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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



COUNTY-LEVEL SENSE-MAKING WORKSHOP REPORT

JUR RIVER COUNTY

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County-level Sense-Making Workshop Report

Jur River County

Program Title:	USAID Policy LINK
Sponsoring USAID Office:	USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security
Award Number:	7200AA19CA00019
Awardee:	DAI Global, LLC
Date of Publication:	April 11, 2022
Author:	Policy LINK
Photo Credits:	Policy LINK

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Acronyms

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
APM	Area Program Manager
CDC	County Development Committee
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
HHS	Household Survey
IMA	Inter-Church Medical Assistance
IPs	Implementing Partners
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Committee
MELS	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Support
Q&A	Questions and Answers
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBeG	Western Bahr el Ghazal

Introduction

After the completion of the payam-level Sense-making Workshops, the Policy LINK team organized a three-day county-level Sense-making Workshop in Jur River County to empower county authorities, USAID Implementing Partners (IPs), and state-level stakeholders with the evidence they need to articulate county-level resilience priorities, action planning, and implementation. This deliberate process is consistent with the USAID/South Sudan Mission’s four-year, scenario-based strategy, which uses a community-focused approach to help targeted households and communities move beyond a critical need for humanitarian aid and assume greater responsibility in shaping their future.

Policy LINK aimed to promote collaborative learning through the three-day Sense-making Workshop by equipping Jur River County authorities, USAID IPs, and state-level stakeholders with the preliminary findings from the community resilience mapping exercise concluded on November 4, 2021. The community resilience mapping activity focused on different perspectives of how communities operate as a system and the critical institutions, structures, processes, and capacities available and relevant to the USAID/South Sudan strategy. It has also explored how communities and institutions come together, organize themselves, cooperate, collaborate, and make decisions to remain shock- and stress-responsive, mitigate the impact of shocks, protect development gains, and facilitate a speedy recovery. The Sense-making Workshop allowed the participating stakeholders to make sense of the critical issues that emerged from the mapping, and identify and offer locally-led solutions for addressing them.

The county-level Sense-making Workshop employed the appreciative and facilitative leadership approach that allows Policy LINK to put the community first in the resilience-building process. This is achieved by empowering communities with the evidence for action planning and implementation of community-led resilience programs and setting the community-driven development agenda. The Jur River County Sense-Making Workshop started on February 21 and ended on February 23, 2022, at Royal Castle Hotel, Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal State.

Purpose/Objectives

The overall purpose of the workshop was to continue building momentum towards effective collaboration between the communities of Jur River County and USAID IPs by preparing county authorities, state stakeholders, and USAID Implementing Partners (IPs) for joint integrated action planning.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Share the preliminary findings from the community resilience mapping exercise;
- Continue a bottom-up approach for evidence-informed resilience priority-setting and decision-making by reviewing the community resilience mapping findings;
- Begin engaging county authorities, state stakeholders, and USAID IPs in dialogue for voicing community aspirations and document the articulated resilience priorities, needs, and actions; and
- Prepare county authorities, state stakeholders, and USAID IPs for the county-wide joint work planning.

Participants

There were 39 participants (36 males and 3 females) in the three-day workshop. Twenty-six were selected from the County Development Committee (CDC) and the county authorities/officials, including the Commissioner, Executive Director, all department directors, and County Paramount Chief. There were eight participants from the state government including the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Gender and Social Welfare and Animal Resources. Five USAID IPs were in attendance.



Sense-making workshop participants starting the workshop with a word of prayer (Photo Credit: Policy LINK)

Table 1. Number of Participants per Category and Gender

Category	# of Participants	Female	Male
County officers	20	1	19
County Development Committee	6	0	6
State Govt Representatives	8	2	6
Implementing Partners	5	0	5
Total	39	3	36

Figure 1. Number of Participants who Attended the County-level Sense-making Workshop in Jur River County per Categories and Gender.

