

Evaluation/Appraisal of South Sudan Women Concern  
Capacity Building Programme  
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# **SSWC APPRAISAL REPORT 2004**

## **1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT**

### **1.1 Organisation background**

SSWC is an indigenous Sudanese organisation, working in KajoKeji county of South Sudan and having a UK registered office. Its overall aim is to empower the women of the area, many of whom are heads of households (being widows or wives of soldiers away on active service). In the early 1990's, most of the people from the area fled to refugee camps in Uganda or into internal camps for displaced people when government forces advanced and took control of KajoKeji town. The SPLA recaptured this in March 1997 and displaced people began to return to their homes. Since then there has been a continual flow of returnees to home areas as confidence in the ability of the SPLA to retain control has increased. SSWC has made a contribution towards this process - promoting stability and encouraging resettlement by providing the means to increase and diversify food production and access to other basic services including training and organisational skills.

### **1.2 Partnership with the Baring Foundation**

SSWC has been a partner of the Baring Foundation since receiving a first grant for capacity building of local groups in 1999. In 2000, the Baring Foundation provided a three years grant for the capacity building of the Women's Groups which enabled women's groups to establish women's centres, where local groups hold meetings, carry out organisational skills training, literacy classes and centralise seed distribution/marketing operations as well as support training activities within the Livestock and Food Security programme. In 2002 CAFOD and Comic Relief two key donors of SSWC carried out two external evaluations of SSWC (copies sent to the Foundation). As another external evaluation would make unnecessary duplication of effort, it was agreed to organise an appraisal of the capacity building programme

with SSWC playing a role of facilitator in promoting a participatory process involving the women's groups and partner organisations to take stock of its achievements, as well as highlight difficulties and key lessons to inform the next phase of the project.

### **1.3 Project Aims**

The aims of the project was to organise capacity building and training to:

(i) Support the development of viable, self-sustaining, community based women's organisations and local partner organisations. Strengthen and empower these organisations and be a focal point to bring displaced and refugee women together to address the economic and social problems facing them and their families.

(ii) Share and increase knowledge, experience and good practice among women's groups and partner organisations. Act as a strategic forum for International NGOs working and delivering services to displaced communities in the area through capacity building support to management committees of women's groups on management skills.

### **1.4 Purpose of Appraisal**

The purpose of the appraisal was to:

- Appraise the impact of the work at the level of women's groups;
- Appraise the impact of the work at the level of individual women;
- Appraise the impact of the work on building the capacity of SSWC and its local partner organisations

### **1.5 Methodology**

The appraisal followed a consultative approach involving SSWC staff, the women's groups and local communities in discussions of activities, achievements and problems encountered. Meetings were held with 20

women's groups, and semi-structured group discussions held with women members in the centres and four general workshops held with all the representatives of the women groups with staff and partners in attendance. Discussions were also held with staff and partners in various combinations. A review of project material and documentation (Project application to the Baring Foundation, Annual reports 2002, 2003 and mid term report 2004) was made.

## **1.6 Project contextual Information**

- (i) **Peace prospects:** Peace in Southern Sudan "New Sudan" as it is referred to in KajoKeji appears to be holding since the last unrest in October 2002. Negotiations in Kenya were nearly reaching their final stages by the time of SSWC appraisal in November-December 2004. In KajoKeji the negotiations look as still inconclusive and the SPLA remains in a state of 'alert' as past experience has shown that ceasefires have been fragile. Locally the appraisal found that SSWC have been instrumental in facilitating peace; women reported being able to offer food to soldiers when this was demanded because of better livelihoods and so being left in peace. SSWC successfully created an understanding with the local authority, elders and military through lobbying. We also found the value of SSWC work in supporting women (who are often left alone for years with their men at the front) is recognised and valued by the SPLM/A.
  
- (ii) **The population:** In peace time the population of KajoKeji is estimated to be 500,000. According to SRRC figures the estimated population is now 150,000. The population is largely Christian (all meetings were opened and closed by prayers; several situations were compared to biblical equivalents). 60% of women are reported to be living as widows and female heads of families for those whose men folk are believed to be alive at the front lines fighting with the SPLA.

