

CARE International Khartoum/Sudan

Final evaluation: Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund

**(DCPSF), Gender and Peacebuilding Initiative (GaPI), Sawtaha (Her Voice) in
Peacebuilding and Recovery Actions**

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February 15, 2022



Image 1 Photo by Hwiada AbuBaker: Reflecting boxes belonging **to saving & loan groups**. Old boxes in blue and new box/es in grey. The grey boxes are initiated after the project ended signing indicator to sustainability in relations to this particular activity.

AlhilaalJadeeda-Bilel locality South Darfur/field visit 1st January 2022

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Abbreviations

CBRM	Community Based Reconciliation Mechanisms
CIS	CARE International Switzerland
DCPSF	Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DDRA	Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency
DDS	Darfur Development Strategy
DGBV	Darfur Regional Authority
DRA	Domestic Gender Based Violence
ED	East Darfur
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GAH	Global Aid Hand
GaPI	Gender and Peacebuilding Initiative
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GIE	Gender in Emergencies
GoS	Government of Sudan
ID	Identity document
IDP	Internally displaced people
IGAs	Income generating activities
LJM	The Liberation and Justice Movement
NCP	National Congress Party
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SD	South Darfur
SGBV	Training of Trainers
TOT	Sexual Gender-based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association

Arabic words used

Ajaweed	A mediation council which consists of the Native administration and community leaders.
Hakamah	In the Darfur communities women who used to encourage conflicts between different groups and carry messages in form of songs and potteries from one community to the other. Through the trainings of different NGOs she is transformed into a <i>Hakimah</i> (In Arabic means wise woman) rather than the <i>hakamah</i> .
Judiya	<i>Judiya</i> is the main mechanism for traditional mediation, reconciliation and justice the word is considered as a generic term for mediation. It constitutes a process of consensual arbitration and mediation designed to achieve compromise rather than based on the notion of punishment.

Musalahat	Reconciliations
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Executive Summary

The Longstanding cultural practises across Sudan often exclude women from decision making, even in issues of direct concern to them such as early marriage and FGM. This report builds on efforts done by CARE in the context of “Sawtaha” project to analyse women situation in the post conflict processes and to enhance transformative change in three areas namely structure, relations and agency which was directed to enhance women in the decision making and in addressing issues of direct concern to them.

The project reflected on theory of change implemented by CARE in a duration of three years constituting the cycle of the project (2018-2021) which included two phases: Phase one, research phase which was conducted to analyse the post-war situation in Darfur in a period of six month and phase two which constituted a period of 22 months for the implementation of the project activities.

The Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF) was launched in 2007 to help facilitate peacebuilding by restoring the capacity and authority of traditional community-based conflict resolution mechanism and to enhance the delivery of economic and basic social services by implementing a number of community-based activities.

In partnership with DCPSF, DRRRA and GAH, CARE conducted a research to: 1. better understand the social and cultural pressures that contribute to women’s negative perceptions of their advocacy power

2. Explore the level of representation of women and youth within the CBRMs, particularly in the role of leadership and the perception of traditional and leadership within the CBRMs

3. To understand the perception of men and young men on women’s participation and leadership with the CBRMS

4. To understand the power structures that exist in the communities and whether there is opportunity to create a more enabling environment for women within the CBRMs structures

The research was designed as a first phase of the Darfur Community and Stability Fund’s Gender and Peace building initiative. The study focused on twenty villages across Darfur States. The research tools used were:

62 Focus Group Discussion (CBRMs, Women Groups, VSLAs and Youth Groups)

85 key informant-interviews (19 with female CBRM members; 20 with male CBM members and 46 community role models which included religious and native administrative leaders several economically successful and or socially empowered women, community-based trainers, female combatants and persons with and consultations with 12 Women’s Rights Organizations. The research question focused on the four key areas of CARE International Sudan’s framework for gender equality: Advance “her” human capital; avail the space, engage men and boys and create an enabling environment.

Accordingly, the research findings showed the following:

Avail the space: Findings show that since the establishment of the CBRMs the percentage of female representations was improved by 1% (from 27% to 28%); overall women representation in leadership was estimated to be 6% across the CBRMs 72% women in the CBRMs have the perception that women can become leaders if they could overcome cultural barriers and acquire the self-confidence that would qualify them for these roles.

Economic empowerment of women enhanced their participation in decision making, CBRM members highlighted that they felt that women had a voice within the CBRMs; that women had gained a platform to share their opinions, increased women’s representations in these spaces. However, the “culture of silence” that characterised these communities hinders women from voicing their problems in public.

Engaging men and boys: 70% of the CBRM members believe that women are capable of holding a leadership position within higher result being seen from male respondents from outside the CBRMs. Yet, the respondents associated women’s leadership capabilities to solving women’s issues. Women’s representations in CBRMS overall young women have a low representation in the youth committees (29%) and low representation in leadership position in Youth committees (13%) compared to male youth.

The enabling environment: 78% of the religious leaders believed that women can hold leadership positions in CBRMs and they had the rights to education and different skills to sharpen their capacities.

These findings initiated recommendations and informed the project that targeted Darfur communities includes; Improving the effectiveness of the CBRMs, providing women with the required capacities and enhancing their participation in leadership and decision-making positions in addition to improve the level of coordination between different actors.

Benefiting from lesson learned and following recommendations of phase1; Sawtaha designed its interventions to enhance the capacity of women to lead these efforts, demonstrate the value of their participation, and create new opportunities for inclusion. The project worked with women's organisations, female youth groups, local leaders, academia, and members in DCPSF-supported Community Based Resolution Mechanisms (CBRMs) -- village-level groups using techniques like dialogue, mediation and negotiation to address disputes -- on issues of leadership and peacebuilding, as well as better addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The project reflected modest progress in gender parity but has not yet been achieved in all levels of the community. Efforts were exerted to achieve similarity in the implementation of the project activities in both SD and ED till the conducting of this assessment, yet due to the wide variation between the communities under investigation some of these differences have been overlooked, such as in Komba (Kass locality) which needs a set of interventions in subjects like conflict resolution before implementing Sawtaha so as to create a context-driven knowledge to provide appropriate understanding and communicating messages relevant to the context.

Overall, the evaluation concluded that the project had created tremendous changes in the areas of implementation in relation to:

Structures where women are able to access opportunities previously denied to them such as becoming member or even heading community groups particularly the VSLA and implement their visions in the context.

Safe environment for women were created where they can address issues of importance. This safe environment was represented by: building clubs for women to meet and discuss their issues and providing space in radio programs for them to voice challenges, successes and issues of concerns

Participating in IGAs to enhance economic empowerment and be able to make decision over their lives.

The traditional institution of ethnicities and tribes were transformed into the new CBRM groups to serve the community and enhance its progress. Even the language of addressing issue in the communities have changed: as Khadiga in Hijilija has emphasized, "We used to address each other's as x and y referring to our tribes and ethnic groups, yet now we address each other as x who belongs to VDC group y who belongs to development group etc."

Such achievement requires continued attention and more integration for those who are not yet included.

The project had been challenged by many tournaments including the COVID-19 lock-down, the tremendous turn-over of staff in charge of the project, the condensed activities to take place in a short duration of time and other issues.

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Darfur Context

Darfur is home to some 80 tribes and ethnic groups divided between nomads and sedentary communities, spreading in an area of 190,418 mi².

Darfur States are characterised by increasing levels for national friction in different parts of the country. Failure to arrive to disputes at the appropriate times resulted in serious harm to those who are engaged in the resulting civil wars and led to prolonged underdevelopment in the whole country (Coombs 2011). The conflict in Darfur is one of the most furious wars in the modern era. At one level the conflict exemplifies the problem of national disunity, which is broadly characterised as a conflict between ethnic groups and tribes of Arab origin and African origin.

The year 2003, designate an end to the war in southern Sudan and signified a new conflict commenced in Darfur in western Sudan (Niama 2005), which has witnessed war and hostilities for some years, represent key contributing factors to the aggressions (Quach 2004). The government of Sudan (GoS) and its allied Janjaweed militia have been accused of perpetrating consistent and widespread violations of human rights, such as murder, rape, torture, unjust arrests, theft, the burning of villages, and the deliberate destruction of crops and livestock, which had mostly affected women in the different Darfurian communities (Amnesty International 2010). This armed conflict has left more than 300,000 dead. An estimated 2.7 million civilians have been internally displaced and an estimated 300,000 have fled over the borders to neighbouring countries, such as Chad (Aljazeera net, 2014).

It took a long time before the GoS and the rebel movements agreed that a peace process should go ahead, and urgent action was needed in order to reduce opposition to humanitarian relief efforts and to stop the killing of innocent civilians (especially women and children), to prevent the destruction of property, and of course, to eventually end the crisis (Abiodun 2011).

The prolonged war challenged efforts for development in the area both in the exhausted infrastructure and in the wearied human resources. The consequence of this neglected state of development is low level of economic activity, disempowered groups who were in a consistent state of mobility and resettlement and limited employment opportunities and increasing poverty.

1.3 Background to the project:

The current Darfur's context was transitioning between conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It is deeply affected by the general political situation in Sudan and by the peace agreement between the current government and the armed movements. Women's participation and protection was generally overlooked by the local authorities as a non-sensitive issue to the peace building process in Darfur despite efforts exerted by different initiatives in the "post conflict development".

