

Strengthening Borderland Peace Led by Local Communities

Lessons from the Karamoja Small Grants Project
Cluster-Based Approach





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This publication is produced by the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The author of the case study is **Dr George Odera Kut**. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Sida or LPI. The publication is the sole property of LPI.

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Finally, we acknowledge the various stakeholders, including local authorities, community leaders, and cross-border partners, whose cooperation and engagement enrich this project. Their willingness to share experiences, knowledge, and support is essential to building sustainable peace and resilience within and across communities in the borderlands. We are hopeful that this work can contribute to the broader discourse on regional peacebuilding and inspire continued commitment to local community-driven solutions.



ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

AFD	Action for Development
APaD	Agency for Cross-Border Pastoralists Development
AU	African Union
BMZ	<i>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</i> (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CBCR	Cross-Border Community Resilience
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCA	Danish Church Aid
EPaRDA	Enhancing Pastoralist Research and Development Alternatives
ICCO	Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation
ICPDO	Integrated Community Peace and Development Organisation
IDI	Innovative Development Initiative
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KDF	Karamoja Development Forum
KHH	Karamoja Herders of the Horn
KLDF	Karamoja Livestock Development Forum
KOMESI	Kongolei, Miskwony, Emboasia, Simotwo
LOKADO	Lotus Kenya Action for Development Organization
LPI	Life & Peace Institute
MADA	Manna Development Agency
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OMO	Omo's Morningstar Children
PYBO	Pokot Youth Bunge Organization
ROG	Root of Generation
SAPCONE	Sustainable Approaches for Community Empowerment
Sid	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TUPADO	Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WSF	Warrior Squad Foundation


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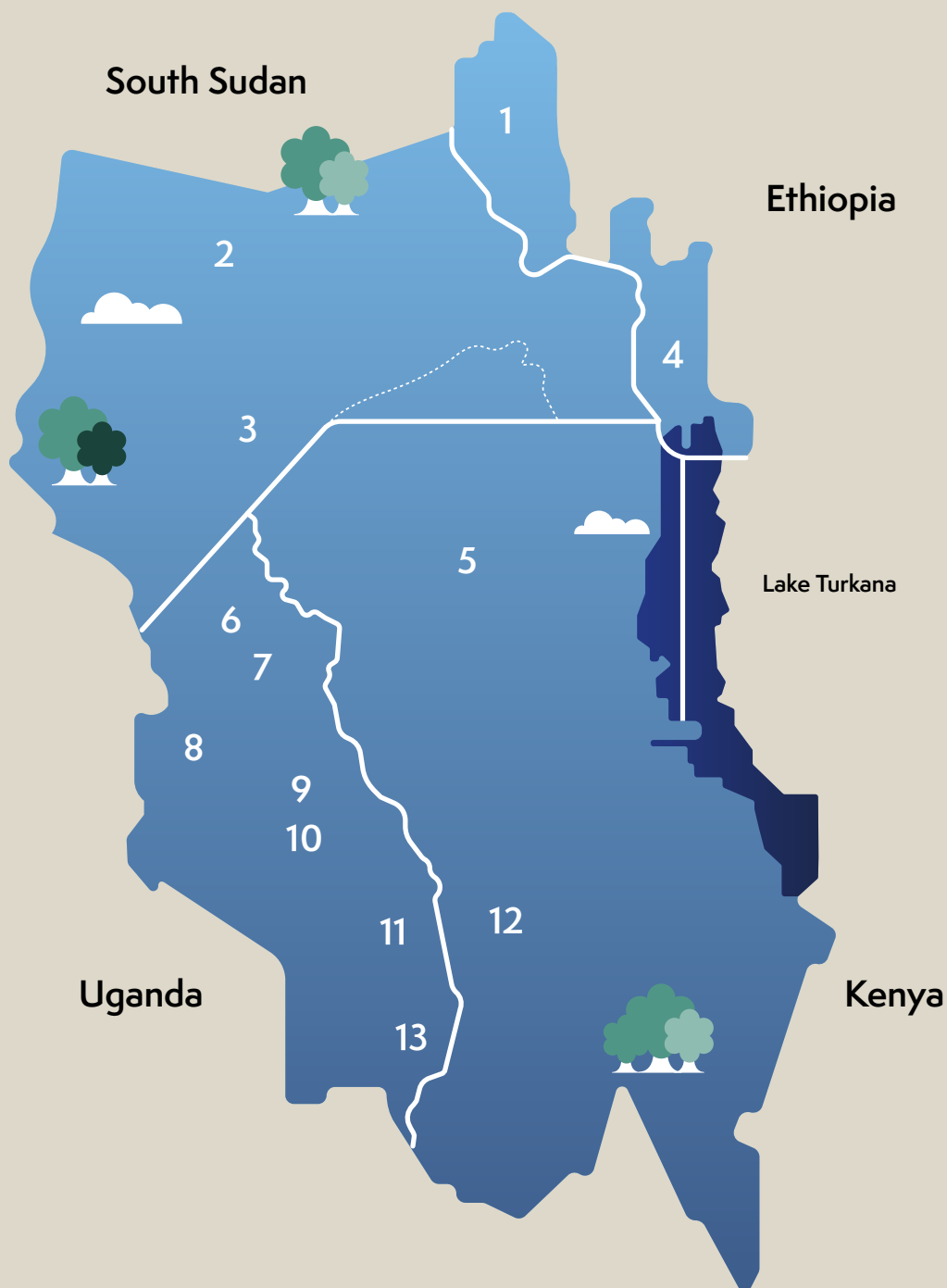
Group work during
the regional dialogue
meeting (Cluster 4)





“ Seeing communities that
once viewed each other as rivals
come together for shared peacebuilding
is powerful. We’re witnessing trust being
built across borders in ways that we
couldn’t have imagined.”





- 1 Nyangatom
- 2 Nyangatom
- 3 Topotha
- 4 Dassanech
- 5 Turkana
- 6 Dodoth
- 7 Jie

- 8 Bokora
- 9 Tepeth
- 10 Matheniko
- 11 Pokot
- 12 Pokot
- 13 Pian

Cluster 1: Ethiopia - 3 CSOs from South Omo

Cluster 2: Kenya - 3 CSOs from West Pokot County

Cluster 3: Kenya - 5 CSOs from Turkana County

Cluster 4: Uganda - 4 CSOs from Karamoja-Moroto, Karenga and Kotido districts

Cluster 5: South Sudan - 4 CSOs from Kapoeta/ Eastern Equatoria State



1. Introduction

The Karamoja Small Grants Project, led by the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, was designed to tackle pressing human security issues in the Karamoja Cluster—a cross-border area spanning Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan.