- (iii) **Status of women:** Negative traditional attitudes and practices have made women subordinate to men. In South Sudan girls are look at as source of wealth and not members of the family. The women argue that had women been considered members of the family, their parents and family members would take into consideration the girl's well being, welfare and education. However this is not the case in the majority of households in the project area. Traditionally once a man could afford a girl's dowry or bride price, he paid and the girl is given up to her marital home to continue her subordinate existence. For example she cannot become a member of the husband's clan, which is a crucial qualification for land or indeed any property ownership within the clan. Traditionally therefore dowry payments are made and it was not habitual for women to own property or assets. In most cases a married woman was most likely to be regarded as part of the family's dominions that allowed the head of the family to prosper (get children, receive bride price from girl children and the woman's labour). Girl's education was not a priority in this context. As a result a large majority of every group interviewed had had no education at all.
- (iv) **The Civil Administration:** The structure of the civil administration (SPLM) is devolved through Regional, County and Payam levels down to Boma (the smallest administrative unit) level, in which SSWC groups have been established. Links with the representatives of this administration has been developed by SSWC. At the top level engagement with the authorities has mainly been around security issues and collaboration on law and order issues.

## 1.7 Core Elements of the Project

Since its beginnings SSWC has placed major emphasis on promoting education and capacity building for women. Education and capacity building

of women underpins the ethos of SSWC, which seeks to support the aspirations of women via organisational development, management skills, adult literacy, entrepreneur skills, and other specialised training skills including lobbying, advocacy, networking, agriculture skills and intermediate technology. Through the capacity building project SSWC supported the aspirations of women to initiate successful community enterprises that meet real community needs. As well as the work within community groups SSWC runs a training and resource centre managed by a team of three staff.

## **2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **2.1 Women's Groups**

#### **(i) The Women Groups:**

Groups were started by SSWC in an effort to bring displaced women together to respond to their needs. When more women heard about SSWC activities they approached SSWC staff. Some sent delegates to enquire what was happening and were encouraged to organise themselves. SSWC then visited them, registered women and distributed seeds. Belonging to a group has allowed some women to return to Sudan and establish themselves, at times leaving their children in the camps in Uganda but returning to bring them as soon as they have a minimum of capacity to feed them. Later returnees from Uganda found women already active in groups and joined for solidarity and also to receive support; women report being inspired by other women making progress and this motivated them to join. Belonging to a group also gave a certain degree of security, a sense of not being alone, when the area remained sparsely populated and unstable. Women interviewed said:

*“This thing has never happened before”* – there were never women's groups in the refugee camps nor did women collaborate in solidarity in old Sudan.

*“The women's chief has since been buried in the dust bin”* is a Sudanese proverb but now women are in leadership roles within SSWC groups and are proud of this. Many women spoke of the psychological support gained from

belonging to a group; tools to clear and work the land were important assets for women; seeds and livestock were clearly valued inputs. Women frequently sang songs that exemplified how their self perception and the way they are perceived by others has changed:

*“First we were only called women but thanks to our Lord, He has saved us”.*

*“We are the army of farmers in the fight against hunger”.*

*“People start to respect us, they say we are really tough”*

The initiative taken by SSWC has been pioneering and countless women said:

*“Never since I was born have I ever heard about anything like this for women”.*

*“Since our mothers there is nothing like this” “ Now we have been given power”*

#### **(ii) Organisation and Management of the Women’s Groups:**

The capacity building project has successfully empowered and strengthened the women’s grassroots movement in Kajojeji. Women’s Groups now have organised constitutions and elected representatives. Since 2001 women decided that those able to pay membership fees of 500/- per year (approx.40p) would become full members and have access to the full range of benefits the project is able to offer: greater volumes of seed for multiplication, livestock and in some groups loans. Grants from the Baring Foundation have enabled groups to establish women centres and to employ literacy trainers. Before the intervention of SSWC there was no properly constituted women’s group. Now 11 Women’s Centres have been established, 20 women’s groups constituted, 78 livestock women’s Groups organized, one Women’s Network established with a total membership of 5,000.