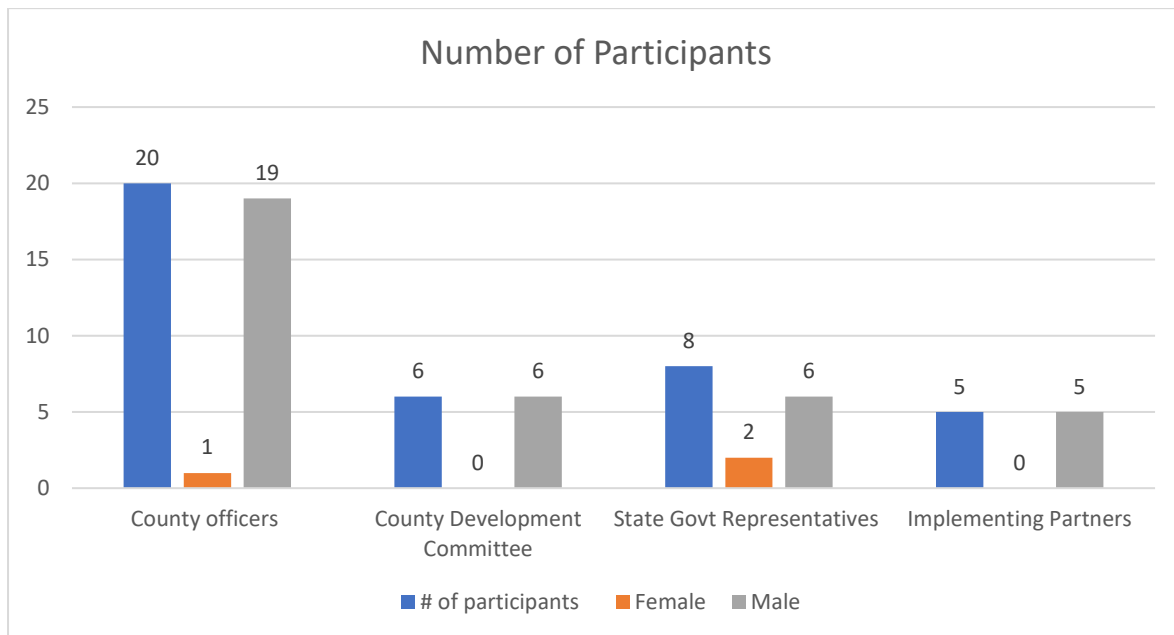
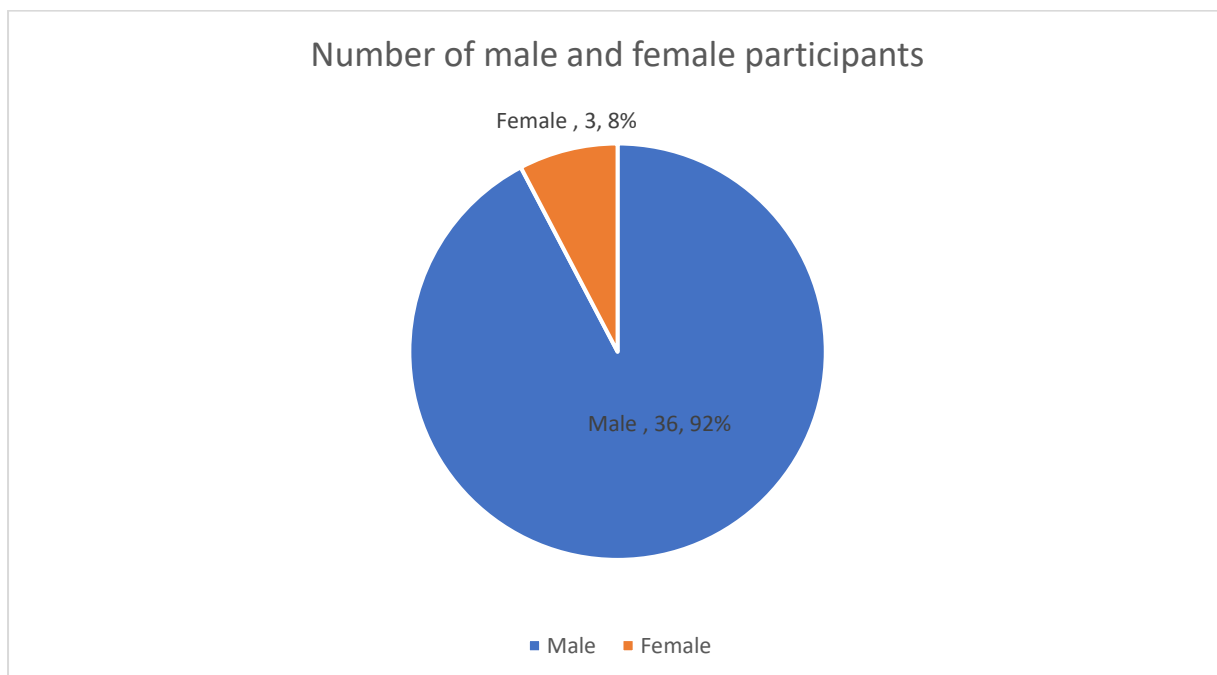


Figure 2 shows the gender dimension of the participants who attended the county-level sense-making workshop. The data shows that significant gender inequality exists at the county level. Only one woman is heading a department in the whole county of Jur River. During the workshop, the Commissioner pledged to address the issue of gender inequality in the employment sector at the county level in consultation with relevant ministries.

