



NORAD COLLECTED REVIEWS

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Conflict Awareness Project – CAP

Implemented by the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) with its partner churches in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar

The report is presented in a series, compiled by Norad to disseminate and share analyses of development cooperation. The views and interpretations are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

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“Blessed are the ones who are peace-makers”

Female Interviewee from Madagascar

Originally taken from Mathew 5:9

Evaluation Report

of the

“Conflict Awareness Project – CAP”

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April 29th 2022

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1. Executive Summary

“God sent the church around the world to bring peace. (...)

Women and the church should never give up to fight for justice. (...)

How wonderful if brothers and sisters live together in harmony”

– Female Interviewee from Madagascar

From 2019 to 2022 the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) has been implementing a project entitled the Conflict Awareness Project (CAP). The CAP project had the overall aim to strengthen the churches in dealing with internal as well as external conflicts by establishing a strategy and a structure for conflict management as well as by equipping key people within the church with expert skills for dealing with conflicts. The project was implemented by partner churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EELC), the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and the Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (FLM) in Madagascar. Over the three years of project implementation (2019 to 2021), a total number of 24 workshops were held in which people of different levels and backgrounds learned about conflict awareness, conflict analysis and peace building. A total of 706 people were reached, 361 of them were women.

The methodology of the evaluation was a mixed methods approach which included the review of available documents, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (online and in-person) as well as analysis and observation. In their analysis, the consultants considered the OECD criteria but also blended it with an Outcome Harvesting approach. The consultants travelled to Ethiopia and Cameroon to conduct in-person interviews and used the online tool Zoom for interviews with participants in Madagascar.

The findings of the evaluation were divided into quantitative findings, which reviewed the project from how it was designed and addressed the indicators and targets set out in the logframe matrix and qualitative findings, which helped to assess the defined goals and to rope in the beneficiaries’ perceptions. The DIGNI Empowerment Assessment Tool (EAT) was used to assess in how far the project helped to empower people.

The CAP project played a very important role by being able to reinforce the importance of conflict management in the church as well as to bring attention to the role of the church in promoting sustainable peace in their societies / communities / nations. All interview participants reported having obtained new knowledge on how to approach and handle conflicts and that the project has even enhanced their own personal attitude towards building peace. The project promoted the empowerment and participation of women within the project but also generally within the church and the community. It furthermore illustrated the importance and possibilities of peer learning for enhancing the workings of the church on peace. All interviewed participants had a truly positive attitude towards the project and were very appreciative that NMS had initiated it.

COVID 19 changed the intervention logic quite a bit, but the coordinators adapted quickly to the new reality and made the most out of the newly created restrictions ensuring that the intervention logic of the project remained realistic. As much as the project included and empowered women, it could have done more of the same for the youth. Even though in some countries the youth were actively involved,

a much more comprehensive strategy for their mobilization and engagement would have been necessary. There is need to review the sustainability model in view of the deficit in resources as well as the need to ensure that the church is more in the driving seat when it comes to development of a logical framework with its goals, outcomes and indicators. In this way, a better streamlining in the function of monitoring, evaluation and learning within the project would be guaranteed. There are lessons learned in response to the impact of COVID as well as recommendations on the adaptations that were taken up.

The key recommendations from the implementation of the project so far include:

- The need to build **greater ownership** by the churches of the project starting from the leadership level and the church board. In doing so the churches will be better placed to contextualise the project, which means that they might want to think about including other leaders from outside of the church (traditional leaders, political leaders), or even working across borders with other churches, since some conflicts don't limit themselves to only one country. In order to do this, the leadership will have to find ways to allocate resources to this kind of work, either from within the church or by looking into additional funding opportunities.
- The necessity of the **NMS leadership to absorb the project** into the overall NMS structures and to push for higher level discussion between the leadership in NMS and the church leadership to anchor the project more sustainability within the church.
- The need for the churches to develop and own their own peace strategies (including terms of reference for the various structures such as the peace committees) is critical to the implementation, ownership and sustainability of the project. Ethiopia has made considerable steps in this regard which can be emulated by Cameroon and Madagascar.
- The project design should be changed to use a **country specific approach** and bolstering the implementation teams at international and national levels. The coordination role needs to be further supported and defined. The monitoring, evaluation and learning within the project can be improved, possibly by defining a clear strategy for it. The project needs to engage key structures of the church including the theological schools and the Sunday schools. Furthermore, due to the nature of the context in which the churches are operating, an even more holistic approach needs to be adopted, where peace-building goes hand in hand with economic and social development.
- In relation to the **trainings**, these could be even more comprehensive and targeted if they are to produce “multipliers” within the churches and countries. A full understanding on what it takes to design a comprehensive and sustainable training of trainers needs time and resources, but is more impactful over the long term. There are also opportunities for introducing online learning to augment the face-to-face encounters.
- There needs to be more **meaningful engagement of youth**, since they constitute a large part of the population in each country and who can easily be swayed into violent activities when idle and not given attention. At the same time, it is the youth who can be innovative and can possibly find creative ways on how to engage in peace building in their communities to make it a fun and relevant activity.
- The **peer learning aspect of the project must be enhanced** to encompass all levels of the project from the national leadership, to the national peace teams and the peace committees. Furthermore, there are advantages to also having peer learning for targeted groups such as women and youth as well as on thematic issues such as inter-faith conflicts or electoral conflicts.
- As already touched upon above, the project needs to **consider a sustainability model** which starts with the churches showing greater ownership of the project through ensuring they also put in resources to the initiative as already shown to be possible by EECMY. Secondly, they need

to strengthen their programming and project management to ensure they are an attractive destination for resources from NMS and DIGNI. And finally, the churches need to consider seeking resources outside of NMS and DIGNI.

There is little doubt that the project has importance and relevance for the churches and their respective countries. Even though the project has reached different levels in each of the countries, there has been a seed sown which now needs nurturing and consolidation. There can be no better example of how the project has begun to touch the lives of those engaged than one of the female interviewees in Ethiopia put it: the child that was born out of a family that initially had been experiencing domestic violence and then was reconciled through the interviewee who had participated in the CAP and was able to apply her skills in solving this problem, was named “*Fiomse*” which means “we made peace/love”. This clearly shows that the tools shared in the CAP project were important and that people appreciate if they are helped in finding peace. It seems the possibilities are only starting.

2. Introduction

Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar are three countries in which NMS has long-standing relationships with the Lutheran Churches. Each country has its very own conflict history and presence emanating from ethnic, to religious to political and economic conflicts.

It is against this background that the CAP was conceived by NMS in 2018 to be implemented by their partner churches, the EELC, the EECMY and the FLM. The CAP project had the overall aim to strengthen the churches in dealing with internal as well as external conflicts by establishing a strategy and a structure for conflict management as well as by equipping key people within the church with expert skills for dealing with conflicts.

Initially the project was planned as a peer-to-peer learning between the different churches to enable them to share their experiences, lessons learned and best practices in conflict management. However, since Covid started in early 2020 only one international meeting between the church representatives took place in late 2019, and from there on travel was no longer possible. Therefore, the project implementation deviated from its original plan and started to focus more on online trainings for key people within the church and on ensuring that the knowledge is disseminated amongst the synods, with women playing a crucial part in Ethiopia, to a lesser extent in Cameroon and Madagascar. In Cameroon the team used radio, TV and social media to bring the knowledge of conflict management to the people. In Madagascar the church focussed on setting up peace committees as pilots in three synods to test the efficacy of the approach.

As the project is in its last year of implementation and a new funding cycle commences mid-2023 a final evaluation had to be carried out to determine the extent to which the project was able to reach its objectives and generate recommendations going forward. Since the borders of Madagascar were still closed by the time of planning for the evaluation and the least activities took place there in comparison to the other countries, the evaluation team only travelled to Ethiopia and Cameroon for in-person interviews. The interviewees for Madagascar were conducted online.

3. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation set out to accomplish the following objectives:

- ⦿ To assess the extent to which the project is on track to achieve its purpose and deliver on the intended outputs;
- ⦿ To review the targeting process for beneficiaries;

- ⊙ To assess achievement in project implementation thus far;
- ⊙ To analyse successful interventions of the project and identify stories of change or best practices;
- ⊙ To draw lessons learnt and recommendations to inform future project designs.

4. Methodology

Initially all relevant project documents were reviewed. Qualitative data on the number of workshops, number of participants and workshop content was gathered and compiled.

In order to better understand the achievements and the impact of the project on the participants’ lives, which lessons can be learned and what can be recommended for future implementation, in-depth interviews were conducted in-person and online. The interview participants were chosen by the project coordinator as well as evaluators (based on the literature review) in view of their relevance to the project implementation and understanding of the context in which the project was implemented.