#### **(iv) Impact of training on management committees and leaders**

**Training:** SSWC provided managerial skills training to 800 women leaders out of which, 20 were Chairpersons, 20 Secretaries, 20 Treasurers, 100 Area leaders, 156 livestock leaders and 60 entrepreneurs. Most of these women

served as board members and area leaders for 10 women's organisations of Jalimo, Kiri, Logu, Mundari, Kinyiba, Bori, Urta, Mere, Mondikolok, Longira, Mogiri, Kansuk, and 10 women's interest groups (including livestock groups, area branches and farmers promoters). Training focused on topics to enhance the management skills of women. These included arithmetic, budgeting, letter writing, recording information, and needs' assessment, reporting and conflict resolution. In December 2003, the women trainees sat for exams in their various centres.

**Training impact on the women leaders:** The project created a big impact in terms of education for women leaders. The majority of these women were illiterate. SSWC had to begin by providing literacy training before embarking on topical materials. After 3 years of training the women said they feel some changes in their lives. Those interviewed reported that the training has big influence in their daily lives as well as management of their groups. They said all the management committee members could now read and write well in Bari (local language) and write some few words in English. As a result of the training women's groups improved their record keeping, advocacy and negotiation skills which they used successfully in loan, goats and seeds recovery. Treasurers and Chairladies said they were now able to remit and sign out their money from the bank. The committees are now able to keep records, negotiate and make payments on behalf of their groups. The management training enabled women to carry out reorganisation in their groups. In addition to this, the empowering effect of the capacity building process was evident in the improvement of organisational and networking skills of the women groups.

## **2.2 NETWORKING AND PLANNING**

An annual general assembly bringing together women from each group was held during the 3 years of the grant. The meetings were attended by SSWC staff, with representatives from NGOs, the local authority and 150-200 women participants/representing all the women's groups. The themes of the AGM centred on '**SELF RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**'. SSWC and women

leaders gathered for 4 days of reporting from groups, discussion of issues and recommendations arising are thereby conveyed back to groups in the Bomas. Many of the issues discussed were practical, ground level issues (eg. around problems of termites in crops, avoiding weevils in seed storage, water retention in fields etc). The process provides an opportunity for new ideas/needs to be expressed and strategies to address these explored. For example it was in this forum that the target for farmers to open and exploit 3 feddans was promoted; one year on women reported the practical limits to achieving this and it was decided to the training opportunity provided by funds from the Baring Foundation grant for intermediate technology skills training to train some farmers in the use of oxen.

### **2.3 NETWORKING AND EXCHANGE VISITS**

SSWC successfully organised 20 exchange visits during the life of the project. Most of these visits took place within the County among the different women groups. Opportunities for women to visit entrepreneurs have been created (women were taken to visit businesswomen in Kampala and Jinja) in Uganda in 2002 and 2004. While there they visited 2 women's groups, the Women's Finance Trust in Kampala, Fisheries entrepreneurs at Lake Victoria near Port Bell and the Farmers Association at Mukono and Uganda agriculture show in Jinja. The women leaders also visited Owino market where 90% of the traders are women and sellers of vegetables. There they exchanged ideas with the market women traders. The impact of the exchange visits was very useful and beneficial to the women leaders and their groups. For example:

- (i) Leaders related to their members their experiences and told them of the new methods of farming. For example, the women related to their members about their visit to the market in Arua, Koboko and Owino where they saw Uganda businesswomen selling vegetables. Women also related their experiences during a visit to see growing of onions by women farmers in Uganda. The result of these visits convinced women in Kajokeji that they too could feed their families

and improve their income through farming. As a result 2004 saw an increased in crop production and increase in family incomes.

- (ii) Another impact of the exchange visits was the friendships women developed between themselves. When asked leaders said they no longer felt isolated. They could visit, be visited and call upon the help of women from villages they never visited before the war. In addition they said they benefited from exchange of knowledge between them selves and women in Uganda.
- (iii) Another impact of exchange visits was the good relationship developed between SSWC, the women's groups and the International NGOs operating in the area. The networking brought NGOs in the area to be aware of the women's groups' activities. As a result NGOs started to use the women's centres as focal points for workshops and health screening (sleeping sickness). The good relationships created with the International NGOs made the Comboni School in the area to purchase some food for their students locally. This helped to improve the women's income.