In 2019 CARE has initiated baseline research in twenty villages across the five states of Darfur to better access women's meaningful participation and leadership in peacebuilding mechanisms on the assumption that under participation of women in different issues of concern to them and of concern to the community would have resulted in their inability to enact their agency and might not enhance their voices in the public or the private sectors in their communities. The research was also directed to examine the ways in which sexual and gender-based violence is being dealt with through the CBRMs, including the degree of knowledge CBRMs have about services available at the community level for survivors. The Gender and Peacebuilding Initiative (GAPI) research was funded by the Darfur Community Peacebuilding and Stability Fund (DCPSF), United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and carried out by Care International Sudan with the support of NGOs including DDRA and Global Aid Hand (GAH) Organizations.

The research feeds directly into the Gender Strategy for DCPSF, which is driven by “a need to change the prevailing perception that women are passive beneficiaries of development initiatives in Darfur, into women as active agents in decision-making in conflict resolution mechanisms, as well as interventions on access and control of resources. In November 2019 a report “Sawtahaa”: Her Voice” was published which in turn informed 18 months starting from June 2020 to address the gaps and barriers raised through the research and strengthen existing opportunities within the communities.

The project focused on conflict-affected women, female youths as key target groups, whilst also ensuring a whole society approach by engaging with men and male youth among pastoralist and farming communities in East and South Darfur states of Sudan. The project had also meant to look at the intersectionality within the identified gender groups to ensure that we meet the needs and build on the capacities and the priorities of persons with disability, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. CIS targeted a total of 14 villages, 6 villages in East Darfur and 8 villages in South Darfur.

This project was intended to help in raising some overlooked issues in Darfur to avoid latent conflicts in the future. It was concerned with giving women in local mechanisms and decision-making positions the capacity needed to voice their opinions and to raise sensitive issues such as women’s protection in Darfur. The project was also meant to help in raising the overall knowledge and capacity in the importance of representing all the individuals of the community in the different mechanisms to resolve conflict, build peace and to achieve stability.

CARE defines women’s empowerment as “the sum total of changes needed for a woman to realise her full human rights.” This involves an interplay of changes in three key areas namely:

1. Agency (an individual’s aspirations and capabilities to fulfil them);
2. Structure (the environment that surrounds and conditions an individual’s choices); and
3. Relations (the power relations through which an individual negotiates their path). (CARE International, Gender equality, women’s voice, and resilience. Guidance notes for practitioners)

Furthermore, based on the three areas of change, CARE International Sudan, developed a framework to promote women’s empowerment (CARE International, Women’s empowerment framework, August 2014). that had been applied to peacebuilding and recovery contexts. It consists of four pillars, which aimed to help women and youth realise their full agency through structural and relational changes in their environment. These pillars are: Advance her human capital; give her space; engage men and boys; and create an enabling environment. The ultimate goal is that gender equality is maintained, women voices are heard in public and in situations of concern to them as well as women, weak and youth are empowered.

Several pre-existing institutions were targeted as stakeholders in the GaPI project and on the 13th and 14th of January 2019 workshop during which the workplan for the project was finalized and between the 21st and 23rd of January 2019 GIE training was held to sensitize and train the project team. The team included several bodies who were already functioning in the communities as example of this is the Government’s creation of the Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency DDRA to consolidate peace and oversee early recovery and development process (see box 2).

Box (1)**DDRA and GaPI**

Conflict in Darfur had always stood out as a major threat to Khartoum ruling elites following 2011 Peace Agreement between the North of Sudan and the South of Sudan. On July 14th, 2011, following the stakeholder consultation in Qatar the GoS and LJM signed the DDPD which in turn created a new reality in Darfur represented by the DDRA and two new states: East and Central Darfur states, thus two formal and informal structures of local governance. However, the two systems have been politicized by the former ruling NCP. For that reason, DDRA remains as an entry point to the communities in Darfur and its role is most prominent in East rather than South Darfur that is why in East Darfur DDRA was assigned to be responsible for the mobilization of the communities in this project due to its pre-existing strong relations with both government and community groups.

Review of the Darfur Development Strategy (2013-2019) as well as GaPI Midway Progress Report March 2019

Box (2)**The first phase of the project**

The initial three months of the project have been centred on preparatory work to facilitate the research which was supposed to be carried out to inform concept note for the project. Hence “The partnership Agreement”, between CARE International Switzerland, Global Aid Hand and the Darfur Development Reconstruction Agency were completed and signed in February 2019. These agreements outlined the responsibilities of each of the partners. As the result of this agreements GAH held responsible for the mobilization of the project’s focal points in the state of East Darfur, due to its pre-existing strong relations in East Darfur with both: Governmental and community groups; while DDRA was held responsible for the mobilization of the project’s focal points in West Darfur (which is not part of this evaluation), as well, due to their pre-existing strong relations in West Darfur with both governmental and community groups. Yet, due to security situation in West Darfur the implementation of the project activities had been delayed.

The responsible agency to implement the project activities in South Darfur was CIS.

Source GaPI Midway Progress Report: March 2019; pp. 1-4.

Specifically, two aims were identified:

1. To help facilitate peacebuilding by “restoring the capacity and authority of traditional community-based conflict resolution mechanisms”;
2. To enhance the delivery of economic and basic social services through a number of community-based activities (Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF) Gender Strategy, December 2014).

2. Purpose and methodology of the evaluation

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

The External Final Evaluation conducted to provide the project stakeholders with information about the performance of the project in relation to its stated objectives, covering the project’s implementation in its entirety from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2021. The evaluation’s assessment of the project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability will be key in informing the development and implementation of future CARE projects and initiatives in Sudan and beyond, which will build on the lessons learned and practical recommendations from this project.

The evaluation assessed the level of achieving the intended below outcomes:

- Invest in women and girls’ agency as active agents in their own pathways to achieve meaningful participation and leadership in public spaces and structures, and to enhance

their agency to ensure their full understanding of and increased realization of their rights, with regards to active participation in society,

- Enhance or establish individual and collective capacity and inclusive mechanisms for decision making, conflict resolution and increased protection of women, girls, men and boys with a focus on gender-based violence and PSEA issues at-risk groups
- Promote joint learning, capture good practices, and identify and implement innovative initiatives to promote gender equality in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and recovery processes

This report feeds directly into the Gender Strategy for DCPSF, which is driven by several interventions to change the prevailing perception that women are passive beneficiaries of development initiatives in Darfur, into women as active agents in decision-making in conflict resolution committees, as well as interventions on access and control of resources (Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF) Gender Strategy, December 2014, p.12).

The appropriate study area was determined with key program staff at the targeted states (East Darfur and South Darfur) in relations to relevance, security, resource availability (transportation means etc.).

2.2. Evaluation methodology:

Primary Data collection

Quantitative and qualitative data has been collected in the form of a household survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The qualitative data has been gathered during FGDs and KIIs for drawing information that cannot easily be collected from a questionnaire as this information are most probably of social and cultural nature.

The consultant conducted primary data collection in seven communities distributed in 5 localities namely Bilel and Kass in SD state, Abukarinka, EL Dein and Assalaya localities in ED state.

Individuals interviews:

A representative sample of targeted areas/ communities carefully selected and defined. The design of the questionnaire guided by the objectives of this assignment as outlined in the TOR agreed with CARE.

Using the structured questioner, and to gather the required quantitative data, 509 individuals were interviewed, 404 are females constituting 79% and 105 are males (29%). See table1 below:

Table 1: Individuals interviews-samples distribution

State	Locality	Villages	Females		Males		Total
South Darfur	Bilel	AlhilaalJadeeda	60	83%	12	16%	72
		Galdi	48	84%	9	15%	57
		Abo-Udam	54	78%	15	21%	69
	Kass	Komba	48	80%	12	20%	60
Total SD			210		48		258
East Darfur	Abu Karinka	Hijlija	60	68%	27	31%	87
		Aljalabi	48	88%	6	11%	54
	El Dein						
	Assalaya	Maali	86	78%	24	21%	110
Total ED			194		57		251
Grand Total			404		105		509

Focus Groups Discussions:

The evaluation conducted a focused group discussion with representatives from community members, they were engaged in a deeper conversation about the implemented project, check lists

were used to guide the conversation and collect the required qualitative data. These discussions were also allowed for the opportunity to assess the current situation, identify the achieved results with regard to the key issues for the proposed project intervention and project designed indicators. Total of 12 Focus Group Discussions were conducted, including CBRMs women groups, VSLAs, and Youth groups in the different targeted communities. All of the FGDs were conducted as mixed FGDs.

Key informant interviews:

Loosely structured interviews have been conducted with key informants including project staff, and key persons in the communities. It is the crucial way to access a population of influential people who would otherwise not be captured by a typical household survey. Check lists were used for collecting information from the key informants (5 CARE Personnel, 15 community informants). See annex 2.

Analysis and reporting

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS computer program to generate frequency tables. SPSS was used to analyze the questionnaires while thematic analysis was used to generate patterns and themes related to data collected from the interviews.

The quantitative data has been analyzed and displayed in percentage tables and presented in Charts and tables of percentages.

