

Youth for Social Cohesion (Y4SC) Project

Evaluation Report

By: Abdelmageed M. Yahya (Ph.D Geography)

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Summary:

This evaluation report is based on a comprehensive desk review of available activities reports and relevant documents and literature provided by VOND Foundation, consultation meetings and interviews with the project manager; the beneficiaries; facilitators; related institutions and partners; individual and group interviews; focus group discussions and participatory observation while attending the last learning event. The overall aim of this evaluation is to review progress achieved to date in the implementation of the project entitled " **Youth for Social Cohesion**" in South Darfur State so as to assess the impact, lessons, identify opportunities and constraints and chart the way forward for new programming. For the purpose of the evaluation, the following indicators have been tested: project relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and achievement of results, sustainability and challenges.

In summary, the evaluation found that:

- **On the project relevance:** the project is highly relevant because it is linked with the national and state government policy and community priorities and needs. The project has timely been implemented when looking to the political change that has taken place in Sudan and its repercussions. There is progress towards enhanced linkages and building relationships between different actors, government related departments and youth groups.
- **On efficiency:** The implementation of the project activities has contributed to rehabilitation and consolidation of social fabric through participation and positive interaction of youth from diverse localities and areas. Beside this, the training package in scope of entrepreneurship also could help much in economic empowerment of youth groups.
- **On the effectiveness:** the community-based approach used in the implementation of the project was found to be very responsive to the specific demands and the priorities of youth and government counterparts as well.
- **Achievement of the results:** The project implemented activities have achieved the target objectives through choosing a useful criteria for the selection of the project beneficiaries, delivery of the relevant activities and meeting the priority needs of the target beneficiaries via enhancing the capacities of youth in different disciplines mainly UNSCRs 1325 and 2250, conflict resolutions skills focusing on mediation and communication skills, as well as entrepreneurship, proposal writing and market survey.

The evaluation has come up with important recommendation relevant to the context of the area. The most important among which are to: follow up the intervention of VOND and El Ruhel Organization to ensure sustainability of the project positive results, additional training and awareness-raising for different stakeholders (mainly youth and women) and more focus on economic empowerment as stepping stone for youth engagement in political stability, peace and development in Darfur.

1. Introduction

Since its establishment in 2005 VOND foundation has been working in solidarity of women in Sudan generally and Darfur in particular. It has accumulated experience with the domain of peace-building, capacity building, community strengthening and gender issues mainly UNSR (1325). Over (24) months in 2018-2019 VOND implemented a project entitled "**Youth for Social Cohesion**" that had been formulated in 2017. The project is funded by Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in support of the National Action Plan on resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council. The project focuses on creation of enabling environment for youth and engages them to build resilience, social cohesiveness and security in their communities and be actively involved in peace building and reconciliation processes. With targeting (25) young male and female who are unemployed university graduates, the project seeks to capacitate young Sudanese youth with life-communication and critical thinking skills to strengthen them in building resilience against recruitment by extremism and fighting militias and involvement in conflict prevention. Through a series of 5 events (learning events, forums and workshops) with a well worked out agenda, youth in Nyala have been trained and capacitated to participate in the process of peace building. The project has been implemented through August 15, 2018 to April 30, 2020, by VOND Foundation in collaboration with Nomads (El Ruhel)¹ Organization and Rural Development in Nyala. So, this report describes the key findings of information that have been collected as a response to VOND wish to carry out final evaluation to the above-mentioned project.

1.1. The project focus and Objectives

The project focused on:

- 1- To create an enabling environment for youth and engage them to build resilience, social cohesiveness and security in their communities to be actively involved in peace building and reconciliation processes.
- 2- To strengthens youth with resilience and strategies to promote gender equality and to mitigate the negative consequences of gender inequality.

The project objectives can be articulated as follows:

1. To capacitate young Sudanese youth with life-, communication- and critical thinking skills to strengthen them in building resilience against recruitment by extremism and fighting militias and involvement in conflict prevention.
2. To equip to participate in the process of:

¹El Ruhel organisation changed the name to Nomad organisation, El Ruhel means Nomad in Arabic. Those names are used interchangeable.

- Development, adoption and promotion of the NAP1325 for youth (focusing on gender equality);
- Dialogue with civil society and link with national and international networks.
- Peace building, through mediation and the development of dialogue and reconciliation skills.

1.2. The project activities

The main activities of the project were implemented through (5) events as follows:

1. **The first Learning Event, held in December 2-6/ 2018.** The first learning event was started by conduction of need assessment to figure out the most important issues for the participants and their respective communities to be taken into account during the course of the project. Then the event was devoted to train the participants in diverse topics including looking at different mindsets, problem solving skills, entrepreneurship issues, pitching ideas, insight in UNSCRs 1325 and 2250, the negative consequences of harmful gender issues and effective listening.
2. **The second Learning Event, held in March 17-21/ 2019.** It was a five days learning workshop which covered mediation & local mechanism of conflict resolution (Judia); UNSCR Resolution 2250 of youth issues and youth participation in peace building and UNSC Resolution 1325 & Gender issues.
3. **The Third Learning Event, held in November 19-23/ 2019.** It was a learning workshop focused on leadership & effective communication; the role of youth in the transitional justice; SDGs focusing on goal (No 5) concerning gender equality and the goal (No16) of peace building; and Recommendation (No 30) of CEDAW.
4. **The fourth Learning Event, held in January 29 – February 2/ 2020.** This learning workshop was devoted to strengthen the capacity of the participants within the domain of coordination, networking, advocacy, political transformation and cooperative work.
5. **The fifth Learning Event, held in February 23- 27/ 2020.** As the last learning workshop, it covered proposal writing, effective communication skills, market survey and analysis, and political change with special emphasis to 2020 budget of the Sudanese Transitional Government.

1.3. The project duration

The project was planned to be implemented through 24 months from January 2018 to December 2019, but it was extended to February 2020. The eruption of the Sudanese peaceful revolution against the previous regime through December 2018 – April 2019 delayed the continuation of the project activities. However, the plan of

the scheduled activities and anticipated outcomes were fully achieved by the end of the project with no additional cost.

