



**COALITION FOR HUMANITY**  
*Improving Community Resilience*

**BOYS RIGHTS VIOLATION, PROTECTION ASSESSMENT,  
MONITORING AND ANALYSIS REPORT  
DECEMBER 2020**

**LONGECHUK COUNTY UPPER NILE STATE, SOUTH SUDAN**  
*July 2020 - November 2020 FINDINGS*



**FUNDED BY SOUTH SUDAN HUMANITARIAN FUND (SSHF)**

*The boys want to go to school*

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

Coalition for Humanity is a National NGO (NNGO) with its headquarters in Juba. Coalition for Humanity's mission is to save lives, alleviate suffering, build resilience of the vulnerable people, through programmes in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation, Protection/GBV, WASH, Food Security and Livelihoods, Health and Nutrition through strategies like community capacity building, Social Behaviour Change Communication, market linkages, advocacy and governance to enhance contextualized innovative solutions for service delivery in Emergency Response and Sustainable development in South Sudan. Coalition for Humanity is currently implementing a protection project funded by South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF). The project seeks to assess the general protection concerns in Upper Nile Longechuk County. A meeting was held with boys between the age of 12 and 17 years, the discussion sort to assess any protection concerns. The boys were asked questions about child recruitment and abduction, child labour, access to education, forced marriage and domestic violence. This report consolidates findings from 60 boys' participants of schooling age randomly sampled across different Payams in Longechuk County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan. A total of 5 focus group discussions were held, and the findings consolidated.

The findings of this report are necessary in raising awareness about challenges boys are facing, coming up with redress mechanisms and various interventions. This report is important for humanitarian workers, Protection and GBV cluster, WASH cluster, NFI clusters, South Sudan government, ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and global GBV call to action, the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.

*The boys want to go to school.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The general security and safety for boys has improved in Longechuk County. The boys are no longer scared of abduction or being forced to join Militia. The situation in Warweng was not stable always because of indirect revenge attacks or ambushes from Gaguang Nuer youth from Mading Payam in Nasir County. The boys' safety is also threatened by swollen rivers, this makes it impossible to attend school during rainy season.

Most boys do not have access to education in this community because of the financial inabilities of families. The families cannot afford uniform, books and other school items. The schools are few, the kids have to walk long distances to access education. Most schools have no feeding program, this led to most children dropping out of school. Most of the time, teachers don't turn up regularly to teach, this was attributed to the lack of incentives (salary) for teachers. The teachers are tired of volunteering and there is nothing the school administration can do. The engagement of boys in domestic chores, like herding cattle, taking cattle to the market for sell, running family business has also been a barrier to access to education. Traders have also taken advantage of young boys; they give them items to sell the whole day as a source of cheap labour. Young boys who get used to earning money drop out of school. When the money is not sufficient, the boys engage in petty crimes.

Boys as young as 15 years are forced to get married, this too has affected their access to education. The boys don't have much control over the parent's decisions and choices when it comes to marriage. It is believed that the parents' choice is the best because they do a better background check about the girl.

### Recommendations

1. The next project should be integrated, Child Protection, and Education
2. There is need for construction of more schools in Longechuk County
3. There is need for school feeding program to improve school attendance
4. There is need to mobilize resources to pay teachers to continue offering services consistently.
5. There is need for policies and law enhancement to make sure traders don't employ children under the age of 18 years.
6. Initiate a policy and law enhancement against forced marriages for children under the age of 18 years
7. There is need for psychosocial support to encourage parents to have an income generating activity to support family so that they can allow boys to go to school.

## 1.0 FINDINGS

### 1.1 General Safety and Child Abduction

The security situation in Warweng was not stable always because of indirect revenge attacks or ambushes from Gaguang Nuer youth from Mading Payam in Nasir County. These youths terrorized people at night and would sometimes kill and leave. Currently, there is no abduction threat or being forced to join Militia, but between 2015 and 2018, local chiefs in the area were said to have mobilized their community members and encouraged them to allow school children to take up arms and defend their communities since there was no proper government in place to protect civilians. In Mathiang Payam there have not been recent attacks in the community in terms of national between government and opposition forces. Mathiang is not experiencing internal or external threats. There are no safety concerns for the boys on their way to schools. In the past, boys were abducted and forcefully recruited into the army against their will and that of their parents as well. Before August 2019, boys as young as 14 years old used to be recruited into both government and opposition forces as fighters.