This report adopted qualitative reflections and quantitative indicators to replicate areas of change through efforts applied to enhance the equal participation of women and men in different age groups to enhance equal participation in the post conflict development of themselves and their institutions.

Thus, this evaluation assessed the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability according to the interests and needs that reflect the scope of the study proposed in the TOR.

In addition, the evaluator tried to elucidate the progress that the project had in the implementation of some intervention strategies inherent to its development that are part of the sustainability approach: Institutional and capacity strengthening, coordination and strategic alliances as well as capturing some of the success stories relevant to the capacity building and income generating procedures induced in the communities.

Thus, Sawtahaa adopted the following steps to enhance voicing the voiceless. Thus, **Box (3)** demonstrates these steps:

Box 3

Steps through which Theory of change implemented in GaPI

Sawtahaa

The theory of change is implemented through three levels:

Level one: Focuses on driving gender equality programming results in relations to the three pillars of change.

Level two: Details the internal work on community transformation to ensure that program undertaken by CARE to ensure that the results are achieved.

Level three: Community transformation procedure that should have been introduced as the result of the intervention that took place in level

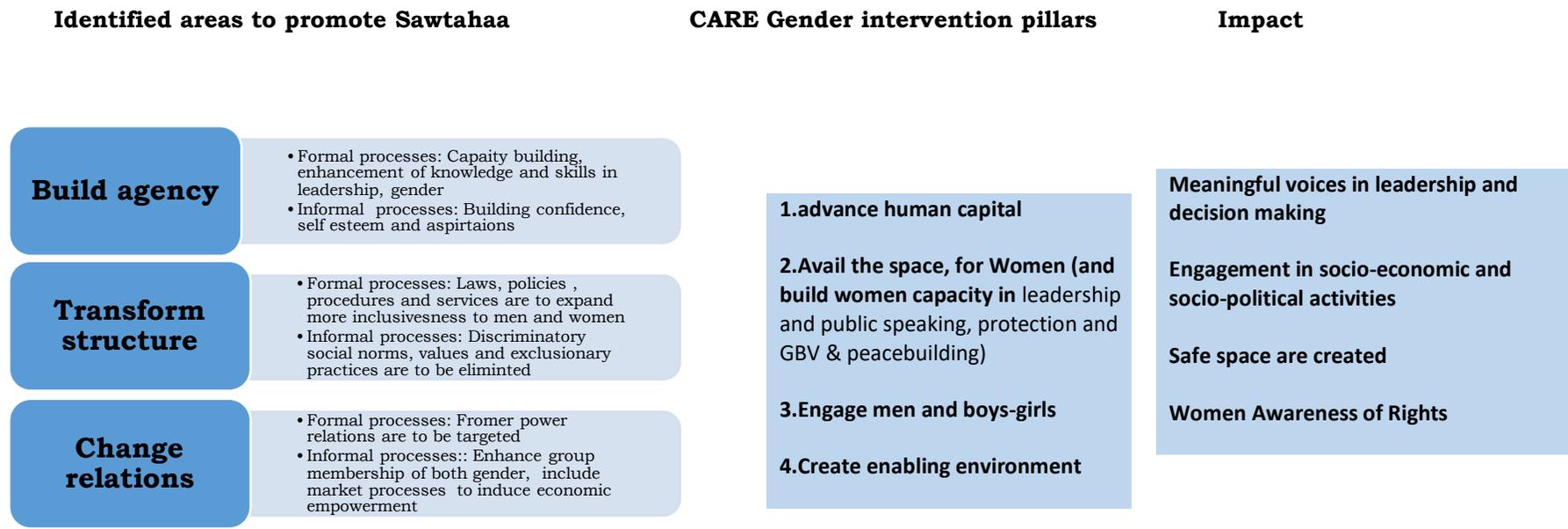


Figure 1: Theory of change

Table 2: Outcome –output map for the assessment

Impact: Gender equality and women empowerment is visible	
Outcome 1: Women/youth female empowerment for meaningful participation in leadership	Output 1.1: Enhanced capability for women’s meaningful voice in leadership and decision making
	Output 1.2: Women are actively engaged in economic and social activities to enhance their decision making power
	Output 1.3: Women and girls have an increased awareness of their rights with regards to gender-based violence and PSEA
Outcome 2: Inclusive decision-making spaces created and protection risks addressed	Output 2.1: CBRMs are supported to be vibrant and gender transformative
	Output 2.2: Women actively participate in community groups and decision-making structures for peacebuilding, conflict resolution and recovery
	Output 2.3: Protection risks and gender based violence issues are recognized and responded to by structures in a survivor-centered approach
	Output 2.4: Safe spaces are created for women and youth to interact and engage to address their concerns and priorities collectively
Outcome 3: Learning and scale up of promising practices for gender equal actions	Output 3.1: The normative roots of gender inequality, power, gender-based violence, and fragility of peace for sustainable recovery, including how they interact, are identified and discussed
	Output 3.2: Change stories are captured and shared

2.3. Evaluation findings:

3.1. Relevance of the project:

The design of the project informed by baseline research in twenty villages across the five states of Darfur to better access women's meaningful participation and leadership in peacebuilding mechanisms on the assumption that under participation of women in different issues of concern to them and of concern to the community would have resulted in their inability to enact their agency and might not enhance their voices in the public or the private sectors in their communities. There was a clear need for improvement in Darfur in terms of the degree and quality of women's participation in peace building processes, as well as the ways in which sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is dealt with at the community level.

3.2. Efficiency:

The project implemented in good level of efficiency, however, the project witnessed many challenges in timely delivering the activities, but it managed to deliver all the designed activities which resulted in a good level of achievement of the desired results. An effective strategy of collaboration was evident across CARE and various partners including, local partner and the community-based structures, in addition to the continuous and good follow up from UNP team which have significant role in overcoming challenges and keep project on track.

Some challenges affected delivering of some activities on time, these challenges include:

- The currency inflation and increase of the prices, especially the fuel,
- COVID-19 significantly affected the implementation of the project activities, the lock-down during 2020 halted the implementation.
- Weak and non-existent communication network in many targeted areas affected timely arrangement with the focal person in the communities and thus resulted in delaying of some activities.

3.3. Effectiveness:

Changing of social norms and traditions need long terms to be changed. The project during its live, succeed to change the perceptions of women's participation in decision making particularly when it related to communal issues.

Good results were achieved regarding women/youth female empowerment for meaningful participation in leadership, this was achieved through the enhancement of women's voice in leadership and decision making, in addition to empowering women be engaging them in economic and social activities.

3.3.1. Outcome 1: Women /youth female Empowerment for meaningful participation in leadership

Lack of capacities among women, is the one of the driving forces that affected women participation in leadership and decision making, to overcome this, the project organized women in groups and provided them with the required capacity building.

OP1.1: Enhanced capability for women's meaningful voice in leadership and decision making

Women in the targeted areas in East and South Darfur have improved their knowledge and skills benefiting from the provided different training packages on leadership and public speaking skills, training on gender peace and conflict modules, decision making.

The selected women models in each state, played important role in encouragement and raise the awareness of women members on PSEA concepts, and effective participation in decision

making at household and local level. These selected women conducted further sessions with wider women on the PSEA awareness and reached wide number of women in each village. Schools' students also participated in these sessions and were provided with PSEA knowledge and information particularly FGMs and Early marriage.

Targeted women and women groups (CBRM, Youth Group, Women Group, VSLA & VDC) in the project area (8 villages in South Darfur and 6 villages in East Darfur) received different types of capacity building, the total beneficiaries around 1149 in South Darfur and 1000 in East Darfur in the basic training programs and with about more than 3600 Reached communities in SD and 2500 in ED in the second level training. The trainings were based in the theory of change and the gained knowledge and skills contributed to achieving the results.

Conflict resolution techniques trainings provided to 75 women who are women groups members, this improved their level of participation in conflicts transformation in their communities.

OP1.2: Women are actively engaged in economic and social activities to enhance their decision making

The project succeeded to build self-confident among women in the targeted communities through engaging them in economic and social activities, which resulted in enhancing their decision related to family and community issues. This resulted from the provided them with the required capacities and own income generation activities, this included improvement in skills and knowledge, in addition to providing the required start-up capital, tools and materials.

The trained 53 women (18 in SD and 35 in ED) on business management skills, those women were carefully selected from existing VSLAs, they transferred knowledge they gained during the ToT training to 650 other VSLAs members (330 women and 320 young girls)

The applied VSLA approach has contributed to improve women access to financial resources and started their own businesses and diversify their income sources. As result from this: 70 women groups started new businesses including vegetable trade, perfume making, spices business and Tea stalls and small cafes.

Mahasin in Galdi reflected on that, she is a member of the CBRM and participating "even in the *Judiya* committee, let alone easier conflict management". She stated that she is allowed space for her opinion which "in support of women if injustice is detected".