1.4. Beneficiaries and target groups

The project has mainly targeted (25) Sudanese young male and female who are unemployed university graduates from diverse geographical areas. They included key individuals drawn through clear criteria of selection in terms of interesting in gender equality; willing to engage in conflict resolution mechanisms and mediation; representing different disciplines, belonging to government counterparts, and to be from women's and youth organizations. However, the project could indirectly, target the community in South Darfur State through radio programming with total population number (4,500,000) according to the State estimations in (2018), who are divided into (21) localities that represented by the project direct beneficiaries.

1.5. Anticipated results and outputs:

The project proposal indicated the anticipated results in terms of project purposes as follows:

Purpose 1: Youth have the required skills for peace building and addressing social issues and disputes peacefully.

Variable indicator: At least (25) participants have gained knowledge about mediation and peace dialogue; and the participants have measurable improvements in self-assessment scores of training participation and in capacity assessment of the targeted beneficiaries.

Purpose 2: Youth have increased knowledge and understanding about gender equality.

Variable indicator: At least (25) participants, trained on UNSCR (1325) and have become gender knowledgeable and gender sensitive among their respective communities, and girls have more self-confidence and boys show gender sensitive behavior.

Purpose 3: Youth acquired the knowledge on working together; they are linked in a (NAP1325) network and can act as change agents.

Variable indicator: At least (25) of the participants youth trained on networking and linkages, and have started to work together on the development of the NAP 1325 for youth.

Added value: **Output 4:** Youth are equipped to develop the skills needed to voice their opinions on issues that are interested for them at different levels of formal decision making.

Variable indicator: The (25) Participants are able to present youth issues in a formal manner. At least (15) participants are engaged in UNSCR 2250 committees

combating extremism and contributing to alternative actions for peace and development.

1.6 Evaluation objectives:

The overall aim of this evaluation is to review progress achieved to date in the implementation of the **Youth for Social Cohesion** Program in South Darfur. As stipulated in the TOR, the overall objective of this evaluation is measure progress against stated objectives and to provide information about the performance of the project, paying particularly attention to the impact of the project actions against its objectives, through the planned period (its relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness, and potential impact); document lessons learned and provide practical recommendations for future plans. So, the practical recommendations emerging from this evaluation will: (i) Generate information on the level of achievement of the intervention objectives (outcomes and wherever possible any evidence of emerging impact) and (ii) inform and guide the design of future VOND's projects.

2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation is based on a detailed methodological framework significantly informed by VOND inputs. The evaluation action plan was carefully prepared by the external evaluator, prior to the commencement of the evaluation. The final evaluation is based on the theory of change underlying the project's proposal. Accordingly, it is grounded in a comprehensive approach that recognizes the interconnectedness among social, economic and political factors in influencing the intended process of social change and its trends. The methodology has strictly been guided by the objectives and deliverables set out in the terms of reference. The methodological framework was complemented by conventional qualitative participatory approach that puts the beneficiaries at the center of the evaluation process.

2.1 Data collection methods:

The evaluation has mainly relied on qualitative data that have been collected through:

- a. **Literature Review:** This included background data on the project targeted area including the project documents, proposal, and activities reports.
- b. **Interviews:** This included the project coordinators (from VOND foundation) and facilitators in Khartoum and Nyala. The structured interviews were conducted with key informants (groups and individual) (VOND director and board members), partner's organization (Nomads Organization – El Ruhal), government relevant staff (The state Ministry of Youth and Sports, HAC) and

- other stakeholders). Unstructured interviews were conducted with the project beneficiaries, both women and men who participated in the events.
- c. **Focus Group Discussions (FGD):** Focus group discussion was also, conducted with the project beneficiaries from young male and female in Nyala. The discussions focused on the project interventions and methods of delivery and their relevance, satisfaction, effectiveness, challenges, impact and sustainability. Other issues include level of interaction and response to peace issues, pre and post project access to state institutions, and invitation to suggestions for improving performance in the future were also tackled.
 - d. **Observation:** Observation was also used while the external evaluator attended the final event that was delivered through 23-27th February 2020.
 - e. **Case stories:** The external evaluator paid special attention to listen to the successful stories and testimonies regarding good practices and the efforts made in dissemination of gained knowledge from the project beneficiaries including male and female youth.

Special considerations have been given to:

- Gender sensitivity of the interventions in terms of addressing their needs, number targeted, capacity development and social status promotion.
- Project contribution and response to contemporary issues of the Sudanese revolution, peace processes and cooperation between communities.
- Relevance of the approach and activities to the socio economic and political priorities of the targeted communities and the local context in general.

2.2 Evaluation plan

To achieve the objectives of the evaluation the report attempts to answer three questions.

- 1) What did VOND Foundation and El Ruhel do so far, through this project?
- 2) How well did they do?
- 3) What difference did the project concerning engagement of youth in social cohesion made and what changes occurred because of the project implementation?

Accordingly, this report is tracking the following steps:

1. Program planning and delivery.
2. The participation of stakeholders.
3. Respected beneficiaries and community served by project.
4. The project results and outcomes indicators.
5. Challenges and problems that faced the implementation of the project activities.

6. Evaluation indicators and scores.
7. Lessons learned and recommendations.

3. Evaluation Results:

3.1 Planning and delivery of the project activities:

Planning: The planned activities of the intended project, monitoring reports and the findings of the meetings with the project coordinator (VOND Director), El Ruhail organization staff and members from relevant government institutions have revealed good planning and implementation of the project. It is evident that a clear monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and reporting system has been established and is functioning at the VOND foundation office. This takes the form of annual plans; action plans, cash forecast and activities report as well as regular follow up. It is to be noted that the project activities are extremely related to the context of the area and priorities of targeted beneficiaries. So, the following point reflects the delivered activities of the project that covered by the external evaluator.