Figure 3. Number of Participants by Gender



Methodology

The following methodologies were applied during the sense-making workshop:

Plenary presentations: During the plenary sessions, Area Program Managers (APMs) gave PowerPoint presentations on key findings from the community resilience mapping, followed by question and answer (Q&A) sessions.

Plenary discussions: To facilitate an in-depth understanding that allowed for responding to the questions in English and Arabic, the sense-making workshop participants asked several questions on the subject being discussed, and there was a moment of heated debate and exchange of information from the different stakeholders.



Hon. Commissioner of Jur River County – Mr. Nicola Thiep giving closing remarks (Photo Credit: Policy LINK)

Sense-Making Workshop Preparations

The Policy LINK team started this activity with a briefing to the Commissioner, followed by RRC, NBS, and National Security Services. As a result of these briefings, the concerned authorities provided a no objection certificate for the workshop to proceed as planned. The County Commissioner was given the sole responsibility to invite relevant representatives of the county and line ministries, including the CDCs to the workshop. To ensure inclusive participation of the county and state authorities, the APMs met and briefed the Commissioner about the selection criteria to ensure adherence to the set standards.

The Policy LINK team also developed the following documents in preparation for the workshop: participant selection criteria, training schedule, logistics notes, attendance form, transport/other payments allowance form, handouts, and slide deck for the presentations.

In addition to allowances, the following items were provided or made available to the participants: facemasks and hand sanitizers in compliance with the covid protocols, pens, flipcharts, marker pens, notebooks, t-shirts. Two large banners were also displayed at the venue.

As part of the workshop and logistical package, workshop participants were provided two tea breaks, lunch, water and soda, and internet during the course of the event.

Daily Activity Summary

Day One

Arrival and Registration

The first session on Day One started with a slight delay due to the official opening of the workshop by the First Minister. The workshop started with participant registration, followed by the provision of facemasks and hand sanitizer.

Introduction and Opening

The three-day workshop was officially opened by the Honorable Minister of Cabinet Affairs, on behalf of the Governor of the Western Bahr el Ghazal (WBeG) State, who was on a state tour in one of the WBeG counties. After prayers, Honorable Commissioner of Jur River, Mr. Nicola Thiep, welcomed the participants and asked them to pay attention to the training to help in supporting resilience programs and initiatives in Jur River County. Then he invited the Honorable Minister of the Cabinet Affairs, Ustaz Anyar Anyar, who welcomed the participants and reiterated the need to understand the importance, pay attention, and take advantage of knowledge transferred to them. He also encouraged the participants to contribute positively and



Jur River County Commissioner addressing the participants.



Hon. Minister of the Cabinet Affairs Ustaz Anyar Anyar giving opening remarks (Photo Credit: Policy LINK)

constructively to the discussion and the program to clearly understand the critical concepts. He appreciated all the stakeholders for their participation and asked them to join efforts to prepare the communities to move toward self-reliance.

Framing the Workshop

After the official opening of the workshop, APMs took the participants through the agenda. They also provided an administrative briefing on the serving of lunch and tea breaks, transport reimbursement, and payment of per diem including the amount. All participants were asked to sign the attendance and payment sheets before payment could be made.

Expectations

- Gain knowledge
- Share ideas with colleagues
- Distribution of visibility materials such as branded t-shirts.
- Transport reimbursement
- Lunch and tea break

Ground rules

- Keeping phones on silent
- Avoid unnecessary movement
- Timekeeping and punishment for those who failed to keep time are singing and dancing.
- No side discussions
- Respect of opinions

During the briefing, APMs emphasized the importance of following the COVID-19 standard operating procedures and why they must be observed. APMs showed participants where the handwashing facilities, additional masks, and hand sanitizers could be found whenever needed.

APMs explained that Policy LINK shall not provide funding for any ideas to manage expectations effectively during the workshop. APMs also informed participants that should feel able to speak freely; that there would be equal opportunity to contribute ideas, and that Policy LINK would be reporting the outcome of the workshop to USAID and its Implementing Partners.

Participants were also asked to share their expectations and ground rules to help with the management of the workshop. The workshop expectations were generally met, and the ground rule helped manage the workshop. The workshop purpose and objectives were also shared during this session.