Marked by historical tensions, economic vulnerability, and resource-based conflicts, this region has long struggled with stability, making it a focal point for targeted peacebuilding efforts.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have emerged as essential actors in promoting peace and security in such borderlands, where state presence may be limited, and traditional intergovernmental efforts are often constrained. In border regions such as the Karamoja Cluster, CSOs mobilise local communities, advocate for inclusive governance, and address the root causes of conflict through initiatives anchored in local contexts.¹ Acting across national boundaries, these CSO networks foster cooperation, mediate conflicts, and build trust among communities that share critical resources, but that may also face competition or long-standing rivalries.² Research demonstrates that cross-border CSO networks not only manage resource-based conflicts, but also serve as early warning systems, offering crucial stability in areas vulnerable to cyclical conflict.³ A CSO partner from the West

Pokot sub-regional cluster verifies this insight:

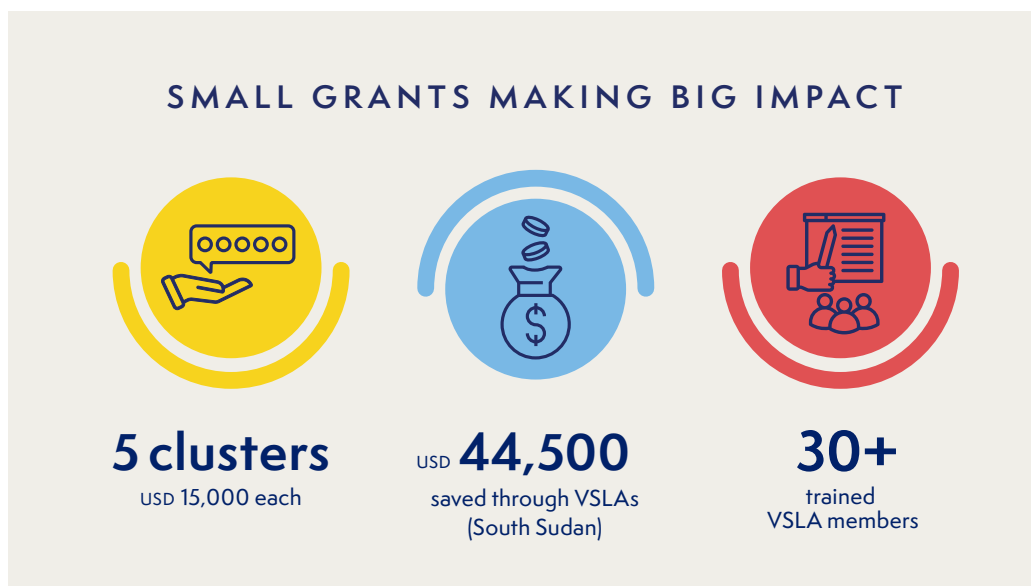
“ Seeing communities that once viewed each other as rivals come together for shared peacebuilding is powerful. We’re witnessing trust being built across borders in ways that we couldn’t have imagined.”

The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* structures participating CSOs into five sub-regional clusters. Each subcluster addresses specific local challenges, while promoting cross-border collaboration. This cluster-based model is designed to amplify the reach and effectiveness of CSOs, enabling them to tackle issues related to human security, economic resilience, and policy advocacy through locally driven initiatives. Studies support this approach: They show that CSO adaptability in dynamic high-risk border regions can facilitate peacebuilding,

- 1 Oliver P Richmond, *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- 2 Alex de Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.
- 3 For example, see: Abiodun Alao, *Natural Resource Governance and Conflict in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 2018; J Barnett and WN Adger, *Environmental Change, Human Security, and the Challenge of Stabilization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.



Dialogue meeting in Kotido (Cluster 4)



engage diverse communities, and bring grassroots perspectives into broader policy frameworks.⁴

Operating from February 2023 to December 2024, the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* moved through several phases designed to empower participating CSOs to drive sustainable community-centred peace initiatives. The four project outcomes—strengthen peace structures, enhance economic stability, create robust cross-border networks, and improve policy influence—demonstrate the transformative role of CSOs in cross-border regions prone to conflict. This project serves as a replicable model for cross-border peacebuilding. It showcases how small grants, and structured support can elevate local capacities, strengthen unity, and build resilient networks crucial for maintaining peace in complex borderland environments.⁵ Each sub-cluster consortium received USD 15,000 to support community-driven peacebuilding initiatives. The high transportation and logistical costs in remote border areas, however, made implementation challenging. To ensure greater impact and sustainability,

sub-regional cluster participants recommend increasing the budget to at least USD 40,000 for future consortium-based projects.

With more than 40 years of experience, LPI remains at the forefront of supporting local peacebuilding actors throughout the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region. By leveraging long-standing partnerships and community-centred approaches, LPI initiatives such as the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* reflect the potential of cross-border CSO networks to catalyse lasting peace across the most challenging and interconnected border regions in Eastern Africa, and beyond.

This report distils lessons from these efforts and provides insights into the effectiveness and sustainability of collaborative CSO-led peacebuilding models in addressing complex borderland conflicts. Ultimately, the aim is to show how targeted small grants can help build local capacities, unite communities, and create resilient networks that are vital for achieving and sustaining peace in conflict-prone borderlands.

4 Jana Krause and Nils Petter Gleditsch, *The Spatial Dimensions of Conflict and Peacebuilding: Conflict Prevention through Local Dynamics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

5 Thania Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010.



2. What we set out to do

2.1 What guides our action?

The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* was implemented from 1 November 2023 to 31 March 2024 in the Karamoja Cluster, a borderland area spread across Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan. While each location had unique activities tailored to local peacebuilding needs, all projects followed a common implementation timeline, ensuring alignment, consistency, and cross-border collaboration among participating CSOs.

Designed to strengthen peacebuilding and human security in the Karamoja Cluster, the project addressed key challenges such as resource scarcity, economic vulnerabilities, political interference, cross-border tensions, and security threats from illegal arms. Recognising both the shared challenges and the specific needs of communities, the initiative provided targeted small grants and capacity strengthening support to selected local CSOs. These grants empowered CSOs to develop locally led solutions to complex security issues while also fostering cross-border collaboration for long-term regional stability.

The project divided the Karamoja Cluster into five sub-regional clusters to facilitate localised engagement and targeted interventions. These sub-regional clusters include: 1) South Omo in Ethiopia; 2) West Pokot in Kenya; 3) Turkana County in Kenya; 4) Moroto, Karenga, and Kotido districts in Uganda; and 5) Kapoeta East County in South Sudan.

This cluster-based approach was adopted to enhance collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and coordination among CSOs working in the borderlands. By grouping CSOs based on geographical and contextual similarities, the approach enabled them to collectively analyse local conflict dynamics, identify shared challenges, and design context-specific interventions to address the unique needs of their communities.

Each small grant was designed to support CSOs in identifying and implementing community-driven initiatives, ensuring that interventions were both relevant and impactful. To strengthen their effectiveness, CSOs received tailored technical support, essential resources, and

capacity strengthening training to enhance their skills in conflict resolution, advocacy, and sustainable development. The cluster-based model also encouraged peer learning and collaboration, fostering stronger networks between CSOs, local authorities, and policy-makers to promote long-term peace and resilience in the region.