In Cameroon a total of 13 people participated in interviews. One interview consisted of three participants that were interviewed at the same time, another interview was attended by two participants simultaneously. Some of the interviews had to be interpreted since the interviewees felt more comfortable speaking in French. People interviewed were the CAP coordinator, the national bishop assistant, the general secretary, the national bishop, the director of Femmes pour Christ, the regional bishop of one synod, the Christian Education Director and member of the National Peace Team, the education secretary, the director of communication at EELC, the NMS field coordinator, a professor and peace trainer, and two members of two synods and peace team members.

In Ethiopia a total number of 12 people were interviewed. All of these interviews, except one, took place in person. Amongst the interviewees were the Peace Office Coordinator and former church president, the Peace Office Project Coordinator, the Women Department Capacity Building Coordinator, the Peace Office Expert and Trainer, the SCES Government Focal Person, several synod Women Department Coordinators, the Inter-Faith Mission Coordinator, two volunteers from the synods, and two members of the NMS office in Ethiopia. Apart from one focus group discussion with the women from the women’s department, all interviews were conducted as individual in-depth interviews. The interviews were not tape-recorded but both evaluators took notes that they could compare.

The interviews for Madagascar were all conducted online. A total of six people were interviewed. The interviews included the church president, the project coordinator, the field coordinator and the vice general secretary general. Two other interviews were with a synod member and with a key member of the conflict management structure who has expertise in training on conflict management. Some interviews were in English, some in French and one in Malagasy which meant that translation was a challenge for a couple of these interviews.

Additionally, the evaluation team spoke to the project coordinator (based in Ethiopia), the international trainer and training content developer (based in Qatar), the project handler (based in Norway), the department leader for Europe and Brazil (based in France), the department leader of East Africa (based in Norway), the former department leader of French-speaking Africa (based in France) and a young female journalist in Ngaoundéré. All those interviews were carried out in an online format.

Altogether, the views and ideas and perspectives of 39 people found their way into this document, 15 of them were female voices (see appendix for exact overview of interviewees).

It has to be mentioned that the project in its original formulation identified the church leadership as its beneficiaries, but as it evolved the beneficiary pool extended to members of the community. However, at the time of conducting the evaluation this was not as clear and hence the interviews were limited to those within the church structures. As the project develops, it would be useful to include beneficiaries from outside of the church.

The evaluators placed great value on transparency towards the interviewees and therefore assured that the interviewees were informed about the intention and scope of the evaluation, about the set-up of the interview, the type of questions they would be asked and that their anonymity would be assured. The interviewees were also encouraged to ask their own questions towards the evaluators to make it a mutually beneficial process.

Data was analysed in relation to the logframe matrix, the set-up of the project itself and to the three goals of the project. Furthermore, the evaluation includes an assessment of the level of empowerment achieved according to the Digni Empowerment Assessment Tool.

In terms of the evaluation approach, the evaluators proposed to use the OECD criteria where relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact were assessed. However, after literature review and initial interviews, it was clear that the disruption of the project due to the COVID pandemic was so severe that the initial evaluation approach needed to be adapted or to be blended with an Outcome Harvesting approach. In this regard the evaluation to a large extent sought to identify the outcomes regardless of the initial planning and then track back the attribution chain, to not only claim the outcome, but to also freely identify lessons learned and recommendations in an unhindered way.

5. Findings

The conducted interviews and the analysis of the available project documents provided significant insights into the roll out of the project, its achievements, lessons learned and opportunities for improvement. The finding section shall initially give an overview of quantitative data available, before it moves to the findings on project implementation level. The third part of this section shall touch on the findings related to the achievement of the goal that the project set out to reach and in how far the participants' empowerment has been increased. There is also a summary of what the project can refer to as its key outcomes as well as the key challenges which prevented the project from meeting its initial or refined goals.

In developing this section, it was a deliberate choice to first address the quantitative findings as a way of ensuring that an evaluation of the initial project plan is measurable and consistent to the initially identified need. By then focussing on the qualitative findings, this was a realisation that COVID-19 affected the project considerably, yet project adaptation ensured that the alternated outcomes and lessons learnt still fitted within the framework of the overall goals. It must therefore be noted that as much as the project adapted to the context, the evaluation process equally adapted from the inception report in order to meet the overall purpose of the evaluation.

It should also be mentioned that even though the findings are based on the literature review, the conducted key informant interviews, focus group discussions, the observations and the analysis are by no means exhaustive and hence there may still be more findings that could not be accessed due to time, resources, access and translation limitations. This project is unique in the sense that it was implemented in three countries which have different contexts, cultures and socio-economic and political realities. In addition, the three different church partners are also vastly different in culture and internal structures and politics. The best way to show these differences is that the interviews that were conducted took

place in no less than five different languages. However, there are similarities which include that the countries all have Lutheran churches which have been engaged in internal and external conflicts. In all these churches there are gender dynamics which require addressing, youth involvement and participation which needs to be harnessed, sustainability challenges for the project and other NMS approaches with its partner churches as well as a clear desire by all the churches to continue with the project having established the importance of the intervention. It is from this basis and other considerations that this report identified the following findings:

5.1. Quantitative findings

The project sought to *increase resilience in contexts affected by conflict of NMS’ partner churches in Cameroon, Madagascar and Ethiopia*. In doing so there were 3 outcome goals which include:

- The churches would develop a strategy on how to handle and address conflicts which is linked to national plans and in accordance with national strategies and SDG 17
- Key people in the churches would have gained knowledge in necessary tools on handling conflict
- The conflict strategy would have been launched and used and the knowledge from the tools disseminated would be used throughout the churches on all levels

A brief scan of these objectives highlighted that through different pathways the first two outcomes have been largely met and the third objective has been affected significantly by COVID and an unclear path to how it would have been met. The last year of implementation could be used to specifically address the third objective. The development of the remaining conflict strategies should ensure that the churches are able to define their priorities and structures and which could then determine future programming.

Over the three years of project implementation (2019 to 2021), a total number of 24 workshops were conducted in which people of different levels and backgrounds learned about conflict awareness, conflict analysis and peace building. A total of 706 people were reached, 361 of them were women.

	Ethiopia	Cameroon	Madagascar	Total
No. workshops	11	8	5	24
No. of people	353	273	80	706
No. of women	212	130	19	361
No. of men	141	143	44	328

The participants were exposed to a knowledge assessment at the beginning of the training and at the end of the training to ensure that new knowledge was gained. In all workshops the initial average of correct answers is lower than after the training. This is proof that the training did indeed increase the level of knowledge that participants had on the topic of conflict awareness.

	Training 1	Training 2	Training 3	Training 4	Training 5	Training 6
Pre-Test	5.5	3.5	5	6.5	6	6.5
Post-Test	7	8	7.5	7	9	7.5
Increase	1.5	4.5	2.5	0.5	3	1

However, in the logframe matrix it was stated that 90% of the training participants would pass a test, which cannot be established with the data that was available at the time of the evaluation.

When looking at the logframe matrix of the project, many anticipated results have been achieved over the first three years of the project. This is illustrated in the last column under “evaluation”. The outputs marked in yellow are the Digni Indicators. Some outputs have not been achieved, which is largely due to Covid and the fact that the original plan of the project could not be followed due to travel restrictions. However, the non-achievement of output 3.1.4. was not related to Covid, but it was rather generally over ambitious, given that the original focus of the project and its goal was to capacitate key people and not a large number of stakeholders.

