



Peace Palette Project Report

Community Dialogue with Cattle Camp Armed Youth in Cueibet–Tonj Corridor (Akut de Door Cross-border Workshop)

February 5 – 10, 2026



"These two days mark the day we will be pulling together in one direction." Wutkiir



Community Dialogue with Cattle Camp Armed Youth in Cueibet–Tonj Corridor (Akut de Door Cross-border Workshop)

1. Basic Information

Project Title:

Strengthening Peace between Cattle Camp Armed Youth in Cueibet and Tonj Corridor

Implementing Partner(s):

State and Local Government Authorities (Cueibet and Tonj) supported by Peace Palette

Lead Organisation:

Peace Palette

Geographic Location(s):

Cueibet County (Lakes State) and Tonj corridor (Warrap State)

Duration:

5 – 10 February

Donors and Stakeholders

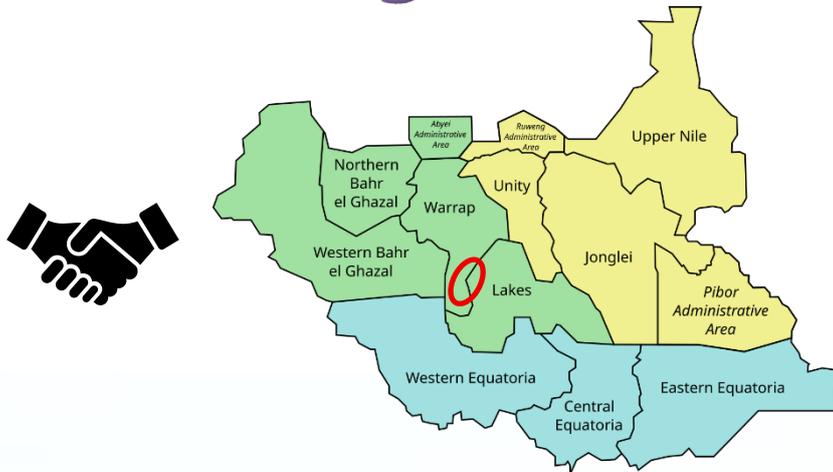
This project was primarily funded by the Wakachiai Project in Japan, with additional support from donors in Australia. Implementation was led by Peace Palette, with strong engagement from county and state government authorities throughout the process.

We received endorsement and support from:

1. **State Governor:** H.E Riny Tueny Mabor
2. **County Commissioner:** Hon John Majok
3. **State Minister:** Hon Nyanhok Malou
4. **Local Chief:** Der Makuei