Participants' Testimonials

- “Your numbers here at the workshop is small but you represent your nation and the county. So, take what you have learned back and implement it in the community.” —Minister of Cabinet Affairs
- “When we started the journey with this partner, I thought they were going to bring the money but I came to understand through these engagements that the resources are within us! Meaning they want us to come together because the money is within us.” —Minister of Cabinet Affairs
- “I have never ever witnessed something like this before, this is unique and it is an eye-opener.” —Representative of the Ministry of youth, gender, and social welfare
- “On behalf of the South Sudan NBS, I would like to really appreciate and commend DAI for doing what other organizations have never done. I have been issuing data collection and survey permissions to many organizations for many years, however, none of them ever came back with the data and the reports to us. Thanks to you.” —Mr. Pons Ukola, Chairperson of the NBS - WBG
- “Data is made for consumption and if its consumption is not facilitated then the objective of collecting the data becomes questionable.” Mr. Pons Ukola

Setting the Stage – Contextualizing Community Resilience

To ensure that all participants were on the same page when using keywords, the APMs started this session with the definition of critical terms. They discussed and agreed on the operational meaning of three keywords: shocks, stressors, and resilience. According to the agreement:

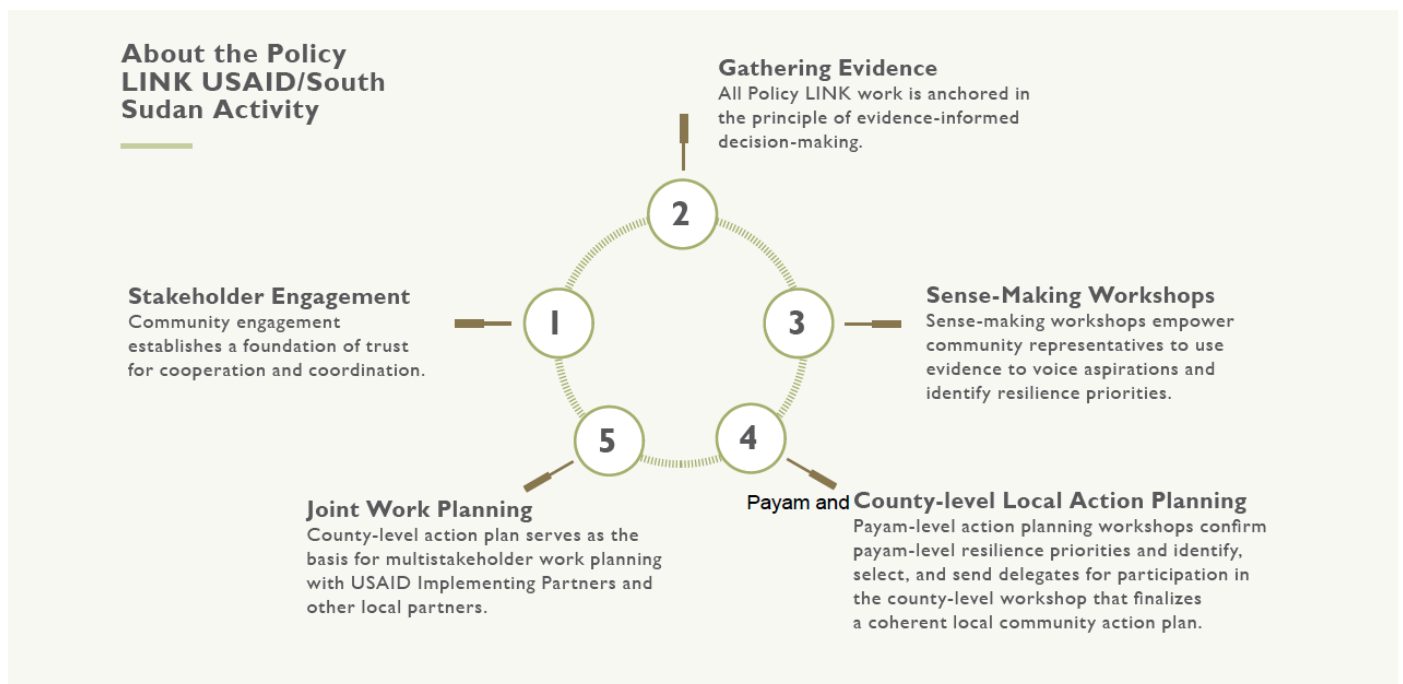
Shock means an acute natural or human-made event or phenomenon threatening significant loss of life, damage to assets, and an individual, community, and institution’s ability to function and provide essential services, particularly for the vulnerable populations.

Stress is a chronic (ongoing or cyclical) natural or human-made event or phenomenon that renders an individual, community, and institution unable to function normally and provide essential services, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses to reduce chronic vulnerability and facilitate inclusive growth.

The following discussion focused on Policy LINK’s technical approach. This session set the stage for a common understanding of the project. APMs provided a description of what Policy LINK is, what it does that is different from other USAID projects, and Policy LINK’s approach to building community-led resilience. Policy LINK’s Five-Step Participatory Planning process is illustrated below.

Figure 4 Policy LINK’s Five-Step Participatory Planning Process



Framing on the relevance of resilience capacities to USAID strategic objectives and community-led resilience were also presented to the participants. Starting with the development hypothesis as described below, followed by the strategic objectives.