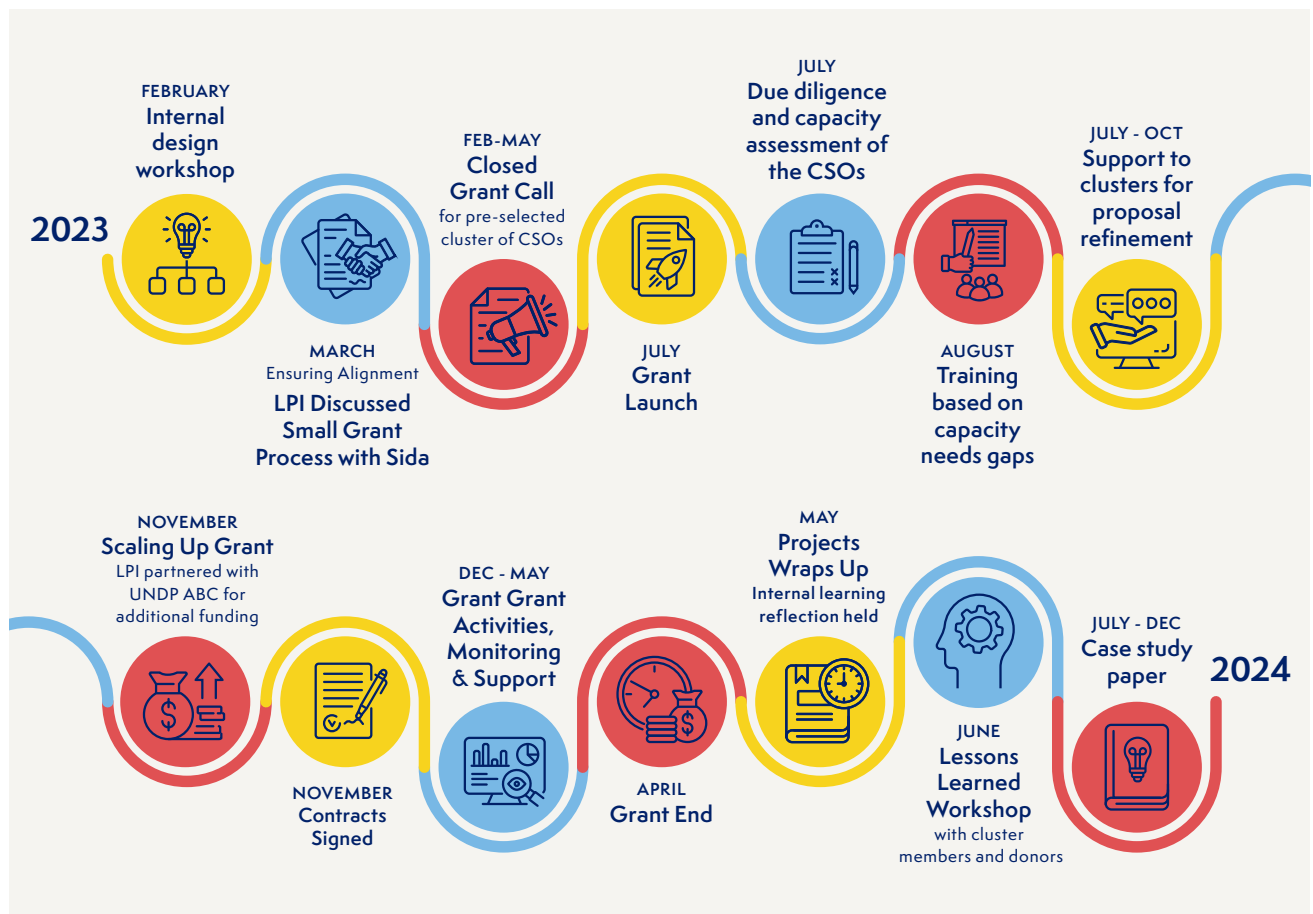
Cross-border collaboration was central to the project, with small grants focused on strengthening partnerships among CSOs across different countries to promote unity and shared objectives beyond national borders. This approach built trust and empowered local leaders to advocate for policies addressing the root causes of conflict, laying a strong foundation for long-term peace and stability. Working in sub-regional clusters, CSOs co-created and implemented peacebuilding initiatives, exchanged knowledge, and improved coordination, making interventions more effective. It also encouraged communities to manage shared resources cooperatively, reducing tensions and fostering social cohesion. The cluster-based model also provided a support network, helping CSOs navigate policy and operational challenges, ensuring that peace efforts remained locally driven and sustainable.

The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* was implemented using a phased approach (see Figure 1), beginning in February 2023 with an internal workshop led by LPI to define the project scope, objectives, and funding modalities. CSOs were pre-selected based on a 2022 due diligence and capacity assessment, ensuring equitable allocation of funds without a competitive application process. In March 2023, LPI engaged with the Sida regional office to align the

initiative with regional priorities and ensure compliance with Sida policies. The essential support provided by Sida included strategic guidance and oversight in shaping the direction of the project. By May 2023, a structured allocation framework was established, leading to project planning in July and capacity building in August, when CSOs received training in conflict-sensitive programming, policy engagement, and financial management. This phased approach ensured alignment, clarity, and capacity strengthening for all participants. A coordinator from one of the sub-regional clusters highlights an additional benefit of this approach:

“ Having a structured partnership agreement has been crucial. It kept all of us aligned, especially when challenges emerged. This clarity made a real difference in staying on track toward our goals.”

Figure 1: Comprehensive project phases timeline for Karamoja Small Grants Project



By November 2023, the selected CSOs had launched their projects with a solid foundation of training and ongoing support from LPI, which included on-site visits and virtual check-ins to address emerging challenges in real time. The CSO projects funded by the small grants were implemented during the official project period (1 November 2023–31 March 2024).

In May 2024, an internal learning reflection workshop was conducted, allowing the larger LPI team to assess their project outcomes, share insights, and discuss the challenges faced during implementation processes. This was followed by a lessons learned workshop in June 2024, during which borderland partners and donors engaged in discussions about project impact and potential scalability. The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* concluded with a comprehensive case study (July–December 2024) to document impact, best practices, and replicable elements for future cross-border peacebuilding models.

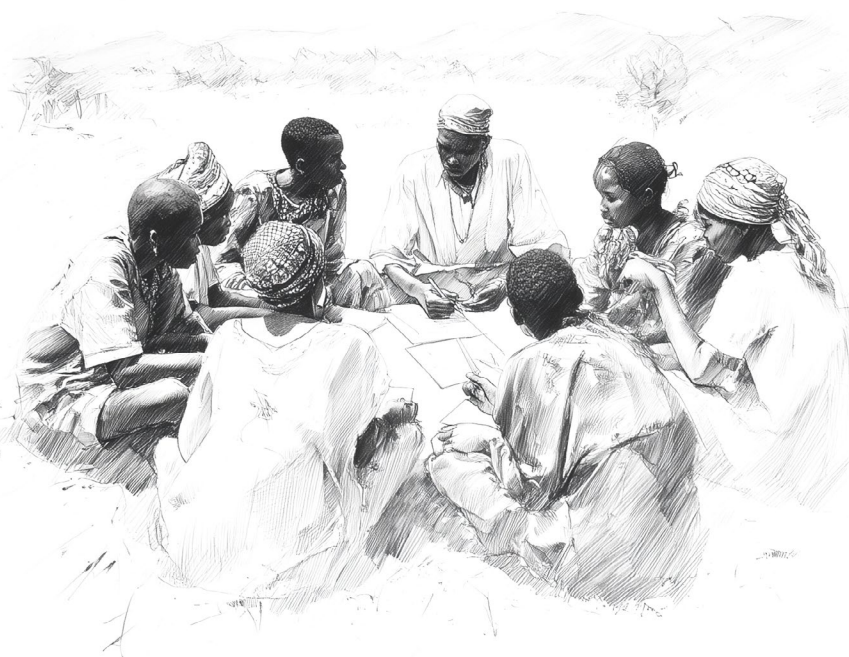
2.2 Key results

The phased approach used in the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* yielded substantial and sustainable outcomes across the region. In particular, through community engagement and intercommunity dialogue, the CSO initiatives supported by the small grants made measurable strides in advancing human security and peacebuilding objectives. One CSO coordinator from South Omo shares a critical insight about project effectiveness:

“When communities drive the peace structures, they’re invested in them. It’s clear that the solutions we’re building will endure because they’re rooted in the community’s own priorities and strengths.”

This reflects a key result of the *Karamoja Small Grants Project*: A sense of local ownership is essential to achieving outcomes that are both relevant and sustainable.

In particular, the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* succeeded in enhancing regional collaboration, improving local governance through inclusive CSO engagement, and offering a structured framework adaptable to other regions in need of sustainable peace interventions. As underscored above, the small grants led to substantial outcomes in human security and peace across the Karamoja Cluster. Equipped with tailored resources



and training, the participating CSOs initiated community-led peace structures to effectively manage disputes and enhance resilience.