### **3.0 IMPACT OF PROJECT ON WOMEN AT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

#### **3.1 Change on women's lives**

In contrast to their lives in the camps or immediately post flight, women reported having a lot of food now and lower levels of disease amongst themselves and their children. Livestock has allowed those that have received goats to gain income from sales (paying school fees was the most frequently mentioned benefit). Over the 3 years the needs of women gradually changed to emphasis on income having achieved some level of food security. The lack of external market and lack of variety in produce for sale made SSWC to diversity crops varieties to include those likely to have market in Uganda and provided training on crops management of these crops.

After receiving agriculture training, women said they were able to produce healthy crops. In particular the knowledge to grow vegetables (onion, tomatoes, beans and eggplant) was reported to have been very useful. Suddenly women found traders and ordinary people from Moyo coming to Kajokeji during market days to buy vegetables and other food crops. (Moyo in Uganda about 20 kilometres away is the nearest sizeable market to the people of Kajokeji). Women from Uganda come to local markets on foot to buy crops. Traders started to come on bicycles. In 2002 SSWC mobilised women's groups to repair potholes on the roads by gathering stones. This women said created change in their lives, amongst others, potential traders had access the area and were coming every market day. Some traders from Moyo have built local shops in the market where there was none before the intervention of SSWC. This new development encouraged the women to open stalls in the market where they sell their produce on a daily basis. Women entrepreneurs said they were now able to change money in the market and negotiate the amount of taxes demanded from them by the local authorities. It is to be noted that the very fact that women have turned into taxpayers from being displaced (receiving relief food) created a big influence in the community and boosted women's confidence.

### **3.2 Ownership of Assets:**

The project helped support training of women in the management of their livestock provided by grants from CAFOD and Comic Relief. Ownership of these assets was for most a new experience (one woman portrayed herself as previously having been a part of the package of the property of her husband) and she now had a greater level of autonomy and self- confidence *"Before we were in a group like this, we wouldn't have been allowed to sit on chairs and to answer questions like this. And who would have thought we would own chairs like these"*. Another woman reported that her children respected her more because of the security goats and seeds had afforded their family; also her husband had valued and respected this stability leaving her at home instead of moving her to the frontline area. Another woman reported having

previously had no property and therefore having led a very itinerant lifestyle *“now I have to come back since I have property”*.

### **3.3 Relationship between men and women**

Some members reported that relationships with their husbands were more harmonious since they were now able to contribute to family income and needs. More rarely, and in a polygamous marriage, the acquisition of assets by one wife had caused tension and jealousies within the marriage but in the particular case reported, local authorities and other members of the husband's family had defended the SSWC member against her husband's perceived unreasonable behaviour. However women said the underlying currents of unease among more men with the newly acquired status of women always surfaced whenever there was a dispute. Such reported cases include confiscation of two members' goats by local authorities to pay for crimes of their sons. Another case involved confiscation of a member's bulls and mouldboard. But the women's local leadership successfully negotiated the return of all these assets.

### **3.4 Training in intermediate technology skills**

Ox-plough training: Members resolved that the best way to gain from the oxen was to have beneficiaries trained to manage the oxen. As a result 75 members received training with their oxen and mouldboards. The last batch of 25 is under training and hopes to graduate by end of January. The training was very participatory. Members brought their husbands, brothers, sons or daughters to train with them in managing the oxen. The impact of oxen training has made a difference. In 2004 farms were bigger. The oxen brought unity and harmony in the families. For example, husbands, sons and daughters trained together. After training those interviewed said they continued to work together as families in the fields. The women were more confident and hopeful. Members said they sold more surplus crops as a direct result of using oxen.