Development Hypothesis:

If USAID/South Sudan focuses its resources in target areas AND meets the basic humanitarian needs and thereby prevents households from employing negative coping strategies that set them back on the development ladder; AND it boosts the resilience of households to shocks by boosting their ability and tendency to pursue diverse livelihood opportunities and employ positive planning and coping strategies in the face of shocks, AND it helps communities strengthen bonds within and between communities; AND it gives households and communities more responsibility and ability to control their development “journey,” THEN the target areas will be less dependent on aid and will have a stronger foundation for eventual “self-reliance.”

Development Objectives:

- DO 1: Meeting the basic needs of communities in crises, while decreasing aid dependence.
- DO 2: Household resilience increased in target areas.
- DO 3: Improved social cohesion in targeted areas.

Session I.1: Shocks and Stressors Affecting Jur River County

The APMs started this session with critical findings related to the demography of Jur River County (population pyramid); literacy rates; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); health services; food security; and access to other services. The objective of this session was to prepare the group for the presentation on shocks and stressors that have affected Jur River County since independence, followed by a Q&A session where participants could critique the results (i.e., add, omit, agree, and disagree with the findings) of the survey. After the presentation on shocks and stressors, the majority of the participants approved the findings as facts that reflect the ground realities.

The questions below were posed and answered in the plenary sessions. The participants endorsed the suggestions from payams as fit for the purpose and did not have further additions to the suggestions. They in fact encouraged that the county should include the suggestions in their workplan for action.

The following suggestions emanated from the payam-level sense-making workshops conducted in the six payams of Jur River County namely. Rocrocdong, Kuajiena, Kangi, Udici, Marialbai and Waibai.

Responses from Key Leaders

“So, we must work with whatever comes from the local authorities and communities as a county authority. I really do appreciate this data, which will help us run this county in the right way since all the heads of the departments are here in attendance.” —Hon. Commissioner of Jur River, Mr. Nicola Thiep

“This data is true and we need to keep it that way. We should respect our people’s opinion, so mostly the issue with rule of law is not the absence of the laws, but it’s the poor implementation of the rule of law.” —County Paramount Chief.

“I really do appreciate this data and the way it’s being disseminated. Thank you, Policy LINK for doing this. We don’t have reliable data these days for planning and decision-making, and most partners come to us to approve their data collection plans but never return to even give feedback or report back to us the findings. Thank you!” —State NBS Coordinator

Questions

What are one to three actions that this community must take to reduce the impact of these shocks?

Violent Conflict

- Faith-based organizations should take the lead in peace promotion activities at the community and grassroots level.
- Empowering the youth with vocational skills by encouraging them to join the Don Bosco training center would engage the youth in a positive activity which would reduce their tendency to play any role in conflict promotion.
- The community, through the parents and teachers association, should establish youth peace clubs both at primary and secondary levels, and in all the youth associations and football clubs.
- Establish theatrical activities for peacebuilding and social cohesion where skilled actors present peace play and poetry competitions at payam and boma levels.
- The community structures such as the chiefs, local government, youth, women, civil society organizations, and peace committee should take ownership of local solutions for regional conflicts.
- In collaboration with the county, payam and bomas, the community should take the lead in promoting respect to the rule of law.
- The community should take the lead in the promotion of a culture of acceptance among the community and between communities.
- In collaboration with peacebuilding partners and the local government, the local community should encourage interclan, intertribal, and inter-community peace and conflict resolution workshops and dialogues.
- Promote and plan for inter-community, intertribal, and interclan joined significant celebrations such as the county, harvest, Christmas, and independence days.
- To mitigate conflict, the community should reorganize itself to become more responsive to conflict shock.
- In coordination with cattle migrating communities, the community with its partners should lead awareness sessions and campaigns regarding the Marialbai agreement.
- The community and its partners should empower the peace committee to lead in conflict mitigation and resolution through grassroots-level awareness campaigns and sessions regarding the role of the peace committee in conflict resolutions and mitigation.
- Chiefs from conflicting parties should plan and convene joint regular peace and conflict mitigation meetings and coordinate during conflict and after any conflict.
- The community, in coordination with the local government and peace partners, should promote and establish an information-sharing platform for effective response during conflict.
- Peace committee should adopt peace messaging at the grassroots level (boma and villages).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community, through its structures, should lobby the government of the state to initiate a disarmament campaign. • Increase social cohesion activities to reduce or curtail tribalism and clannism attitudes and behavior. • Coordination between the traditional courts, regular government courts, and police is critical in conflict resolution. This is related explicitly to criminals sent to jail by the conventional courts. Still, later the individuals are released from prison because of a lack of respect towards the traditional courts and chiefs.
Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ease flooding, the community should have the workforce dig waterways and canals to reduce flooding. • The community should have the workforce mobilize its human resources to construct dykes, but this needs support from partners to provide bulldozers or excavators for the construction of more stable dykes. • The community should promote early cultivation to reduce the impact of flooding on agricultural activities. • The community should promote and encourage communities living in lowlands to move to higher ground to reduce the impact of flooding on farms and dwellings. • During flooding, affected households should be encouraged and supported to move to nearby non-flooded areas. • Flooding impacts households and communities' food security. The community should close the food gap or hunger gap by promoting a sustainable wild food harvesting/collection.
Economic Shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the impact of economic shocks, the community should encourage adopting sustainable charcoal making businesses. • The community should adopt the ancestral wild food collection. • The community would reduce the impact of economic shock by hunting approved wild animals and encourage traditional ways of storing dry meat. • The community should adopt sustainable fishing activities (not to catch small fish) for both home and market to close the hunger gap. • The community and its partners should promote agriculture as the only viable means to reduce the impact of the economic shock. • To reduce the impact of economic shock, the community should encourage the collection of firewood and elephant grass for the market. • Construction of central grain storage facilities in the community with partners' support would help the community members adopt a seasonal grain collection and storage to serve as a buffer that would mitigate against economic shock.
Crop Pest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community should encourage early cultivation to reduce the impact of crop pest. • Use locally made mixed organic pesticides such as neem, hot pepper, or ashes to combat crop pest outbreaks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with its partners, the community should promote crop spacing methods that reduce the impact of crop pest. • Move the farms to other locations with fewer pest outbreaks. • The community with its partners should hold awareness sessions on the benefits of adopting and making a pesticide spray from boiled mahogany leaves/wood. • Encourage the community to make and use an organic boiled local tobacco spray to terminate and chase away the pests. • Community should promote the planting of local seeds because they are resilient to the local environment.
Livestock Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage, develop and promote the adoption of treating humans and livestock with local herbal medicines. • Encourage and promote livestock vaccination in partnership and coordination with FAO.
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and implement a bushfire awareness campaign to discourage bush burning for purposes such as hunting or random bush burning in the forest to reduce the impact or mitigate wildfire destruction.
Death of a Family Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In coordination with the government and well-wishers, the community should support the construction of a bridge over Jur River to reduce the impact of people drowning.