Project highlights

All the peace committees established through the small grants held regular dialogue sessions that enabled neighbouring pastoralist communities to share grazing land and water resources peacefully, thus reducing tensions. In the South Omo region of Ethiopia, for example, the grants funded the establishment of peace committees equipped to mediate resource-based disputes. In West Pokot, the Kacheliba–Amudat Corridor Peace Structure facilitated regular community dialogues, bringing together diverse voices — including elders, youth, and women — to address the root causes of conflict and reduce cattle raiding incidents along the Kenya–Uganda border. In Uganda, grants made to the Karamoja Cluster districts of Moroto, Karenga, and Kotido supported the development of early-warning systems to prevent cattle raiding. This involved trained local monitors who could swiftly detect and report threats. This system enables quick and coordinated responses, demonstrating how small grants can enhance community-driven security infrastructure.

The economic stability promoted by the small grants also contributed to peace. For example, in Kapoeta East County in South Sudan, the grants funded the establishment of village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) to empower women by providing them with financial literacy training and access to small loans for ventures such as livestock trading and agriculture. By March 2024, these VSLAs had collectively saved more than SSP

5.8 million (approximately USD 44,500), allowing members to achieve financial stability and participate more actively in peacebuilding activities. In Turkana County, Kenya, the small grants supported livelihood diversification programmes, equipping community members with agricultural and business skills to reduce their reliance on livestock—a traditional, but often conflict-inducing economic activity due to competition over grazing land.

While the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* was very successful, it also faced challenges. These include political and regulatory issues, difficulties in reaching remote areas, limited funding, coordination and leadership gaps, and challenges with reporting and documentation. Despite these obstacles, the small grants helped CSOs carry out projects that improved security, supported economic activities, strengthened cross-border cooperation, and gave communities a stronger voice in policy discussions. The project shows that small well-planned grants can have a large impact and create lasting peace and security in border regions. Based on their experience, the CSO participants suggest helpful ways to improve future small grants, such as making funding more flexible, allowing more time for implementation, and improving coordination between different regions.



3. Addressing regional priorities

Each of the five sub-regional clusters across Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan tailored its initiatives to address specific regional needs. This meant combining locally grounded solutions with crossborder collaboration to promote broader peacebuilding objectives. This overview highlights the unique focus and activities of each sub-regional cluster. All projects were implemented from 1 November 2023 to 31 March 2024.

3.1 Cluster I: Empowering community peace actors in South Omo, Ethiopia

The “Empowering Community Peace Actors” project was launched in Nyangatom woreda,⁶ South Omo, Ethiopia, with the goal of addressing conflict dynamics in borderland communities in the Karamoja Cluster. The project aimed to reinforce local peacebuilding structures and enhance the capacities of community peace actors in conflict resolution and advocacy.

It was led by the Enhancing Pastoralist Research and Development Alternatives (EPaRDA), working with Action for Development (AFD) and Omo’s Morningstar Children (OMC) local CSOs in South Omo. The project also facilitated cross-border cooperation with CSOs from Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan, forming a regional coalition to address human security issues collaboratively and amplify grassroots voices in policy discourse.

The project had three primary objectives:

1. establish strong partnerships among participating CSOs to enhance collaboration and regional coordination;
2. provide targeted training on conflict analysis, conflictsensitive programming, and policy advocacy to strengthen CSO capacity; and
3. distribute three small grants to support community-driven peacebuilding initiatives with long-term impact.

Key results

The project successfully built new collaborative networks among CSOs in South Omo and the wider Karamoja Cluster, promoting sub-regional cooperation and experience sharing. Previously, many local CSOs worked within their own national boundaries, focusing on jurisdiction-specific issues. This initiative allowed them to explore interrelated socio-economic problems and human security concerns collectively.

Two peace committees were established in Lebere kebele,⁷ South Omo, where none had existed before. Members were trained in peacebuilding and advocacy, equipping them with skills to identify and address conflict triggers. These committees held monthly meetings with local stakeholders, strengthening local conflict management and trust building.

CSOs participated in two rounds of training covering policy analysis, organisational development, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and financial management. CSO representatives were also actively involved in Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) policy forums, in which they discussed cross-border trade, pastoralist mobility, and regional security cooperation.

The small grants enabled CSOs to implement projects such as a workshop for community-led advocacy, a cross-border Nyangatom–Turkana peace committee meeting, and a livestock value chain training for community members and government officers. These efforts promoted dialogue on peace and security, strengthened trade, and supported economic integration. The project also introduced a cluster-based approach to this area, whereby local CSOs formed

⁶ A *woreda* is a third-level administrative district.

⁷ A *kebele* is the lowest-level administrative unit.

a partnership consortium, shifting from competition to complementarity in project preparation and resource mobilisation.

Challenges and moving forward

Despite its successes, the project faced several challenges, including budget limitations. The target areas were hard to reach, resulting in high overhead costs. Additional administrative difficulties stemmed from LPI financial requirements for original financial documents and variations in NGO per diem rates.

Moving forward, CSOs and partners identified key priorities, including scaling up the project, as it was piloted on a small scale both in terms of area coverage and magnitude. They emphasised the need to further strengthen cross-border collaboration by expanding engagement with CSOs in border regions and establishing joint project work experience. Participants also highlighted the importance of an exit strategy. As part of this, they proposed the creation of a platform for sustained cross-border CSO collaboration to ensure that the relationships developed during the project could be maintained, with clear objectives, beyond the project timeline.

3.2 Cluster II: Strengthening local peace structures in West Pokot, Kenya

The "Support Sustainable Peace, Social-cohesion, Justice, and Strengthen Local Peace Structures in the Karamoja Cluster" project addressed pressing human security challenges along the Kenya–Uganda border; specifically, the

Kacheliba–Amudat Corridor. This initiative focused on cultivating peace and stability in an agro-pastoral region prone to cattle raiding, resource scarcity, and frequent droughts. The project was implemented by three partners representing an important cross-section of the local community in a dynamic consortium: the Sikom Peace Network, Komesi Women's Network,⁸ and Pokot Youth Bunge Organization (PYBO).

The consortium aimed to create dialogue spaces for warring communities, amplify the voices of pastoralists, and empower traditional governance structures to handle conflicts more effectively. The project operated in the Kenya–Uganda borderlands, spanning an area inhabited by the Pokot, Sabiny, and Pian communities. These communities have shifted from pastoralism to mixed farming, thus intensifying competition for limited resources. The consortium brought together organisations with extensive experience; for example, the Sikom Peace Network has a history of partnering with Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR), Chemonics International, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the KOMESI Women's Network and the PYBO have previously collaborated with International Alert, World Vision, and Mercy Corps. By building on the strengths and expertise of the three partners in the consortium, this project sought to establish sustainable peace structures to address complex intercommunity dynamics in the region.

⁸ KOMESI stands for the four locations encompassed by the women's network: Kongelai, Miskwiny, Emboasia, and Simotwo.

Key results

The project successfully reactivated local peace structures in the sub-regional cluster area, achieving notable outcomes that contribute to social cohesion and stability in the Karamoja Cluster. CSOs in the region participated in dialogue spaces to promote trust building and collaboration among the Pokot, Sabiny, and Pian communities. As a CSO representative from the project area explains:

“ Through these peace structures, we’ve moved from a place of mistrust to one of cooperation. Dialogue spaces have brought the Pokot, Sabiny, and Pian communities together, showing us that collaboration is not only possible but essential for lasting peace.”