Bela (university graduate) in Maali shared that; such improvement in the status and role of women in her community was "acquired" through systematic sensitization initiated by women economic empowerment, then women respect to their "acquired" roles (as productive household members) i.e. economically active using own possession such as income generating skill and capital given to them by CARE. Bela made a simile referring to women who are farmers, but in the farms possessed by the husband for example and between women who are economically productive using for example capital given to them by CARE; while the first can easily be manipulated by the husband the second is dealing with her own possession. Inclusion maintained even among those who were hesitant to join in the beginning. IGA, acted as an economic resource for women. Food processing training created big impact in the communities. Women perceived knowledge on new food processing. Cookies and cakes became indicators of civilization and introduced into the menu of new year ceremonies together with the hibiscus and baobab.

Not only we realized that men in themselves have to be gender sensitized to accept to transform women from the representation in the committees to the stage of voice-fulness in the committee, women themselves have to be sensitized to accept themselves as leaders in such positions which used to be solely male spheres.

It worth mentioning that, although women are accepted and respected as members in the market committees, yet there is a dimension of skill building which is not yet accomplished. In the visited areas in the South and East Darfur, consultants witnessed a total of 15 women who have had a start-up capital and business skills training, food processing, as well as being members in the market committees.

When asked in both communities of Darfur under evaluation were working women. Without any exception upon visiting the targeted villages in South and East Darfur, many community members attended the visit thinking that CARE is creating another list for the people to participate in the small fund activities.

Mariam in Alhila AlJadeeda explained to us that she was preparing cakes for the new year, and it was not only the inhabitants of Alhila AlJadeeda who buy from her, but others in the surrounding villages do approach her to sell cakes. She explained that the ingredient for making her IGA is not expensive because she gets eggs from her own chicken. She uses oven charcoal for cooking.

Mariam sells a medium cake for 5000 SDG and the big one for 11,000 SDG.

OP1.3 Women and girls have an increased awareness of their rights with regards to gender-based violence and PSEA

The project did great effort for changing the social norms and bring understanding among communities on the negative impacts of discrimination, and important of women voice, in this regards, different models were used, including drama sketches through act-stop theatre paved the way for safe and free spaces for respect and acceptance of women rights to address even the sensitive issues for effective interaction between women leaders and traditional leaders.

Early child marriage and FGM practices among girls considered as the worst practices towards girls, because it has bad effects on their health and psychological situation. Schools’ girls were involved in the awareness raising events and received information about negative social norms of these practices, in addition to other gender-based violence and PSEA. The messages in the sessions also provided information on how to resist against these negative practices within the society.

When asked women in different communities of Darfur reflected that they know several aspects relevant to GBV such as: Early marriage, FGM or husband violence, rap etc (Figure 2). In response to knowledge about violence against women men showed minimal knowledge of the elements of GBV than women (Fig 2).

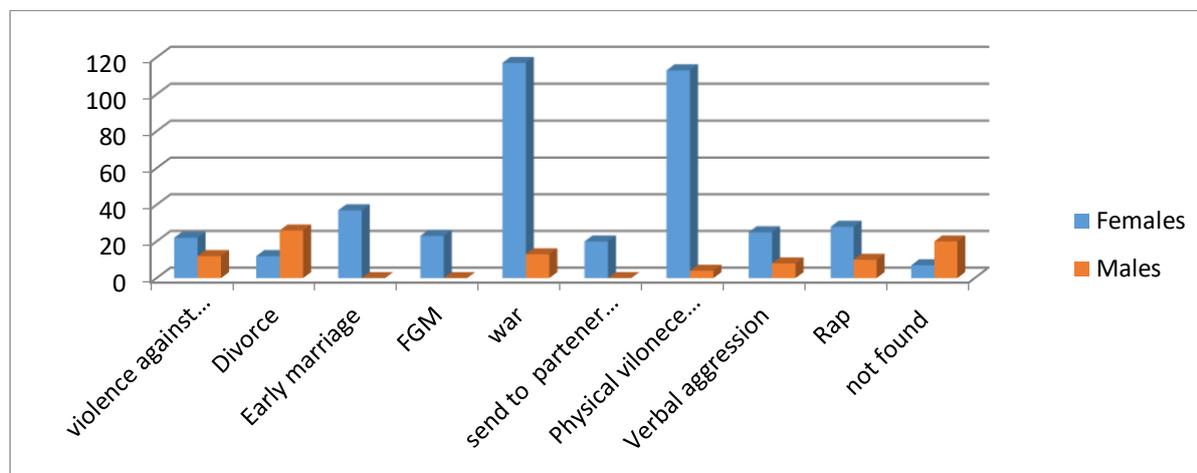


Figure 2: Awareness raising in female right and GBV

During the focus group discussion women reflected in different settings of the targeted communities that they did not use to know that early marriage and FGM are violence, yet they are aware now of the harm that the two practices have on women. International law or human right regarding such issues is not very well acknowledged. During the focus group discussions in SD and ED males of different age groups reflect acceptability to women in the different CBRM committees. They approved women functionality in settling some disputes which used to be settled through ajaweed and as Adam Obeid Mohamed in Maali stated, “The presence of women in the CBRM helped a lot in settling women’s disputes and quicken the processes of justice, furthermore, voicing what used to be not important (referring to past experience with settling such conflicts without involving women victim in the solutions). This result goes in line with the questionnaire results which showed that 74% of women displayed knowledge on different components relevant to GBV.

In Abu Udam SD Abu Baker Yousif, the secretary of one of CBRM in the Focus group discussion (AlhilaalJadeeda SD) reflected, “Disputes used to be the issue of the wise men in

the community, but after men and women received trainings in conflict resolutions from different NGOs, now wise men in the community are appreciating that since 2007 no big conflict, that used to push the people out of the village has not occurred, because the moment you see members of the community acting in a conflict triggering manner you call for the Musalahat committee and before it is out of control the committee resolves it”.

3.3.2. **Outcome 2: Inclusive decision-making spaces created, and protection risks addressed**

The evaluation showed that; As a result of capacity building provided to women in the targeted communities, 40% and 43% of women who are members is committees are now heading theses committees in East Darfur and South Darfur respectively. Most of the consulted women are active participants in the VSLAs (70% in East Darfur and 43% in South Darfur).

Whoever, women reflected that they involved in disputes resolutions all the time within their committees, but some committees such as the conflict management committees are headed by men.. Interviewed women in Maali and Hijilija were actively involved in participating in conflict resolutions mostly in familial disputes.

Women who were members of CBRMs (20% in East Darfur and 8% in South Darfur) are not heading the group. They reflected that; to a large extent conflicts affecting whole community members (such farmers’ herders’ issues), but they still consider it as men’s issues. In this regard, transformation observed toward women participation, as different communities in East and South Darfur stated that; whenever the CBRMs committee meet, women must be present.

Bela, in Maali (who turned to be a trainer to other women on GBV and IGA) and Hawa Abdul Rahman in Hijilija (is the deputy of the CBRM, a state which did not exist before the initiation of the project) in East Darfur shared that; women members in CBRMS are sharing their opinions, particularly in issues relevant to GBV.

There was a need to involve with women victims of GBV in discussions to reflect on the “doers” particularly that after the violent conflicts which forced us to flee and during which the “doers” might have not been known, now the doers are most of the time known to the victims. We have been trained to pull the information from the women victims of GBV that the “doers” are to face their crimes (Hawa Hi East Darfur).

In regard to participation in decision in household, consulted women, shared that they participate in decisions related to to children includes schooling and other issues. 80% of the stated that; they decide on the girls’ proposal for marriage in early age, and children’s harmful practices like FGM as well. They also shared high level of understanding to the issue “we were blind and now we see”, reflected Mahasin from Galdi.

Outputs 2.1 CBRMs are supported to be vibrant and gender transformative

The most active CBRM is in East Darfur: Hijlifa and ElGalabi and in Galdi and AlhilaalJadeeda in South Darfur.

Community members men and women reflect satisfaction with the performance of CBRM.

The following table shows:

Table (5) Female Representation in CBRMs in East and South Darfur

		CBRM Total Members		% of Female in Pres. And
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State	Total	Female	Youth Female	Male	Youth Male	President of CBRM		Vice-President of CBRM		Total CBRMs	Vice. Pres. Of CBRMs
						M	F	M	F		
South Darfur	555	179	15	278	75	9	-	6	3	18	17 %
East Darfur	404	221	9	231	42	8	1	9	-	18	6 %
Overall Total	959	400	24	509	107	17	1	15	3	36	23 %
%						94%	6%	83 %	17 %		

In AlhilaalJadeeda and Galdi CBRM continue conducting training sessions in different aspects to enhance the capacity of the community even after ending the activities of the project. Sessions are done in the schools and different community members are invited to attend with themes: GBV or demonstrating food processing issues. When the consultants did the field visit to AlhilaalJadeeda, women groups informed that they were having a demonstration session in the market place with the theme of food processing.

OP 2.2: Women actively participate in community groups and decision-making structures for peacebuilding, conflict resolution and recovery:

There has been remarkable progress regarding the inclusion of women in the various committees such as CBRM, market committees, VSLAs, Village Development Committees and other women groups, this resulted from the self-confidence they gained from the different capacity building programs, this was enhanced by strengthening them economically, which made them more independent and became able to deliver their voice

networking has been maintained particularly in East Darfur. When asked about networking with other women groups or authoritative women, women in AlhilaalJadeeda shared that they network with other women groups in other communities and through the DDRA they are paying casual visits to other communities.: Women in Aljalabi declared that they invite and receive invitation from different groups in other parts of Darfur where the project is running. Many times, they exchange visits and talk about their problems. Visits are not paid regularly and are normally arranged by DDRA.