### 1.2 Child Labour

There are many boys aged 13 years and below who are hired by local traders in Mathiang market to sell items like bread, biscuits, oil in gallons, sugar, salt, onions e.t.c. These traders pay the boys 50 birr a day. This was happening even before closure of schools due to Covid-19 pandemic. The boys engage in selling these goods as a means of earning a living because they lack good parental care. They always drop out of school because of poverty and lack of parental support. Other boys are taken advantage of by local traders to sell their goods while paying them very little money at the end of the day. A lot of families engaged boys with family businesses in the local market at the expense of schooling. For example, some boys would be told by their parents to take either one of the family cows, goats, or sheep and sell in Mathiang market so as to start some small family business. The boys working for money have got high chances of dropping out of school and ending their education life. This is because they frequently miss school and perform poorly during exams hence most of them fail to attain the pass mark for promotion into the next class. Others were reported to become criminals in order to sustain their urge for money.

### 1.3 Access to Education

Most boys do not have access to education in this community because the financial abilities of families vary, some families are rich and their children comfortably go to school, while children/boys who come from poor families rarely attend schools, and if they do, they do not manage to complete their studies. Barriers to accessing education include; lack of parental support, long distances to school, no school feeding program, lack of scholastic materials, and lack of teachers in the school. Other barriers stopping boys from accessing education were lack of teachers to teach in the school, lack of school uniforms, and lack of learning materials in cases where they were not provided by parents or supplied by schools. Lack of peace in the community especially when communal violence occurred was also mentioned. Boys who lack education resort to crimes while others engage in small businesses. Boys had no safety concerns on their way to school apart from the long distance which was a challenge for those who came from Bomas that were far away e.g. Mokley and Kuryiith. Coming to Warweng Central Primary school located at the payam headquarters would take them roughly one and half hours walk from those Bomas

In Jangok Payam boys were not given chance to go to school because of a lot of work at home e.g. taking care of herds of cattle and goats. The other challenge was the long distance that would be covered daily since there was only one school in Jangok. The boys reported that they used not to be taught regularly because some teachers did not come to school throughout the week since they didn't have incentives in terms of salary at the end of the month. This made them reluctant and would come to school whenever they wished. There was nothing the school administration would do about it. Another safety concern was the danger and risk of crossing rivers during the rainy season. Because of this, many children do not attend school during the rainy seasons. The boys said the streams would get full and dangerous making it difficult for some children to attend school.

### 1.4 Forced Marriage

Forced or child marriages is a common practice in this community. The boys are forced to respect the decision of their parents. According to their culture, boys who go against their parents' decisions/wishes are ex-communicated in the community because they are seen as outcast members. According to the boys in Mathiang, the most appropriate age for a man to get married is 20 years and above. A different group believed that the most appropriate age for a man to get marriage was 25 years and above as per the boys while for a girl they said 20 years old would be fine to get married. Fathers made marriage decisions in their families and they do not consult anyone for such arrangements. However, 15-year-old boys have been forced to marry. Fathers are the ones who make decisions in the family for one to get married. They usually arrange for such marriage without consulting their children because they think they have the right to choose wives for their children. There are so many circumstances where boys have been forced to marry by their parents. While some respect these decisions by getting married, others run away to their uncles or grandmothers' homes. Other boys may run mad if they cannot manage such stress. However, the choice of the parents was good because they would thoroughly check the background of the girl they wanted their child to get marriage to. They pushed their children into early marriage in order to avoid using their resources/cows on extended family relatives whose children planned to marry

## **1.5** Conclusions

The boy child is mostly affected by child labour and forced marriages. The long distance to school is a barrier to education. Lack of teachers in school, lack of school uniform, lack of education material has also contributed to boys not attending school.

