



FEED THE FUTURE

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



Community Consultation Meeting on Formation of Inclusive Champion Group

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Community Consultation Meeting on Formation of Inclusive Champion Group

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Background

In October 2020, DAI Global LLC (Policy LINK) signed a six-month Community Engagement Fundamentals grant agreement with the Wau Civic Engagement Center (WCEC). Thereafter, a series of discussions and consultations were held by members of the CEC to assist and support the Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR) in the state. The agreement tasked Wau CEC User Committee members to assist Policy LINK in the layout and implementation of the PfRR and five associated milestones that support building resilience and reducing vulnerability in the community. It also assigned Wau CEC members to work closely with community institutions such as local government, the private sector, traditional authorities, and other humanitarian stakeholders to improve knowledge management practices and use of evidence to inform joint decision making at local, national, regional, and global levels.

In line with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between DAI/Policy LINK and Democracy International (DI) to strengthen the coordination capacity, agency, and participation of local communities to promote resilience in South Sudan, one aspect of this grant agreement is the strengthening of the Civic Engagement Centers (CECs) which serve as a safe space for traditional leaders, private sector representatives, civil society, and local government stakeholders to collaborate.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the consultation on the inclusive champion group (ICG) is to gather the views of the community on how to form the ICG, increase community-led resilience, and encouraging the community to take the initiative by identifying, planning, organizing, and addressing their problems in a bottom-up approach.

Consultation Meetings

WCEC, in coordination with Policy LINK, has conducted a series of stakeholders/community consultation meetings in Wau County covering Mboro payam, Gede boma of Kpaile payam, Bussere boma, and Ngo Halim.

On June 16, 2021, the WCEC team organized a consultation meeting with the community at Mboro payam. The meeting was attended by 42 individuals (33 males, 9 female) who included elders, chiefs, women, youth, traditional leaders, and farmers.

After presentations from WCEC members, Linda and Ramadan, both representing Policy LINK, feedback was sought from the community representatives. The community representatives noted that it was first time an NGO (Policy LINK) had consulted the community on planned support. They also welcomed the idea of a steering committee at state level if it reflects the community's multi-ethnicity and diversity, and includes individuals from the Ndogo, Golo and Bai tribes. Finally, they enquired when the steering committee would be officially formed.



Figure 1: Consultation meeting with community at Mboro

On June 17, 2021, a second consultative meeting was conducted at Gede boma in Kpaile payam. The meeting was attended by 10 individuals (7 males, 3 females) who included representatives of local government, traditional leaders, women, youth, and farmers. The meeting started by introducing the community representatives to the ICG as a new tool that engages different partners, including community members, and that is supported by other stakeholders.

The community representatives were then welcomed to give their feedback and reactions. They expressed their readiness to work with the proposed ICG idea and appreciated the move to have the community in the forefront if given the right support. They also stated that they preferred a sub-ICG body at different locations given the vast size of Gede and great distances between locations.

On June 18, 2021, the WCEC team conducted the third consultation meeting at Bussere boma. The meeting was attended by 60 individuals (17 males, 43 females) who represented traditional leaders, women, youth, and farmers.

In their feedback on the proposed ICG, the community representatives welcomed the idea that community members will be able to participate and contribute their inputs, proving that they are valued and are now part of future programs. They also suggested that the proposal includes youth apprenticeship to support local youth. Finally, they added that the program should include a livelihood subsidiary program for poultry, sheep, and fishing value chains.

On the same day, a fourth consultation meeting was conducted within Wau Municipality to gather views on the proposed ICG from the Wau business community. Nine individuals (2 male, 7 female) attended the meeting and welcomed the initiative. They appreciated that they had been considered for inclusion in the ICG formation but raised concerns on whether they would be treated differently from foreigners who have better access to business capital. They also requested training in business management.



Figure 2: Community Consultative Meeting at Gede attended by the Commissioner and members.



Figure 3: Consultation meeting with Community at Bussere



Figure 4: Consultation meeting with business community groups

On June 22, 2021, the WCEC held the fifth stakeholder/community consultation in Ngo Halim. The meeting was attended by 72 individuals (15 males, 57 females) who represented traditional leaders, women, youth, and local government.

In the feedback session, the community representatives expressed their high expectations that the PfRR would help them address the needs for basic services including schools, primary health care, and water. Questions were raised on the time of formation of the ICG, number of the members in the ICG, and whether there would be different ICGs representing farmers, fishermen, disabled etc. The local chief responded to these questions and informed the community representatives that there would be only one ICG in the area with an agreed upon number of members, and that the success or failure of any project would depend on them. It was left to the community representatives to decide when the ICG will be formed, an activity that can also be witnessed by other partners who might be interested in the process of selection.

On the same day, a sixth consultation meeting was conducted within Wau Municipality for civil society organizations (CSOs). The meeting was attended by 13 individuals (11 males, 2 females). In their feedback on the proposed ICG, the CSOs welcomed the initiative and expressed their willingness to take part in the ICG's formation as CSOs represent a core element of community engagements. Their only concern was on the number of people that would make up the ICG.