Consultant witnessed some level of inclusion of women in the market and market committees. Women are in market in places such as AlHila Aljadida, however, they are not in head positions, but they are involved as members in the market committees which as great transformation towards women actively participation, as they themselves recognize, women are not exposed to big deals of commerce, to big cash, bargain in market, tactics' and major decisions concerning the market (such as enlarging the market, moving the market to another place..etc.).

Other communities which participated in this evaluation also reflected on such visits but there is no clear-cut occasions or associated reason for the visits. It is observable that such

activities widen the horizon of women and different members of the communities by exchanging experiences and reduce tension between the groups. Yet, continuity of such activities is not likely to be maintained. Interviewing Adam Haroun who is a member of DDRA in Abo Udam, he stated that arrangements to pay such visits is difficult because it needs resources, unless support comes from the NGOs in the area it might not be possible to maintain continuity in this respect. Yet, when asked whether such communications would be possible, 60% of the women in Abo Udam reflected that they may continue network with other communities on individual and on personal bases.

Table (4) Women beneficiaries who benefitted from start-up capital in the selected communities in both states

The project managed to distributed start-up capital to 70 groups each group consist of 10 members and 27 women individuals and 15 Youth men in South and East Darfur (742 women out of which 15 were Youth male), to perform Petty trading, tea stalls, small cafes, perfume making and spices business and small shops for household items.

Box 4 Case study women actively participating in community groups

The consultants witnessed a case at Maali as they were involved in this evaluation. Two young ladies came to meet the consultant and revealed that they were visiting a girl friend who was accused of killing a young man as his animals were herding in her field. They were carrying food for the imprisoned lady and displayed that they were allowed to get into the prison to meet their girl-friend because through the different trainings with CARE they came to know women in charge of the prison and she allows them window to meet the imprisoned girl-friend and to supply food for her as well, they were promised that the authoritative women will help with what they could do to let free of the imprisoned. Such case reflects two processes:

1. Women are provided a platform to discuss issues used to be treated in very narrow space.
2. Women are supporting each other in issue of concern to them and are handling issues within their circles and outside circles as well introduced to the group through the project relationships

Sawtahaa activities are directed to create transformative change including women voicing their experience and built capacity to engage in decision making and culture of peace within the household and at the community level. Table (6) reflects women experience in decision making structures for peace building:

Table 3: Women participating in CBOs and decision making

	Participants' experience	Frequency	%
a.	Participate in decision making in the committee	125	30%

b.	I grew to be called by the community members to talk to others about GBV	150	37%
c.	I am heading a committee	72	17%
d.	I can take decisions within the household context	43	10%
e.	I help in the capacity building sessions relevant to GBV	14	3%
	Total	404	100%

The consulted women shared different level of participation and decision making in their families and communities, 30% shared that they have voice in the committees and participate in decision making, 37% reflect that they are raising community awareness on GBV, 17% are heading committees, 10% are now able to take decision in their households, 3% provide help in GBV events.

The finding shows that involvement of women in CBRMs has increased by 2% from the baseline data on the communities (from 28% to 30%), in the 7 communities under the study. Yet, findings also reflect that women grew to exercise some decision-making processes in the household. Through the focus group discussion, it became clear that mostly women participate in decisions relevant to children and children schooling. Capital enabled women to be able to carry some of the household burden. This as well, encouraged changing some of the cultural and tradition expectations the community held about women had as well helped the partners to accept women's participation in the economy of the household. One participant in the focus group discussion at Maali put it, "Now men as well can come and ask us to help them economically when they are in need".

3.3.3. Outcome 3 learning and scale up of promising practices for gender equal actions

Women Conduct dialogue and discussion sessions among themselves and other committees which they are members of.

Women reflected that they are participating in GBV and domestic violence platforms of conflict managements through the village committees in which they are members. 72% (ED) and 56% (SD) of those who were asked whether they were involved in resolving disputes while they are members of the committees to which they belong (in East Darfur & South Darfur respectively) assured that they do; but documentation for the cases, despite the facts that reports on the activities revealed that different community members were trained

on reporting different case they settle does not exist. This exists for two reasons:

1. Despite the training CBRMs members get (Training CBRM members in management of disputes as well as reporting them) which in SD has targeted about 28 participants who further reached 1800 members of whom 869 females and 931 males and in ED has targeted about 35 participants, yet reporting is not a culture in the community in either state. Yoma Hamuda in Hijlija (ED) showed the consultants a small notebook in which she stated that they track documentation of violence and other incidents they manage. Yet, two cases were written date back to August 2021. When asked on the number of cases they receive she stated that they settle GBV cases on monthly base.

2. As Mohamed Abu el Gasim head of the Dispute committee in Galdi stated, "Conflicts are getting less and less in occurrence particularly domestic violence (three years ago we used to receive between ten to fifteen cases in a week-time). Now we do not resolve such conflicts so frequently. Two or three cases in one month. Still when they occur, we quickly set the committee and resolve them".

The first issue in this account is that the community itself has got a categorization for the conflicts intensity and small disputes which may quickly get resolved are not considered as important as big conflict of issues to the whole community. As well the CBRMs do not have a clear division of labor in the technical dimension like who will take minutes of the meeting or who will document what is happening. Such procedure is similar in both ED and SD.

In all communities participated in the evaluation, women are visible in the decision making at the level of the household particularly children schooling whereby women reflect that they are acquiring more and more confident on their abilities to deal with such problems. Particularly, as they are economically productive. This has been evident also through the survey done in this evaluation whereby 9% from our surveyed group reported that they benefited from the seed money disseminated to them however, all women in the community are productive in one way or the other. As one woman in HilaAljadida stated in the focus group discussion, “no woman stays home doing nothing, all women in this community are economically active, either they are farmers or sell goods in the marketplace”.

Safe spaces created for women youth to interact and engage to address their concern and priorities

DDRA are involved in the issue of creating and securing the necessary space for women to discuss issues of concern. For example, in *AlJalabi* women were allowed a small club for their meetings and capacity building activities.

Table 4: Community bombers provided with safe spacing

State	Male	Female
South Darfur	35	88
East Darfur	95	61

3.1 The normative roots of gender inequality, power, gender-based violence and fragility of peace for sustainable recovery including how they interact

Networking is maintained not only through “voicing” women’s problems, successes as well as relevant issues, but also included radio program. In East Darfur, 17 radio programs and 9 messages were conducted, concentrating on addressing harmful practices such as early marriage, FGM, discrimination and ethnic prejudices and. In South Darfur 21 radio programs conducted directed to enhancing culture of peace, enhancing Hakama’s role, etc. as well as through listening to each other’s issues through Sawtaha **radio** program. The program reached many members in the communities, women exchange news and information with each other. Particularly, those who were allowed chance to have their “voices” voiced in radio “usually” find a way out to listen to the program sending “on the appropriate day” and invite other women to listen with them. Women displayed that they are very proud to speak about their problem in radio and they started to tell us about how they explained their problems in Hajlija for example, Yoma Hamodah (40 years) single mother with three children explained how she talked about the problems of the farmers and the animal herders in the radio reflecting on a challenge of common concern to the community.

The radio program consists of messages forwarded to the communities. The messages are mostly with peace contents yet such as demystifying early marriages and FGM. One of the most important issues was how the *Hakimah* is not spreading the message of peace rather than war.

However, men voices were as well allowed space in the target communities in the radio programs in both communities voicing challenges of common concerns.

3.2 Success story

Following is success story reflecting women’s experience in the community after the implementation of the different activities

Success Story: Youma Hamoda



Image 2 Youma Hamoda woman leadership in Hijilija
Photo: Hwiada AbuBaker

Youma Hamoda is 45 years old, married with three children two boys and one girl. She is a woman with striking charismatic leadership. She did all Care's capacity building trainings. She is the treasurer of the CBRM and the first women member in this committee in Hijilija. She is well respected by the whole community for her wise decisions associated with the family dispute, husband and wife, and other social disputes. Moreover, because of her distinguished role in family and social conflict resolution skills, the CBRM leader and members decide to involve her in other conflicts mitigation e.g. pastoralist and farmer conflict.

Upon our arrival we observed that all community members especially men waiting her arrival to lead the discussion. She is contributing in many other committees with her accumulative experience. She talks fluently and systematically about all issues concerning women and their role, problems, and challenges in Hijilija in particular and women in East Darfur in general.

When she was asked about dramatic change in her village she stated that ***"we used to call people in the village with their ethnic belongingness e.g. Maliaa, Rezigat ...etc. but, after Care implementation of different projects in the village, we started to call people with their community committee's affiliation e.g. these is the people of CBRM, VSLA, VDC, or NRMC"*** .

Men leaders and informants as well as women in the village assured the initial role of Youma Hamoda who is well known with leadership and empowerment skills in the village.