The report at a glance

1 Dialogue of 2 States



40 participants
30 men / 10 women



2 full days together



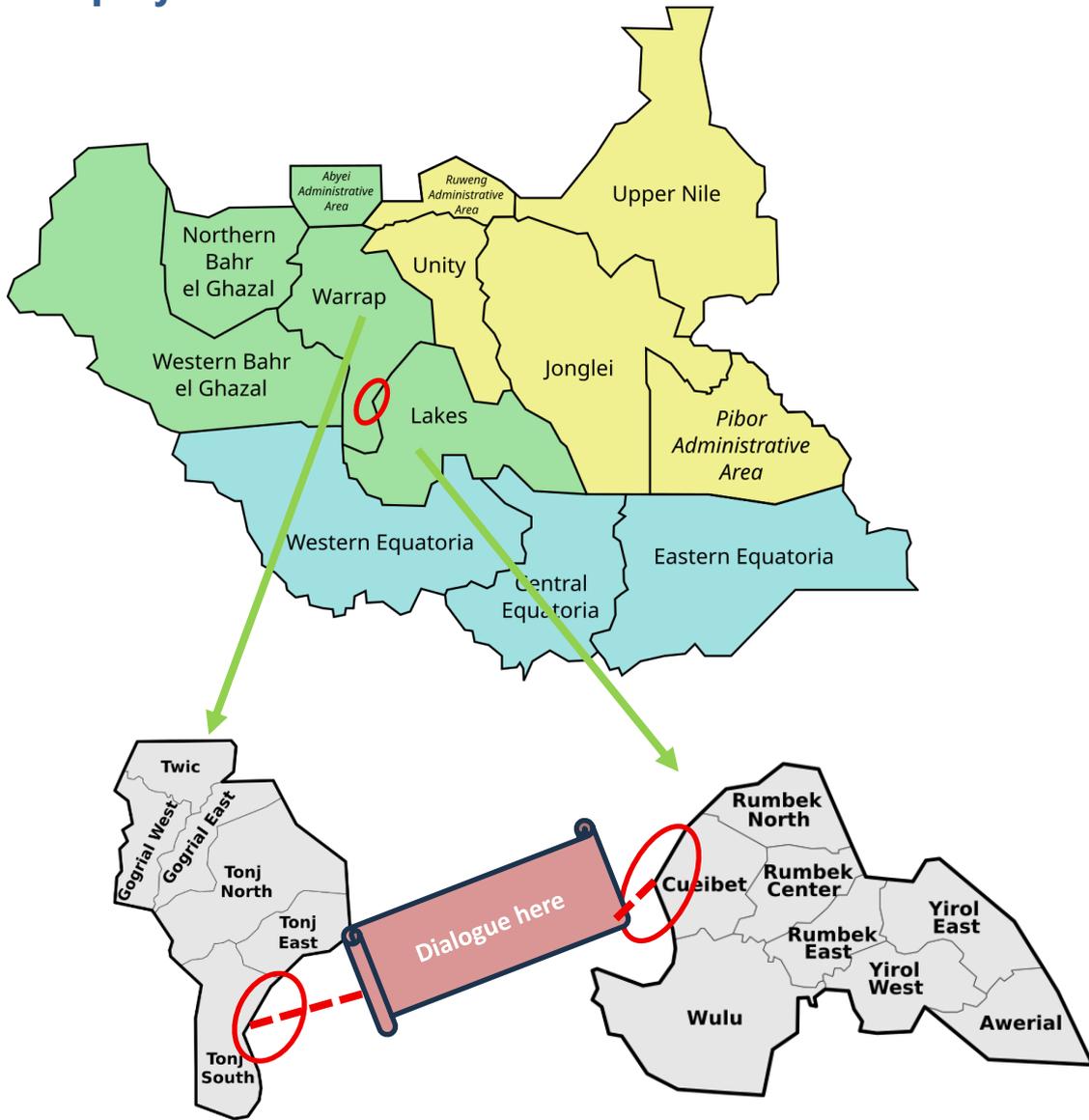
3 people employed



2 million people approx.
benefited



Our project area



Outcomes Summary

The meeting produced several significant commitments to immediately reduce violence and strengthen long-term cooperation between the two communities.

1. Immediate Cessation of Hostilities



Both groups formally agreed to cease all acts of violence against one another with immediate effect. This included halting cattle raids, revenge attacks, and all forms of armed confrontation. The agreement marked a critical shift from retaliation to dialogue as the primary means of resolving disputes.

2. Establishment of Early Warning and Joint Conflict Prevention Mechanisms



Participants committed to working together to share information on rising tensions, planned attacks, or emerging disputes. By communicating early, both sides aim to intervene promptly through dialogue and mediation to prevent conflicts from escalating into violence. This early warning system was recognised as essential to preventing future clashes.

3. Identification and Reporting of Criminal Elements



The groups acknowledged that some violence stems not from community grievances but from criminal individuals who exploit instability for personal gain. Participants agreed to identify such individuals in their communities and report them to local authorities for legal action. This commitment aims to distinguish criminal behaviour from legitimate community concerns and strengthen accountability.

4. Formation of the *Akut de Door* Grassroots Peace Committee



A joint peace committee, known as Akut de Door, was established, comprising representatives from both communities. The committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of agreements reached at the meeting, mediating emerging disputes, facilitating communication between cattle camps, and liaising with local authorities and peace partners. Its creation provides a permanent local structure to sustain peace efforts beyond the dialogue.

5. Recovery and Return of Stolen Cattle



Participants agreed to actively collect cattle stolen in previous raids and return them to their rightful owners. This process was recognised as a crucial confidence-building measure that helped restore trust, reduce grievances, and prevent cycles of revenge. Each community is committed to beginning this process immediately upon their return to their cattle camps.

Outputs summary

- A total of **40 participants** took part in the process, comprising **30 men and 10 women**.
- All participants were **adults**, with no individuals under the age of 18 involved.
- The meetings were conducted over **two full days**, running from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm each day.
- Facilitators held **5-day preparatory consultations** to ensure success of the 2-day workshop.
- Facilitators held **daily coordination sessions**, with one hour each morning for briefing and one hour each evening for debriefing to review progress, address challenges, and plan the following sessions.



Contents of Dialogue – themes and quotes

The dialogue sessions focused on key issues affecting relations among cattle camp armed youth and their communities, with the aim of building shared understanding, addressing drivers of conflict, and identifying practical pathways toward peace.

