I. Key development issues and rationale for Bank involvement

Strategic Context

*There is widespread agreement that livelihoods support for youth is a priority in South Sudan. Conflict-affected youth, defined as those that participated in conflict either over time or in short engagements and those whose lives were significantly altered by conflict, are a particularly vulnerable subset of the youth group.* Unfortunately the livelihoods models primarily rely on traditional vocational training or TVET which has been found to be inaccessible to this group and not targeted for these specific needs. The proposed project aims to build from but adjust the approach taken in traditional livelihoods programming to provide more realistic and targeted training for conflict-affected youth.

Civilian youth have widely been drawn into the renewed conflict, building upon a history of youth participation in conflict in South Sudan. This is evidenced by recruitment of youth into the White Army and non-formalized youth groups siding with the SPLA. South Sudanese youth are also drawn into other forms of community level violence such as armed cattle raiding. In July 2014 a JSDF funded Stakeholder and Community Assessment consultative study was completed in which communities identified conflict-affected and unskilled youth as a priority group. Furthermore, communities identified economic empowerment and specifically immediate use vocational skills training as a key strategy to address the risks associated with this group.

Youth are led to violence due to a combination of factors including widespread unemployment, resultant low reservation wage, limited education and skills experience, and social pressures. Global research has established these links with a particular emphasis on the connection between youth unemployment and the propensity for violence (Collier 2007; World Bank 2011; World Bank/Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) 2014b; Bennett et al
2011). This scenario is concerning as South Sudan has a large youth population, with almost 75% under the age of 30 (GoSS 2011) and the highest levels of unemployment in South Sudan are among youth (World Bank, 2013b). There are no official figures available on the national rate of youth unemployment but it has been highlighted as a key challenge by the government, as well as by development partners. Female youth face particular challenges following decades of disempowerment in South Sudan, whereas male youth also have specific rites of passage and community perceptions around the role of violence therein. Additionally, there are many youth that have not been pushed to violence but are affected by the conflict. Research in South Sudan has shown alarmingly high levels of trauma experienced by ex-combatants as well as civilians not directly engaged in combat (Winkler, N 2010). Trauma-related mental health disorders can pose barriers to participation in community life, income generation and peace-building activities. The consultations clearly found that significant support to enhance livelihood opportunities is required to sway disenfranchised youth away from resorting to violence.

**These groups and individuals require customized programming as a security and development imperative** - underscored by recent events in South Sudan - and as a critical element of broader peacebuilding efforts and pre-requisite for sustainable development. Youth, particularly those directly affected by conflict: (i) have low levels of education and lack basic literacy, numeracy and language skills, (ii) lack business management know-how, (iii) may face psychosocial challenges, and (iv) face considerable barriers to accessing existing vocational training opportunities. Trainers report difficulties and additional time required to train this largely illiterate, under-educated target group. To this end, stakeholders agreed that basic literacy and numeracy classes greatly enhance, not only the value of the vocational skills training (VST) instruction itself, but also contributes to students’ employability skills.

**Unfortunately, the traditional models of vocational and livelihoods training do not meet the needs of this vulnerable group.** While there is much discussion of vocational training in South Sudan and specifically on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), these trainings do not address the complex needs of conflict affected youth in regard to basic literacy, educational attainment levels, lack of classroom experience, psychosocial strain and destructive alternate economic pathways. Nor do they equip them with the knowledge and tools to secure alternate livelihoods in the peacebuilding context. Gender also presents a significant factor in the ability to access vocational training as well as the type of vocation selected. Research has shown that women and girls face barriers to vocational training linked to gender norms dictating domestic commitments and expectation that they will remain in the home (Women’s Refugee Commission 2010). In addition females have lower literacy and educational attainment levels and high exposure to insecurity.

**A new approach to the training model for targeting these youth will therefore be essential for ensuring inclusive growth.** Training models targeting these groups and focusing on more flexible vocational skills training (VST) together with complementary trainings on entrepreneurship, cooperatives, functional literacy/numeracy, life skills and psychosocial support will be required to meet the needs outlined during community consultations.

**Critically, the consultative process further uncovered a significant gap in the availability of local trainers.** Currently the demand for trainers far exceeds the current capacity with this trend particularly visible outside of Juba. Therefore organizations were found to primarily rely on
international trainers, which presents significant issues around sustainability and effectiveness as trainings in local languages are therefore not feasible.

**Country Context**

*Only three years after the Republic of South Sudan’s independence, the country has fallen back into conflict and faces significant instability with considerable relief and development challenges.* The rapid escalation of the current conflict was facilitated by the high level of militarization throughout the country – both in formal security forces with numerous factions, non-government militias, and significant civilian armament. As of 2011 the Republic of South Sudan (RoSS) cited the need for a new national Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program to professionalize and downsize the National Organized Forces (NOF), unfortunately the new program was only being piloted at the time of the conflagration of the new conflict.