This collaboration revived local peace structures such as the Pokot–Sabiny Women Peace Ambassador Network, which played a crucial role in bringing together women from conflicting communities to promote peace. The cluster-based approach provided a structured framework that enabled consortium members to pool resources, share local knowledge, and develop culturally sensitive peace strategies. Unlike informal collaboration, this approach grouped CSOs based on regional proximity and shared challenges, fostering systematic coordination and long-term engagement. Their efforts were further supported by partnerships with the ASAL (arid and semi-arid lands) Humanitarian Network and the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) to maintain security.

Challenges and moving forward

Amidst complex and persistent challenges such as political interference in peace negotiations, illegal arms, climate change, and the presence of wildlife that disrupts grazing practices, the project highlighted key issues, including the need for inclusive governance that engages youth and women. It also identified policy gaps along the Kacheliba–Amudat Corridor, emphasising the importance of developing a grazing management plan for areas such as the Pian-Upe Game Reserve to address human–wildlife conflict.

Moving forward, the project aims to build on these achievements by strengthening cross-border peace structures, advocating for grazing management policies, and deepening engagement with local communities to sustain progress in peace, social cohesion, and conflict prevention in the Karamoja Cluster.

3.3 Cluster III: Transforming conflict and building resilience in Turkana County, Kenya

This project focused on conflict transformation and building resilience in Turkana County, Kenya, a region prone to resource-based conflicts, economic vulnerabilities, and governance gaps. It built on ongoing cross-border collaboration efforts between Kenya and Uganda, addressing intercommunal conflicts and regional peacebuilding challenges in the Karamoja Cluster. The project was designed to strengthen peace structures, facilitate inclusive governance, and promote economic resilience, ensuring community-led cross-border cooperation.

The project was led by TUPADO (Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization) in partnership with a consortium of CSOs, including the Agency for Cross-Border Pastoralists Development (APaD), Sustainable Approaches for Community Empowerment (SAPCONE), Lotus Kenya Action for Development (LOKADO), and Women in Borderlands. These organisations had previous experience in cross-border consortium work, having participated in USAID-funded projects such as PEACE III (2014–2019) and the CBCR Drought Mitigation Project (2022–2027). Leveraging these past experiences, this project ensured that small grants were used to reinforce established cross-border collaboration mechanisms, creating a sustainable peace framework. As one consortium member notes:

“ Our cluster collaboration allowed us to pool resources and expertise, making it possible to achieve impacts that would have been out of reach individually.”

Key results

The Karamoja Small Grants Project directly supported the establishment of the Coordinated Peace Actors Forum, a structured network of peace actors that facilitated joint peace dialogues and engagement with government agencies. The forum linked local CSOs, county governments, and national security agencies, ensuring sustained coordination of peace efforts. The project facilitated the election of a secretariat for peace actors, strengthening governance within the peacebuilding community and extending the Chiefs Forum structure across Turkana County.

To promote economic resilience, the project supported VSLA-led workshops, equipping women with entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, and business development opportunities. These workshops also facilitated access to Women Enterprise Funds, enabling women to engage in income-generating activities, thereby reducing their economic vulnerability and potential involvement in conflict.



Participants in the Women training workshops (Cluster 3)

The cross-border component of the project was strengthened through joint initiatives with Ugandan CSOs, focusing on shared peacebuilding strategies, regional trade facilitation, and the coordination of early warning mechanisms. These activities built trust, reinforced local leadership engagement, and aligned interventions with broader regional security strategies.

Challenges and moving forward

Despite these achievements, the project encountered challenges such as youth unemployment, crossborder cattle raids, and resource competition, which continue to threaten stability in the region. Limited funding also restricted the expansion of the community-requested initiatives that emerged from the project, in particular women-led economic activities.

Moving forward, CSOs and partners emphasised the need to scale up cross-border engagement to ensure that Turkana CSOs work more closely with their counterparts in Uganda and South Sudan. The project also aims to expand community-driven peace mechanisms, advocate

for more funding, and document success stories for policy influence. Strengthening evidence-based advocacy and regional collaboration remains a key priority for sustaining impact beyond the project period.

3.4 Cluster IV: Building peace and resilience in the Moroto, Karenga, and Kotido Districts, Uganda

This project was designed to strengthen livelihoods, enhance food security, and promote peacebuilding in cross-border communities affected by economic vulnerability and intercommunal conflict. It took a collaborative approach, integrating co-creation and joint implementation, ensuring that planning, implementation, and learning were done collectively among the consortium members.

The project was implemented by a consortium of local CSOs, including Karamoja Development Forum (KDF, now renamed Karamoja Herders of the Horn (KHH), Manna Development Agency (MADA), Warrior Squad Foundation (WSF), and Karamoja Livestock Development Forum (KLDF). These organisations had prior experience working together under various consortia grants funded by Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ; Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), USAID, Save the Children, Oxfam, Interchurch Organisation for Development (ICCO), and the Robert Bosch Foundation. Their established networks and expertise enabled them

[Click here to watch the video about the Turkana Country Peace Policy 2024](#) explained by William Erot, *Deputy Director Administration Services* and Augustine Lokwang, *Consultant*



to effectively engage local pastoralist communities and policymakers, ensuring contextually relevant interventions that addressed food security, market access, and peacebuilding.

Key results

The cluster-based strategy promoted strong relationships between consortium members and local communities, reinforcing cross-border collaboration and engagement with local authorities. Through joint planning and implementation, partners conducted policy dialogues on pastoral issues, facilitated engagement between local communities and government authorities, and coordinated efforts with livestock traders and market associations to improve economic opportunities and security.

The project also introduced sustainable livelihood strategies, which aimed to improve food security through VSLAs, financial service linkages, entrepreneurship training, and livestock marketing opportunities. These strategies were integrated into the project as part of a holistic approach to conflict prevention, recognising that economic vulnerability is a key driver of instability.

The project promoted new partnerships to strengthen security coordination and cross-border peace initiatives; notably, between the KDF and the Sikom Peace Network and LOKADO. It also expanded the network of partners engaged in the project; for example, MADA and the Enjojo Foundation.

Challenges and moving forward

The project faced challenges, including financial constraints, inflation, and insecurity. This limited the scope of the

project and left some areas without support. These constraints were similar to those in Cluster III, highlighting a wider systemic issue across the Karamoja Cluster: Limited funding, logistical barriers, and security concerns hinder the full implementation of peacebuilding interventions.

Despite these challenges, the project demonstrated the importance of co-creation and joint implementation in ensuring community ownership of peacebuilding and livelihood interventions. Moving forward, stakeholders highlighted the need for longer-term funding commitments, improved partnership policy frameworks, and the inclusion of national-level actors in regional dialogues to enhance sustainability and policy impact.

3.5 Cluster V: Enhancing border conflict prevention in Kapoeta East County, South Sudan

This project in Kapoeta East County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan, titled "Enhancing Border Conflict Prevention and Resolution", was implemented to address persistent border conflicts and build economic resilience in Narus payam.⁹ The project focused on reinforcing existing peace structures (peace committees) and VSLAs to empower communities economically and support sustainable peace. Kapoeta East County was chosen for two primary reasons:

1. its strategic significance in the region; and

⁹ A *payam* is the second-lowest administrative division (below a county), with a minimum population of 25,000 people.

2. the presence of established peace committees, which play a crucial role in managing local disputes and encouraging collaboration.

Participating organisations brought extensive experience in implementing cluster-based grants, having previously engaged with international donors such as BMZ, USAID, and Save the Children.