This photo provoked a prolonged debate on the status of WASH services in the County. (photo credit: Policy LINK)

Community Collaboration and Cooperation

Name one activity that would allow for cooperation and collaboration between this community and the implementing partners?

- Planning and promoting peace dialogue meetings at the community and grassroots level
- Awareness creation and orientation of the local communities about the roles, objectives, and work plans of the IPs
- Joint resilience education and awareness at the payam and boma levels
- Joint work planning between the community and IPs would facilitate cooperation and collaboration
- Organization, establishment, and awareness activities regarding the benefits of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA)
- Joint gender-based violence awareness activities between the community stakeholders and the IPs
- Collaboration and coordination between the IPs and community over traditional chiefs and community stakeholders consultative meetings to encourage greater community participation in local decision-making

Name one activity that would allow for cooperation and collaboration between this community and

- Cross or inter-community peace and dialogue workshops and training
- Promotion of inter-community youth competitions and games such as football
- Intercommunity business activity promotions such as weekly markets that move between communities
- Encourage and promote inter-community marriages

<p>other communities in the county?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint quarterly cultural events, activities, and competitions such as (cultural dance competitions, county days, etc.) • Agricultural benefits public awareness sessions • Joint chiefs conventions on peace and conflict resolution and mitigation meetings/workshops • Construction of access roads between communities under food for assets programs
<p>Name one activity that would allow for cooperation and collaboration between this community and the local government?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regular social events and community awareness activities • Schedule regular public meetings between the government and the community • Peace committee to champion and lead the mitigation aspects of the causes of conflict between pastoralists and farmers • Information sharing through the structures between the local government and the community would allow for and facilitate cooperation and collaboration • Community integration meetings led by the traditional and local authorities • Collaborative governance promotion activities such as community members participating in the local decision-making process • Awareness and education of chiefs and law enforcement agencies on the Local Government Act • Cooperation and coordination on issues related to forest and natural resource management through local community and government policy development sessions • Customary law awareness and development • Increase the participation of community members in the local decision-making process

Day Two

Arrival and registration

The second day of the workshop started at 9:00 am. The workshop began with participant registration, followed by issuing facemasks and hand sanitizer for all participants. Before starting with the day's agenda, the first day of the workshop was recapped for the reference of the participants.

The participants could recall most of the key points discussed on day one of the workshops, and committed to pay closer attention and participate fully on the second day.

The participants were introduced to the main concepts of resilience capacities. They agreed on the operational definition of the three capacities (i.e., absorptive, adaptive, and transformative). Following are the agreed operational definitions of the three resilience capacities.