Delivery of the Project activities: As mentioned above the project was mainly relied on capacity building of youth through conducting (5) learning events in Nyala, South Darfur State. The adopted methodology of using diverse learning methods including presentation, discussion, group work, role play, experience sharing and field exercise represent the stepping stone for the achievement of the project objectives. Going through the events, it is obvious that each learning event represents a package of interrelated issues, and each topic has somehow contributed in achieving the goal. Accordingly;

The first learning event used consultation meeting to assess the priorities of the youth for peace building and to determine their goals. One of the priorities of the youth that was mentioned repeatedly and was not part of our original program is the lack of economic opportunities. Because of the impact of this factor on conflict prevention and building resilience the facilitators decided to include this topic because it is an essential factor in reaching the main objective of the Y4SC project. So, different sessions were organized to provide participants with mindsets, ideas, tools and skills to increase their economic opportunities in Darfur.

Gender issues and effective listening: Through presentation, discussion and exercise the participants have actually changed their negative beliefs on gender issues. The facilitator was able to drive home the idea that effective listening requires mutual respect, patience, and placing yourself in the shoes of the other person. The UN Resolutions 1325 and 2250 were discussed in a plenary session. over five days the

duration of the second learning workshop, the participants gained bountiful theoretical and practical knowledge on mediation & local mechanism of conflict resolution (Judia); UNSC Resolution 2250 of youth issues and youth participation in peace building and UNSC Resolution 1325 & Gender issues.

By the end of the second learning, the participants were encouraged by VOND to contribute to awareness raising through dissemination of the knowledge they gained from the training in their communities.

Through the third event, other resolutions associated with the UNSCR 1325 were discussed and introduced to the participants, mainly recommendation No. 30 of CEDAW, resolutions No.1820, 1888 and 1889 concerning sexual violence and the development of indicators to monitor and measure the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. Different issues were addressed in the group work such as sexual violence, psychological support to the survivors of the violence and economic empowerment of women in the state. The issue of effective leadership was also discussed and the participants knew that communication and negotiation skills are important for effective leadership. On the other hand, a whole day was devoted to presentation and discussion on the transitional justice. However, Sudan Youth Strategy was also presented and discussed. The participants knew that some issues which were raised in the youth resolution 2250 such as violent extremists and employment opportunities. With regard to SDG perspective, almost, all the participants assured that, they were not familiar with the concept of SDGs and they perceive this session as very important to them. The participants recognized the importance of the two goals to peace building.

The fourth Learning session covered the basic concepts of conflict, the differences between struggle, conflict, dispute and violence; the causes of conflict; the importance of differentiating between the root causes, the proximate causes and the trigger out of the conflict. The event also focused on the importance of conflict analysis, analyzing the actors of the conflict and the external socio-economic and political context of the conflict. The session covered the issue of the conflict and human rights; the international agreements that have been ratified by Sudan; the differences between the mechanisms of conflict management and prevention. The gender effect of conflict, advocacy, lobbying and networking were also presented and discussed. As well, the participants recognized that peace building requires networking between all actors engaged in the process. Market survey was discussed and the participants understood that market survey is an essential step before starting the business.

The fifth leaning event represented the real face out of the project as focused on equipping the participants with real added values for their future work. With this regard, the two facilitators presented and trained the participants how to write project proposals including proposal writing requirements, Steps to write a project,

the logical framework for the project, the funding, and how to conduct an evaluation. As communication is an important factor in peace-building, conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence and social cohesion, the facilitator used diverse exercises to ensure understanding of communication concept and theories, listening as the benchmark of communication, means of communication. The secession also discussed the market strategies, political change and market survey followed by practical survey to Nyala market.

3.2 The project Results and outcomes and indicators:

Goal	Purpose	Planned activities	Efficiency		Effectiveness		Remarks
To create an enabling environment for youth and engage them to build resilience, social cohesiveness and security in their communities to be actively involved in peace building and reconciliation processes.	To capacitate young Sudanese youth with life-, communication- and critical thinking skills to strengthen them in building resilience against recruitment by extremism and fighting militias and involvement in conflict prevention.	Five Learning events, workshops and forums focusing on: 1-Training on UNSCR 1325 and 2250, CEDAW and/or African protocol for women rights 2-Training on communication skills 3-training on peace-building techniques, dialogue, mediation and reconciliation 4- Awareness on gender equality and gender mainstreaming 5-learning Planning, Monitoring and Reporting (PMR) 6- Analyze and formulate National Action Plan (NAP) concerning a UNSCR 1325/2250 and Youth, Peace and Development Agenda (YPDA) for UNSCR1325 7-Develop Action Plan for future interventions and explore supporting strategies 8- Additional topics for life skills (Building self-esteem and confidence)	Planned and achieved activities/topics	Planned but not achieved activities/topics	Planned and achieved outputs	Planned but not achieved outputs	
			Five learning events conducted covered UNSCRs 1325& 2250, CEDAW, gender issues, conflict resolution skills, peace-building techniques, dialogues, reconciliation, gender issues, M&E reporting, communication skills and additional topics for life skills	The youth did analysis for 1325, but they didn't get to the point where they could formulate 1325 NAP	Output 1: Youth have the required skills to enter into mediation and peace dialogues. Output 2: Youth have increased knowledge and understanding about gender equality. Output 3: Youth acquired the knowledge on working together; they are linked in a (NAP1325) network and can act as change agents. Output 4: Youth are equipped to develop the skills needed to voice their opinions on issues that concern them at different levels of formal decision making.	Youth are linked in a (NAP1325) network	The project planned activities, results and anticipated outcomes have been achieved. The political change in Sudan led to delay of some activities and the outcome concerning (1325 NAP). The postponed activities were implemented in 2020 after the scheduled project timeline without additional cost