Evaluation Report of the “Conflict Awareness Project (CAP)” – Final Draft

Impact:	Increased resilience in contexts affected by conflict of NMS' partner churches in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar								
Output	Baseline	Expected result 2019	Expected result 2020	Expected result 2021	Expected result 2022	Actual result 2019	Actual result 2020	Actual result 2021	Evaluation
Outcome 1: The churches have developed a strategy on how to handle and address conflicts which is linked to national strategies and SDG 17									
1.1 International team established									
International team is operational and # of people recruited		6				9			Even three more people were recruited than anticipated, even though they do not have an official contract. ✔✔
1.2 Project launched in each of the churches and agreement signed									
# of partners who have agreed to be part of the project		3	-	-	-	3	-	-	On track ✔
Strategy planning workshops within each church conducted (figures are for all 3 churches in total)		3 meeting/ 150 people			3 meeting/ 150 people	3 meetings / 107 people			On track, even though with slightly less people ✔
1.3 Exchange meeting between and within the churches has been conducted									
Exchange meeting between the church leaders conducted (church leader's forum)		1			1	1			On track ✔
# of partners who have developed a functional strategy on handling conflicts which is linked to national plans (draft first year and final version last year)	1	3	3	3	3	1	In the process	In the process	Behind. Only Ethiopia has so far developed a strategy and structure with ToR on paper. Cameroon has tangible developments and Madagascar has only started the process. ✘
# of people involved in making the strategy (church leaders and int. team)		9	9	9	9	9	55	39	Many more than anticipated, but not clear whether this is beneficial, since many cooks may spoil the broth. But then again, more people buying into it and supporting it, might make the developed strategy stronger.
Impact:	Increased resilience in contexts affected by conflict of NMS' partner churches in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar								
Output	Baseline	Expected result 2019	Expected result 2020	Expected result 2021	Expected result 2022	Actual result 2019	Actual result 2020	Actual result 2021	Evaluation
Outcome 2: Key people in the churches have gained knowledge in necessary tools on handling conflict									
2.1 Workshops in different tools conducted									
(1.1.1.) # of persons organized over # of direct beneficiaries and # of indirect beneficiaries	5	9	15	30	30	9	91	277	Even though designed as strategy project, many more people were mobilized. Direct beneficiaries: 540 Indirect beneficiaries: 13,605 ✔
# of international workshops organized for the partner churches		-	2	2	-	-	0	1	Only 1 international workshop was conducted online due to Covid-19. ✘
% of workshop participants who pass a test which measures their understanding and ability to use the tool (to be set by the trainer)		-	90%	90%	-	-	N/A	N/A	Cannot be evaluated due to different type of data collected. —
2.2 People trained are followed up and are passing on their knowledge									
(1.1.2.) # of groups/networks organized	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	6	In 2021 even more groups / networks organized ✔
(1.2.2.) # of volunteers mobilized to serve the local community and estimated number of man-hours	1	3	15	30	90	90	17	38	Average annual working-hours: 576 hours ✔
(3.1.4.) # of stakeholders who have received peace education	23	150	150	230	310	108	76	254	Only in 2021 the number was exceeded, during the first 2 years the number was below what was expected. ✘
# of people participating in national peace meetings		-	50	50	-	-	0	8	 ✘
Number of workshops organized for the partner churches		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	4	15	No national workshops were planned in the original project document since this was intended as more of an exchange project.
# of trainings/awareness raising events in the congregations and communities and # of people participating		-	-	-	90 events/ 9000 people	-	-	-	Cannot yet be evaluated —

Evaluation Report of the “Conflict Awareness Project (CAP)” – Final Draft

Impact: Increased resilience in contexts affected by conflict of NMS' partner churches in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar									
Output	Baseline	Expected result 2019	Expected result 2020	Expected result 2021	Expected result 2022	Actual result 2019	Actual result 2020	Actual result 2021	Evaluation
Outcome 3: The strategy is launched and used and the knowledge from the tools disseminated and used throughout the churches on all levels									
3.1 Documentation of the project is collected and compiled in a book and disseminated to the partner churches									
(3.1.1) # of persons actively promoting peaceful coexistence	7	150	230	230	310	108	270	281	Only in the first year the target was not met.
3.2 Launching and celebration of strategy in each church									
Book compiled and printed					1				Cannot yet be evaluated
# of copies of the book distributed					2500				Cannot yet be evaluated
Each church has a launching event of the book and strategy					3				Cannot yet be evaluated
Number of people made aware of the strategy (through launching, book distribution and church meetings)					4500				Cannot yet be evaluated

5.2. Findings related to the set-up of the project

5.2.1. Ownership

It must be appreciated that the project in its multi-country approach was best conceived from the NMS level and that this has led to conflict management and peace building playing an even more important role in the church than it has already. The churches took up what was conceived at the NMS level and made it largely their own with support from NMS. A project of this nature cannot happen without various stakeholders playing different roles, which can also change with time. Even though to a large extent the project was ultimately collectively owned, the true test for its sustainability and impact will be the level to which the key responsible stakeholders can determine the vision of the project, initiate and own key actions, and finally support these actions financially. It is with this in mind that the concept of ownership¹ of the project needs to be defined among the stakeholders and adjustments will need to be done by all involved to promote greater ownership by the churches, particularly in Cameroon and Madagascar.

Even though a number of factors affected the level to which the churches could take ownership and which will be spelled out below, all church leaders fully accepted and owned the project and even requested that it should be continued. The Bishop in Cameroon and the President in Madagascar both spoke glowingly about the importance of the project within the church as well as within the greater context.

Since the CAP project had a very different set-up compared to other projects in all the three churches, the path to greater ownership by the churches included more peer learning, an assumption that a change of leadership would not affect the uptake of the project and that all the churches would develop a written conflict management strategy, among other things. In Cameroon and Madagascar, even though the leadership understood the relevance of the project for the church, they weren't always sufficiently engaged. This is due to the set-up of the project and its inception, whereas the church leadership was asked whether they wanted to participate in it, rather than develop it themselves. For both Cameroon and Madagascar, the church elections had a significant impact on the ownership process, because the new leadership needed time to grasp the essence of the project and then give it their full support. In Madagascar though, it was pointed out that the leaders very much stood behind the project and considered it their own. Here the focus has been largely on the development of peace committees starting with 3 pilot synods. In Cameroon the project was set-up under the Bishop's office but there was no clear relationship with the NMS field office and it was not fully integrated into the

¹ An interesting read in this topic might also provide some useful understanding and ideas on project ownership: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241169724_WHO_OWNS_A_PROJECT.

church structure. In this way Ethiopia found itself in a significantly different situation due to having an already advanced set-up of peace structures within the church. They were also the ones that hosted the only international meeting that occurred in 2019 and the NMS coordination office is based in Addis Ababa, which could have played an additional role in strengthening the project structures. When the pandemic struck, Cameroon and Madagascar were further away from the coordination point and with part-time staff leading the process, they were not able to fully take-off the project. Ethiopia in this regard is quite instructive on how to achieve greater ownership. The project in EECMY benefited from a long history of the church addressing conflict and setting up structures for conflict management. The leadership of the church since 2018 owned and supported the process, followed up on interventions, provided supervision and even shared recommendations throughout the implementation. The head of the peace commission is the president of the church itself and the synod leadership facilitated the functioning of the synod peace committees to actively participate in the project. Therefore, developing a national peace strategy was not only possible but fully supported by the church starting with the leadership. And this is further seen through the application of church resources towards peace programming including the aspect of this project as well as getting support from other funding partners. This is a positive model for the other churches to emulate.

Even within the NMS leadership it was mentioned that there was a lack of ownership, commitment and general consideration for the project. It seems the project was located in a way that roles were not fully defined and people were not always sure whose responsibility it was to carry out certain tasks. This needs to be reviewed going forward, because the NMS leadership has an important role to play when it comes to offering support for the project coordination team and being in close exchange with them, but also by engaging with the church leadership and anchoring the project on the highest level in the church. This would ensure greater project effectiveness and efficiency.

In order to enhance the ownership, the proposals include separating the project interventions so that these can be carried out at country level for each follow-up intervention. This will ensure that the follow-up to the CAP project is more focussed on the context and specificities of each church and country. In addition, the churches need to develop a needs assessment specific to the church which will align with the overall theory of change but with unique and “niche” activities for each church. For instance, Ethiopia can strengthen the role that women have already taken up in supporting conflict management in the communities and Cameroon can strengthen the communications approach that was necessitated by COVID as well as their synod approach. Madagascar can look to its pilot synod approach for lessons on how to review their current approach in the constitution which is heavily reliant on legal redress as means on conflict resolution. These different approaches are on the contrary also one of the reasons why peer learning would remain relevant to share lessons and best practices across the countries. Finally, the coordination role at the NMS level remains critical and can only be phased out once the churches have developed their activities further and accessed the key resources and innovations they need to ensure the projects are sustainable. This also includes ensuring there is a clear role for the NMS leadership to support the project going forward.

5.2.2. Project design

The theory of change (ToC) of the project was quite clear and reasoned that *if these churches develop their own strategy on how to handle different conflicts, they will be better equipped to play an active role in the civil society of their country*. While this is very relevant, it required further elaboration because the three churches are all at different levels and would all need to develop differently towards the same theory of change. In addition, the overall change needs to be better articulated and accepted or agreed upon by the churches. The ToC implies that the final outcome is that the church plays a meaningful and positive role in conflict management, be it for within its own structures or within society. This being the

case, regardless of the challenges around COVID-19, this could not have been accomplished within the 4-year period of the intervention, but rather has to be viewed as a progressive approach. In this regard, three distinct stages were identified:

- i. Establishing an appreciation of the context and importance of managing conflict within the church and the communities as well as ensuring ownership of such processes by the church.
- ii. Developing tools, skills and structures to manage conflict within the church and utilising these for a given period to ensure there is clarity that this is working
- iii. Using the lessons learnt in managing conflict in the church (including peer learning) to play an active role in managing conflicts within the community and the society at large.