Figure 6: Consultation meeting with youth groups

On June 24, 2021, the seventh consultation meeting was held for youth groups in a morning session. The meeting was attended by 20 youths (12 males, 8 females). In their feedback on the proposed ICG, they welcomed the idea and said they would be the first to support the ICG program, and that they would like to be part of the ICG body.

The eighth consultation meeting was held for different political parties in an afternoon session on the same day. Seven individuals (3 males, 4 females) attended the meeting. In their feedback on the proposed ICG, the politicians noted that the ICG represented a new philosophy, that their views would be needed in a such practice, and that they were ready to be included in the ICG. They also requested some training on promoting their role for the advancement of people's lives.



Figure 7: Consultation meeting with different political party members

In another afternoon session, the ninth consultation meeting was held for women's groups. In their feedback on the proposed ICG, the women appreciated being given a say in its formation and requested that future ICG meetings be held in residential areas to allow for women's participation as well as that of people with disabilities. The meeting facilitator took note of that and asked the women in attendance to share the message with other women in their respective locations for wider consultation.



Figure 8: Consultation meeting with women's groups

On the June 25, 2021, the tenth consultation meeting was held for participants from different government institutions and faith-based organizations. Nineteen individuals (12 males, 7 females) attended the meeting. In their feedback on the proposed ICG, the different groups noted that the ICG represents a new way of doing things and one that allows for input from different partners. They also noted that it will allow communities to assess, identify, plan, and manage their own affairs. Further, they noted that the ICG should

translate ideas into action if it will be different from other NGOs/INGOs who make promises but take no action. They also promised to give the support needed for the success of the ICG.



Figure 9: Consultation meeting with government institutions

WAU CEC Roles and Responsibilities

1. To support USAID/DAI - Policy LINK to facilitate mobilization of community representatives in ICG consultation meetings.
2. To facilitate, coordinate, translate, and document outcomes of the ICG consultation meetings.
3. To conduct daily market price, providing daily contextual updates and market assessments including COVID -19.
4. To note community feedback and concerns are well noted.

Accomplishments

The WCEC User Committees have participated in the implementation and accomplished Milestone III by conducting a series of consultation meetings in Wau County and Municipality. To accomplish this milestone, the WCEC conducted the following activities:

1. Developed a work plan for the meetings in and outside Wau Municipality to guide the process.
2. Organized massive mobilization within the local community.
3. Documented the consensus on deliberations on the formation of the ICG during the consultation meetings.
4. Documented the daily market prices assessment.
5. Recorded and translated the meetings, taking note of the community's views, concerns, and opinions of the ICG.
6. Took photographs of each meeting.

Challenges Encountered

1. Lack of transport reimbursement and refreshment for participants.
2. Lack of airtime incentive for mobilizing participants to attend the meetings.
3. Some areas had poor road conditions.
4. Communication for mobilization to be reviewed.
5. Line of communication/channel to be unified and agreed upon to avoid different opinions
6. Venues need to be reconsidered as people preferred to have meetings in a comfortable environment with chairs and refreshments served.
7. There were concerns as to why the ICG is only at state level, if there will be training for members to familiarize them with the ICG, and if it will factor the multi-ethnicity of the community.
8. The WCEC had to take the responsibility of transporting the participants back to their various locations, but the vendor failed to provide vehicles and distribute the invitation letter.

Key Lessons Learned

1. Timing and communication are very important as all stakeholders' involvement needs to be planned.
2. The positive lesson learned includes mobilization and communication- these were so helpful to encourage people.
3. The lack of transport reimbursement and airtime incentive for WCEC User Committee Members makes communication for consultation meetings, coordination, and mobilization difficult and untimely.
4. NGOs' meetings culture where participants served with refreshment such as at least water and biscuits.
5. Transport companies and the business community should be prioritized to promote the indigenous community advancement.

Recommendations

1. There is need to ensure provision of transport reimbursement and airtime incentive for CEC User Committee Members and participants for motivation and activity coordination.
2. The WCEC User committee and Policy LINK who have been involved in coordinating these events should continue with the spirit of collaboration and teamwork to move the PfRR agenda forward in Wau.
3. WCEC User committee in agreement with Policy Link should take the lead in facilitating communications and mobilization, to avoid double channels and minimize confusion.
4. Some solutions must be found to avoid community strife to serve the WCEC team conducting meetings in the name of Policy LINK. ICG formation need to be timely planned to maintain the momentum.
5. There was a big demand by different community representatives to have a ICG sub-body and not just one at state level.
6. During the peak of the rainy season additional support will be required for those making trips to certain locations i.e., raincoats, gumboots.
7. Emergency stock of some basic necessities as a rescue mitigation when conducting field meetings.



Figure 10: Group photo, Community on Consultation meeting in Mboro