4 Relevance

- 4.1 Looking to the context and dynamic of conflict in Darfur where the project has been implemented, it is worth mentioning that the project has succeeded in adoption of learning methods as the most suitable approach comparing to training. Of course, training and learning are inextricably linked and look like two faces of one coin, but training is more focusing on giving information and knowledge in a way of instruction from one side. Learning is a process of absorbing information with the goal of increasing skills and abilities for the sake of facing unexpected situations and future challenges.
- 4.2 The project activities suited to the priorities of the targeted group and policies of the state government and aligned with donor interest. Based on the need assessment, lack of economic opportunities is one of the most important issues should be addressed by the project. Because of the impact of this factor on conflict prevention and building resilience the facilitators included this topic because it is an essential factor in reaching the main objective of the Y4SC project. Participants expressed the need for development of the youth, building the economy and create projects that benefit the youth and the community at large. This positive and optimistic mindset was also manifested in terms of the cohesive attitude among the participants during the course of the learning events.
- 4.3 Focusing on the role of youth in social cohesion realizes that the project has addressed the most important issues for South Darfur community. It was mentioning multiple times during the opening ceremony that peace is currently prevailing in Darfur and that conflict resolution should no longer be the priority. The focus should rather currently, be reconciliation and development. so, increasing economic opportunities is vital because youth people feel with personal and family responsibility, the only way for them is to either join the armed movement or government forces under conditions of limited alternatives. Different sessions were conducted on entrepreneurship to provide participants with mindsets, ideas, tools and skills; this project however would potentially require a lot of effort and/or capital to start but provides a large business opportunity.
- 4.4 **The beneficiaries' selection:** The selection of the participants was based on fair criteria to ensure diversity of geography, political affiliation and ethnic background. VOND foundation in collaboration with El-Ruhal Organization for Rural Development and also in coordination with government counterparts (the State General Administration for Youth and Sport; administration of the productive graduate, and HAC) have set up precise criteria for the selection of the project beneficiaries. The criteria of selection included gender diversity, university degree with diverse disciplines, leadership skills, geographical area to ensure representation of different geographical areas and representing the localities of South Darfur State as well civilian camps beside personal

interest and commitment to the project objectives and anticipated results. Based on these criteria, and to ensure the best representation, some beneficiaries were selected by government mentioned institutions and some by VOND and Nomads Organization. Some of the beneficiaries have experienced voluntary work (cleaning hospitals), some have initiatives (using drama and media in solving social issues). Accordingly, (25) participants including (13) female and (12) male were selected.

4.5 The objectives: of the project objectives have clearly addressed in a right manner the issues that had been identified and the needs of the targeted communities. The communities in Darfur have been suffering from different types of conflicts including community-based conflicts over access and utilization of natural resources; political war represented by armed movements; and the Rapid Support as government militia. These different types of conflicts and armed entities have badly affected the daily life of Darfur people particularly youth, who are the agent and victims of such conflicts under condition of severe polarization and limited alternatives. With this regard, the project objectives have succeeded to address the right issues of the targeted communities. The need assessment that carried out at the beginning of the project intervention was also a creative idea to figure out the most important issues for youth to be addressed. Thus, the Project's objectives are consistent with the policies of the government counterparts and other stakeholders (line ministries, state governments, localities and local cultures and attitudes etc.).

4.6 The Project has initiated and enhanced social cohesion of the communities as: a) Most of the participants did not know each other before the intervention of the project. So, the project provided the suitable environment for the participants to know each other, positively interact and work together for achieving the objectives of the project (enhancing social cohesion and reducing community based conflicts via engaging in productive works and business); b) Interaction between the beneficiaries was good to know their issues and understanding their behaviors and attitudes; c) The project beneficiaries have been more cohesive as interviews and FGD revealed that agreed to consolidate their social relations and already started mutual visits to each other in different occasions to become a regular program particularly for those who got sick.

4.7 Synergy: There is synergy between the project interventions and those implemented by government relevant institutions and other international organizations: The director of the general administration of youth in South Darfur affirmed that most of the State Ministry projects are targeting engagement and capacity building of youth in peace and development and livelihood systems. The State Ministry of Youth has (5) years plan, where UNSCRs 1325 and 2250 are integral part of such plan. In addition, it is good that the first state plan on UNSCR 1325 in Darfur was in 2003, and in 2007 the greater three

Darfur States set up a state plan for UNSCR 1325. Many activities were conducted by UNAMD, most of them were awareness raising. It is to be noted that UNAMID had celebrated by UNSCR 1325, but there is no real tangible result on such matter. On the other hand, the project intervention has drawn the attention of the state government to positively involve youth in development projects and benefit from youth energy in achieving SDGs at the state level.

4.8 Participation of stakeholders: The project has identified and selected its key partners and beneficiary groups taking special consideration to gender balance, vulnerable groups and institutional capacity issues. The project stakeholders included the governor of South Darfur, some ministers and local government officials, UN agencies, INGOs, national organizations and notable community members. The opening ceremony was attended by approximately 200 guests, including the Vice-Governor, the Minister of Youth and Sport, the Director General of Youth, the HAC's Humanitarian Commissioner and other key community figures. Also, the representatives of the state ministry of youth and sports and HAC have actively participated in the learning events. The project had sufficiently targeted the newly graduate and unemployed youth from South Darfur State, with full coordination and collaboration with relevant government ministries and institutions at the state level, including the state ministry of Youth and Sport, the representative of HAC, and the representative of the state Peruse of Graduate Employment. Women have been involved in the different activities and they have special consideration in some activities, mainly that relate to peace and gender issues. Estimations show that women represented (50%) of the project beneficiaries. As a result, the role of woman in socio-economic and political stability and peaceful coexistence has become clearer and more effective. VOND Foundation has strongly focused on effective participation of youth, however, it is clear that women are more committed to participation comparing to men.

5 Effectiveness

5.1 Project has achieved its objectives of enabling youth to positively and actively contribute to social cohesion. The training components have shown that the participants have gained good knowledge on UNSCRs 1325 and 2250. Not only for the participants but also for the wider circle of stakeholders around them through radio and direct activities that organized by the participants among their respective communities. The project activities have not only covered the planned components of the training, but also other important issues relevant to the current political situation in Sudan has been included (e.g. constitutional document of the transitional government, orientation about the ongoing negotiation in South Sudan with special consideration to Darfur track, the 2020 budget and recurrent events).