4. Project sustainability and pitfalls

Several sustainability-relevant indicators that might tell that some of the project activities might be sustained for some time in the targeted communities:

In some communities, such as (AlJalabi in East Darfur and Alhila AlJadeeda in South Darfur) community members are likely to enhance their capacities in income generating activities even after the end of the project. Because of the increase disposition of the community towards enhancing the capacity in activities introduced by Sawtahaa, training such as pastries and food processing is (still run by the CBRMs and CBTs). Acquisition of a life skill that would enhance women empowerment was observed to be advantageous to the community members and young women will be predisposed to acquire such skills and may seek to develop themselves economically even after the ceasing of the project (ACF 2009). Particularly that there are other institutions as well informed by Sawtahaa which may fund such development for example the VDCs. In such cases the likelihood that such IGAs induced by Sawtahaa will be sustained.

In Galdi, South Darfur and Maali in East Darfur, the change in the food habits induced by the IGAs is very much appreciated by the young women group who introduce themselves as expert in new art in food making which introduce people to new food culture and habit. Mariam in Galdi expressed, "Making cakes introduced us to new civilization" literally, she said, " قصة عمل الكيك دي دخلتتنا عهد جديد "

In Maali Khadiga Ismail told us that new food habits are now introduced into marriage ceremonies and the like which were not used to be there. She said the cake is there in the henna ceremony- hand-in-hand with the baobab and other indigenous food.

4.1.3 women leaders

Maali Women leader in heading the income generating groups are expected to continue. As Bela from Aljalabi mentioned, "After the end of the Sawotoha project now we have 7 new emerging VDC groups". Adding to this (new role i.e., gender related conflict management is now anticipated from women in these groups). The "necessity" can be instrumentally defined as (the ability of women to quickly understand, explain, and suggest appropriate dispositions to dealing with conflict-gender-related issues). The new role is functional in the turmoil and GBV context). In that way, women are expected to remain in leadership positions. Such continuities envisage wider sustainable of the transformative change within these communities even "with-out" the context of Sawotoha.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Relevance and appropriateness

Sawtahaa program has transformed women's lives in many ways including "new built personalities" and material changes in food habits as well as empowerment through different income generating activities, yet the program requires update to meet the demand of the different Sudanese context as well as the fast-changing world which is changeable and unpredictable. Although the context and application are coherent and applicable in the context of women empowerment in ED and SD (economically and contextually), the content needs follow up to track the fast change in the local processes regarding transformational change, in other word it needs a step forward that the credits acquired are not lost.

There is a need to ground the design and the development of the program in a comprehensive and contextual analysis to test its applicability to different categories of women needs and interests as well as functionality and applicability because not all the seven communities investigated were reflecting good transformational

Komba, as one of the project areas was very difficult to be accessed by the team. Relevant CBRM were invisible, women who benefited from the program were reluctant to attend the evaluation meeting and the group which attended when we were there were expecting CARE to register them for further fund. Those who attended were not part of CBRMs or VDCs. The community members are still contextualized in the IDP mind-set implied by the conflict they suffered in their communities and the obligation to flee the village whenever it occurred. The

community still need capacity building program and much training is to enhance the capacity of women there in relation to difference. Add to that the language barrier; women do not speak the language between the community and others. Such context hinders the community to be influenced by the project.

CARE defines women's empowerment as "the sum total of changes needed for a woman to realise her full human rights." This involves an interplay of changes in three key areas namely:

1. Agency (an individual's aspirations and capabilities to fulfil them).

The survey done in this evaluation, some agencies are changed, most of the time towards consolidating and strengthening women institutions like leadership which are mostly recognized in VSLA committees and minimum in the CBRM. Yet, the vision of the GaPI is through deep change in the agencies of the communities to enhance women's voice in women voiceless agencies.

2. Structure (the environment that surrounds and conditions an individual's choices); and

In all communities, visited by the consultants, environment is more tolerant to women. In almost all visited communities in both states, structures were created whereby women come together to voice issues of concern (like a women's club has been constructed at AlJalabi". Radio program, as well is a new platform for women to share experiences, yet it is not very much efficient and although expected to cover wide range of community members it seems that it is not, because most of the participants who shared their experience to this project are not fond of radio program due to the electricity shortage that implied frequent filling of telephone radio batteries, thus not doing it grew to be an option to 80% of those who were asked whether they follow the morning program of "sawotoha" in both states. Yet, as a starting point acceptability to this issue is guaranteed to many of the community members males or females.

3. Relations (the power relations through which an individual negotiates their path). (CARE International, Gender equality, women's voice and resilience. Guidance notes for practitioners)

Relations were not very much changed. Patriarchal ideology is still dominant, and women participation is still resisted in spaces that are resolving "male-issues" such as the disputes resolutions in relations to, for example, farmers and herders. Relations inside the house are to some extent changed 40% of the women surveyed reported to have new forms of authority inside the house particularly in relations to children's issues such as buying school equipment or dealing with siblings' disputes. Yet, traditional relations of power are still maintained in the public, in their memberships in the CBRMs and in other issues. One man reflected, "we respect women in my community, and we respect them more when they put us, men, in the front line!"

5.2 Enabling environment

The thorough implementation of the project activities and consequential application of CARE theory of change had contributed to transforming not only the women targeted by the activities as well, but change can also be cited in transforming the environment from being tensed, edgy and strained to be more conducive enabling and contenting to the community. A cooperative spirit rather than a competitive one is observed whereby those who know are eager to teach those who do not know. Khadiga in Abu Udam shared that she started and will continue to develop capacity building session in food processing, the graduated persons in the community will then acquire the necessary skill for IGA

Women grasped the opportunity to create a physical space for them in Maali (where a club has been constructed through the self-funded community initiative); at Hijlija, and Galdi the school was developed into a space where VSLA meet and disseminate money among them. At Alhilaaljadeeda the club was assigned for women's activities. This has not been recognized in Komba.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Suggestions for the way forward:

The recommendations aim to catalyse increased investment in key areas to support efforts towards gender transformation.

The strategic recommendation is that: Future implementation should address communities with their components and specificity. This procedure would imply that CARE should revise its theory of change to be more participatory and more comprehensive to include after implementation enhancement that would create second level of transformation and may guarantee sustainability to its efforts.

The theory of change is reflective and had been implemented the way it stated it would be implemented, however:

The fact that some communities need to be read carefully before the implementation of the project activities, some of the activities which are understood in terms of the economic benefit rather than to create change particularly in some of the non-included participants to the study (Whereby people in some communities, upon our visit were insisting that, since we came from CARE, we should register them for, what they next round of seed money).

There is a need to sharper focus on the different age groups levels of changes. Since many groups are targeted by the project objective disaggregated findings is possible, but there is a need to provide new situational analysis to younger female-male age groups (girls-boys) as these categories seems to gradually disappear during the implementation of the project activities and reports; although they were visible in the beginning of the project. I recommend targeting girl and boy generations in a concentrated sharper inclusive project. These are the future of the communities and investing on them is more sustainable more than other community members.

One observation is that there is a tremendous turn-over of staff who were handling the project was high at the three levels (community, state and national). This affects the project in several processes. First, in the community level concerning the CARE – DDRA staff who were of directly responsible for implementing activities in the field: It is not easy that the participants get used to people who visit them for the implementation of activities, to suddenly know that these people are changed. One participant in Abu Odam said, “We liked Haja and Hala (/pesuodo-names of CARE staff) very much because they were easy going and do not keep us long in waiting and in delivering the messages. And because of the high attachment with them you will find that all ladies who were pregnant at that time they delivered a baby girl, named her after Hala or Haja. Yet suddenly Hala and Haja were not part of the program and we started to get to know new faces”. Concerning DDRA, we sensed challenged in communication with the staff responsible for implementation of the project activities in the field when we were in Nyala. Every field we visited the preparation of the community for our visit was handled by women beneficiaries of the project activities. That is why for example in Komba many of those who attended our visit were not part of the project because there was a gap in field coordinator (DDRA role was invisible). This is exactly the opposite in ED where (GaH in this case) work thoroughly to prepare the relevant community members to our visits.

Second, the turnover affects the essence of the project itself and the delivery of the message to the community level, and global understanding of how all activities need to fall into the big goal and outputs the project needs to achieve.

To clarify, the existence of staff members responsible for the implementation of the project from the beginning to the end guarantee smooth flow in the implementation and consistency of the vision of the project spirit. Thus, the assigned staff will **naturally adopt** vision on how all activities will flow into the main goal (voice of females, youth involvement, gender equality, and the strategic goals to achieve this including changing of structures ...etc). The turnover led to that this vision grew to be **mechanical** rather than natural (in a sense that: activities should be done because they are part of the project and there is a deficiency of time).

Despite all these pitfalls, *Sawtaha (her voice)* in Peace Building and Recovery Action worked thoroughly in the communities and generally:

-Sensitized men to accept females as a partner in the community.

-To accept female as a leader in the community.

-Women were able to secure platform for them in many communities, in which they meet to discuss issues of concern

-To help men realize the capacity of women in dealing with challenges (particularly women issues), even if they are not in the state of leaders in the different committees. Her mere existences and her ability to defend her issues is an impact relevant to activities (output 1)

-Darfur conflict created a state of normalizing the SGBV or at least it is considered as a normal procedure during conflicts. The project activities corrected such concepts and let women to start criminalizing such practices and claim rights through law and through the CBRMs whether they members or not members in these bodies.