## **1.6** Recommendations

- 1 The next project should be integrated, Child Protection, and Education
- 2 There is need for construction of more schools in Longechuk County
- 3 There is need for school feeding program to improve school attendance
- 4 There is need to mobilize resources to pay teachers to continue offering services consistently.
- 5 There is need for policies and law enhancement to make sure traders don't employ children under the age of 18 years.
- 6 Initiate a policy and law enhancement against forced marriages for children under the age of 18 years
- 7 There is need for psychosocial support to encourage parents to have an income generating activity to support family so that they can allow boys to go to school.

**ANNEX MONTHLY BOYS FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020**

**Findings from Boys FGD July**



**Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violation:  
Upper Nile State Report**

**Date: 21/7/2020**

**State: Upper Nile County: Longechuk**

**Payam: Mathiang**



## Background

Coalition for Humanity is a National NGO (NNGO) with its headquarters in Juba. Coalition for Humanity's mission is to save lives, alleviate suffering, built resilience of the vulnerable people, through programmes in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation, Protection/GBV, WASH, Food Security and Livelihoods, Health and Nutrition through strategies like community capacity building, Social Behavior Change Communication, market linkages, advocacy and governance to enhance contextualized innovative solutions for service delivery in Emergency Response and Sustainable development in South Sudan. Coalition for Humanity is currently implementing a protection project funded by South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF). The project seeks to assess the general protection concerns in Upper Nile Longechuk County. A meeting was held with Men between the age of 12 and 17 years, the discussion sort to asses any protection concerns. The boys were asked questions about child recruitment and abduction, child labour, access to education, forced marriage and domestic violence

## General Safety and Child Abduction

There have not been recent attacks in the community in term of national conflict between government and opposition forces. Mathiang is not experiencing internal or external threats due to the ongoing peace between the government and the opposition parties who were signatories to the signed peace agreement that is now under implementation. There are no safety concerns for the boys on their way to schools In the past, boys were abducted and forcefully recruited into the army against their will and that of their parents as well.

This used to take place in the greater Longechuk Payams such as Mathiang, Pamach, Belwang, Jangok, and Malual. This has changed in the recent past since the peace agreement was signed. Currently there are no circumstances where boys voluntarily join child army or other militia groups during or after the war. Before August 2019, boys as young as 14 years old used to be recruited into both government and opposition forces as fighters in the Payams listed above.

## Child Labour

There are many boys aged 13 years and below who are hired by local traders in Mathiang market to sell items like bread, biscuits, oil in gallons, sugar, salt, onions e.t.c. These traders pay the boys 50 birr a day. This was happening even before closure of schools due to Covid-19 pandemic. The boys engage in selling these goods as a means of earning a living because they lack good parental care. They always drop out of school because of poverty and lack of parental support. The boys believed that when schoolboys engage in work for money, they may end up becoming criminals in future because they will be living stressful lives without hope for a better tomorrow.

## Access to Education

The boys believe that education is important. Education makes a person responsible and useful in the community because when a person is educated, he may become a doctor, teacher, engineer, mechanic, lawyer, a nurse, a scientist, etc and serve the community with his/her knowledge. They also believed that parents, especially fathers are responsible for the education of their children as they are the ones who make final decisions in the family. Most boys do not have access to education in this community because the financial abilities of families vary, some families are rich and their children comfortably go to school, while children/boys who come from poor families rarely attend schools, and if they do, they do not manage to complete their studies. Barriers to accessing education include; lack of parental support, long distances to school, no school feeding program, lack of scholastic materials, and lack of teachers in the school. Boys who lack education resort to crimes while others engage in small businesses. Other boys are taken advantage of by local traders to sell their goods while paying them very little money at the end of the day.

## Forced Marriage

Forced or child marriages is a common practice in this community. For example, a 15-year old boy was forced to get married to a 19-year old girl by his parent in April 2020 in Malual payam. The boy was forced to respect the decision of his parent despite the fact that the girl was older than the boy. According to their culture, boys who go against their parents' decisions/wishes are ex-communicated in the community because they are seen as outcast members. They are not regarded as good boys. According to the boys in Mathiang, the most appropriate age for a man to get married is 20 years and above. However, the youngest age was a 15-year-old boy in Malual Payam who was forced to get married. Fathers are the ones who make decisions in the family for one to get married. They usually arrange for such marriage without consulting their children because they think they have the right to choose wives for their children. There are so many circumstances where boys have been forced to marry by their parents. While some respect these decisions by getting married, others run away to their uncles or grandmothers' homes. Others, even forced, refuse to go back to their biological parents.