5.2 Generation Dialogue:One of the very important issues was the initiation of what was called "**Generation Dialogue**", where elders and youth were brought together and discussed the experience of youth with VOND project focusing on 1325 and 2250. The discussion between youth and elder's community leaders was an important opportunity to address the positive history and peaceful coexistence that has long been experienced in the area and followed by the ancestors.It was really a creative idea and powerful approach to show the participants from youth the practicality of 2250 UNSCR in particular and how elder community leaders perceive the UNSCRs 1325 and 2250.

5.3 The presentation of the recorded radio film about UNSCRs (1325 and 2250) has shown that the performance of the implemented project by the end of the training events. It has also indicated that there is a deep understanding and great knowledge about UNSCR 1325 and 2250.

When the project started, I had no meaningful idea and hesitated to get start my own business, but after the first learning I got confidence to begin my business. Now, I have established a small company of Music Production with direct support from my mother and Mrs Mekka (VOND) who encouraged and provided me Midi-keyboard controller. Thanks for Mekka and VOND. Mohamed Wagih, a participant

5.4 El Ruhail Organization has proved a very strong commitment and great ability in providing logistic support to the project implementation, investing in its deep-rooted relation with HAC and government counterparts. The opening and closing sessions proved how the project organization committee has good relations with different stakeholders including national and international NGOs, UN agencies and government of South Darfur represented in the governor's representative from the ministry of education and guidance.

5.5 The Project has supported the beneficiaries to develop and enhance their social cohesion in the area through capacity building intervention. The delivered training package was useful enough to develop the skills of the participants, who are qualified graduates, in scope of UNSCRs 1325 and 2250; conflict resolution skills; conflict and context analysis, communication skills. Before the project implementation, all the participants, with no exception, had no idea about UNSCRs 1325 and 2250. The exercises and role play that presented by the participants during training events indicated the extent of knowledge that they gained by them about the covered topics particularly UNSCRs 1325 and 2250; conflict resolution skills and mediation; communication skills, proposal writing and market analysis.

5.6 The project intervention has obviously improved the capacity of the beneficiaries who became more self-confident than before. The following indications represent a strong evidence of the capacity improvement among the participants of the project:

- i. Miss Ihsan Ahmed haroon, has found her own kindergarten.

- ii. Miss Nafisa Omer Haroon, has started her own business between Sudan and Egypt. She also participated in the campaign of Malaria defeat through awareness raising on how to mitigate Malaria disease. Through Malaria campaign, Nafisa took the opportunity to address UNSCRs (1325 and 2250) among communities where she went.
- iii. Mr. Mohammed Wagih, has extended this work and founded his own advertisement business.
- iv. Mr. Mohammed Awad, has found his own training center
- v. Miss Alyaa Osman Hamid, has joint Tennis International Company
- vi. Mir Mazin Zayed and Abdelrahim Ishaag have engaged in agricultural investment.
- vii. Nine of the project participants organized sessions with some community leaders and security officers on which they discussed violations of human rights, peace and how to enhance social peace in Darfur.

It is worth mentioning that, before the intervention of VOND, the holistic majority of the participants had absolutely been surrendered with fewer alternatives to get into business work. It is clear that both male and female have retributively been selected and benefited from the project intervention. The successful engagement of these participants in business work would encourage the others to learn from their experiences. This could positively contribute to the achievement of the project objectives and thereby support the social cohesion in the area. However, the economic hardship that take place in Sudan stands as one of the very serious factors that constrain youth engagement in social cohesion.

The project has improved my knowledge and information on UNSCRs (1325 & 2250). I have become aware of how to help myself, people and solve problems. (Nafisa).

I was passive, but now I became active with self-confidence to lead initiatives and I have gained knowledge on gender issues and gender equality. (Kawser)

5.7 Response to current aspects: The project responded to the political change that has taken place in Sudan since April 2019, where structural change policies and positive interaction of youth with the political change were the real added value of the project intervention. The project activities had succeeded to train the participants of post-conflict issues mainly the transitional justice; and truth and reconciliation committees based on South Africa experience.

5.8 Different factors stand behind achieving the objectives of the project including choosing the right participants who have academic qualifications (universities graduates), relying on local consultants for the delivery of training as facilitators and trainer, who have good experience with facilitation and training skills accompanied by deep

understanding to the local context of Darfur with accumulated experience on UNSCRs 1325 and 2250 and the Project beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders have positive views about the process of the Project implementation.

6 Efficiency

6.1 Budget management versus achieving the objectives: The idea of the project management team was to achieve the maximum benefits regardless of budget limit. So, budget was wisely allocated for the implementation of the project activities according to plan, the project timeline and needed inputs. The planned activities postponed for eight months (March - October 2019) because of the political change and instability. This has negative impact of the budget management; however, the allocated budget has wisely been spent despite of economic inflation. The plan was to take the participants into exchange visit in Khartoum to interact with youth in Wadi organization project, but unfortunately this matter was not achieved. Nevertheless, the project steering committee was succeeded to include additional components in training (e.g. entrepreneurship, fund raising, proposal writing and awareness raising on 2020 budget of the transitional government). So, the project's budget and timeframe/duration has been justified based on the mentioned constraints and what have been achieved actually.

6.2 Cooperation between VOND and the implementing partner in Darfur: It is useful that the project intervention was in collaboration with the most eligible partners and active local NGOs (El-Ruhal Organization and Rural Development), the state ministry of youth and sports. Also, they invited some elders and native administrations to discuss the issues of 1325 and 2250. The relation between VOND and Ruhal organization and Rural Development was started before this project during (2016-2018) while VOND was implementing the Women Leadership and Empowerment Project (LEAP) as El-Ruhal Organization was one among (16) organizations who trained by VOND. Based on this experience and assessment to the most eligible organizations, VOND has signed MoU with Nomads Organization in 2018 for the implementation of this project.