### **3.5 Training in advocacy and lobbying skills**

We provided training in advocacy and lobbying to women leaders particularly the management committee members. This training resulted in women's ability to take collective action on issues affecting their group members. For example:

- (i) The lobbying and advocacy skills of women leaders were evident in the way they mobilised their communities to participate in voluntary work. As a result women leaders were called upon by the local authorities and International NGOs to participate in joint activities. For example in April 2004 MSF requested the help of Kiri women's group to assist in organising a public celebration called by MSF. The WHO (World Health Organisation) team and ARC (American Refugee Committee) both international NGOs recruited the help of the women's groups in the various locations to organise and invite the public to general meetings on market days. All this was possible because the women were able to persuade people to come and listen to health messages.
  
- (ii) Women's groups reported that they continued to mitigate the adverse impact of soldiers' movement in the area. The leaders organised 4-5 visits to the front line to speak to soldiers. The most recent visits took place in October 2003, December 2003, March 2004 and May 2004. They persuaded soldiers not to take food by themselves but to request instead. As a result it was reported that soldiers often moved without harming anybody. When on duty soldiers often came to the women centres, requested for food, received food provision through the women leaders, cooked for themselves, spent night in either a school or church premises and moved on. Before a group of soldiers could move on the women leaders said they alerted their network in the next village about the imminent arrival of soldiers to that village. In this manner the soldiers would pass through villages without causing havoc.

- (iii) The advocacy and lobbying skills also enabled women to represent their members in disputes. These skills were evident in the ability of women leaders in dealing with domestic disputes among their members. For example there was a case in Logu when a husband agreed with his brothers to divorce his wife. However they confiscated her bulls and mouldboard, which was a loan to her from SSWC. The member reported the case to her management committee in Logu women's Centre. The chairlady and 3 other women leaders went to the house of the member and successfully negotiated the release of the bulls and the mouldboard to the member. This member is now settled in her village in and joined the nearest women's group there, which is Kiri Women's Group. In Mondikolok the local court confiscated 5 goats belonging to a member. They said the goats were taken as punishment to her son who married a local girl without paying enough dowry. When this was reported to the women leaders in the centre, they went to the local chief and negotiated a settlement.

### **3.6 Training in health promotion skills**

SSWC used its training skills to organise a series of workshops and seminars in the women centres and schools on health promotion. These focused on Mother and Child Health, Reproductive health particularly among young families and the girl child. During these seminars girls watched educative videos followed by group discussions. In addition SSWC provided training to women leaders as health promoters. These leaders conducted home visits and helped encourage families to live healthy lives. As a result women reported that the health of families improved. Members took better care of their children thereby reducing the numbers of malaria cases among children.

### **3.7 Literacy skills**

Women committee members and other selected leaders (livestock supervisors and areas leaders) value the literacy training opportunities that

have been offered. With improvement of their literacy, numeracy and budgeting skills, women reported being better able to handle their money and make family decisions about how to divide scarce resources as a result. This appears to be more important than at first glance. But in a war situation where there has been no official currency for 20 years it is very important for members to learn to deal with the different currencies (dollar, Uganda and Kenya shillings that come to the area. In the context of war and currency shortages the people may be hardly numerate or conversant with handling cash. Women were fiercely proud of the little English they had mastered. Examples were given of now being able to acknowledge anyone who said 'Good Morning' to you on the road. Women also reported feeling more confident in handling money.

### **3.8 Agriculture skills**

Through the Baring Foundation funding SSWC provided training on agriculture skills, which enabled members, cultivate a variety of crops SSWC has introduced to the area. Former crop varieties had often been lost during the years of population movements when farmers were unable to retain and multiply seed. SSWC successfully reintroduced and trained members in the management of crops that had disappeared from cultures such as finger millet (which does well on poorer soils and in erratic rains) and indigenous varieties of groundnut that did not suffer from rosette virus or dry off with sunny conditions. Beans have been encouraged as a new cash crop. Other legumes (green grams, cowpeas and pigeon peas) have also were promoted by SSWC as has intercropping of short season legumes in between longer maturation crops such as cassava. Thus overall yields per feddan have been increased. Seeds of new cereal varieties e.g. an improved shorter season variety of sorghum *Sekedo* have also been introduced and multiplied for distribution. Both crops have been promoted by SSWC and some are now sold as cash crops (onion, beans, groundnuts, eggplant, okra, tomatoes and sorghum).