Absorptive capacity is the ability to minimize exposure to shocks and stresses through preventative measures and appropriate coping strategies to avoid permanent, negative impacts. (8 Indicators).

Adaptive capacity is the ability to make proactive and informed choices about alternative livelihood strategies based on understanding changing conditions. (10 Indicators).

Transformative capacity involves the governance mechanisms, policies/ regulations, infrastructure, community networks, and formal and informal social protection mechanisms that constitute the enabling environment for systemic change. (15 indicators).



Demonstrating what absorptive capacity may look like (photo credit: Policy LINK)

Session 1.2: Resilience Capacities

The second session focused on presentations framing relevance of resilience capacities to USAID’s strategy and community-led resilience. Presentations were followed by a Q&A session, where participants were given a chance to critique the findings, add, omit, agree, and disagree with the results of the survey. All participants approved the findings as facts that reflect the reality on the ground. Each topic stimulated a good discussion, with some participants disagreeing on some responses and some participants further clarifying for their colleagues and eventually agreeing with the findings. It was a moment of back and forth with every participant having something substantive to contribute.

“This is a very impressive outcome and reliable data. ACTED carried out a similar survey recently and the findings are the same.” —ACTED Representative

The following questions were asked, and the participants reviewed the list of suggestions from the payam-level sense-making workshop, made a few additions, and endorsed the suggestions for action by the county and state authorities. The questions and suggested actions are listed below for reference.

Questions

Conflict Mitigation, Mobilization, and Participation of the Community and Resilience Capacities

Name one to three actions that this community must take to mitigate conflict.

- Activate Marialbai agreement between pastoralist and farmers
- Educate the community on the resolutions of the Marialbai agreement
- Compensation of damages related to cattle migration
- Discourage the culture of revenge and encourage the community to follow the rule of law related to homicide
- Involve youths and women in conflict mitigation and resolution activities
- Strengthen the capacity of the law enforcement agencies
- Control alcohol consumption and distribution to mitigate conflict brought about by alcohol

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church institutions should champion peace messaging during mass • Lobby the government to include conflict resolution and peace studies in the curriculum (primary and secondary) • Fair and transparent employment practices, such as the ones adopted by DAI, will reduce or mitigate conflict around issue of employment mistrust • Conflict sensitivity awareness training • Community to promote and encourage coordination between the traditional courts, regular government courts, and police to mitigate and resolve conflict • Promote, encourage and plan chief coordination meetings for peaceful coexistence
<p>Name one to three actions that this community must take to increase the absorptive capacity of households to respond to shocks and stressors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote agricultural land expansion • Diversification of livelihood sources such as vocational training • Increase the yield and storage of more food by adopting new improving practices • Train and develop the VSLA groups in financial and investment management practices • Enhance the storage facilities to cope with and absorb the positive increase in yield • Cultivate cassava because it has the potential to increase the absorptive capacity since it could continue to grow even off the season • Seek payments from people you loan money or cattle to • The ability of the community to construct dykes • Train the community member to practice sustainable wild leaves and food collection to reduce the hunger gap • Fishing as a coping mechanism to absorb the shock
<p>Name one to three actions that this community must take to increase the adaptive capacity of households to recover from shocks and stressors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt to continuous farming such as practicing gardening during the dry season in the swamps and regular wet season cultivation • Short term variety adoption to help the communities adapt to flooding and dry spells • Early seeds distribution would increase the adaptive capacity and reduce community vulnerability to flooding • Early land/farm preparation to increase the adaptive capacity with unpredictable rain • Invite extended family members to help in the cultivation • Group farming culture is encouraged because it reduces dependency and helps communities that are lacking tools, such as ox plowing, to increase the cultivated land area
<p>Name one to three actions that this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ox plowing adoption transforms the capacity of the community to produce more food

community must take to increase the transformative capacity of households to recover from shocks and stressors.

- Group farming adoption would transform and increase the area cultivated
- Provision of agricultural extension services would train the community in adopting improved ways and methods of farming
- Hire laborers to help you during the cultivation period. This has the potential to transform the livelihood of communities by increasing the food security level of communities
- Sell cattle to hire farm laborers, ox plowing tools, and tractors. This is a mindset transformation that has the potential to change the food security dynamic at the community level
- Adoption of seed banking practice would reduce dependency on seed sourcing and distribution and would facilitate early cultivation if the rain comes early
- Increase the storage capacities to cater to increase in yield
- Inclusive participation of all community members in the decision-making process would transform community social cohesion
- Business development training at the grassroots level would develop the transformative capacity of markets
- Providing microfinance and cooperative societies development in the community would increase access to business finance
- Adoption of vegetable farming would transform the health and economic abilities of the local community
- Development of agricultural schemes could stabilize the economy
- Youth development and empowerment through vocational and business training would increase the livelihood sources of communities
- Provision of extension services (agriculture and livestock) would educate the communities and help them transform by adapting to new ideas and revolutionizing agricultural and livestock sectors
- Fruit planting would increase the livelihood sources of communities and potentially its resilience capacity
- Mechanization of the farming industries through the adoption of tractors and ox plowing practices
- Fishing practices education and awareness would improve the sustainability practices of water resources at the community level, for example (no fishing of small fish)
- Encourage and strengthen the VSLA loan practices via training in financial management practices
- Invest in new ideas in cattle rearing practices
- Build access roads with the workforce (the community constructed seven access roads) this could increase peace activities between communities and reduce conflict