6.3 Special consideration to beneficiaries needs: The project was started by conduction of training need assessment to figure out and prioritize the interests of the beneficiaries to be taken into consideration.

6.4 Integration with previous efforts: The project seems to be integrated with other previous efforts made by UNDP. In 2013, UNDP in South Darfur had implemented a project entitled "Youth Volunteer, rebuilding Darfur", that focused on building the capacity of youth in scope of entrepreneurship. The project was implemented in collaboration with peace center of Nyala University. On the other hand, the peace center of Nyala University organized some awareness activities on UNSCR 1325 in collaboration with the State Ministry of Social

Welfare. The project is also integrated with other interventions as World Vision Organization (International), that constructed social services (water and schools), established youth clubs and trained youth in entrepreneurship.

6.5 The project has succeeded to adopt the most likely approach to maximize benefits against limited events via covering variety of issues in either event (managing time factor, wisely spending money and budget allocation and maximization of benefits). However, for the sake of learning from the practical experiences, some business men were asked to join the learning event. The integration with business men in Nyala has equipped the participants with useful experiences that enabled some of them to successfully engage in the market economy. Practical exercises through role play on truth and reconciliation committees (learning from other experiences e.g. South Africa) and constitutional document of the transitional government.

6.6 The project has consolidated the relationship of cooperation between the participants and others involved in the same sector. The attendance of the representatives from HAC and the State Ministry of Youth and Sport strengthened the relationships through direct and daily interaction during the five events.

6.7 Implementation Capacity: The implementation capacity of the project's partners reveals the integration between the two implemented organizations (VOND and Nomads). The VOND foundation has strong capacity in human resource (trainer and facilitators), while Nomads has good relations with government relevant institutions and other stakeholders in South Darfur State. This integration has positively impacted on the proper implementation of the project, minimize the risks and overcome the challenges. It is to be noted that the relationship between VOND and Nomads started before this project, when they jointly implemented a mediation (Judia) project in Northern and South Darfur States. It was successful intervention as they were able to settle tribal conflicts in North Darfur (between Zayadia and Berti), in South Darfur (between Salamat and Fellata). VOND foundation has signed an agreement with the government counterparts represented by the State Ministry of Youth & Sport on one hand and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) on the other, to get legal and official support. The State Ministry of Youth has previously implemented a project in collaboration with UNDP. The project was focusing on capacity building of youth on peace and entrepreneurship. So, this project has filled the gap and completed what has been done so far by government relevant institutions.

7 Impact:

7.1 The project has adopted a useful theory of change, focusing on behavior change to encourage youth engagement in peace process rather than joining armed movements and/or Rapid

Support. So, the project activities succeeded to enhance the participants motives and ambitions, as some of them participated in international competition.

7.2 At the beginning of training events, the participation and interaction of female participants in particular, with facilitators and trainers was so limited, as they feel shy to talk. By the end of the project program all the participants, with no exception have become able to express their opinions and comments. The performance of the participants in general has clearly been improved. The participants broadcasted recorded band about UNSCRs 1325 and 2250 revealing their deep knowledge and believe in the stated. Through such record, female participants have shown a great competency on understanding the project covered topics.

7.3 The evidences have shown that the project beneficiaries have been enabled to adopt new approaches and practices the new knowledge that they gained for enhancing social cohesion in Darfur States, through the followings:

- i. Miss Islam Abdel-Latif Salih, participated in a workshop organized by the State Ministry of Youth and Sport in cooperation with UNWOMEN on women issues in January 2020. Through the workshop, Islam talked about UNSCR (1325) and her participation was useful and drew the attention of the attendances. She also became a member of a women association.
- ii. Mr. Musaab Musa; in February 2020 delivered a public speech at Nyala Market on the current political aspects in Sudan. He invested that occasion and talked about the ongoing peace negotiation that take place in Juba, South Sudan. He mentioned that women and youth should be involved in peace talks, political affairs, the transitional government at State level with special consideration to women role in peace and stability as stated in UNSCR 1325.
- iii. Mr. Abdelhameed mentioned that he played the role of mediator in a dispute erupted between two groups of people in Tulus locality. Fortunately, he succeeded to handle the case where he benefited from what he learned about mediation and reconciliation.
- iv. Mr. Abdelraheem, in January 2019 was invited to attend a training workshop as a trainee. When he reflected his experience about the presented topics, they discovered his capacity and knowledge about gender and entrepreneurships. Then the facilitator asked him to help in the training particularly the concepts of entrepreneurships, gender issues and peace building.
- v. Mr. Ahmed M. Haroon was also invited to attend a workshop in Khartoum on the Key Challenges of Investment Opportunities in Sudan. The workshop was organized by Arab Organization for Agricultural Development. Through which,he reflected the knowledge that he gained from the project training. He talked about VOND experience with youth training addressing the UNSCRs (1325 and 2250).

- vi. The participants (Ihsan,Ayman, Maysa, Nafisa, Islam and Alaa) however, participated in a radio program on the role of mediation in solving tribal conflicts in Darfur in February 2020.
- vii. Miss Tamadorfrom JebalMarra mentioned that a dispute occurred over gold camp ownership and resulted in the closure of the camp. The male only organized a meeting to discuss how to solve the problem. Miss Tamaor drew their attention to the importance of involving women in the discussion as women have the same right. Unfortunately, the men refused the participation of women. So, she organized women meeting and talk to them about their rights. She was able to mobilize women against discrimination made by men and at the end the governor of State responded to women's claim as he ordered to incorporate women in the solution of the problem.
- viii. Some of the participants were a part of the previous regime, where the events provide a suitable environment for them to positively interact with each other, particularly after the political change. This opened up a good change for dialogue, political compromise, reconciliation and tolerance among youth in Darfur. At the beginning, many of them were against any attempt of accepting each other, but at the end they have become integrated. This opened up a good change for political compromise, reconciliation and tolerance among youth in Darfur. At the beginning, many of them were against any attempt of reconciliation, but at the end they accepted each other.
- ix. The participants being able to use gained knowledge and experiences as mentioned by many participants during FGD and interviews. They have started to address gender issues, UNSCRs (1325 and 2250) among their special groups at localities, work, market and neighborhoods. The role of youth among their community has been transformed to be more productive and positive rather than to be passive and problem making. Also, the project has enhanced youth participation in peaceful coexistence initiatives, and consolidated the relationships of cooperation and community-based relations through direct interaction of youth from different geographical areas and sharing of knowledge that gained through the conducted learning events.
- x. As a result of the project intervention, the participants established an association of "**Youth for Social Cohesion**", which has been registered at the State Ministry of Social Welfare. They are also working to organize themselves to be registered as a local NGO. The other initiative is to form a Sudanese Youth Advocacy Group for Resolution 2250 and link together with advocacy groups from other countries.
- xi. The participants list (Annex 2) shows that women have the lion share with regard to participation in the Project activities. However, some interviewees see that it is important to increase the number of males as the traditions and social norms ban female from free movement if the idea is to move from area to another for enhancing peace and social cohesion.

