



DGTTF SOUTHERN SUDAN 2005-2008: SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: POLICIES, EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

BACKGROUND:

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 created the new autonomous Government of Southern Sudan [GoSS]. The GoSS was required to establish institutions and processes of governance including at the local level, with no previous experience in government and in an environment characterized by the tribal nature of its traditional social organization, identity and culture.

Contact with State power has traditionally been mediated through the chiefs with little or no direct participation of the general population in the formal political process. In a similar vein, traditional southern Sudanese society has been male dominated and women had been relegated to the fringes of public-decision making and responsibility.

While this situation remains to an extent, war has changed the traditional role of women and the tasks they assume have diversified, although they were never formally included in the peace negotiations.

CATALYTIC & INNOVATIVE:

**Project I:
Support for the development of policies and legislation for responsive, accountable and equitable local government**

The main innovation of the project was to involve traditional authorities in the design of the legal framework for local governments, tapping into their knowledge and perceived legitimacy vis-à-vis the majority of the population, thus grounding local government in

a realistic manner in the actual context of Southern Sudan.

As a secondary objective, the project also outlined a follow-up project known as the Local Government Recovery Programme.

Three workshops were held with traditional authorities and the proceedings from these meetings fed directly into the development of the Local Government Act. In addition, study tours to other African countries were organized so that Sudanese traditional leaders could gain first-hand understanding of comparable governance systems that include traditional authorities.

Finally, the Local Government Recovery Programme was designed and set up and now provides technical support to the Local Government Act and its implementation. The project was highly catalytic in that was the first time in the Sudan that tribal chiefs were not only consulted but actively

participated in the design of legislation.

Project II: Strategy for mainstreaming gender empowerment in local government

The second DGTTF project aimed to support gender mainstreaming by training state and county government officials as an integral part of the Local Government Recovery programme.

In a first phase, the project helped build databases on women's access to services and other issues, provided training [with modules and tool kits], developed policy guidelines and successfully introduced gender issues into planning and budgeting processes.

As such, the project created an avenue for dialogue on women's political participation and contribution to development in Southern Sudan. Although delayed, the Gender Policy Framework was completed in 2009

Investments:

- Project I: USD 200.000 from DGTTF in 2005
- Project II: USD 485.000 from DGTTF over the years 2006-2008

Partners:

- Ministry of Local Government Equipe
- Ministry of Gender

For more information:

- <http://www.undp.org/governance/library.shtml>
- <http://www.undp.org/oslocentre>
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and a network of twenty Gender Focal points was set up in each of the 10 Southern States.

LESSONS LEARNED:

DGTTF projects can play an important role in post-conflict countries where relatively small financial allocations can contribute significantly to a strategic area and to the setting up of the necessary legal framework.

Local government is a contested arena and managing tensions in a productive manner is key to long term peace and development. With traditional authorities playing a role in state building, tensions emerged between traditionalists and modernists, especially youth, who did not feel that traditional leaders represented their own views and aspirations.

This tension, if well managed, can be the beginning of a democratic political dialogue where positions and interests are negotiated through institutionalized democratic processes. In the worst case scenario, however, it could lead to more conflict.

The results achieved by the gender mainstreaming project may not last without renewed support. The delay in completing the Gender Policy Framework meant that it was not included into the Local Government Act, which was a missed opportunity for sustainability. Resources for the Gender Focal points are currently not available to maintain their activities.

The ultimate litmus test for the success of these initiatives will be to what extent their impact will still be felt after the 2011 referendum for the independence of Southern Sudan.