What actions can the implementing partners adopt to increase the mobilization and participation of local communities in their resilience programs?

- Implementing partners must use the existing community structures for mobilization; for example, ask the youth leaders to mobilize the youth and the women and traditional leaders to do the same for their relevant groups.
- Conduct regular consultation with the community leaders when planning and allocating resources to each area; for example, when planning for food distribution, the community leaders must be involved to allow for transparency and accountability.

Day Three

Arrival and registration

The third day of the workshop started precisely at 9:00 am with participant registration, followed by issuing of facemasks and hand sanitizer for all participants. The recap of day two was done for the third day before starting with the day's schedule.

The third day turned out to be interesting as the presentation focused on the finding related to local government responsiveness to different services in the community. While most of the results depicted a negative view of local government responsiveness, the participants came to appreciate the fact that community perceptions are correct because they lack information. Therefore, there is a need for the county authorities to conduct a regular sensitization to the community to help understand the government's responses to the entire situation in the county.

Findings on cooperation and conflict around assets were presented last, where a heated debate emerged as a result of the view of some county officials on the management of assets such as forest. All members have agreed that the forest is being exploited by individuals and doesn't help the community in addressing some of the resilience priorities. After a lengthy discussion, there was a consensus that more needs to be done to ensure that community assets are used for addressing the pressing community needs. There was an agreement that indeed, some of the assets drive conflicts, such as livestock and land. There was a recognition of the need to set up committees to manage this asset so that it helps promote cooperation instead of conflict.

Next steps

The APMs gave information on what the next step looks like. After the payam and county-level Local Action Planning and Joint Work Planning Workshops, complete information will be disseminated to the communities. Policy LINK is expected to pass the baton to the MELS Activity for the implementation of subsequent steps and processes, including participatory monitoring of the activities.

Payam and County-level Local Action Planning

Payam-level action planning workshops will confirm payam-level resilience priorities and identify, select, and send delegates to participate in the county-level workshop that finalizes a coherent local community action plan.

Joint Work Planning

The county-level action plan serves as the basis for multistakeholder work planning with USAID Implementing Partners and other local partners.

Closing of the workshop

The workshop was closed by the Honorable Commissioner of Jur River County, Mr. Nicola Thiep, on behalf of the First Minister. In his remarks, the Honorable Commissioner expressed his gratitude and appreciation to facilitators and participants for the spirit shown during all the three days of the workshop. He particularly acknowledged the joint efforts to build trust, cooperation, and unity among the participants and community. He said that this was an eye-opener, and there is a need to focus on sustainable development in the county. He emphasized that now the county authorities know the gaps and should move forward to address them. Therefore, the local committees in the payams must include an early warning systems committee; they can also use traditional systems and signs for disaster. They should inform the communities to prepare accordingly. He pledged to address the sharp gender gap in the county and declared the workshop was officially closed.

Lessons Learned

The selection criteria were instrumental in ensuring inclusivity in selecting the participants for the sense-making workshop. The requirements must be precise, and authorities must receive a thorough orientation before applying for it to work.

Once the local traditional wisdom and systems are integrated, respected, strengthened, and allowed to be part of the programming, it lays the foundation for trust and the sustainability of the programs that are being implemented.

It is essential to give enough time for community discussion during workshops to allow for consensus building.

Challenges

This workshop was well planned and executed without any significant challenges.

Takeaways

The objectives of the workshop were fully achieved because all county department directors were in full attendance from day one.

The County Commissioner pledged to form a County Emergency Preparedness Committee, which is an indication of his relentless support to build resilience capacities of the communities in the county.

The Commissioner also pledged to address the issue of gender imbalance at the county level.

The participants were very impressed, appreciated and concurred with all the findings except for a few related to firewood availability and community participation in the local decision-making. The argument given to the latter is that the community structures have their representatives who take the decision on their behalf. So, most possibly, the enumerators did not make it clear to the respondents.

Three IP partners, ACTED, NRC and IMA attended the three-day workshop. All agreed that the findings were very beneficial to them and it confirms the results from other surveys that they have conducted in Jur River.