1. **Shaping A Shared Vision of Peace as Collective Responsibility**

Participants began by exploring what peace means in their daily lives and communities. Discussions moved beyond the mere absence of fighting to include safety, freedom of movement, access to grazing land and water, respect between clans, and the ability to raise families without fear. This helped establish a shared vision of peace as a positive, active condition that requires collective responsibility.

"We cannot achieve peace unless we commit to it." Hon John (Commissioner)

2. **Root Causes of Conflict**

The group examined the underlying factors fuelling violence between cattle camps and clans. These included cattle raiding, competition for grazing land and water points, revenge killings, political manipulation, a lack of economic opportunities for youth, and the ready availability of weapons. By identifying these root causes, participants were able to move beyond blaming individuals and focus on systemic issues that require joint solutions.

"The pain I am carrying is too much, and it is hurting me." Mary

3. **Peace for Long-term Prosperity and Livelihoods**

The meaning of peace was revisited when peace alone cannot meet basic survival needs. The group discussed the difficulty of meeting basic survival needs without cattle raiding as the sole source of food and income. The discussion was facilitated by the facilitators that lasting economic opportunities can only exist in a peaceful environment. They emphasised that stability enables communities, organisations, and government to introduce farming, trade, education, and other livelihood initiatives, which cannot be sustained during ongoing violence. Peace was therefore presented as the foundation for long-term prosperity.

"I do not expect anyone to come from anywhere to resolve our problem, but it is only we who will resolve our issues." Marial

4. **Accountability for Past Violence**

Concerns were raised for the many deaths caused by intercommunal conflict and how perpetrators of serious crimes could be held accountable. The facilitation team clarified that issues of justice and accountability fall within the responsibility of government authorities. Participants were encouraged to know that follow-up engagement would be organised with local authorities to raise these concerns and explore appropriate mechanisms for addressing past and ongoing abuses.

"The government is watching us kill each other with the guns, and they seem not keen to step in and disarm us." Mayiik

5. Impact of Conflict at Individual, Family, and Community Levels

Participants reflected on how conflict affects their personal lives, households, and wider communities. At the individual level, youth shared experiences of trauma, injury, displacement, and loss of livelihoods. Families described losing breadwinners, disrupted children's education, and constant fear. At the community level, conflict was linked to broken relationships, halted development, food insecurity, and long-term mistrust between clans.

"The guns we are carrying are the diseases we must treat; we will continue to die."
Asunta

6. Peaceful Coexistence and Living Side by Side

Discussions then focused on practical ways communities could live together peacefully despite past conflicts. Participants emphasised the importance of dialogue, respect for boundaries, early communication when tensions arise, the involvement of elders and youth leaders in mediation, and collective responsibility for preventing violence. Emphasis was placed on resolving disputes before they escalate into armed confrontations.

"I am happy to be here because I was able to meet with people, I once called enemies, but today we will leave as friends and brothers." Mawut

7. Sharing and Managing Natural Resources

Given that competition for grazing land, water sources, and migration routes is a major trigger of conflict, participants discussed fair and cooperative ways to share natural resources. This included agreeing on access to water points, respecting farming areas, coordinating seasonal cattle movements, and using local leadership structures to manage land and resource disputes.

"Look at our neighbours. They are doing better than we are. We can do better." Majok

8. Formation of the Akut de Door Grassroots Peace Committee and Next Steps

The final theme centred on establishing the Akut de Door, a community-based peace committee comprising armed youth representatives from cattle camps. Participants discussed the committee's purpose, its roles in preventing violence, mediating disputes, spreading peace messages, and coordinating with local authorities and elders. Clear next steps were identified, including regular meetings, community outreach, early warning of potential conflicts, and continued support from peace partners.

"I am looking forward to when we meet again and assess the progress of our achievements." Gum

Ways forward – critical steps for the Akut de Door Committee

1. Strengthen and Support the Akut de Door Peace Committee –

Provide ongoing technical support, mentorship, and basic communication tools to enable the committee to respond quickly to emerging conflicts, coordinate dialogue, and maintain regular engagement between cattle camps. (Peace Palette)

2. Support Community-Based Early Warning Systems –

Formalise information-sharing mechanisms between cattle camps, elders, youth leaders, and authorities to identify risks early and prevent violence before it escalates. (Peace Palette)

3. Facilitate the Recovery and Restitution of Stolen Cattle –

Support structured processes for tracking, returning, and verifying stolen cattle to prevent revenge attacks and rebuild trust between communities. (Akut de door)

4. Establish Regular Follow-up Dialogues –

Organise quarterly review meetings among the communities to assess progress, address emerging tensions, and reinforce commitments from the initial dialogue.