-To penetrate structures used to be solely male-space such as the *judiya* (women used to be sent back to husband even though DGBV is practices on her through the *judiya* dispute resolution). We knew that, through the enhanced capacities women were then interfering in many of the disputes even if they are members not leaders in the CBRM, and in some cases they were able to put conditions for familial processes for wives to get back to husbands.

-Sensitize females to create a safe platform and to discuss issues used to be taboos (such as rape and sexual abuses) as one woman stated, " بقت عينا قوية، " an assumption different from what the case used to be "women as voiceless"!

-Sensitize communities to respect youth and consider them as functional members of the committees (different from what used to be: Wise-men Umdah and sheikhs).

-Many women benefited from the IGA induced by the project activities and helped women to adopt the vision of the "soft activities of the project".

-Internal familial dynamics: Women grew to be voice-full in relations to the fate of their children's education and family life. The economic empowerment put women in position that they are targeted by the children to settle problems relevant to schooling and in many times women's opinion which are shaped due to the activities qualifies them even to interfere in decisions relevant to the future of the children..etc. (to stand against FGM practiced to the daughters and early marriage issues).

-To change food habits and introduce new food varieties, not only that but to try to mobilize the natural resources like coal, and create ovens to produce cookies, introduce this to other communities and benefit economically and educationally and prestige wise from this.

Yet, we strongly recommended that activities should not stop (may be projects that may uptake from where ***Sawtoha (her voice) in Peace Building and Recovery Action stops.*** **So that** what had been achieved turns to become indivisible parts of the structures of this communities.

6.2 Lessons learnt

Directly targeting women's capacity increases their powerful participation in their communities

Targeting women with different activities with sharp focus on one dimension of change enhance their capacity in that direction of change

Too many activities done without enough lapse of time between the projects can be confusing to the community

Changing community social norms such as patriarchal ideologies need a continuous and unceasing targeting to the community, needs time beyond the capacity of a two- or three-years project

Projects should provide rooms for flexibility of extension to meet unforeseen pitfalls

Excessive turnover of staff coordinating the projects affects the projects in a negative way

Big projects that target change in basic concepts of the communities needs more than one coordinator to work out

When there is a lock-down in a prolong period like during COVID-19, marginal flexibility in implementation of the project activities should be considered that the condensed activities would not allow space for “taking the breath” and looking back to see how this had been impacting the community. The communities are very exhausted due to the short gap between one activity and the other, to the extent that when the consultants were in the field other unfinished activities were taking place at the same time. This led to some confusion that the participants did not know to whom they were had to refer and what are the activities that CARE is implementing at that particular moment. Such procedures also need to be revised.

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Annex 1

Table 5: Log frame updated with evaluation values

	Result Chain	Indicator	Baseline (Values and reference Year)	Target (Values and reference Year)	Current Value (reference Year)	Source and mean of verification	Assumption and risk XX
Impact (Overall)	Ensure higher representation, up to 50%, of women at decision making structures, mainly CBRMs and youth associations, and active participation in decision making process by 31 July 2021	% of women/youth female have membership in decision making bodies.	15%	50% (by end of project)	23%	CBRM record, FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report	NA
Outcomes (Specific objectives)	Outcome 1: Women/youth female empowerment for meaningful participation in leadership	# and % of women/youth female members in the key positions of leadership.	6%	40% women in key position of leadership	48% (mostly in VSLA)	CBRM record, FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report.	
	Outcome 2: Inclusive decision making spaces created and protection risks addressed	# and % of CBRMs started dealing with protection related risks	0	60%	55%	CBRM record, FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report.	
	Outcome 3: Learning and scale up of promising practices for gender equal actions	# of promising practices documented and shared	0	5	3	FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report.	
Outputs	Output 1.1: Enhanced capability for women's meaningful voice in leadership and decision making	% of women report increased participation in decision making	6%	60%	37%	FGDs and KIIs project reports.	
	Output 1.2: Women are actively engaged in economic and social activities to enhance their decision making power	# of women engaged in economic activities	0		36%	FGDs, Project reports.	
	Output 1.3: Women and girls have an increased awareness of their rights with regards to gender-based violence and PSEA	%of women and girls who report increased awareness on their rights and GBV	0	60%	377 (74%)	CBRM record, training reports, FGDs, Project reports.	

	Output 2.1: CBRMs are supported to be vibrant and gender transformative	# of CBRMs started practicing gender sensitive actions	0	10	4	CBRM record, training reports, FGDs, Project reports.	
	Output 2.2: Women actively participate in community groups and decision-making structures for peacebuilding, conflict resolution and recovery	# of CBRMs accommodating active participation of women	0	14	6	KIIs, FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report.	
	Output 2.3: Protection risks and gender based violence issues are recognized and responded to by structures in a survivor-centered approach	# of CBRMs who act on GBV issues and link to appropriate bodies	0	10	3	FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report.	
	Output 2.4: Safe spaces are created for women and youth to interact and engage to address their concerns and priorities collectively	# of spaces created for women and youth interaction (CBRMs, VDCs, local administration)	0	3	1	FGDs, Project reports, evaluation report.	
	Output 3.1: The normative roots of gender inequality, power, gender-based violence, and fragility of peace for sustainable recovery, including how they interact, are identified and discussed	# of factors of inequality and fragility identified	0	TBD	a) Patriarchy structure of the community b) Social norms of the community c) Relatively low gender sensitivity d) Women's subordination supported by socio-cultural ideologies that perpetuated this women's subordination	FGDs, Project reports,.	
	Output 3.2: Change stories are captured and shared	# of stories	0	6	3	Project reports,	

Project activities:

Under outcome 1

Under output 1.1:

- 1.1.1 Training women (from different groups) on leadership skills and public speaking skills
- 1.1.2 Train women (from different groups) members on Gender, Peace and conflict Modules
- 1.1.3 Awareness sessions on the participation of women in Decision making and conflict resolution using drama show campaigns
- 1.1.4 Select model women for awareness sessions on gender, PSEA and peace-building to community members
- 1.1.5 Engage women Groups in gender related issues forums and Discussions

activities conducted in this part of the project had targeted women and women groups (CBRM, Youth Group, Women Group, VSLA & VDC) in the project area (8 villages in South Darfur and 8 villages in East Darfur). Beneficiaries from such activities around 1149 in South Darfur and about 1000 in East Darfur in the basic training and with about more than 3600 Reached communities in SD and 2500 in ED in the second level training. The trainings were based in the theory of change and thus created:

These trainings took place during the year 2020 which was known to be a disruptive year for several reasons including: —the pandemic COVID 19 and the global lockdown. The project activities began in the second part of the year during August 2020 with the TOT in Leadership and Public Speaking, Protection and GBV & Peacebuilding.

- While the mini baseline survey had started in September 2020 (“Sawtaha” in Peace Building and Recovery Action report June-October 2020). July- October marks the rainy season in Darfur, which is characterized by road difficulties and restricted mobilities which created obstacles for the trainings assigned to take place in the communities during September. Other challenges to the initiation of the project in the targeted villages were the political transformation after December Revolution. This led to a change in the grass root political structures bodies which led the communities to remain very suspicious concerning the groups formulated in fear to be part of the previous El Bashir over through Regime. Thus, hastily reading the context by the project team led to inappropriate judgement of some the communities consequently more delay in implementing activities in the scheduled time.
- -change in the communities which used to be imbedded in cultural pressures was enhanced and detected whereby women experienced more inclusion and many of them were mentors and influencers in their spaces. Thus, women are able to voice issues of concern, to be included as members in the CBRM and as leaders in the VSLA.
- All these delays impacted the delivery of the running activities:
- In needing more times to realize impact in the communities.
- Activities became condensed and there was no enough time lapse between one activity and the other to the extent that several activities were running at the same time. Thus, led to:

-
1. creating a kind of confusion in the part of the community (Several communities were not sure that we are registering the members for CARE seed money or doing something else although a clear statement was made for the object of the consultant visits to the village).

2. Exhausting the community, thus, it became not clear to the community members what, when and how activities would start or end. What are the activities and how these are processed? Members of the community for example came to meet the consultants with assuming to meet the criteria for the eligibility of the seed money that their names should first be written in the consultant's documents before they got to be involved in the project processes

- The project implementers were able to overcome some of the challenges yet other challenges were not visible in the beginning but appeared in the end of the project as (the consultant realized the running of few activities even during the conducting of this evaluation consultancy which was supposed to measure the impact although non-cost extension was made from September to December 2020).
- As a result of these trainings women could participate in different public occasions (it was no more unusual to find young women in public ceremonies and in public spheres. Some women became voice-full, some still grew to settle dispute particularly of women nature such as family problems, but not big disputes such as conflicts between farmers and herders (which is to a large extent main issue of conflict), and female heading CBRMs still not very much accepted and welcomed.

Under output 1.2:

- 1.2.1 Provide business skills training to selected women (VSLA leaders + any income generators)
- 1.2.2 Provide startup capital to women groups (it includes individuals)
- 1.2.3 Provide food processing training to women Groups (including young women groups or women groups that majorly consist of young women)
 - Distributing startup tools and materials
- 1.2.4 Support women engagement in market management committees

The training provided in this part of the project together with generating a source of income to women and other groups, it led to that communities and women groups built up confident in “Sawtahaa” and grew to be more interested in the soft activities of the project as well as in the IGA.