7.4 The Project has positively impacted on addressing the cross-cutting issues including gender relations (the balanced selection of male and female), conflict-sensitivity/do-no-harm (diversity of tribes and political affiliation). According to the executive director of Nyala Admin Unit (D. Khalid El-Hattabi) the project has positively contributed to reduction of tribal intolerance among youth through bringing them together from diverse ethnic groups. The new relationship between the participants shall pave the way for them to give up negative habits and accept each other. This indicates the positive role that can be played by youth among their respective communities in future.

8 Sustainability

8.1 The representative of the department of youth and sport at state level emphasized the commitment of his office to sponsor the trained group through providing institutional support to activities and programs. The commitment of the implemented partners (VOND and El Ruhul Organization) to continue after VOND cease funding for the project, through providing technical assistance and link the beneficiaries with potential government and non-government institutions, could positively ensure the sustainability of the results.

8.2 It is worth mentioning the El-Ruhul Organization is a leading for a network comprises (5) local organizations work on training and capacity building on peace building and negotiation skills where youth could be targeted by such program and the project participants could be a part of this networks through Nomads Organization.

8.3 The participants have become more reliable to work together and are working hard to be registered an association. Formation of youth for social coherence association and its registration as a legal body at the State Ministry of Education and Guidance, administration of youth and sports is vital for sustainability of the project results.

8.4 The above-mentioned testimonies indicated the Project has created a sense of awareness on socio-political issues among the beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

9 Key challenges of the project implementation

- 1- Engagement of women in native administration is one of the very key challenges because of the cultural constraints while working in developing NAP for 1325.
- 2- Voluntary work for unemployed people might not be the good paradigm for enhancing youth engagement.
- 3- Linking youth with local traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution is difficult because most of local institutions have political affiliations and have not been affected by change yet. However, most of native administrations were established by the ex-

regime on political basis. Youth are not a part of local mechanisms of conflict resolution in their respective areas and most of native administrations, who have not been changed yet, have a political commitment with the NCP. Most of the youth are not accepting the ruling native administration

- 4- At the beginning, and before the political change, the state government was hesitated to bring representatives from IDPs camps in South Darfur, but the project administration has succeeded to bring two persons from them and participated in the project events.
- 5- Despite the political change was positive in providing a conducive environment for NGOs work in Sudan without restrictions, the change however, has negative impact for achieving the scheduled activities as many planned events had been postponed. As a consequence, the last postponed two activities (4th and 5th events) were organized in one month (February 2020) to be committed to the project time line.
- 6- The great challenge is how to sustain the project positive results under condition of limited available opportunities for future funding.
- 7- The project has adopted soft intervention approach. Most activities are learning events where some participants and stakeholders, mainly government counterparts believe in the importance of relief and recovery intervention.
- 8- The problem of translation into English Language was one of key obstacle for youth to communicate with international trainers. However, VOND provided a translator to ease the problem.

10 Evaluation indicators and scores for the project

Evaluation Criteria	Score (1-6)	Comments
Aim	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has adequately contributed to the enhancement of social cohesion through building the capacity of the targeted beneficiaries in different fields of social development, economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming. The intervention of VOND in South Darfur through this project directly supports the mission and mandate of VOND Foundation.
Design	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project design was clear and reasonable. The designed activities have generally been suitable for meeting the priorities and concerns of the beneficiaries and communities in the targeted area. The selection of Nyala, South Darfur was highly relevant to meet the objectives of the project particularly in current stage. There is a great likelihood of exchanging and replicating the experience from this project to other contexts.
Resourcing	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff members of VOND Foundation are aware of the area context. The main facilitators are familiar and aware of the area issues and context The project partners and beneficiaries appear to have great willingness to interact with VOND interventions and projects.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has adequately opened opportunities for further activities and interventions
Delivery	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project beneficiaries representing intended groups, gender balance and intended number of participants. As the State is extended in (21) localities, it would be more useful if the number of the participants was more than (25) person to enhance representation and maximize outputs. • There is a clear M&E and reporting system • The stakeholder's consultation before starting activities implementation was intrinsic to consider youth priorities and the most important issues. • The project rationale is highly relevant and meets community needs. • The project contributes to the ongoing efforts of the responsible government authorities concerning reduction of community-based conflict, peace-building and peaceful coexistence.
Organizational environment	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOND Foundation has a collaborative partnership with other NGOs who are working in the area to exchange experiences, which contributed in the creation of useful work plans. • Within the project framework, it is likely to replicate the project ideas in other areas. • There are clear M&E systems indicate planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. • The relationships of VOND with funding institutions, government and national and international NGOs is vital for further initiatives.