The boys believed that it is good for boys to respect the choice of their parents, but they should not necessarily enter into forced/early marriages because it may lead to them running away from the home or even commit suicide. Other boys may run mad if they cannot manage such stress. Culturally, boys talk to their paternal or maternal uncles or grandmothers when they experience mistreatment from their parents. The uncle then calls the boy's father to his home to discuss reasons for mistreating his child. The boys' father would then explain the problem, and then the matter is resolved peacefully. This is the same if the boy ran to his grandmothers' home. The boy would later return home or remain at his uncles or grandmothers' home. The boys recommended that, the parents need to be made aware of child rights and the importance of an educated child to the family and community at large.

## Domestic Violence

There are fights in the family between parents due to misunderstandings brought about by the father coming home drunk, or the mother failing to prepare food for the family on time and even the father failing to provide food for the family. Most of the conflict, fights and beating in the households are caused by misunderstandings between the husband and wife. A husband involving in excessive drinking becomes violent against his wife. Failure of a wife to prepare family meals on time angers the husband and he may beat her. Another source of conflict is failure of the father to provide food or clothing for the family. In case of fights, the paternal or maternal uncles or grandmothers settle disputes between boy child and his parents. If boys fall out with parents, their paternal uncle, maternal uncles and grandmothers on either from his mother or father sides all the times, assists them. The boys recommended that older community members should counsel them; paternal uncles or maternal uncles and their parents should be advised very strongly by community elders and other opinion leaders in the community to stop mistreating their children.

## Summary of Findings

- 1 Child labor: Young boys aged 13 years and below are being hired by local traders in Mathiang local market to sell their goods in small scale in the market or open places, and only pay them 50 Birr at the end of the day, which is exploitation and child abuse.
- 2 Limited access to education: education is only accessible to children who come from rich families, while children who come from poor families and lack parental support while in school, drop out of school and end up in the market selling goods for local traders when they are supposed to be in school.
- 3 Child or forced marriage: Child or forced marriages is a cultural practice in the community, and children as young as 15 years old are forced to marry by their parents. An incident happened in April 2020 in Malual Payam of Longechuk County. This is a violation of children rights, which needs to be addressed by creating awareness targeting parents, community elders and leaders who see it as a normal cultural practice.
- 4 Domestic violence: Wives battering is considered here as a cultural practice that is even acceptable to the women themselves and no one takes it seriously. Parents quarrel and fights openly before their children and community considers it as a normal.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 Need to raise awareness on child labor or child rights targeting local traders in Mathiang Payam who hire and engage the young boys to sell their goods in the open market.
- 2 Provision of school feeding program to support children who come from poor families. Local authority and CH team in Juba and in the field to share this concern with World Vision that is in charge of General food distribution (GFD) in greater Longechuk so that they can provide school feeding program when schools reopen.
- 3 Creation of awareness on child or forced marriage targeting parents and community elders in order to change their cultural perspective that allows forced marriages among young children.
- 4 Raising awareness on domestic violence and the importance of respecting human rights especially respect for women rights putting into consideration that women rights are human rights that need to be respected by husbands and community.

## Findings from Boys FGD August



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violation:  
Upper Nile State Report

Date: 31st August, 2020

Payam: Mathiang

State: Upper Nile

## **Introduction**

The focus group discussion was conducted in Mathiang Payam on 31st August, 2020 from 4.00pm with twelve boys attending the meeting. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longechuk County.

## **Child recruitment and Abduction**

There were no safety concerns for the boys on their way to schools. They moved freely to and from school without anyone disturbing them. There were also no security issues or fear of abduction or forceful recruitment into armed groups for the boys in the county. However, such cases of forceful recruitment of boys into army forces were common in greater Longechuk from late 2018 backwards especially during the war in South Sudan. Such practices had stopped since signing of the peace agreement between government and opposition forces in 2018. Voluntarily joining of the boys into child army or other militia groups were also not there.