Under output 1.3:

- 1.3.1 Engage Ypeer to raise the awareness of women through dialogues and discussion sessions with women on women rights and the existing risks and discrimination practices among women groups (gender, SGBV)
- 1.3.2 Facilitate Radio campaigns to combat GBV and negative social norms against women and advocate for women participation
 - Capacity building in this respect constituted 55% of the targeted community members.

Under outcome 2:

Under output 2.1:

- 2.1.1 Training CBRM leaders on GBV and the available referral systems
- 2.1.2 Training in leadership and decision making for CBRM leaders
- 2.1.3 Training for CBRM leaders on gender in conflict situations, peace building, PSEA, and protection
- 2.1.4 Training to CBRM members in management of disputes and, conflicts as well as reporting them
- 2.1.5 Exchange visits for role model CBRMs members to advocate for women participation in decision making and conflict resolution
- 2.1.6 Identify and train gender champions at community level

Capacity building relevant to CBRM:

- 55% of the participants stated that they received trainings in leadership and peacebuilding and GBV.

However, Training in leadership for this sector is a very debatable:

For example: the basic training TOT of leadership which targeted the CIS staff and the project partners (DDRA, GAH... etc.) in the TOT took place in 6 days in August 2020, with heavy content.

When we come to earth in South Darfur, for example DDRA, is not visible in the training of the communities as it appears from the reports on the training. It is always CIS staff who conduct the training. All the burden of the training was on the hand of two CIS staff members. In the end, the training came to the hands of the CBRMs and other community members, who further inturn communicate the training to the

community. The nature of such **downward processes** weakens the content and it reaches to the level that all the delivered content may be done in a form of lecture in a duration of 20-30 minutes (instead of 6 days). By co-incident the consultants were present in one of such trainings and witness such pitfall. Such assumption has also been consolidated by statement of community members who attended such “sensitization” rather than “training” in Abu Odam “xxx is deliver a lecture every week on telling us about GBV and leadership”.

Many lectures were delivered in the “downward” trend, however skill of handling survivors of GBV and SGBV. Many cases are handled within the family circle. It is still considered stigma to deal publically with cases of GBV and SGBV.

- Communities reported networking and exchanging visits with other communities and each community tell their stories.

Under output 2.2:

2.2.1 Support the legalization and organization (by-laws) of women groups and to create a network for women groups and to link them with service providers and powerholders

Such support here, greatly impacted women groups. Some women groups are legalized in HAC مفوضية العمل الطوعي.

Thus grew to be be registered as NGO and be eligibal for fund from banks. This we saw in Abu Odam and in AlHilaAlJadida (2 VSLA in each community). However in AlHilaAljadida women still needed training to which bank to go because not all groups were successful in convincing banks and other funding bodies (Eventhough all legal papers were present). CIS made a clever step by allowing women to issue IDs, needed for such legalization. About 70% of the community members in this training were able to issue National ID.

Under output 2.3:

2.3.1 Training government officials and religious leaders on protection risks facing women, grils, youth and older people, how to manage them and the role of women and girls in addressing protection and conflict related risks

2.3.2 Identify and train gender champions among CIS, government, NGOs staff and teachers

- Community leaders are supporting women addressing issue of protection and conflict related risks and show how to handle such crises. Community leaders when asked whether they think that women are capable of handling dispute and resolving problems they assured that women of great help when comes to the issues related to "family and women" (wife and husband conflicts, rape issues, etc). This is an important **gender transormation** as these issues were solely resolve by male community leaders. It is worth mentioning that when the despute include women, the female members of CBRM are immeditly invoved even if they are not in the leadership position as president or vice president of the CBRM. **Thus the project impacted that men are not in level one in handinling such familial despute as it used to be, instead women jumped in to first level.**

- CBRMs member in East Darfur realizes forms of physical violence, they refer victims of domestic violence to the health Centre, provide medical and psychological support to the survivor and normalize gender-based violence forms as FGM and early marriage. Moreover, they do not refer the victim/survivor of rape to the formal legal system. Rape is still a sensitive issue and very big reluctance to talk about rape.

- Still CBRM dealing with cases of SGBV and GBV are not very known to the communities about 30% women asked who solves such problems they say the Omdah or the oldest in the family.

Under output 2.4:

2.4.1 Use Radio for commuity disscusion sessions with Hakimas, model men and religious leaders who support women's inclusion in conflict resolution structures

- Community discussion sesssions to support women inclusion in confict resolution structures
- Field radio reporting

2.4.2 Conduct dialogue and discussion sessions among different community groups on the spaces that should be made available to women and youth

- In East Darfur, 17 Radio program and 9 messages concentrating on addressing harmful practices such as early marriage, FGM, discrimination and ethnic prejudices and 21 program in South Darfur as well directed to enhancing culture of peace, enhancing Hakama’s role in peace building, etc. The barrier here is that not every community member possess radio and do not use telephone for radio purposes

because to charge mobile or to fill radio batteries is expensive (in most communities there is no electricity). Yet, about 33% of the participants in the targeted communities stated that they are able to listen to one or two Radio programs.

- 6 women in ED, 4 in SD reported that they were hosted by such program who was entitled “Sawotoha” and are able to voice some of their successes and failures, problems and issues of concern. Some women told that they are not able to listen to the program because they do not know the time of sending, others stated that the time of the sending is not suitable for them due to their domestic activities.

Under outcome 3:

Under output 3.1:

3.1.1 Facilitate dialogue and discussion sessions among community structures, leaders and CSOs on addressing the violence and protection risks

3.1.2 Create a network for women, youth and CBRM groups and to link them with service providers and powerholders to address conflicts and peacebuilding

In two communities one in South and one in East Darfur, community leaders and women groups informed the consultant about the collective gathering where CARE brought different members and leaders of CBRMS, VSLA, youth and other groups, from different communities in one place to share experience and stories related to GBV and protection, and conflict migration mechanisms. Community representatives were very happy and described this gathering as fruitful and informative and they learn from each other experience in conflict management and combating GBV.

Under output 3.2:

3.2.1 Develop success stories for thematic areas that support the change process through films

3.2.2 Share the 2019 research results on Gender (GaPI) - National and state level

- The making of film was an activity that had started and was running in ED when the consultant were there.
- **GaPI** results were disseminated and shared with stakeholders at state and national level

Annexes

Annex2: Key informants who participated in the interviews

Table 6: Key informant participated in the interviews

	Stakeholder	Targeted community	Identity	Relevance to the program	
1	Teyonna Adam		CARE/ former key participant in Sawtaha project and one of the founders of the program	Khartoum Office	15 th December 2021
2	Shukri Omer	East Darfur	CARE Office at El Daein	Supervising implementation of the project	29 th December 2021
3	Marwa Ibrahim Saeed	East Darfur	CARE Officer	Coordinating the project and facilitating programs in South Darfur	29 th December 2021
4	Assim El Hadi	South Darfur	CARE Officer	Project manager, observer implementation of the project	28 th December 2021
5	Magda Yagoub	South Darfur	CARE Officer	Coordinating the project and facilitating programs in South Darfur	28 th December 2021
Key informants from the communities					
1	Sadig sidig	East Darfur Hijlija,	Head of Musalahat Committee & CBRM	Participant	29 th December 2021
2	Yoma Hamuda	East Darfur Hijlija,	Member of Musalahat Committee	Participant	29 th December 2021
3	Hawa Abdulrahman	East Darfur Hijlija,	Head of Women Committees	Participant	29 th December 2021
5	Bella AbdelNabie	East Darfur ElGalabi	Focal for Sawotoha	Head of women committees	29 th December 2021
6	Hawa AbdelNabi	East Darfur ElGalabi	Head of VSLAs	Participant	29 th December 2021
7	Adam Obeid	East Darfur Maali	Head of VSLA	Participant	30 th December 2021
8	Mohamed Adam	East Darfur Maali	Head of the commercial room in the area	Observer/participant	30 th December 2021
9	Khadiga Ismail Nour	East Darfur Maali	VSLA	Participant	30 th December 2021
10	Osman Abdel Rahman	South Darfur Komba Kass	Resource Committee	Participant	31 st December 2021
11	Fatima Hamudah	South Darfur Abo-Udam	Beneficiary from the seed money for income generating activities	Participant in Sawotoha	2 nd Jan 2022
12	Hawa Mohamed Hamdaeen	Abo Udam	VSLA	Participant in Sawotoha	2 nd Jan 2022
13	Adam Haroun	Abo Udam	DDRA	Participant in Sawotoha	2 nd Janr 2022
14	Mastura Mohamed Omer	AlhilaalJadeeda,	Food processing Income generating activity	Participant in Sawotoa	2 nd Jan 2022
15	Mahasin Adam	Galdi	Ajaweed Committee	Participant in Sawotoha	2 nd Jan 2022
16	Barakat Ahmed Barakat	Abu Udam	Ajaweed Committee		
17	Women groups	Galdi	Conflict resolution Ajaweed	Participant in Sawotoha	2 nd Jan 2022