11. Current situation and risk mapping:

- a) Despite of the political change that removed the previous regime and supported by all Sudanese community from diverse states particularly Darfur, the eruption of community-based conflict (e.g. El-Gineina case) with ethnic dimension indicate how Darfur region is still suffering from socio-political vulnerability. Follow up peace-building and behavior change interventions could be vital.
- b) Networking in business might be difficult for a group of people who are diverse in interests, geographical areas, needs, priorities and personal commitment. Encouraging youth to establish economic cooperative could be a good opportunity to maximize benefits and minimize this risk as well.
- c) Involvement of female in socio-economic and political issues is restricted by deep-rooted social norms and diverse cultures. Assisting community-based organizations to undertake awareness sessions with special consideration to male might be useful to minimize this risk.
- d) The long-term war in Darfur has resulted in serious destruction of social fabric and massive human atrocities under conditions of mistrust trauma. Involvement of effective stakeholders and women in peace processes would be most likely to deal with this risk.

12 Lessons learned and recommendations:

12.1 Lessons learned

1. The project activities are focusing on soft intervention in terms of workshops of training and awareness raising. Despite the decision makers prefer hard interventions (relief and construction of social services), the Capacity building and behavior change programs are aligned with the contemporary trend of international interventions in peace-building and development.
2. The project management through adoption of tri-partnership between international organization represented by (VOND Foundation⁰, national (Nomads Organization) and government of South Darfur was useful idea in the implementation and sustainability of a project focuses on issues of diverse socio-economic and political dimensions.
3. Bearing in mind the budget limitation, despite the participants were somehow representing the different geographical areas of the state, the selection of (25) young male and female is seem very limited comparing to the big number of the localities in South Darfur (21 locality).
4. Depending on national consultants who have a great knowledge with the local context in addressing sensitive socio-economic and political issues was useful. At the same time, bringing international trainer was important to provide a chance of interaction with international experience and examined the practicality, seriousness and accountability of the implemented organization/s.
5. Youth in South Darfur are suffering from complicated problems of poverty, unemployment with limited alternatives and spread of drugs under conditionsof vulnerability and polarization by military forces. So, targeting youth to enhance social cohesion and peace-building in Sudan generally and Darfur in particular is the most practical idea since youth are agent and victims of wars and conflicts.
6. Training of youth in scope of promotion of life skills, projects designing and management and networking could positively impact on their disengagement in armed movement and military forces.
7. The positive interaction of the participants with the project activities provided a good chance of learning and strengthened their technical skills, and they have become very keen to learn from and help each other.
8. The learning events provided a good chance for the participants to benefit from training in learning good values of transparency, accountability and political will
9. The training events programs were very intensive;it would be good if the number of events increasedrather than to deliver intensive events.

12.2 Recommendations:

General recommendations:

1. The project should be extended, at least for one year, to ensure follow up of the project tangible results, maximization of benefits and sustainability of the intervention through provision of technical assistant to youth who have already started to reflect the project outcomes.
2. Conduct TOT for the project participants on UNSCRs (1325 and 2250), peace-building and conflict resolution skills mainly mediation and arbitration to ensure dissemination of gained knowledge at different levels mainly at the level of the (21) localities of South Darfur State and to enable youth play a positive role in mediation, reconciliation and peace building in the upcoming stage.
3. Advanced training on proposal writing and fund raising is vital to build the capacity of youth in Darfur under conditions of influx of international organizations after the political change in Sudan and thereby peruse youth career actively.
4. Enhancing local traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution via learning from other experiences in other areas of Sudan (Reconciliation and Peaceful Coexistence Mechanism RPCM of South Kordofan and Peace Council of Blue Nile), and exchange experiences from other African countries and international if possible.
5. The project is likely to be replicated in other states of Darfur based on the context similarity and as a response to the realistic need of Darfur communities to ensure application of the effective paradigm of VOND intervention.
6. Support collective work and cooperation between youth with regard to economic projects and business administration and enable youth to learn from each other's.

Policy-oriented Recommendations:

For Youth:

1. It is important to encourage youth to move forward through implementation and dissemination of what they have gained among their respective communities.
2. It might be likely for youth to think of making Cooperative Associations rather than private companies or organization to ensure integration of similar ideas and link them with each other.

For the Government and other Stakeholders:

1. Involving youth in decision making at different levels.
2. Empowering youth economically through opening up investment opportunities by national and international NGOs and finance institutions.

3. The State Ministry of Education has to adopt an integrated program of awareness raising at schools on UNSCR (1325) and negative attitude.
4. The HAC should provide training opportunities for youth in different disciplines.
5. Involving youth in peacemaking, negotiation, cabinet of the state government, committees of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation committees and native administration.
6. Provision of financial and kind support for youth to disseminate concepts of UNSCRs (1325 and 2250) at localities level.
7. Enable youth to networking and learning from national and international experiences.
8. Encouraging youth in entrepreneurship projects at individual and collective levels.
9. Special consideration should be given to youth recruitment in national and international NGOs and UN agencies employment opportunities.

Annex 1: List of interviewees

List of stakeholders and institutions met during the evaluation process Nyala, South Darfur during February 23-28th 2020

No .	Name	Organization /Area	Position	Telephone
1.	MekkaAbdelgabbar	VOND	Director, Project coordinator	+31681094224
2.	Elsa Scravesande	VOND	Facilitator	+31640146427
3.	AbdelrahmanAbddelgabar	VOND	Facilitator	+31655533386
4.	Awatif Ahmed Nihar	University of Khartoum	Facilitator	+249902867106
5.	Naglaa M. Basheir	U of Nyala	Facilitator	+249123659497
6.	Mahasin Ali Abdelgadir	El-Ruhal Org	Imp. Partner	249111657163
7.	Omer A. Mekki	Youth Administration	General manager	+249964183281 +249121177634
8.	Zahraa Ahmed Abdalla	HAC	Orgs. Administration	+249129178137
9.	Mohammed Wagih	Youth M	Participant	+249912645802
10	Alyaa Osman Ali	Youth F	Participants	+249118302120
11	Khalid El-Hatabi Adam	Government	Executive manger	+ 249123330959
12	Nafisa Omer Haroon	Youth F	Participants	+249911202061
13	KawserMergani	Youth F	Participants	+249924857947