## **Child labour**

Child labour is common with Local traders in Mathiang Market. They hire boys aged 13 years and below for as low as 50 Birr per day. This was said to have been the practice even before schools got closed as a result of the Pandemic outbreak. The boys working for money have got high chances of dropping out of school and ending their education life. This is because they frequently miss school and perform poorly during exams hence most of them fail to attain the pass mark for promotion into the next class. Others were reported to become criminals in order to sustain their urge for money.

## **Access to education**

Education makes a boy become a responsible person and helps his/her community and parents, for example, they said that when you are educated, you can work anywhere in the world and you can support your parents. Parents, especially fathers were responsible for the education of their children, and for those who did not have fathers, their mothers were responsible to take them to school. Most boys did not have access to education in the community because the conditions of the families were not the same, some families were rich while others were poor and couldn't afford taking good care of their children educational needs. The barriers stopping boys from accessing education were lack of teachers to teach in the school, lack of school uniforms, lack of learning materials in cases where they were not provided by parents or supplied by schools and lack of peace in the community especially when communal violence occurred and incidences of engaging boys in income generating activities i.e. those who came from poor families, e.g., those who were being hired to sell goods in the local market during schooling time. Boys who lacked education became unhappy, idle and most likely resort to stealing other peoples' property or turn out to be criminals.

## Forced marriage

Early marriage was a common practice in the community, for example, in the recent past, in July, 2018, a 15 years old girl was forced to marry a 35 years old man in Mathiang Payam and nothing was done about it because marriage was considered a family affair and girls or boys were expected to accept marriage arrangements that would be made by their parents. Those who resisted were bad children according to the parents and the community. The most appropriate age for a man to get marriage was 25 years and above as per the boys while for a girl they said 20 years old would be fine to get married. Fathers made marriage decisions in their families and they do not consult anyone for such arrangements. According to the boys, many had been forced into marriages they never wanted. This affected both boys and girls. As a result, unwilling ones' escaped to their paternal or maternal uncles while others disappear from their biological parents' homes and do not come back for good. However, the choice of the parents because they would thoroughly check the background of the lady they wanted their child to get marriage to. The bad side of this would be if both the boy and the girl were not willing. Paternal and maternal uncles or grandmothers played a critical part in settling a mistreatment dispute between boys and their parents. It was however recommended that parents need to be made aware about the importance of schooling for their children by explaining to them the importance of educated children.

## Domestic violence

In the domestic set up, "small mistakes" resulted into family wrangles. For example, mothers would be beaten up by fathers when they failed to prepare food in good time. This was reported to be common with drinking fathers. The flip side of this is that children became psychologically affected. Young people should be counselled by elderly community members such as their paternal uncles, maternal uncles and their grandmothers also their parents should be advised to treat their children well by the elderly people in the community and also local authority should take care of them by talking to their parents too to stop mistreating their children.

## Summary of findings

- 1 Child labour is still common in the local community and children as young as 13 years old are engaged by traders in the expense of schooling
- 2 Forced child marriage is practiced and children have got no voice over their parents
- 3 Domestic violence happens though it affected children psychologically. Culture supports the violence between husbands and wives and there is nothing the local authority can do

## Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 Need for community awareness on child labor or child rights targeting local traders in Mathiang Payam hiring and engaging young children in the open market and shop businesses.
- 2 Provision of school feeding program to support children who come from poor families would be key. Local authority and CH team in Juba and in the field to share this concern with World Vision who is in charge of
- 3 General food distribution (GFD) in greater Longechuk so that they can provide school feeding program for schools when they are reopened this year or next year.
- 4 There is need to raise public awareness on child or forced marriage targeting parents and community elders in order to change their mind set on forced marriage and violation of their children rights to marry at the right time and chose whom they want to marry.
- 5 Raising awareness on domestic violence; Focus should be on the importance of respecting human rights especially respect for women rights and peaceful settlement of family affairs between husbands and wives.



## Findings from Boys FGD September



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violation:  
Upper Nile State Report

Date: 16th September, 2020

Payam: Warweng

State: Upper Nile

## Introduction

The focus group discussion was conducted in Warweng Payam on 16th September, 2020 from 11.00am with twelve boys attending the meeting. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longechuk County.