The project was implemented by a consortium of organisations, including the Root of Generation (ROG) as the cluster lead, the Integrated Community Peace and Development Organisation (ICPDO), Ateker Foundation South Sudan Chapter, and Innovative Development Initiative (IDI). These organisations also collaborated with other national NGOs operating across Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia through initiatives such as the SPREAD (Strengthening Integrated Peace Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction) initiative for Cross-Border Communities in the Karamoja Cluster, funded by the European Union and the Danish International Development Agency (Danida). The initiative aimed to strengthen local governance, promote gender inclusion, and engage youth in peace processes.

Key results

Key strengths included inclusive participation, strong coordination with local authorities, and gendertargeted programming, which promoted community-wide commitment. Emerging partnerships with organisations such as the ICPDO, ROG, Ateker Foundation and IDI expanded the network and reinforced collaboration on cross-border issues. The project also strengthened relationships in the consortium, as members coordinated roles

effectively, shared resources, and collaborated closely, which reduced costs and enhanced operational efficiency. The cluster-based approach strengthened relationships with community stakeholders, including chiefs, kraal leaders,¹⁰ church figures, and local government authorities. This encouraged local ownership and sustainable peace. The project emphasised a genderinclusive structure, with each peace committee consisting of five women and six men, empowering women and kraal youth in leadership roles.

The VSLAs were particularly impactful, with 30 trained members saving more than SSP 5.8 million (approximately USD 44,500) by June 2024 and accessing small loans for business growth. This CSO leader in Kapoeta East sub-regional cluster asserts:

" The VSLAs have been transformative. We're seeing tangible changes in household stability, and this economic resilience strengthens the peace initiatives we're working on."

The peace committees achieved notable successes, some of which include mediating inter-clan disputes over water and pasture, and negotiating the return of a Toposa cattle boy who was abducted by the Turkana. The committees also reduced organised cattle raids and strengthened early warning systems using mobile phones.

¹⁰ A traditional African village of huts, typically enclosed for keeping cattle.

Challenges and moving forward

Notable challenges included high expectations from communities, including local authorities, which were linked to the assumption that the project would address basic needs such as road infrastructure, water supply, and medical facilities, financial constraints that limited physical meetings, and logistical issues due to remote areas with poor internet connectivity and high car hire costs. Communication barriers in *kraal* areas also persisted, affecting youth engagement. Documenting best practices, such as the role of shared resources in peaceful coexistence, and addressing gaps in youth unemployment, food security, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention emerged as clear priorities.

The project highlighted the effectiveness of a cluster-based approach in fostering collaboration, strengthening governance, and promoting sustainable peace. ROG, the cluster lead, along with ICPDO, Ateker Foundation and IDI emphasised the need for continued support from LPI, Sida, and UNDP to build on these achievements. Priorities included deepening engagement with community peace structures, expanding economic empowerment initiatives, and strengthening early warning mechanisms. Sustained long-term commitment is essential to address the root causes of conflict and instability in Kapoeta East County and beyond.



Peace committee members jointly planning next training schedule (Cluster 5)

4. Key outcomes: what we achieved together

The cluster-based approach of the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* enabled meaningful progress in peace, resilience, and collaboration across the Karamoja Cluster. Through targeted support for CSOs, the project empowered communities to address local challenges and establish lasting structures for peace and economic stability.

To better understand the potential of the small grant cluster-based approach, it is insightful to summarise the broader impact of these efforts.

4.1 Strengthening local peace structures

The CSOs selected for small grant support focused on establishing or enhancing peace structures that communities can use to address and prevent conflicts. These structures provide trusted spaces for dialogue, conflict resolution, and collaborative decision-making.

Peace committees were set up in multiple communities facing resource conflicts to establish local forums where members could openly address disputes. These committees, which included respected local leaders, became critical in reducing tensions and fostering trust within and across communities.

Across the five project sub-regional clusters, CSOs organised peace dialogues to bring together leaders, elders, youth, and women from neighbouring communities. These dialogues served as safe spaces for discussing shared concerns, building mutual understanding, and establishing social bonds that bridged national borders. In high-risk areas, early warning systems helped communities report signs of potential conflict, enabling leaders to take timely action and coordinate community responses.

4.2 Economic empowerment and social resilience

The project emphasised economic empowerment to address the links between economic hardship and community instability. CSOs consequently implemented programmes providing financial

stability and promoting resilience to foster an environment conducive to peace.

The project introduced VSLAs in areas with high youth unemployment, providing financial training and access to small loans. Community members, especially young people and women, used these resources to start businesses and strengthen their financial independence. It's worth noting that the VSLAs have remained active and functional long after the small grants project concluded. This indicates ongoing efforts to ensure the sustainability of the gains made during the project implementation period. Job training programmes offered practical skills suited to local job markets. These programmes helped young people take on positive roles in their communities, encouraging economic opportunities and reducing the potential for conflict driven by economic pressures.

4.3 Empowering women in peace processes

Women played a central role in the Karamoja Cluster, and their participation in peacebuilding added a valuable dimension to local initiatives. Selected CSOs focused on equipping women with skills in conflict resolution, leadership, and advocacy. In Cluster IV, women received training and became active leaders in local peace efforts. Women's groups created inclusive spaces where women could discuss solutions to community issues, making peace efforts more reflective of community needs. These initiatives enabled women to bring unique perspectives to peacebuilding processes and contributed to more comprehensive conflict resolution.

Safe spaces were also established for women to discuss challenges such as domestic violence and economic pressures that impact family stability. These spaces provided support, resources, and training, empowering women to advocate for themselves and contribute to stronger, more resilient communities.

4.4 Promoting cross-border collaboration

The cluster-based approach encouraged local and regional cooperation, enabling communities to share resources, ideas, and solutions for addressing challenges they have in common. The CSOs selected to participate in the small grants project facilitated cross-border agreements in areas with limited resources, such as water and grazing land, to ensure fair sharing. These agreements proved essential in reducing tensions and preventing conflicts, particularly during times of scarcity. Regular dialogues between neighbouring communities created a shared sense of purpose. This allowed leaders to address common challenges collaboratively and fostered cooperation across borders.

4.5 Increasing policy influence and community recognition

An important part of the project was to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to work with local authorities to amplify community voices and ensure that peace efforts gain recognition in broader policy structures. A CSO partner in the Amudat Border sub-regional cluster explains the value of this approach:

"Without changes to trade policies, our work remains uphill. These restrictions limit economic opportunities, which in turn affects peacebuilding. We're working to bring this issue to the attention of policymakers."

Throughout the course of the small grant project, many CSOs developed partnerships with local authorities, helping to raise the visibility of the concerns in their communities. These partnerships encouraged local governments to support and recognise the importance of community-driven peacebuilding. Community members expressed a strong sense of pride and ownership in these initiatives. In particular, they viewed the work of CSOs as an integral part of their communities rather than as external interventions. This was a key factor in sustaining peace efforts over the long term.

4.6 Sustaining peace through community ownership

The Karamoja Small Grants Project established sustainable community-led frameworks that empowered local communities to maintain peace independently. Prioritising local ownership, strong partnerships, and integration with local governance, the project aimed to ensure long-term impact.

The economic initiatives promoted self-reliance and financial stability, reducing dependency on external aid. Local decision-makers supported these goals, aligning project objectives with regional policies. This served to strengthen community and government backing.

Emphasis on cross-border themes such as social cohesion and human security reinforced established community structures such as chief forums and councils, offering effective ways to address shared challenges. Project support for capacity strengthening and facilitating connections with regional networks further strengthened these initiatives, helping communities adapt and sustain peace.

4.7 Enhancing cross-border policy engagement in Eastern Africa

The small grant project aimed to create a policy environment that supports sustainable development and long-term stability for border regions. Specifically, it sought to align regional policies with community needs.