*Beyond security challenges, South Sudan is facing particularly stark poverty rates and low education indicators.* According to the most recent national data, over half of the population of 8.3 million lives below the national poverty line with significant inequalities in access to services, resources and opportunities. Gender disparities are pronounced with female-headed households among the poorest. Further, education indicators remain low with only 27% of the adult population being literate and net primary enrolment at 44% (Government of South Sudan (G0SS) 2011). South Sudan’s low education indicators are particularly evident among conflict-affected populations where lack of facilities, capacity and displacement compromised access to education for decades. Youth and children actively engaged in combat will have missed the opportunity for education aside from the few able to attend ‘bush schools’ (Atari et al 2009). In addition to the resulting low educational attainment, such conflict-affected youth will also suffer challenges relating to their limited exposure to structured education. While increasing numbers of children have been able to attend primary school since the signing of the CPA, completion rates and access to post-primary remain low.

*Further compounding the challenges, income generation and livelihood opportunities are extremely limited in South Sudan.* An over-dependence on oil production is compounded by strong import dependency, with an absence of manufacturing or commercial agricultural base and services sector. Decades of sustained conflict destroyed rural infrastructure networks, including roads, markets and storage facilities and impeded transfers of knowledge and technology. This is reflected in the agricultural sector where, despite an abundance of natural resources and enormous agricultural potential, with 70% of its land area favourable for crop production, less than 4% is under cultivation (International Fund for Agricultural Development 2007). Therefore, livelihood development priorities for South Sudan include the diversification of the non-oil economy with particular emphasis on rapid expansion of the full value chain of agricultural production as well as encouragement of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to process and produce local goods.

**II. Proposed objective(s)**

**Development Objective**
The proposed Project Development Objective (PDO) is to provide an economic empowerment training program for conflict-affected youth in South Sudan through development of the curriculum, skilling of trainers and piloting the training.

Key Results
The project is to achieve the PDO by developing economic empowerment training modules appropriate for conflict-affected youth, successfully training trainers to implement these modules, and pilot this training with potential youth beneficiaries. Progress in achieving the PDO will be measured by the following key results indicators:

1. Number of trainers completing the training of trainers (disaggregated by gender, region, and training content type);
2. Number of youth attending the training (disaggregated by gender, region, center/mobile training and training type) and
3. Percentage of youth beneficiaries participating in an economic activity 6 months or more after training completion (disaggregated by age, gender and region).

III. Preliminary description

Concept Description

This project will develop the tools and trainers for a holistic suite of economic empowerment training specifically adapted to the needs of conflict-affected youth and pilot this new approach through a set of trainings for conflict-affected youth. The programming will be designed specifically for this vulnerable group, with particular recognition of low literacy/educational attainment levels, challenges resulting from exposure to traumatic experiences, and time-use cost-benefit realities. Traditional vocational training and TVET programming has been found to be largely ineffective as it presupposes levels of literacy, employment opportunities and long timelines of commitment which are not realistic for these youth. The innovative approach being piloted here instead builds skills that allow for immediate use in their communities while training for long-term economic flexibility and mobility.

The project will include development of the curriculum, the training of local national trainers, and the piloting of the training with conflict-affected youth. In this manner the beneficiaries of the project will include not only youth receiving training but also local tradespeople newly trained as trainers. The business and pedagogical skills gained will increase their capacity to expand their businesses and train additional youth as their business expands, as well as bring new approaches to their communities. This emphasis on expanding the pool of local trainers is necessary to provide services in local dialects to non-English or Arabic speaking individuals and developmentally preferable given the increased need for understanding of local contexts and challenges in the local business communities.

The training will include elements of vocational skills with immediate usage at the rural and semi-urban community level; imbedded entrepreneurship, cooperatives and business skills; functional literacy/numeracy; life skills on personal conduct, business conduct and conflict

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1 To promote social cohesion rather than potentially contribute to a further division among the youth, the term “conflict-affected youth” is used here to broadly capture both youth that have actively participated in conflict and those impacted by the conflict.
mitigation; and psychosocial support training. The skills training will cover both agrarian and non-agrarian options. This will build on the work of Japan International Cooperation Agency’s (JICA) Project for Improvement of Basic Skills and Vocational Training in Southern Sudan (SAVOT & SAVOT2) but in a manner that is accessible and digestible to vulnerable conflict-affected youth.