## Child recruitment and Abduction

The security situation in Warweng was not stable always because of indirect revenge attacks or ambushes from Gaguang Nuer youth from Mading Payam in Nasir County. These youths terrorized people at night and would sometimes kill and leave. They would take with them cattle that would be found outside the family tukuls (Luaak). These would happen in the dawn when nobody would hear them. The boys reported that the local leaders in the area had tried several times to apprehend the criminals but it had not been successful. Boys had no safety concerns on their way to school apart from the long distance which was a challenge for those who came from Bomas that were far away e.g. Mokley and Kuryiith. Coming to Warweng Central Primary school located at the payam headquarters would take them roughly one and half hours walk from those Bomas.

Insecurity issues for boys had also not been experienced of late e.g. abduction or being forced into groups that they didn't like. However, this was the case in the recent past before the end of the civil war in South Sudan in late August, 2018. School boys would be recruited into armed groups to be used as fighters in order to defend the community against external aggression. In 2015, school boys from Warweng Central voluntarily joined militia groups because they wanted to defend their community since the war was affecting everyone including women, girls and young children. Local chiefs in the area were said to have mobilized their community members then by encouraging them to allow school children to take up arms and defend their communities since there was no proper government in place to protect civilians.

## Child labour

A lot of families engaged boys with family businesses in the local market at the expense of schooling. For example, some boys would be told by their parents to take either one of the family cows, goats, or sheep and sell in Mathiang market so as to start some small family business. Others were hired by local traders to sell out their goods in small scale in the open air market and later pay them 50 Ethiopian Birr at the end of the day. This kind of engagement for money had a lot of negative impact on the life of the young boys because most of them ended up out of school. Some performed poorly because of not fully attending lessons while others resorted to criminal activities

## **Access to education**

Boys understood that education made people become knowledgeable and intelligent in the community. It was also a source of employment because those who were educated worked anywhere in the world and offered financial support to their parents. According to them, parents were responsible of taking their children to school. Apart from most of them going to school, a few boys had not and some had just dropped out at some point. Those from poor families lacked support from their families in terms of meeting certain basic needs and some got discouraged by the long distances covered daily to reach school. It was also reported that lack of school feeding program, lack of scholastic materials and lack of enough teachers in school had also demotivated some of the boys from going to school.

Boys who lacked education resorted to crimes while others engaged in income generating activities. Some had been exploited and abused or hired to work only for their daily bread without a clear future plan.

## **Forced marriage**

Forced or child marriages were a common practice in the community. They were frequently done by parents who had single sons. They pushed their children into early marriage in order to avoid using their resources/cows on extended family relatives whose children planned to marry. According to the boys, the most appropriate age for a man to get married was 18 years and above. However, in November, 2019 in Kuryiith Boma, a 16-year-old boy was forced to marry because he was the only son to the parents. The parents brought him a girl whom they claimed to have loved her because she was good mannered and they had known her parents for a long time. Hence, fathers and mothers made decisions for their children to get married and they usually arranged such marriages without consulting their children because they always thought they had the best choices for them. Most boys found themselves in such situations and because they respected their parents, they had no other options other than abiding by it. Maternal and paternal uncles handled most cases of misunderstanding between children and their parents. The uncles often times listen to both the father and the son after which the conflict would be resolved peacefully. To show that the matter was completely settled, the boy usually returns home with the father. Parents of the boys however need thorough sensitization on the existence of child rights and the importance of education to their children.

## Domestic violence

Parents fight due to; family misunderstanding, drunkenness, failure of a mother to carry out her duties as instructed by a father and failure of a father to provide food and other basic needs for the family. These constant conflicts between parents make the children unhappy and sometimes influence them to move out and settle elsewhere in unknown places. Disputes between boys and their parents are often settled by either the paternal or maternal uncles or their grandmothers from both sides.