In this regard the churches were at different levels and the processes can take a while to fully be integrated. For instance, both the FLM and EELC have recently had to address electoral based conflict as well as other conflicts emanating from their societies. In order to do this effectively, there is need for each context to be given its due consideration. This means that along with the conflict awareness trainings each country may require other tools such as a systems approach in order to address systemic and historical challenges such as how the churches are set up (internally) or to address inter-ethnic, inter-religious or socio-economic challenges in the community (external). In other words, in how far is the church prepared to address socio-economic and political realities that may underpin some of the recurrent conflicts? Going forward, it is for this purpose that the ToC needs to be reviewed and refined to allow each church sufficient time and resources to grow and lead in such roles.

Another challenge around the project design was an unfortunate occurrence at the start of the project when the international team was cut short of a key staff member that was focussing on the admin and finances of the project, leaving the project short in manpower at the coordination level. This needed to be addressed early because combined with the advent of COVID-19, this meant that a project staff on 40% had to lead on implementation, admin and finance as well as coordination. This proved to be a challenge, especially since the project staff in Cameroon and Madagascar were also employed on a part time basis. It clearly emerged that in regards to coordination of the project there were too many demands on too few people. Having to coordinate the different countries and partners, working on the actual implementation of the project and at the same time playing the role of an admin and finance person resulted in a feeling of being overworked and not having enough time for any of those different roles.

In reviewing the implementation model there was also a review of the beneficiaries of the project. The initial target beneficiaries of the project were the church leadership with their role being that of leading or facilitating a process of peer learning and developing the strategies and structures to address conflict within the churches. The next phase of the project would naturally be to increase the ownership of the conflict management processes within the church by training more church leaders and leadership and possibly having the church become a key actor in conflict management in their country – thereby eventually extending the beneficiary circle to the society at large in each country. Due to the changes necessitated by the COVID pandemic, the beneficiary target expanded rapidly to include the church congregation through the synod leadership. This was not a negative development but highlighted the fluidity of the intervention logic.

A further finding was that the internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms could be improved in their precision, comprehension and strategy. It needs to be mentioned that the three countries differed in their abilities to collect and produce relevant data. It was clear that once the change of project logic was realized, the project approach was going to change and new indicators were needed to be developed and monitored, which has not happened (e.g. the monitoring of social media data in

Cameroon). At least three interviewees mentioned that the monitoring of the project could have been more systematic in regards to more efficient data collection of who was trained when and where and what the different people were doing with the new skills and knowledge. The framework for monitoring needed to take into consideration a clear baseline at the start of the project from which change could be measured and a more deliberate process of monitoring was required because of the complexity of the project, being delivered in three different countries. There might be need to build the skills of the country project teams in monitoring and evaluation as this will also aid them in greater effectiveness and efficiency.

The project organogram does not require major restructuring because it did not have a chance to be fully utilised. However, there may be need to refine the roles at various levels based on the importance of conflict management in the churches as well as based on the role the churches can play. Essentially the project needs to be implemented at two levels. The church level is the national level must be led by the churches and responding to the context within the church and outside the church. The second level would be the international level where NMS provides support and project design, access to resources (technical and financial), reflection and learning as well as identifying opportunities for peer learning and innovation. This essentially means that the three churches can each implement their very own project, which essentially means that three different projects are implemented and have to fit into the same theory of change. The NMS international office in Addis Ababa can then play a coordination and support role. The other roles of the international team need to be further emphasised as they were foreseen in the original project document.

5.3. Findings related to the achievement of the goals

Goal 1: The churches have developed a strategy on how to handle and address conflicts which is linked to national plans and in accordance with national strategies and SDG 17

The goal has been reached to different extends in the different countries. The country that has made significant strides on the achievement of this goal is Ethiopia. Since the EECMY has a long-standing history of peace building that dates as far back as 29 years ago, they established a peace office in 1993 and in 2003 a peace commission of which all 29 synods became members. On synod level there are also peace committees, which are constituted by the executive director of each synod, youth and women members as well as members from the community. The peace committees are guided by terms of reference, which helps the members to move into the same direction. However, the peace committees have not been established in all synods yet. The CAP project could therefore utilize and benefit from the already existing structures for dissemination of the new knowledge on conflict awareness and peace building, which ensured for more sustainability and more absorption of the training content into the church and the community at large. These structures have been emboldened by CAP in the sense that they have not only been equipped with useful tools to address conflicts that may arise, but the CAP project has also re-energized the structures. Before the CAP project started, the national peace committee had to be called by the synods to solve their problems on the ground, which has now changed due to the synods being capacitated with conflict management skills by the CAP project. The peace committees have also benefited by the affirmation of the role of women in peace-building which has seen the rise of female peace champions in the church who are moving within their communities and promoting peaceful resolutions to conflicts. This is a direct result of the CAP project.

In Cameroon the situation is quite different. There is no clear conflict management strategy in place that would have been established centrally from and by the church, even though the project coordinator tried to establish such a strategy on a national level. The current bishop clearly sees a need for a national peace office, because there is a strong belief that the church has an important role to play in addressing

and solving conflicts. Even though there is no national peace office in place yet, the 10 different synods have started to set-up peace teams that each consist of six members from the church. The idea to form peace teams was taken up during one of the CAP exchange meetings, when Ethiopia shared its structural set-up with the other two countries. The effective and efficient work of the peace teams in Cameroon is however impeded by the large geographical distance between the individual members of each peace team, no existent terms of reference that could set a course of action for the teams and the lack of access to financial means for the peace teams on synod level. This movement though to appreciate the role of the church and initiate peace structures is a direct result of the engagement with the CAP.

In Madagascar, just like in Ethiopia, the church has a structure in place that is responsible for dealing with conflicts inside and outside of the church. This is being done by the department for conflict management, which is attached to the central office and guided by the constitution and by-laws of the church. The CAP project has highlighted the limitations of the current department and approach by the church. While legal redress is an option in conflict resolution, the church had not engaged and is yet to put in place a structure that is more holistic. The tools and skills that were taught online in 2021 resonated with all those interviewed and it was clear that the approach to adopt three pilot synods would be their first in utilizing the training and knowledge gained at the peer learning session in 2019.

In both Cameroon and in Madagascar it was mentioned that the change of leadership after every four years jeopardizes the consistency of any project. Projects are largely dependent on the goodwill of the administration and the church board. But, once they are on board, the project is validated and will receive the necessary support. The irony of this is that the elections of the church are often leaving some parties unhappy and in extreme cases resulting conflicts can even lead to splits within the church. This highlights that managing conflict within the church is critical for the smooth running of the church even before the conflicts that arise with the community are being considered.

One area that can be improved on this goal is greater alignment with the national peace policies and SDG17. At this stage of the project this would be challenging for Cameroon and Madagascar as they first have to attend to the internal challenges. There was no evidence for instance that SDG17 was unpacked during the training nor was there discussion around the national frameworks for conflict management even though the churches in different ways engaged with national authorities. This is an opportunity that can be exploited in the next phase of the project.

Goal 2: Key people in the churches have gained knowledge in necessary tools on handling conflict

All people interviewed confirmed that through the CAP project they had gained new knowledge. In particular they mentioned the ability to look at a conflict from an analytical point of view. Before engaging themselves in finding solutions, they now take a step back and first try to understand what the causes and the impact of the conflict are by using the conflict tree, the history approach or the ABC triangle. The new knowledge has also contributed to a very different attitude and approach and has “brought peace within me”, as one of the interviewees put it.

Many of the people interviewed mentioned that they are using the new knowledge and the tools to address conflicts in their communities (see Success Story attached). However, since the evaluators did not have a chance to speak with the actual conflict parties, it is difficult to establish whether the conflicts were solved sustainably and in a mutually agreeable way.

It was also mentioned that even though the tools taught have provided new theoretical knowledge of how to look at conflicts, the interviewees still feel that they lack the skills and the competence to successfully and confidently intervene in conflicts to sustainably solve them.

Another issue to consider was the nature of some of the conflicts identified such as conflicts of pastoralists and farmers or inter-ethnic conflicts. Such conflicts require that the church improves its understanding and the tools available to it so that its members are capacitated to successfully intervene in such conflicts and find sustainable solutions. The churches would need knowledge on using the systems approach, advocacy for peace, and non-violent communication. However, it was repeatedly mentioned that this is quite a specific knowledge that might not easily be accessible to the churches in all their locations.