#### **4. IMPACT OF A RESOURCE CENTRE**

The construction of centres has served to provide a focal point for women to meet and for other activities to be carried out around this point (eg. literacy training for committees; seed distributions and collection at harvest). They have raised the profile of the organisation within local communities and it is predictable that as large groups break up into smaller more manageable units, these subgroups are likely to request resources to construct centres of their own. For example members in Kansuk were already requesting to break up into Gudoru and Kansuk. This was reported as a direct result of success existing groups and the movement of more people back from refugee camps and internally displaced people's camps to settle in their villages.

#### **5. CAPACITY BUILDING OF SSWC AND LOCAL PARTNERS**

##### **5.1 Capacity building of partners:**

Through the grant our partners improved their resource base by purchasing training materials. They improved their professional ability through in-service training of their staff on information technology, adult teaching methods, administrative and financial management.

##### **5.2 Capacity building of SSWC**

SSWC also improved its ability to deliver the project. It organised in-service training for field staff on intermediate technology, information technology, development and design of training materials, adult teaching methodology, administrative and financial management. SSWC successfully developed a clear mechanism for requisitioning and recording stock and stores as they enter and leave the organisation. This is applied both to items required for project and centre activities and for seeds banked by the women's groups. As a result SSWC staff were able to use an improved management and administrative system. This included the use of information technology,

binding machine, laminating machine, photocopier, video recorder, Waybill forms, local purchase orders, Requisition forms, Issuing forms, Receipt forms, payment Receipts, Leave forms and Sick reports forms. The empowering effect of this training was evident in the success of training activities delivered to the women's groups. The staff was able to organise and provide training activities on target. Another indicator of the improved capacity of our staff and those of partner organisations was their ability to lobby and network with other NGOs in the area. Their lobbying and networking helped to increase support for the women's groups. For example, Comboni School purchased crops locally.

Despite a misunderstanding between SSWC and some local authorities in Septembers 2004, the local authorities have become responsive to the needs of women as a result of intense lobbying and networking from our staff and partner organisations. For example the civil authorities continued to assist women's leaders to solve disputes over confiscated crops or goats. Their willingness to punish soldiers and any one abusing women, brought peace to the area. As a result there were no frequent robberies or assault in the area.

## **6. OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

Despite the continuous rains fluctuations more crops survived due to the agriculture skills training. Members gained income through the sale of their crops as seeds to SSWC. The women considered the purchase of seeds locally, as a great contribution of the programme in addressing the problem of marketing in the County. On the average a member gained 300,000 shillings from sales of crops. We believe that access to training in addition to food and other factors of production (tools, livestock) enhanced the production capacity of members and contributed to peace building in the area. For example Women expressed during the general assembly that they could pay school fees and other essentials like cloths, medicines, salt, soap and sugar. We found that the ability of women to contribute both food and income has given them a new status in the family and the community. Women are more

confident. They are happier and their families are healthier. The results of these changes have attracted more people to come back from the refugee camps in Uganda. We also noted that more soldiers' families are relocating away from the front lines.

## **7. CONSTRAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Development is often achieved by imitation; in many circumstances this is helpful. By virtue of the fact that SSWC moved back into KajoKeji and began to cultivate a very positive example was set which other women followed. New crops and new practices (including the novel practice of women meeting and working together) have been introduced in this way. Women now have a greater range of food crops, cultivate more land and own assets that they did not have access to before (neither in Old Sudan nor in the camps). They also have some access to literacy and health education. Women have clearly been motivated by the success and the example of others to try to attain the same goals.