The goal was to address the unique challenges faced by border communities in Eastern Africa, ensuring that their needs inform and shape regional and continental policy frameworks. These communities, particularly those involved in cross-border trade, pastoral migration, and resource sharing, face significant challenges. These include stringent trade restrictions, lack of currency exchange facilities, and limited freedom of movement. Recognising these issues as key barriers to regional security and economic stability, it became essential

to elevate local concerns to a broader platform, including IGAD and African Union (AU) policy agendas, to facilitate a supportive policy environment that enhances trade, mobility, and collaboration across borders.

Over the course of the small grants project, several core areas were identified for effective policy intervention. One priority was easing trade restrictions on cross-border livestock movement by simplifying clearance requirements and delegating more authority to local border authorities. By addressing bureaucratic barriers, policies can enable smoother trade operations, reduce costs for traders, and improve economic outcomes for border communities. This approach aligns with the more localised model of authority that is advocated in existing policy frameworks, aiming to make cross-border commerce more practical and accessible.

Another focus area that emerged was the need for formal currency exchange facilities at border points to address current reliance on unregulated markets. Standardising currency exchanges stabilises trade conditions and reduces financial risks, while stimulating a more integrated regional economy. In addition, flexible migration policies were highlighted as essential for pastoralist communities. Policies that support organised and safe cross-border movements for herders seeking water and pasture can reduce resourcebased tensions and promote the shared and sustainable use of resources.





5. Primary insights: small grants and the cluster-based approach

The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* was designed to address critical human security challenges in a complex cross-border region by empowering CSOs with targeted funding and collaborative support. Operating across Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan, the initiative aimed to promote peace, resilience, and social cohesion by leveraging community-driven solutions and building regional crossborder partnerships. Insights gained from this experience underscore the significant impact of small grants and the cluster-based approach in creating sustainable locally led change.



Chief opening on of the Women training workshops (Cluster 3)

5.1 Transformative potential of small grants

The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* highlighted the transformative impact that small grants can achieve when aligned with locally driven and community-centred solutions. Through targeted grants, CSOs were empowered to address pressing human security issues specific to their communities, including inter-community tensions, resource management, and localised economic challenges. The small grants offered CSOs the flexibility to develop interventions that were both rooted in local knowledge and tailored to the unique circumstances in each region.

In addition to financial support, the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* emphasised capacity strengthening through targeted training. This combination of funding and training sought to provide a foundation for establishing resilient peace structures, bolstering economic stability, and initiating policy dialogues that amplify community voices. Importantly, the selected CSOs were able to develop initiatives that extended beyond the life of the project by ensuring that the

peace-building strategies were grounded in community ownership. Although limited in size, these grants demonstrated that modest resources can lead to lasting improvements when directed at well-defined community goals and backed by local involvement and expertise.

5.2 Strengthening regional collaboration through the cluster-based approach

The cluster-based approach emerged as a powerful model for advancing regional collaboration and mutual support among communities spanning international borders. Grouping CSO partners in geographic clusters allowed the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* to address specific regional challenges, while encouraging cross-border cooperation. This approach helped communities transform potential competition over shared resources into collaborative management, fostering social cohesion and reducing long-standing tensions in a region historically marked by resource-driven conflict.

Through cross-border networks, the selected CSOs engaged in collective advocacy efforts that helped influence policies promoting regional stability. The partnerships formed across borders proved to be valuable assets, as they enabled communities to address shared issues such as water scarcity and grazing land allocation through cooperative agreements rather than competition. While environmental and logistical challenges occasionally posed obstacles, the resilience built through these partnerships laid a foundation for sustainable

peace, helping communities manage external pressures more effectively.

The cluster-based approach also provided CSOs with a support system, which helped them navigate diverse policy and operational landscapes. Working together across the five sub-regional clusters offered partners access to a wealth of shared knowledge, resources, and insights on addressing similar challenges in their unique local contexts. This collaborative framework proved especially effective in fostering longterm regional integration and social cohesion.

5.3 Core themes in financial and operational structures

As the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* progressed, several core themes emerged around financial management and operational structures essential to facilitating effective cross-border collaboration. These themes highlighted both project strengths and areas that could benefit from refinement in future initiatives.

Financial accountability and simplification

The financial structures established by the project, such as designating team leaders for managing direct payments, reduced the administrative burden on smaller CSOs, allowing them to focus more on impactful community work. This simplified approach facilitated smoother fund management and centralised financial oversight, which was particularly valuable in the remote and resource-constrained environments of the Karamoja Cluster. At the same time,

challenges around documentation standards and the flexibility of fund transfers underscored areas for improvement. Participants recommended clearer financial protocols and standardised reporting templates to streamline accountability, making financial processes more transparent and adaptable for all partners.

Team leadership and coordination

The team leader model helped strengthen coordination, providing centralised logistical support and improving monitoring processes across clusters. By assigning a lead CSO in each sub-regional cluster, the initiative allowed other consortium members to dedicate more time to activities that directly impacted their communities, increasing overall productivity. Challenges such as inconsistent planning meetings and occasional misalignment in the use of funds, however, revealed the need for further refinement. Suggestions included establishing rotational leadership to involve all cluster members more actively in planning and decision-making. This would both diversify leadership experience and ensure more inclusive operational structures.

Sustainable resource allocation

High transportation and logistical costs in remote areas often stretched available funding, particularly in regions where cross-border access involved multiple layers of coordination with local authorities. This experience highlighted the need for realistic budgeting in cross-border initiatives. To enhance financial viability, participants proposed a higher minimum funding threshold to help cover essential costs related to transportation, logistics, and local government involvement. This insight emphasised the importance of adaptable financial structures capable of supporting the unique operational demands of peacebuilding in remote border regions.

The emergence of these core themes in financial management and operational coordination offers valuable lessons for future projects, particularly those operating in complex multi-border environments. A focus on accountability, inclusive leadership, and realistic budgeting ensures that cross-border initiatives can remain effective and transparent.

5.4 Sustainability

Sustainability was a central priority for the *Karamoja Small Grants Project*. In particular, this focused on embedding initiatives in local governance structures, strengthening community ownership, and creating resilient financial models to establish long-term impact.

The VSLAs became crucial to the project sustainability strategy as they enabled communities to support peacebuilding initiatives independently and reduced reliance on external funding. By providing financial training and resources, the VSLAs empowered community members to start businesses, save consistently, and build economic resilience. This approach fostered a culture of self-reliance, allowing communities to continue economic and social development efforts beyond the duration of the small grant project.

Aligning project goals with local policies was another key factor in achieving sustainability. The involvement of local decision-makers in the planning and implementation phases helped secure community buy-in, embedding project objectives in regional development plans. This alignment ensured that peace and resilience efforts can be sustained as integral components of broader community priorities, with local leaders

actively supporting and advocating for these initiatives.

The focus on cross-border themes such as social cohesion and human security helped unify the five subregional clusters and reinforce established community structures such as the chief forums and local councils. These frameworks provided a solid foundation for sustained impact, as they enabled communities to integrate project activities in familiar governance structures. Continued capacity strengthening, regional advocacy, and resource mobilisation further reinforced these efforts, helping communities adapt and maintain peace initiatives independently.

5.5 Partnership and cross-border collaboration

Partnerships and cross-border collaboration were key to project success, enabling CSOs to coordinate region-wide solutions to shared challenges. Clear agreements such as memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and formal partnership frameworks ensured alignment, accountability, and stronger coordination among partners. This structured approach enhanced efficiency, reduced duplication, and strengthened long-term cooperation, making peacebuilding efforts more effective and sustainable across borders.