This project is guided by the following Key Principles: i) adopt a holistic approach to vocational training courses, integrating business skills and life skills as well as providing literacy, numeracy and English language courses in parallel; ii) Ensure a market-based and business orientation of services; iii) Ensure vocational training activities build upon traditional livelihoods; iv) Ensure conflict sensitivity; v) Ensure gender sensitivity; vi) Employ community-based, participatory mechanisms; and vii) place a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation.

Project Components

The project includes three components:

- Component A: Training of Trainers
- Component B: Pilot the Training Approach & ToT Model through Training for Conflict-Affected Youth
- Component C: Project management and monitoring and evaluation

Component A: Training of Trainers

This component will first develop the curriculum as informed by a market assessment, will recruit new and existing trainers to the program and will provide a training of trainers on the holistic economic empowerment training.

Curriculum Development

The first step in this process is the development of a strong curriculum that is holistic and targeted for conflict-affected vulnerable youth. The curriculum development will build on existing resources to develop a series of standardized courses tailored so as to be accessible by typically excluded youth. The primary components of the economic empowerment training are to include vocational basic-use skills training, entrepreneurship, associations and financial literacy training, psychosocial support training, life skills and functional literacy/numeracy.

The curriculum will place an emphasis on experiential learning through practical and interactive teaching approaches in order to (i) avoid excluding the most vulnerable populations who are unable to read and write and (ii) ensure training is visibly transferable to the local market and can facilitate immediate, or relatively near-term income generation in a way that is tangible to students.

Gender-sensitivity: Training design will take into consideration barriers which prevent women and girls from participating. This includes: (i) offering courses in more female dominated professions alongside sensitization to promote female engagement in non-traditional domains, (ii) provision of childcare facilities, (iii) be prepared to implement flexible training schedules
accordance to the needs of trainees, for example, shorter, more intensive courses specifically for women with other obligations, holding training at appropriate times of the year (not during harvest for example), and (iv) outreach and recruitment to promote women’s participation alongside sensitization and messaging to enable acceptance/understanding of the importance of women’s participation.

Training of Trainers

The Training of Trainers is necessary to strengthen and grow the pool of local trainers in the area of economic empowerment. Due to the large percentage of citizens affected by the current conflict, as well as the high numbers of youth participating in the fighting either informally or formally, there is a very high demand for these training services. However, there is an insufficient pool of trainers available to deliver these trainings. There is also a severe lack of local trainers, which are not only preferable in terms of sustainability and cultural awareness, but also a requirement due to linguistic realities outside of the major cities of South Sudan. Additionally, once peace is agreed, there will be large numbers of DDR participants requiring these services in the future.

Therefore, the Training of Trainers will target both existing and new trainers to increase the training capacity in these crucial areas. The project will coordinate with state, private sector, NGO, civil society and faith based sectors to enhance the training capacity of the existing trainers. New trainers will be identified based on proficiency in the necessary vocation, thus allowing both new and existing trainers to participate in the same course. This also presents the opportunity to establish a mentoring system, where existing trainers from state, private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), civil society and faith based sectors can be paired with new trainers during the course. The new trainers will be drawn from tradespeople in communities in all 10 states. The training will provide them additional business knowledge as well as training methodology which will enhance their capacity as businesspeople, with the benefit of being able to train additional staff as their business expands. Existing trainers will enhance their training capacity by learning approaches and curriculum applicable to conflict-affected youth. Trainers will not be paid during the ToT but their room and board will be covered and, based on performance by the individual during the ToT, those selected to conduct the training of youth will be paid for their services. This training will also have application to other low literacy/low business experience vulnerable groups.

The training of trainers will be conducted in three regional centers around the country and will draw trainers from all 10 states. In keeping with the importance of conflict-sensitivity in the current setting, it is crucial that training be offered in all three regions of the country – ensuring neutrality and equal service delivery throughout the country through a broad representation across the country as beneficiary trainers and trainees. The ToT course is recommended to be conducted for two weeks for existing trainers and three months for new trainers. The training for those with no experience will begin first and then those with experience will join later in the class, with all trainers graduating together as a cohort. The program will be led by a lead master trainer and supported by local or regional master trainers as available.
**Component B: Pilot the Training Approach & ToT Model through Training for Conflict-Affected Youth**

Building upon the preparations in components A and B, the project will then implement the training for conflict-affected youth on economic empowerment and livelihood development activities. As outlined above, this will consist of (i) Vocational basic-use skills training on four priority subjects per regional center vocational basic-use skills training, (ii) Entrepreneurship, business skills, associations and cooperatives and financial literacy training, (iii) Psychosocial basic training, (iv) Life skills including business conduct, conflict mitigation and violence prevention techniques, and (v) Functional literacy/numeracy.