Many of the interviewees who were trained also regarded the training as a training of trainers, but it appeared to be a premature step in the project. In order to train the beneficiaries to truly become trainers for others on this topic, it would have needed a more extended exposure not only to the training content, but also to the concept of adult education, training tools and how to measure the impact of the training, and how to train others. Therefore, those who cascaded the training were mostly sharing tools rather than providing a training in its true sense. But it is understood that this too was a deviation necessitated by COVID-19.

One common issue that kept being mentioned was the need to ensure that the trainings had more concrete real - life examples to work on during the trainings. This would have deepened the knowledge and would have garnered the skills of the training participants while at the same time giving them more confidence to truly understand the conflicts at hand. In all three countries there was a suggestion to fuse in some of the cultural or traditional tools around conflict managing. This all supports the importance of having a more contextualized and comprehensive approach going forward.

The use of an international conflict expert was very useful and appreciated by interviewees especially in terms of learning and understanding key concepts, tools and methodologies around conflict management. Interviewees were able to recall key concepts such as conflict tree analysis, ABC analysis and were especially captivated by the Do No Harm aspects. It is not clear whether being international had a major particular advantage but it was also important that the international consultant was knowledgeable about the region, the context and able to communicate effectively in French and English.

The introduction of online learning in 2021 to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was a necessary and important step in the project. This did not only ensure that the project kept up with its goal but identified online training as an opportunity that can still be utilized going forward. Some of the advantages for online training for this project is that it can be cheaper because it can be repeated over and over whereas in person training has new costs every time it occurs. It can also remove the need for training of trainers by ensuring everyone can have access to the same material. Importantly if done well it can also increase the ownership of the project by featuring the members of the church in the training playing different roles including welcoming of trainees, sharing of stories of change, explaining how a certain tool was used, etc. It will be worth considering it in future programming as a novel and innovative delivery model for the CAP trainings.

It was also noted that there was a third format for the trainings which was the introduction of compact discs which had training materials including PowerPoint presentations, video recordings, etc. In interviews this did not however feature much as most interviewees appeared to respond more favourably to the face-to-face and online formats. One interviewee expressed that the interactive nature of the face to face and the online trainings was effective without mentioning the compact discs. It would therefore appear that the compact discs have not been utilized as much and may not be an effective format for delivering the training. It is thinkable that the compact disc could be a nice add on in the online trainings.

Goal 3: The strategy is launched and used and the knowledge from the tools disseminated and used throughout the churches on all levels

So far, the strategy has only been launched in Ethiopia. In both Cameroon and Madagascar there is no concrete strategy as to how to address and handle conflicts that goes beyond litigation and truly involves the parties involved in the conflict. Nevertheless, many tools have been disseminated to many different levels in Ethiopia and Cameroon and a lot of effort has been put into ensuring that the knowledge trickles down to the people on the grassroots level. Therefore, it remains very important for the church in Cameroon and in Madagascar to move swiftly towards establishing a peace strategy not only to meet the project goals but also to define where they would like to go with the project as a church as well as reinforcing the support of the project by the church leadership. As the project nears conclusion, such strategies can determine project focus going forward and both countries can also use the example of Ethiopia.

Other deliverables in this goal such as the publication of a booklet has not yet been accomplished by the time of this evaluation, however, the project has not come to an end as of now and the publication is well underway.

5.4. Additional Findings

5.4.1. Involvement of Women and Youth

Involvement of women: As it was originally planned, the project did intend to provide an opportunity to women to access education and training and the table above (see page 8) shows that the number of women who have attended the trainings even exceed the number of men. Additionally, the project did enhance the opportunity for both women and men to organize, which is shown in the number of trainings that were held in the communities (only three workshops were centrally organized by NMS out of the 24). Since the number of men and women who have participated in the trainings is nearly equal, it can be said that the intervention has involved men and women as active partners

The role of women was quite strong in Ethiopia, where synod female leaders who were trained were very active in addressing conflicts within their churches. In Cameroon we spoke to one woman representative of Femmes pour Christ who see a big opportunity to take up the trainings and not only to disseminate the knowledge but rather to also intervene in conflicts. However, it was not very clear to what extent they are really absorbing the skills and the knowledge. In Madagascar the vice general secretary was very vocal on the role of women and was clearly passionate about the project and the role of women in the project. However, it was obvious that the trainings had yet to make significant inroads into the role of women in peace building.

This highlighted that there may be a huge opportunity to work with women in peace building, which may possibly lead to better results, because women as well as men clearly saw the role women play in their communities. As one interviewee put it “women can tell their men to go and fight, or they can tell them that they should keep their feet still. The men will do what they women tell them, even though they will not openly show it”. It was also clear that CAP contributed to a change of perception of women and their roles in the church. For the very first-time women can become synod presidents and leaders of the financial department, which contributes to more gender equality and can possibly solve gender conflict. Furthermore, there is a lot of need for peer learning for women in the church in terms of their engagement in church processes as well as peace building and conflict management.

Involvement of the youth: The involvement of the youth was handled quite differently in the three countries. Ethiopia seems to have the most comprehensive approach in a way that the youth are represented by the Children and Youth Department of the church and the youth officer is a member of the national peace team. The EECMY even conducted a workshop that particularly focused on the youth. However, even though there are first steps towards integrating the youth into peace building activities,

there is no comprehensive strategy of how to sustainably do so, neither in Ethiopia nor in any of the other two countries.

One young woman (Ethiopia), who had participated in the CAP in Ethiopia, spoke with a lot of positive energy and brought up many innovative ideas on how peace building could be taken up by the youth. The interviewee suggested peer learning at the peace committee level within and across countries, suggested ways for the peace committees to evaluate themselves and the possibility for the church to establish and support Peace Ambassadors.

It is advisable that the project takes up a more methodical and planned approach to youth engagement. This needs to take into consideration the African Youth Charter of the African Union which defines youth and establishes principles for youth engagement and participation. If particular tools and materials for training and engaging young people are being used and a joint brainstorming on how a youth format could look like is carried out, it can be guaranteed that they are not pressed into an adult format that would not meet their needs and interests and that would overlook the innovation they could bring to the table. Furthermore, the absence of age aggregated data highlighted the need to further work on the aspects of youth programming on the project.

This actually offers an opportunity for the project going forward where the project may also consider youth projects on peace which can be supported by various partners working on youth issues similarly to the way in which women in peace can be supported. There are also opportunities for learning across the countries on what are the best strategies for engaging young people including ensuring that they stand out within the Peace Strategies developed.

5.4.2. The church and its role in conflict management

The Lutheran churches have always played a role in conflicts in the respective countries. They are often viewed as impartial parties who can bring conflicting parties together. However, whether inside or outside the church, the church is not always impartial and most importantly it is not always equipped with all the tools to promote sustainable peace.

Starting with the conflict in the church, it is important to prepare the church to be a trusted and capable actor in peace building and conflict management. If the church itself is experiencing unresolved conflicts, then other parties may not put their faith in the church, but rather pull away. In order to act with integrity and to be trusted, the church needs to uncompromisingly solve its internal conflicts in a sustainable way. In some instances, external conflicts implicate the church such as the land conflicts in Madagascar and the inter-religious conflicts in Ethiopia and Cameroon. In such situations great tact and skill is required and peer learning can provide opportunities to see things differently through support from a sister church. In Ethiopia the church has participated in interfaith conflict resolution and peace building, which indicates that the church has built integrity and trust among the larger community apart from her constituencies. This is why local government structures in Ethiopia are seeking intervention and support of the church in areas of conflict resolution.

In addressing many of the conflicts in the societies, the church has to strengthen its understanding of socio-economic context, political realities and histories of the countries that are the reason for conflicts between different groups of people such as the difference in economic realities between refugees and host communities or the difference in access to political power between different ethnic groups. By using conflict management tools, it has to be ensured that the focus is not only on negative peace, meaning establishing an environment where there is absence of violence, but rather on creating positive peace where the underlying causes of conflict are addressed and people can truly reconcile and don't continue to perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices against each other.

Another critical aspect to consider for the churches is how they will resource these conflict management activities. With the creation of peace structures within the church, there will be need to financially strengthen them and to understand that conflicts are a way of life and will always be there. Such structures cannot fully rely on the NMS or even donor funding generally. With time, the churches must see the value of their peace structures and ensure that they are adequately resourced.

5.5. Digni Empowerment Assessment

Since the conflict awareness project is funded by Digni, the evaluation is obliged to include an empowerment assessment in regards to the degree to which the target group is empowered to live a life in dignity. It includes an assessment as to the degree of empowerment and to the level of change that has happened. Empowerment is defined as a combination of resources, agency and achievement.

In regards to **resources** the interviewees all spoke about a feeling of empowerment related to the education they obtained, which provided them with new knowledge and different ideas on how to approach conflicts. Also, social resources were created in terms of new networks (represented by the peace teams) and by new relationships between the members of the different churches in the three countries. There remains some work that needs to be done in terms of ensuring these resources remain accessible to the communities due to the resourcing model for the project which is highly dependent on donor support.