5. Ensure Sustainable Funding for Grassroots Peace Efforts –

Encourage donors and partners to commit to longer-term support rather than one-off dialogues, recognising that peacebuilding among armed youth requires consistent engagement over time.

6. Integrate Local Authorities into Peace Monitoring

Strengthen collaboration between the peace committee and county-level authorities and ensure agreements are recognised, supported, and enforced, where necessary, particularly in security and accountability matters.

7. Promote Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

Create safe spaces and targeted activities that enable women to contribute meaningfully to conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation efforts.

8. Develop Livelihood and Economic Alternatives for Youth

Introduce practical livelihood initiatives, such as farming support, vocational training, and small-scale business opportunities, to reduce reliance on cattle raiding as a survival strategy.

9. Provide Psychosocial Support and Trauma Healing

Introduce community-based healing initiatives to address the emotional and psychological impacts of prolonged conflict, particularly among youth who have experienced violence.

10. Monitor, Document, and Share Lessons Learned

Regularly document progress, challenges, and success stories to inform future peacebuilding initiatives and guide policy and programme design.

Important notes – challenges of delivering the meeting

Delivering the meeting presented several logistical and security-related challenges, largely due to the remote nature of cattle camps and the fragile context in which armed youth operate.

	Challenges	How they were addressed
1	Mobility was a major constraint. Many cattle camps are located in hard-to-reach areas with no proper road infrastructure, particularly during the rainy season between April and November, when access becomes nearly impossible for vehicles.	Participants were asked to walk to the meeting venue. While demanding, many youth travelled long distances on foot, in some cases for up to two days, demonstrating strong commitment to the peace process.
2	Limited telecommunication further complicated coordination. Most of the areas are not connected to the national communication network, making phone contact unreliable or impossible.	To mobilise participants, the team relied on word of mouth. Trusted community members were sent to walk to different cattle camps to deliver information about the meeting, its purpose, and the agreed-upon dates.
3	Insecurity along travel routes posed serious risks. Movement between cattle camps and the meeting venue can expose individuals to attacks by armed criminals or rival groups.	To reduce these risks, participants were encouraged to travel in groups rather than alone, increasing safety and discouraging potential attacks.
4	The risk of revenge killings was another sensitive challenge. Some participants came from clans with a history of violent conflict, creating the possibility of confrontation while travelling or upon arrival.	This was addressed through prior deep engagement and consultations with clan leaders and youth representatives, during which clear agreements were reached to suspend hostilities for the duration of the process and to allow dialogue to take place peacefully.
5	Reaching consensus on a neutral meeting venue also required careful negotiation. Different groups initially expressed concerns about safety and bias depending on the location.	The local government was therefore engaged to mediate discussions, eventually securing agreement to hold the meeting in Cueibet. Authorities also provided assurances of security, which helped build participants' confidence.
6	Financial constraints further affected implementation. The initial budget exceeded available resources, putting the entire meeting at risk.	The team worked closely with participants to revise the budget, removing non-essential costs and identifying practical alternatives. Due to the high cost of vehicle hire, several participants voluntarily chose to walk to the venue. These adjustments not only made the meeting feasible but also reflected strong local ownership of the process.
7	Sudden security incidents can disrupt plans, seasonal migration of cattle camps, which make participants difficult to locate, and scepticism toward dialogue processes stemming from past unfulfilled promises.	These were mitigated through continuous engagement with youth leaders, transparency about the meeting's purpose, and the involvement of trusted local authorities and community figures.

Main staff members

Role	Name	Profile
Peace Specialist	David Nyuol Vincent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co-Founder & Executive Director of Peace Palette ● Significant international leadership figure ● Lead facilitator for South Sudan National Reconciliation Agenda ● Author of "The Boy Who Wouldn't Die" (Publisher: Allen & Unwin) ● Double Degree – Bachelor of Political Science and Criminology from the University of Melbourne ● Fluent in Dinka, English, Swahili, and Arabic.
Co-Facilitator	Mary Arun Gol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chairwoman of the Rumbek Women's Association ● Peace Canal Area Coordinator for a national organisation in South Sudan ● Community Mobiliser ● Holds a degree in Agriculture ● Fluent in Dinka and English
Co-Facilitator	John Mayiik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peacebuilding Manager – TOCH ● Expert in early warning and early response systems ● Holds a master's degree in Conflict Resolution ● Fluent in Dinka, English, Swahili, and Arabic.
Co-Facilitator	Salva Akot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peace Desk Coordinator ● Deputy Peacebuilding Manager ● Expert in process design ● Fluent in Dinka, English, and Arabic.