The team leader model in each of the five sub-regional clusters helped streamline logistics and provided centralised support, allowing CSOs to focus on community-centred work. Flexible arrangements in the cluster-based approach gave

partners the ability to respond to changing conditions, while regular inperson meetings fostered open communication and allowed partners to refine strategies collectively. Furthermore, as emphasised by the CSOs, rotating leadership roles is crucial to strengthen ownership across organisations, leading to building diverse leadership skills. This also reduces reliance on a single partner and promotes a more balanced distribution of responsibilities.

Cross-border partnerships enabled communities to share knowledge, experiences, and resources, helping them tackle shared challenges such as resource competition more effectively. This collaborative approach strengthened mutual trust among communities and promoted regional stability by providing a unified front to address common issues.

5.6 Policy engagement

The *Karamoja Small Grants Project* aimed to influence policy frameworks that address the unique needs of border communities in Eastern Africa. Elevating local concerns to regional platforms such as IGAD and the AU allowed the project to work toward supportive policies for cross-border trade, migration, and security.

Engaging border communities directly in policy formulation was also identified as a way to make policies more effective and inclusive. By incorporating local voices into policy development, decision-makers can ensure that cross-border trade, migration, and security policies align with the lived realities of those directly impacted. Furthermore, improving both awareness and accessibility of existing IGAD and AU policy frameworks at the community level allows border populations to better understand and leverage regional provisions in their daily lives, making these frameworks more actionable and impactful.

TUPADO officer at peace accord place





6. Challenges and lessons learned

The implementation of the *Karamoja Small Grants Project* provided unique insights into the challenges of peacebuilding in cross-border regions.

This section summarises the main challenges encountered and highlights specific lessons that can inform future projects facing similar cross-border and multi-partner complexities.

6.1 Political and regulatory complexities

Working across Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan required navigating different political and regulatory environments, which affected project ability to coordinate consistently across borders. The distinct governance structures and local regulations in each country created obstacles that CSOs needed to address with care and adaptability.

Lesson learned

Close and proactive engagement with local government officials in each of the five sub-regional clusters is essential. Establishing relationships with local authorities early on can smooth project implementation by aligning efforts with policies in each region. This experience highlights the importance of contextsensitive project planning in politically complex areas.

6.2 Logistical constraints in remote border regions

The remote and often isolated locations of communities in the Karamoja Cluster posed significant logistical challenges. High transportation costs, inadequate infrastructure, and complex coordination needs across borders limited in-person meetings and complicated project execution.

Lesson learned

Investing in digital communication tools and building strong local partnerships are effective strategies for overcoming logistical constraints in remote areas. Flexibility in logistics planning is crucial, as is accounting for transportation and communication needs in the budgeting process.



Group picture of Peace committees

6.3 Limited funding for high-cost initiatives

While small grants provided vital support, the scope of some community needs outpaced available resources. The costs associated with cross-border collaboration, transportation, and coordination with local authorities exceeded initial funding allocations in some cases.

Lesson learned

Future projects should consider establishing higher minimum funding thresholds to ensure financial viability for initiatives in remote and isolated areas. Integrating community-driven models such as VSLAs can also supplement project funds, providing a degree of local financial self-reliance and resilience.

6.4 Coordination and leadership in the clusters

The cluster-based approach relied on a team leader model for coordination, which provided essential support, but revealed some challenges in scheduling and fund distribution. Balancing the leadership roles among CSOs was complex, especially in maintaining consistent communication and inclusive decisionmaking.

Lesson learned

Project experience reinforces the value of rotational leadership and collective planning processes to ensure more equitable participation among partners. Establishing clear roles, consistent schedules for planning meetings, and inclusive decision-making frameworks strengthens coordination within diverse partnerships.

6.5 Financial accountability and documentation challenges

Ensuring consistent financial accountability across multiple partners with different capacities posed a challenge. Although simplified financial processes helped, maintaining uniform standards in documentation and flexibility in fund distribution highlighted areas for improvement.

Lesson learned

Clear standardised financial protocols and regular training on financial accountability can strengthen transparency across the consortiums. Future initiatives should consider uniform documentation processes to support efficient financial management, especially in diverse cross-border partnerships.



7. Recommendations and a way forward

Building on the experiences and insights gained from the Karamoja Small Grants Project, the following seven recommendations outline actionable steps to enhance the impact, resilience, and sustainability of future peacebuilding projects in conflict-affected regions, especially in borderland areas. These strategies address financial flexibility, cross-consortium coordination, security and risk assessment, environmental resilience, extended project timelines, engaging local government and community leaders, and crossborder networks for policy advocacy.



Establish flexible funding models

Securing adaptable funding structures is essential to mitigate the financial constraints that often arise in remote and high-cost areas. Future initiatives should incorporate flexible budget allocations to account for unexpected expenses such as transportation and logistics, particularly in remote or hard-to-reach locations. Establishing contingency funds in project budgets ensures that resources are available to address unplanned costs, thereby maintaining project continuity and allowing CSOs to respond more effectively to emergent needs. Clear financial protocols and standardised reporting can further strengthen financial management, particularly in complex multi-partner settings.

Strengthen cross-consortium coordination

Clear and standardised practices among the cluster-based consortiums are essential for effective crossborder peace initiatives, especially when diverse organisational cultures are involved. Early alignment sessions should establish shared goals, roles, and responsibilities to strengthen collaboration. Formal agreements such as MoUs can define partner roles, while regular reviews and communication channels ensure ongoing coordination. Incorporating rotational leadership and shared decision-making in the subregional clusters can enhance organisational capacity and encourage collective ownership, improving coordination and long-term partnership sustainability.

Integrate security and risk mitigation strategies

In regions impacted by political instability and potential security threats, a proactive security approach is vital. Future initiatives must conduct comprehensive risk assessments and develop adaptive security protocols in collaboration with local authorities. Contingency planning, regular monitoring of potential threats, and implementing safety protocols for both project and local CSO staff, along with community participants, can help create a safer environment. Establishing adaptable security measures helps mitigate disruptions, allowing peacebuilding activities to proceed with minimal risk in volatile settings.

Address climate and environmental challenges

Environmental factors such as drought, resource scarcity, and climate change continually exacerbate tensions in conflict-prone regions. Integrating climate adaptation and environmental resilience measures into peacebuilding projects can mitigate resource-driven conflicts and build community resilience. Initiatives should incorporate sustainable resource management, water conservation programmes, and climate-adaptive agricultural practices to address these root causes of instability. By strengthening environmental resilience, projects can support community cohesion and foster long-term stability.

Extend project timeframes for deeper impact

Short project durations often limit the capacity to address complex intersecting challenges such as gender inequality, environmental degradation, and systemic poverty. For lasting change, future peace initiatives should consider longer project timelines or phased approaches that allow for sustained engagement with these complex issues. Extended project durations enable gradual integration of social, economic, and environmental factors, allowing projects to achieve more comprehensive impacts and support sustained improvements in human security.

Enhance local government and community engagement

Proactively engaging local authorities from the outset helps ensure regulatory support and aligns project objectives with local and regional priorities. Building strong long-term partnerships with local government officials and community leaders provides a foundation for ongoing project support and continuity, especially in politically complex areas. Close collaboration with local leaders also fosters local ownership and enhances the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding efforts, making communities better equipped to manage ongoing challenges.

Build cross-border networks for policy advocacy

Cross-border partnerships can provide a strong platform for influencing policy frameworks that support the mobility, resource-sharing, and economic needs of border communities. Developing robust crossborder networks enables future projects to engage in collective advocacy, pushing for policies that address the unique challenges of border communities. These networks allow for unified responses to shared issues, amplifying community voices at regional levels and contributing to a more supportive policy environment for cross-border stability and collaboration.