In regards to **agency** the project managed to create a sense of “power within”, because many interviewees spoke about feeling stronger in their own capacities, feeling enlightened and more mature so that they can embrace peace building as part of their lives. The project has also contributed to generate the “power with”, by bringing people together, so that they can share their knowledge and can start planning for collective action. Some interviewees have actually started to use their knowledge in their communities and tried to intervene in conflicts on household level. However, the project has not yet reached to the levels of “power to” and “power over”, because for that the project would have to be more sustainably integrated into the church structure and people would have to be able to exert their knowledge and witness the results of their actions, which was not fully the goal of this stage of the project design.

As much as the interviewees shared that they were successful in applying their new knowledge in their communities and managed to solve some conflicts, it cannot be truly verified that this is a sustainable **achievement**.

Degree and level of empowerment						
Thematic area of result		Level 1: Output Individual and community	Level 2: Output Individual and community (congregation)	Level 3: Outcome Individual and community (community)	Level 4: Outcome Community and/or society	Level 5: Impact Community / society / structural
		Strengthening civil society	Ethiopia	X	X	X
Cameroon	X		X	X		
Madagascar	X					
Conflict management capacities built	Ethiopia	X	X	X		
	Cameroon	X	X			
	Madagascar	X	X			
Peaceful coexistence	Ethiopia	X				
	Cameroon	X				
	Madagascar	X				
Gender equality	Ethiopia	X	X	X		
	Cameroon	X	X			
	Madagascar	X				
Total assessment of project		X	X			

The overall scoring that was given to the CAP project is a 2. Different ratings were applied for the different countries, since the achievement differed significantly. But it can be confirmed that level 2 was achieved by the three countries in most thematic areas of result. A more detailed description of the rating is provided below.

Strengthening Civil society

Many people trained under the CAP project occupy leadership positions in their congregations and many even occupy leadership positions at synod level. Thus, it constitutes expressing leadership *in* civil society, because every congregant is a citizen and is exercising their right of association by belonging to a faith-based organization. Some of the data collected points towards the leaders of the church advocating for peace and reaching out to other church leaders, which could be seen as showing leadership *of* civil society. An overall level of 3 is reached for Cameroon and Ethiopia, because the data provides evidence that the trained participants are taking the message beyond their church congregations into the broader community. They have even started to apply their knowledge in their communities, thus trying to make a change. This is not necessarily true for Madagascar, where it happens much more occasionally. However, for the project to reach a higher rating, the trained people would have to come together and organize themselves to have larger impact in the wider community and society at large.

Conflict Management Capacities Built

The data obtained points towards people having acquired new knowledge on how to approach, understand and solve conflicts. In Ethiopia this knowledge is being spread widely and a number of concrete examples were provided where the knowledge was applied. The same happened to a lesser extent in Cameroon and Madagascar, which is why those two countries have not been evaluated as being on level 3.

Peaceful coexistence

The CAP project contributed to people reflecting about peaceful coexistence and becoming an ambassador for peace. However, since many conflicts are still happening within the church and on community level, the CAP project could only contribute to level 1. It also observed that it would have been difficult for the project to make inroads on this area at this stage of the project because this will only come to pass once the project has fully gone past stage 2 and 3 (see findings on Theory of Change above).

Gender Equality

In Ethiopia most of the interviewees were not only women but women who were active in their church structures. A key realisation is that the cultural context is a critical factor to consider in assessing the contribution of the project to gender equality. The CAP project was also taken up by the women department, which ensured that all women representatives of the synods were trained in conflict awareness. Those women then used the new knowledge and skills to solve conflicts not only in their congregation but also in their communities. Since the passing on of knowledge is not as structured and widespread in Cameroon and Madagascar, these two countries were evaluated as only reaching level 2.

6. Key Outcomes and Challenges

The overall goal of the project was to *increase resilience in contexts affected by conflict of NMS’ partner churches in Cameroon, Madagascar and Ethiopia*. In reaching this goal there was need to review the impact path due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This made tracking outcomes and outputs a lot more

challenging for the project staff, because the project pathway deviated and hence the probability of unintended results became not only enhanced but also necessary. This did not prevent the project from ending up with lessons learnt and recommendations but it did warrant a revisit of what were the key outcomes without being limited by the project log frame. Similarly looking at the key outcomes is also instrumental for identifying new project ideas and approaches.

The importance of conflict management in the church is reinforced

What clearly stood out as the most important and most visible outcome was the realisation and acceptance by church leaders that addressing conflict within the church is necessary and needs to be strengthened. This is possibly the most important step in the theory of change and must not be taken for granted as a key outcome.

The church has a role to promote sustainable peace in their societies/communities/nations

There was also an acknowledgement that conflicts are an unavoidable part of life and the churches existed in communities that were embroiled in various types of conflict. These communities will benefit from a church that can not only resolve these conflicts but can facilitate sustainable peace. The starting point is for the church to accept that it has a role it can play and the project contributed to emboldening this belief. Church leaders realized that if they can position the church in a way that it will be seen as bringing peace to the people, it will enhance its relevance and even contribute to more congregants joining the church in the future.

The empowerment and participation of women

The role of women in conflict management in the church is an avenue for promoting the participation of women in the church as well as providing solutions to community conflicts. Through these roles the women interviewed illustrated that they had not only grown in confidence but also embraced the role and defined it as a role they could effectively play in the church and in the communities.

The importance and possibilities of peer learning

All interviewees very much appreciated the international exposure and the opportunity to exchange with others from different backgrounds. Even though they highlighted that the conflicts are very specific that they individually are dealing with, there is still need for exchange and this should play a crucial part in the development of any new project.

Challenges

Intervention logic

The theory of change implies that if the churches develop their own strategy on how to handle different conflicts, they will be better equipped to play an active role in the civil society of their country. There is need to spend a bit more time and resources in strengthening the ownership by the church and realising the impact of the training within the church.

The engagement of youth

Even though they were named as a particular target group, the youth have not yet played a sustainable role in the project. This is particularly significant since the majority of the population in all three countries are the youth. Therefore, they need to be roped in a lot more into peace building so that they can lead by example to their peers. There have been positive steps on this within Ethiopia and there is still much more that could be done in Cameroon and Madagascar.

The sustainability model

The project has a lot of potential, but it needs to pay particular attention to sustainability. The peace structures need to be sufficiently resourced, through a mixture of funding from external donors and through the church allocating resources to the peace committees from its own budget. The latter would also re-enforce the ownership of the project by the church and EECMY has already shown that this is possible.

The impact of COVID

Covid-19 really changed the set-up of the project and contributed to a slight change of goals. The initially planned international meetings could no longer be convened, but instead the knowledge and skills were trickled down to the grassroots level much more than was anticipated. At the same time, some of the project content was disseminated through the media in all its forms, which was initially not anticipated. In future interventions, online possibilities need to be planned into the project right from the start including facilitating online peer learning, considering online trainings, etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It emerged that monitoring and evaluation needs a more streamlined strategy across countries. The logframe matrix target indicators and the collected data did not immediately match up, some data was collected that, though useful for ensuring project progress, was not speaking to the indicator mentioned in the logframe matrix, and general knowledge of monitoring project progress was rather low.

7. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

7.1. Ownership, strategy and structure

One of the lessons learned is that in the current project there could have been more ownership by the church, but that the church nevertheless believes in its relevance. As a recommendation for the future, the NMS leadership and the church leadership should have joint discussions to develop the project together, to exchange ideas on how best to develop a structure and then a strategy on how to ensure that the content is being carried through to all levels. To also ensure that the project is not the special interest of only the church president, which can potentially carry political implications such as that the church members don't want to support the project, because they don't support the church leader, it is recommended to have a steering committee in place. This committee could consist of representatives from different institutions, which would have the positive side effect of the content of the project finding its way into all those institutions. The committee would be guided by well spelled out terms of reference and a clear strategy.

In order to ensure that the project is well anchored in the church structure, it is of utmost importance to gain the approval by the church board. As soon as the structure is validated by the board and the council, any project will have a secured place in the church structure. Ethiopia proved this point true, since the project was approved by the Management Committee of the National Church and the agreement was signed by the church president. Furthermore, Ethiopia has a written Conflict Management Strategy in place that defines the actions and the structures that will work towards brokering and maintain peace in the church and the church's role in community conflicts. If this happens in all countries, this will also guarantee the sustainability of the project, since it will be officially recognized and will receive financial as well as human resource support. For this purpose, it is essential that Cameroon and Madagascar move swiftly to develop their conflict management or peace strategies. The peace teams that have been or will be created have to be supported to ensure their survival, which

is why it needs to be ensured that the national and regional church can allocate a budget line for peace work.