Now as women, having met their basic food needs, seek to address their outstanding income needs they once again fall back upon imitation. There is a limit to the range of crops that can be produced and thus find local market. Given the scarcity of cash it is a struggle for women to find innovative services that can be delivered to generate income. There is a tendency to propose activities that women have noticed but are probably not conversant with the detail or practicalities. For example grain or cassava mills are immediately appealing to women who spend considerable time grinding millet and sorghum by hand yet others have attempted to run these commercially and in some locations have failed. The ideas may be sound and further investigation is needed (by the women who want to start an income generating project and by the SSWC extension staff who seek to support them). Women are handicapped by their low levels of education, lack of access to radio or other sources of outside ideas. A decision was taken that SSWC needs to move cautiously where it comes to new innovations putting more emphasis and preferring compatible and adoptable alternatives.

Peace and stability have been key inputs into what has been achieved. In some ways SSWC has contributed towards achieving and maintaining this. Women have been able to offer food to mobile armed forces and have not been subjected to the same levels of violent abuse. The two are probably linked, as is the reputation of the SSWC women – of being tough yet reasonable. Women have been less inclined to move away from their newly acquired assets and their husbands at the front are reportedly content with their greater stability. Some key individuals from SSWC have been involved in the community planning and discussions around peace negotiations.

Ultimately greater forces are also at play in the long-term if peace is achieved it will have great bearing upon the future for SSWC. If peace does become more long term and individuals and donors begin to invest more in the region the organisation is positioned to play a continued role in its development. SSWC has an established base, some solid experience in community mobilisation and support, and a staff team that could have an even wider impact within the population of KajoKeji due to the capacity building attained.

**Problem of ex-child soldiers:** Members reported experiencing difficulties due to the turning up of many young men in their centres. This group is made up of ex- child soldiers. Having left the front lines, they roam in the villages without jobs. They lack basic skills to earn a living. Some of these boys often turned up during training demanding to be admitted. When the women refused to take them in, they terrorise the women. For example during the AGM in Feb 2004, about 30 boys turned up. They demanded to be admitted. But the guards refused and a fight started. SSWC only solved the problem by offering the boys 2 days of entertainment at the Resource Centre during Easter Holiday. The problem of the ex-child soldiers is part of the over all challenge facing SSWC and the groups ie how to deal with groups of men who feel excluded by the project? SSWC needs to develop a rapprochement with these groups in the medium and long-run basis.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Impact of SSWC work:** Drawing from of the comments made by individual women, community leaders and the groups themselves show that they value highly the impact SSWC has had upon their lives. Interviews with staff and partners show that they are happy about the impact of the project on their own organisations. During the period of the appraisal meetings and discussions, those who initiated the organisation and the staff who run it were often congratulated for the energy and commitment they bring to the work in difficult and often dangerous circumstances. The indirect contribution to peace building that this practical programme primarily addressing food security and training has made is felt to be remarkable.

**Programme targets:** Most of the programme's initial targets have been met. However the target of women's groups mobilising financial resources locally had been difficult. For example only a few women groups have been successful in raising income from Centre hire and facilitating health promotions activities for International NGOS (ARC, WHO, MSF); not all groups were able to open a bank account they remained using the accounts of the other groups. Such groups need further support to really develop into independent, self- sustaining entities and many more women in KajoKeji could still benefit from similar support.

**Growth and development of the programme:** SSWC has been a pioneer, moving back into the South Sudan at an early stage when security was far from assured. Its initiators are dynamic, strong willed women who have gathered others around them and by "*the threat of a good example*" – Malien proverb – inspired others. While success had encouraged SSWC and inspired others, the threat of success had earned SSWC enemies from some powerful quarters. This had particularly been difficult during 2004 prompting SSWC to embark on a lobbying scheme that lasted some months. SSWC will need to rethink its approach and include some vulnerable men into the programme

while keeping an open mind to involve in constant dialogue and consultation with local authorities and elders.

**Future of Capacity building for the Women's Groups:** Capacity building for women remains necessary otherwise single women will not be able to educate their children. There are vivid examples from Uganda where some women widowed by HIV have performed strongly in income generation and SSWC staff sees this, as goal that still has to be further developed to involve more women. SSWC has supported the development of 20 groups to date. As peace gradually takes hold the women's groups face a challenge to integrate returning women into their groups. The women's groups are accessible through SSWC centre in Jalimo though with the extremely poor condition of roads it can take several hours to reach some groups and during the rains they are not always accessible. Road difficulties coupled with insecurity at times still present a challenge to the organisation. Despite all the difficulties women felt that capacity building for them remains an important tool for both group and individual empowerment. As expressed by some of the women leaders during the assessment process they greatly valued the capacity building (see extracts from some of the leaders speeches recorded below).