Two approaches for training delivery will be utilized in this project: (i) mobile training approaches and (ii) making use of existing vocational training centers (VTCs). The former would be particularly suited to agriculture, livestock and fishing activities as well as providing additional timing flexibility often beneficial to women. The trainings will be developed to receive certification issued upon graduation. Start-up capital will also be considered in the programming design. This is particularly important in view of the highly limited availability of microfinance and particular barriers faced by conflict-affected youth in accessing such services.

**Vocational Skills Training Center Based Trainings**

There are several established VTCs which present the opportunity to utilize existing facilities in peri-urban areas thus facilitating direct market interaction and links to existing functioning enterprises. The vocational training center mapping conducted in preparation for this project found that many vocational training facilities are either used part-time or currently not operating, therefore the exact center location of the trainings will be determined based on training schedules and facility availability. Using VTCs can also contribute to community reconciliation and social reintegration.

**Mobile Training**

Mobile training approaches will be included in the project due to their capacity to address challenges of reaching the most vulnerable beneficiaries, including notoriously hard to reach pastoralist youth. This model will allow beneficiaries to continue with income-generating activities in parallel to receiving training. This will also improve young women’s access to skills training opportunities while still being able to fulfil domestic obligations. A mobile training model would additionally address challenges such as the provision of transportation and food for beneficiaries. In view of the current resource constraints identified by this study at the national level – this approach would prove more sustainable following project completion - trainer salaries being the major cost after the initial outlay for training equipment and start-up capital. Existing approaches to implement mobile training have been tested by actors in South Sudan including United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and their local partners. Implementing Partners with experience in the provision of such training will be recruited to determine the detail of such an approach relevant to each community.

**Youth Focal Points**
Due to the heightened vulnerability of this group, the need for an area-based support structure for conflict-affected youth following the structured mobile or center based training was highlighted in the consultative conversations conducted in July 2014. Due to access constraints and the related logistical and cost implications, implementing partner implementation of such support is both unrealistic and unsustainable. Additionally, youth to youth programming is responsive to the strong influence of the peer group at this developmental stage. Youth Focal Points (YFPs) will be chosen from the group of trainees as those that standout due to their positive leadership and ability to connect with their peers.

YFPs will be offered a supplementary training following the full group training which will include: leadership skills, psycho-social support approaches, cooperation across services and available services, roles and responsibilities, and accessing existing services. The training will include a specific emphasis on therapeutic methods or psychosocial tools to enable youth to cope with the economic and social challenges they are facing. The group will gather again for a mid-term in-service to share best practices and solutions as well as provide further leadership training. This will provide a youth peer network between which the YFPs can share best practices, concerns and new approaches. This service will be supported for nine months following the initial training.

**Component C: Project management and monitoring and evaluation**

The project will be recipient executed by the MLPSHRD. MLPSHRD will provide the core human resources required for project oversight from Juba and for field implementation in the three cities. It is expected that complementary, specialized, technical inputs and their logistical support will be required to execute project activities and provide adequate technical guidance to the project implementing partners.

In view of the pilot nature of the project and the strategic importance of scaling up its activities to other communities in South Sudan, it is necessary to set up a project monitoring and evaluation system that would assist in project management as well as in the identification of lessons to be applied to the design of follow up projects. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will measure project performance according to results framework targets and provide monthly, quarterly and annual program activity reports, targeting both the management of MLPSHRD and Implementing Partners, as well external stakeholders. A baseline and endline survey will be completed as well as an end term review and a final implementation report.

Further, the project will introduce a system for the participatory monitoring and evaluation of its activities. It is envisaged that this approach will further contribute towards the empowerment of the communities, building trust in project partners, and strengthening cohesion by the socialization of the results and achievements of the project. The project will support the design and establishment of a participatory monitoring and evaluation (P-M&E) system. The monitoring and assessment of specific elements of the mandatory project M&E system will be conducted in conjunction with the youth focal points and the community leadership. Specific templates and procedures will be introduced for this purpose. Information Technology (IT) applications will be utilized to handle data collection and analysis including collection of direct inputs from youth for
participatory M&E to ensure direct participation of beneficiaries. Data collection will be conducted by the local implementing agency along with participants from the community and will be synchronized to a central database. The project will include a monitoring and evaluation officer based in Juba who will be responsible for the administration of the P-M&E system, coordination with communities and youth for information collection/analysis, conduction of analytical work, and preparation of mandatory reports. The M&E outputs will include: a baseline survey as a basis for the evaluation of project performance and impact, a final evaluation, and a strategy paper for scaling up the project based on an intensive lessons learned report. The M&E information will be consolidated and shared with the communities via youth focal points and implementing partner staff as well as with state branches of the vocational training centers, relevant government entities and stakeholders upon completion.

IV. Safeguard policies that might apply

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VI. Contact point

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