Furthermore, the church should include local and traditional leaders in its peace building project to ensure that the project obtains full support on community level and nobody would feel left out. Especially where the church stands on one side of the conflict, there is need to reach out to peace-building institutions from other ethnic and religious backgrounds.

It was also mentioned that for Cameroon it would make sense to reach out to other churches (bishops and pastors) in the Central African Republic and in Mali and use them as allies when working on conflicts. Even Nigeria might be an important ally when working on cross-border conflicts. This will require a much larger set-up that reaches across borders, but will possibly prove to be even more effective when addressing conflicts that go beyond the borders of just one country.

The importance of meaningful engaging of youth cannot be overstated for the project. This will increase the ownership and sustainability of the project objectives and will help bring in much needed innovation into the project. The structures of the church must include young people in a similar way as they have included women.

7.2. Project set-up and project design

Due to the difference in conflicts in each of the countries, it is highly recommended to focus on a **country specific approach**. As pointed out above, the church structures are developed to a different degree in each country, which means that they have varying capacities to absorb the knowledge and training and to spread it to the grassroots level. Additionally, the conflicts and the context of each country are fundamentally different from each other, which demands for different training set-ups.

In order to achieve more impact with the project, it needs a **stronger implementation team**. So far only one person per country was in charge of the management and implementation and only contributed 25% of their time. In the future, it needs a person that is 100% dedicated to the project and supported by an administrative assistant. Additionally, the implementation team should be gender balanced and also include young people.

In regards to the **coordination** carried out by NMS, it also needs a stronger team. The coordinator should at least work hand in hand with an admin and finance person, so that the coordinator has the leeway to truly focus on the coordination of the project. On the side of the implementation it needs experts who can pass on the knowledge and skills to the beneficiaries without drawing too much time and energy from the coordinator. If the overall NMS leadership stood more confidently behind the project and ensured that it was anchored on the highest level in the partner church, the project would immediately increase in its relevance and effectiveness.

It has to be carefully identified who will be trained as multipliers and to which levels and institutions the trainings shall reach out. Instead of only training individuals from within the church structure, it is recommended to also **approach the educational institutes** that train the pastors to ensure that they are exposed to the knowledge early on. Sunday school teachers should be included in the CAP project as well so that they can spread the knowledge and skills to even the youngest congregants.

According to the data at hand, peace building by itself will most probably not be successful, since the lack of economic opportunities and challenges in the socio-cultural fabric of society constantly create new conflicts that have to be addressed. Therefore, a more **holistic approach** is deemed necessary to combine development and peace work.

Importantly the internal monitoring of the project needs to be enhanced and can occur on many levels. The project coordination role can include the role of monitoring, evaluation and learning whereby tools need to be developed at the beginning of the project to monitor and evaluate periodically at all levels including the peace committees, the national peace team, and the international team. This can be further augmented by enhancing the knowledge and skills of the project teams on monitoring and evaluation.

7.3. Training set-up and content

As much as the interviewees appreciated the new knowledge on conflict awareness and peace building, there are a number of lessons learned and related recommendations for improvement. Overall, the training was rather short and it was expected that the participants will be able to use the knowledge they obtained in the training to apply it in their respective communities. This has proven to be difficult. It was recommended that the training should be more comprehensive and that it be structured in a way that a feedback loop is included. Stakeholders should initially go through an exposure training, then be taught how to train others, get a chance to apply their knowledge and their skills and then be brought back to reflect with their peers on what went well and where there are still learning gaps. As much as the interviewees were excited to apply their knowledge in their communities, they also realized that conflicts are very diverse and that the tools they have learned so far are not enough. There was a strong desire to work on concrete conflicts that arise within or outside the church and initially try to analyse and solve them in the classroom setting, before the trainees venture out to do this in real life.

Working in conflicts and on conflicts requires a person not only to have knowledge – what this project was mainly focusing on – but also to have a certain attitude and standing as well as concrete skills. Therefore, the training content needs to be expanded to include communication and mediation tools, an understanding of identity, in-group and out-group phenomena, the impact of conflicts on feelings and relationships amongst many other topics. It is recommended to initially train about 10 to 15 key multipliers over an extended period of time so that they truly have the skills and the confidence to intervene in conflicts. This will also provide for an opportunity to apply the knowledge and turn it into skills. Once this is done, they should be accompanied when they now spread their knowledge in the communities.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAP followed the global trend of moving towards remote learning and utilising digital tools. Conflict management relies heavily on trust building, which is more effective when humans meet face to face and establish real connections. Once this is done, online tools can assist in some elements of the project or future interventions such as online trainings and therefore this needs to be built into the project going forward. Support and mentoring of trained personnel can also be conducted online. Peer learning for the peace committees, where there can be an exchange of how well the tools have been used, can be less costly than physical meetings. This means that the project will need to invest in the tools that can facilitate online learning and sharing.

7.4. Peer Learning

The peer learning component of the project must be continued and enhanced. The churches are in a position to learn from each other on many levels and this must be facilitated not only for this project but for many other interventions the churches may be engaging with. Specifically, for this project it can start at the leadership level where the international team can also support the church leadership in anchoring the project at the highest level and in their priority agendas. The next level is at the national peace team level where the peace teams must regularly come together (online and face to face) to share and learn from each other’s interventions. A further level will be the peace committees which can engage peer learning at an in-country level as well as across countries. An additional level to that would

be at the thematic or target group level. For instance, the women leaders in Ethiopia, Cameroon and Madagascar can share and learn so much from one another and embolden their approaches. The same can be said for youth or those dealing with inter-faith related conflicts or electoral based conflicts. The possibilities are numerous if peer learning is further developed and structured deliberately to address key learnings as they emanate. Ultimately, where key conflicts within the church emerge, a sister church can be tasked to mediate or resolve the conflict and this role can only be nurtured where peer learning works effectively.

7.5. Sustainability

The project will require to be resourced more effectively, which means that the reliance on NMS needs to be progressively reduced. It was quite evident that the current resources deployed to the project were not sufficient and as the project and its structures grow, the demand will increase further. Therefore, there is need to adopt a more sustainable model for the project which will do three things:

- Firstly, and most importantly, the churches must seek to position the project centrally within the churches ensuring that the project is recognised and resourced by the church due to its importance and centrality to the functioning of the church and the relevance of the church within the community.
- Secondly, the churches must seek to position themselves better to access resources from DIGNI and NMS. This means that they must define and contextualise the project for their respective churches. They must seek to improve of project delivery and increase the programming skills around the projects including project design, monitoring and evaluation, expert skills etc. They must also improve on the management and administration of development projects.
- Thirdly, the churches must be encouraged to identify funding sources beyond NMS and DIGNI. In Ethiopia GIZ already supports the Peace Office and this should be seen a best practice that can assist Cameroon and Madagascar to follow suit.

8. Conclusion

The intervention by NMS to the Lutheran churches in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar represented a calculated and ambitious attempt to address conflict within the church and support the role of the church to manage conflicts within the communities and societies to which these churches belong. The project was initiated by NMS which was a slight deviation from how projects are normally implemented, but the three churches took up the challenge primarily because of the relevance of the issue and the need to better manage conflicts within the church. The church leaders of all three countries appreciated the initiation of the project a lot and said:

“The biggest threat to the project is to actually stop the project at this stage”.

The initial planning revolved around peer learning and this was significantly disrupted by the advent of the COVID pandemic leading to a change in the project design and intervention approaches. This was not unique to NMS or the churches but a global challenge that all evaluation processes also had to adapt to. In assessing the extent to which the project is on track to achieve its purpose and deliver on the intended outputs and outcome, the harvesting approach had to be blended with an OECD approach in realisation that it would only make sense to establish what were the outcomes regardless of the initial plan and results framework. In doing so, the project was looked at from various angles as being very relevant at international, national, community and church levels. The project was largely effective and efficient in reaching its goal. There is need to review the sustainability model from NMS perspective and this may be relevant for NMS programs and relationship with its churches. It is too early to determine the impact of the project because it does require a long-term approach and this is only the beginning.

In this regard the key outcomes of the project were to establish and re-enforce the importance of conflict management within the church as well as the fact that the Lutheran churches in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Madagascar can play a key a role in it. This is critical for any other interventions going forward and the work already done makes it critical that it continues for each of the churches. Other key outcomes include a realisation of the importance of the Peer Learning process and an activation of the role and impact of women in the churches in conflict management. These are outcomes that need to be harnessed and protected because they offer possibilities in programming that were not fully utilised initially and the possibilities of elevating the relevance and effectiveness of the churches within their communities and nations.