## **9. EXTRACTS FROM WOMEN LEADERS SPEAKING**

- (i) Togoleta women Group:** The capacity building activities have improved the ability of leaders to serve their members. For example, one member –Josphina chairlady said “I can now read and write. I can budget my expenditure. I benefited from my goats, crops and sold surplus crops. So the membership of the Group has been very useful to me. Thanks to our mum (SSWC Director) and the staff. There is great change in all of us women. We are able to write our names and do our own budgets. The capacity building and teaching has enlightened us. The greatest is the training on

livestock, ox-plough, crops management, literacy and financial management in particular budgeting”

- (ii) **Mogiri Women Group:** Agnes Yiki chairlady said “The training we got in Mondikolok is good. Because Mondikilok is far our members wanted the teaching to take place in Mogiri Women Centre. As a result we built two tukuls in Mogiri including a classroom. Because of the teaching in Mogiri, more members joined. We can now see great change in our homes”.
  
- (iii) **Urta Women Group:** Jennifer Basa livestock beneficiary said “I was able to look after my goats because of the training on goat management. My goats multiplied and I was able to sell 8 off spring. Lilian Dudu chairlady said “I am grateful for the work of SSWC. Because of the training, I am able to read and write. I can now prepare my budget and manage my money. I can also use ox-plough. As a result I cultivated a big field and harvested a good surplus. This year for the first time in my life I obtained 600,000/= from crops I sold. As a result I was able to pay school fees for my five children including one in senior. We are now able to write in Bari and understand some words in English”.
  
- (iv) **Kansuk Women Group:** Mary Poni Treasurer said “our work in the centre has been improved because we the committee were able to manage the members. Because of the training we were able to assess the needs of our members and those arriving from refugee camps in Uganda. The training has made us strong both at home and in the community. We can now negotiate and advocate for our members. The training has given us knowledge to look after our goats, use ox-plough, grow healthy crops and run successful small business. For example this year we sold more onions because we now know how to make our own nurseries. Some members said onions are now their best selling item after goats.”

- (v) **Jalimo Women Group:** Ester Poni, livestock leader said “Teaching is going on well in our centre. I benefited from the training. I can now write and keep records of my livestock group. I set up a stall in the market to sell my vegetables. Now I am able to pay school fees for my 5 children, buy clothes and improve my house. In 2002 my husband had left me because he said I was becoming too powerful but this year he came back”.
- (vi) **Kuya Women Group:** Josline Yobu Chairlady said “in my experience there is a big change on women in my area because of the training. I myself was illiterate before SSWC started literacy classes in our Centre. Now I can read and write. I can even sign the group’s cheque when we go to Moyo to draw money. Last year the bank manager used to complain that we (women) did not know how to sign properly. As a result we used to sign several times before the bank could accept the cheque. This problem is no longer there thanks to the literacy classes”.
- (vii) **Kinyiba Women Group:** Joyce Kiden chairlady said “the impact we got in Kinyiba is great. The most important change came through building women’s skills. For example women are now using ox-plough because of the ox-plough skill training we received from SSWC. The members have increased their incomes through the sale of goats, onions, tomatoes, eggplant, okra and groundnuts. All this is a direct result of the capacity building training, which taught us how to farm, manage our money and protect our selves through lobbying, negotiation and advocacy. I even paid school fees for my children including on in senior. When I was nominated to go on exchange visit my son gave me back some money from money I gave him for school. He said I should use the money to buy shoes so that I look smart during the trip.”

**(viii) Romogi Women Group:** Rose Guwo Area leader said “the impact of capacity building and training has been great on the women of Romogi. For example whenever we were coming back from attending classes in our Centre, men used to tease us in the street. The men would ask us and greet us in English to test if we (the women) learned anything at all. We would excitedly answer back greetings in English.