There were challenges also that were identified at the same level which require addressing in future programming. Key amongst these are the review and refinement of the theory of change so that it is clear and deliberate that the first step is to equip the church to understand and address conflict in order to address conflict within the church as well as within the community and nation. There is need to fully incorporate youth in the process through clear strategies and to begin to think of the most effective ways of resourcing the project for the long term. The lessons of COVID mean that all development projects have had to develop in ways that allow for agility in project management hence the tools for remote programming need to be enhanced at all levels. Such adaptation also warrants a strengthened internal monitoring and evaluation process beginning with a clear establishment of a baseline and more deliberate monitoring processes to ensure all changes in project intervention are still measurable. It is clear that the project cannot continue as a three-country project but it must retain the peer learning component with the individual countries factoring in this approach also as a way of enhancing ownership of the project.

Overall, the project has been a unique and relevant intervention which relied on many variables which were not envisaged in the initial planning. The project has begun to create change and hence must be given an opportunity to follow through on this initial work. When the churches are fully capacitated, have initiated sustainable structures for their peace teams and find themselves in a position to engage in their communities, they can truly feel blessed as they are the ones who are the peace-makers.

9. Appendix

9.1. Success Stories

While interviewing the different stakeholders in the different countries, several success stories were shared with the evaluators, which are cited below.

Female interviewee in Ethiopia:

“The new knowledge that I obtained through the CAP project is very helpful and I could actually use it. There was a couple with four children in court to get divorced. I got a chance to mediate in this. I first met husband and wife separately so I could hear to both sides of the story. In this process, the family must have gained trust in me, because they recommended that I take part in the mediation. I believe it was God who gave me the chance to mediate. I urged the elders to also give me a chance and to include me in the mediation team. The couple spoke about their perceptions and the way they looked at it, they took responsibility for their actions, but also shared responsibility for their children. I showed them how their life would look like after the divorce and which impact it would have on their children. By understanding this and jointly taking responsibility, they cancelled the court case and are still together. I got a wide heart to listen to people’s problems.”

Female interviewee in Ethiopia:

“I gave the training to four parishes, which includes 90 congregation leaders. After the training, I have followed up on the women to find out how the training has impacted them. This is when I heard that one of the trainees has taken an initiative to go to the local prison and train detained women. Before that there was no connection to the women in prison. Once the training was underway, this woman and other women collected materials in kind to donate to the women in the prison.”

Female interviewee in Ethiopia:

“In my office, there was a young boy who always got into problems. He drank a lot of alcohol and chewed khat. The leadership in my office took some money from his monthly salary to sanction him. The boy had a bad reputation and the office was about to release him from his job. Since I now had this new knowledge from the training, I investigated and tried to find the source of the boy’s problem. I approached him and showed him how to realize peace in his life. After several sessions, he changed his behavior and he is now married. I feel like a mother to him after this process and the trust this has built between us. The boy turned man is now teaching others how to attain peace in their personal lives. He changed his circles and is now known to be teaching peace. I believe that women are the very actors of peace, they are the councillors of their children and husbands. I am very grateful to have gotten this training and to have become a peace agent.”

Female interviewee in Ethiopia:

“After having been trained in conflict awareness, I started going to the field to pass on my knowledge to the women, their husbands and elders. Since we were discussing until late in the afternoon, I could not go back home, but was taken in by a family with six children. When the father of the family came home in the evening and greeted his wife, asking about her day and how she had been, the wife did not respond. I immediately realized that something was going on. I used my new skills of analyzing the conflict to find the root causes. We talked for eight hours and found a solution to the problem that the women and her husband had.”

“After another training that I had conducted in 8 parishes, I spent the night again with one family. At midnight, the neighbors of the family fought and the wife of the neighbor fled to the family. I sat down

with the neighbor and investigated the problem to find the root cause, which was a disagreement on finances. We called the husband to come over and asked him whether he would have beaten a friend over the same issue that he has had with his wife. Obviously he wouldn't have. After looking at the issue together, we realized that it was a rather simple thing that could easily be resolved. This is what we did. The couple left happily and even had a child afterward, which they named “Firomse”, which means “we made peace/love”.

Female interviewee in Ethiopia:

“I worked on the Aguji and Amaro / Kele conflict. By using the connector and divider knowledge on this conflict, I was able to show to both parties what it is that connects them and what divides them. I pointed out what would happen if they lost this precious connection. They played out a drama and afterwards they hugged each other and cried. We told them to work on peace making since they need each other.”

Male interviewee in Cameroon:

“In my opinion, the peace team sensitizes people and people can bring their conflicts to the team so that the team can analyze the situation. I have an example of a conflict in our community that the peace team helped to solve. There was a youth leader, who had a problem with a member of the district. The man from the district had borrowed the generator of the youth but didn't pay for it and also didn't return the generator. The youth leader wrote to the peace team to look into the issue. As the peace team we came and used the historical method that we had learned during the training. In the process as we were looking at the history of the conflict, when and where it had started, we found out that the two parties had a different understanding of the matter. The member from the district realized that the generator was not working at the time that he borrowed it. So obviously he didn't want to pay money for it. At the same time, he felt that he couldn't now return a broken generator. By sharing their views and thinking of how to move on together, we could settle the conflict.”

Male interviewee in Cameroon:

“After the having been part of the CAP project, I was more attuned to the message of peace and non-violence. As a reverend I was able to intervene in a conflict. On the 2nd of December 2021, a Christian was killed and the Gbaya wanted to take revenge on the Peul. I told them to be patient and not to revenge, because God would reveal the identity of the assassin soon. I also preached the gospel of peace to them. The family did not revenge and a few weeks later the police had found the assassin. It was actually another Gbaya. In this way a fight between two ethnic groups was prevented.”

9.2. List of Interviewees

Country	Number	Name	Title	Gender
Ethiopia	1	Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idossa	EECMY Peace office coordinator and former church president	male
	2	Yihun Birhanemeskel	EECMY Peace Office Project Coordinator	male
	3	Abebech Kussa	EECMY Women Department Capacity Building Coordinator	female
	4	Keneni Jibat	EECMY Peace Office Expert and Trainer	male
	5	Hanna Billu	Adola Genale Synod, Wadera Parish Volunteer	female
	6	Karo Gebre Hiwot	EECMY SCES Women Department Director	female
	7	Rev. Desta Danno	Dara Synod Women Department Coordinator	female
	8	Birhane Bekele	EECMY CES Women Coordinator	female
	10	Aster Jugisa	EECMY SCES Government Focal Person	female
	11	Woinshet Hayu	Addis Ababa Synod Volunteer	female
	12	Worknesh Genno	NMS Field Coordinator	female
	13	Sophie Küstert-Rakatondrainy	NMS Project Coordinator	female
	14	Addis Bekele	EECMY Inter-Faith Mission Coordinator	male
	Cameroon	15	Jean Marc Djouldé	EELC CAP Coordinator
16		Enok Garga Zizi	National Bishop Assistant	male
17		Raphael Oumarou Batouri	General Secretary	male
18		Dr. Ruben Ngozo	National Bishop	male
19		Aissatou Nasson	Director of Femmes pour Christ	female
20		Rev. Roger Pitang	Regional Bishop, Meiganga	male
21		Rev. Sanda Saidou	Garoua Synod	male
22		Rev. André Djedou	Christian Education Director and member of the National Peace Team	male
23		René Claude Djomo	Education Secretary	male
24		Rev. Serge Patrick Teneku	Director of Communication at EELC	male
25		Dr. Assana	Professor at Ngaoundéré University and Trainer	male
26		Enok Houssame	NMS Field Coordinator	male
27		Mvooh Pascale Cyrille	Member of Peace Team in the Southern Region	male
Madagascar	28	Andosoa Ramiamanana	NMS Field Coordinator	female
	29	Andrianasolo Fiankinana	FLM CAP coordinator	male
	30	Toromaree Mananato	Secretary General of FLM	female
	31	Pr. Rapelanoro Rebenja Fahafahantsoa	President of the University Fianarantsoa	male
	32	Ramarolahy Calixte	Synode Morondava Région MENABE	male
33	Rev. Denis Rakotozafy	Church President FLM	male	
NMS HQ	34	Lena Eltervag	NMS Project Handler	female
	35	Erik Bischler	Former NMS Department Leader of French-Speaking Africa	male
	36	Sandra Bischler	NMS Department Leader for Europe and Brazil	female
	37	Arild Bakke	NMS Department Leader for East Africa	male
Other	38	Rolf Grafe	Independent Consultant for the design and implementation of the CAP	male
	39	Rekiatu Musa Jingi	Young Independent Consultant in Ngaoundéré	female