They recommended that it would be good for the boys to frequently receive counselling from their elderly community members, paternal uncles or maternal uncles. They also suggested that their parents should be advised to stop mistreating them because it would allow them concentrate in constructive things including their education. They also said the local authority should take interest and intervene

## Summary of findings

**Child protection:** Children are forced into marriage by their parents at an early age. They are also engaged in business by their parents and local traders instead of schooling

**Access to education:** The long distance from home to school prevents some children from accessing education

**Domestic violence:** Wives mistreatment exists in Warweng Payam and it is an acceptable cultural practice because no one takes it seriously including the local authority. Parents also quarrel and fights in front of their children without any problem because the community seems to have normalized it despite the effects to children.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 There is need to advocate for the rights of children to education by discouraging all forms of child labour
- 2 There would be need to construct more schools at the proximity of homes in order to reduce the distance that children cover to and from school daily
- 3 There is need to create awareness on the effects of child or forced marriages and how they infringe on the rights of children. The sensitization would target parents and community members in order to change their cultural perception about forced /early marriage for young children against their will.
- 4 There is need to raise awareness on the effects of domestic violence to children by targeting men who mistreat and beat their wives

## Findings from Boys FGD October



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violation:  
Upper Nile State Report

Date: 20th October, 2020  
Payam: Jangok  
State: Upper Nile

## Introduction

The focus group discussion was conducted on 20th October, 2020 in Jangok Payam. The meeting was attended by 12 Boys (Hosts) from 11 Bomas (Kuembor, Palkack, Relbek, Mathiang, Boryuween, Paytath, Mataar, Kuembor, New Site, Phalang A and Phalang B). The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longuchuk County.

## Child recruitment and Abduction

The general security was said to be normal. The only issue was that some boys were not given chance to go to school because of a lot of work at home e.g. taking care of herds of cattle and goats. The parents would also interfere with schooling through forced early marriage arrangements. Safety concerns including walking to school were not reported. The only challenge was the long distance that would be covered daily since there was only one school in Jangok Payam which disadvantaged children from Bomas faraway from school e.g. Taywengthuok and Kamel. Walking would take about 30 to 40 minutes. They also highlighted that there were no insecurity issues for them in terms of fear of abduction or forceful recruitment into armed groups. This was however the case in the recent past during the 2013 crises in greater Longechuk including early 2018. It however stopped since signing of the peace agreement between government and opposition forces in 2018 and boys were no more volunteering to join the army and other militia groups at the expense of education.

## Child labour

Boys as young as 11 years ran small businesses in the local market in mathiang. Instead of schooling, some had been hired by local traders who pay them 50Birr a day. The boys also helped their parents in taking the goats and cows to the market for sell and this had resulted into a lot of school drop outs as well as poor performance for those who were still attending school. There were consequences as a result of early engagement of boys in working for money. It came out that they would get used to having money and lacking at some point would push them to engage in criminal activities such as stealing and abusing drugs

## Access to education

The boys began by recognizing that education made people responsible in the society. They also added and said that educated children had a brighter future compared to those who were not educated because they would be employed and support their parents financially. It was therefore the responsibility of parents to take their children to school. They however mentioned that children who came from rich families had more advantage because the parents were able to afford to provide for their education needs. Those whose parents were poor ended up dropping out of school because the parents would not sustain them in the education system.

Other challenges that also hindered boys from accessing education were; intentional lack of support from parents to provide essential basic needs such as school uniforms, the lack of teachers in school to provide them the correct learning, the long distances that would be covered from home to school on a daily basis (30-40min walk), lack of scholastic materials and early child labour at the expense of schooling. These challenges were said to have increased the rate of school drop outs who end up involving themselves in criminal activities in the society

## Forced marriage

Early or child marriage was said to be a traditional practice that allowed children/boys who were born single to their families to get married early so that parents could avoid spending resources on other close relatives. The marriages were often arranged by parents even without the knowledge/consent of the children. Those who never complied were considered rude and outcasts from the community. According to the boys, the most appropriate age to get married would be from 20years and above. A young man in Nyathoan Boma had however been forced by the parents to get married in April, 2019 at 17 years of age. The boy was a single child to their parents hence the early arrangement. Fathers always made the plans concerning marriage and never consulted any other person in the family. It was however reported that some boys who had not been comfortable with the marriages escaped from their homes while others resorted to committing suicide through hanging or even shooting themselves either with a gun or an arrow. In their own opinion, the choice of parents to arrange for marriage was good in the sense that they often did a thorough background check about the girl's family. The negative side was that sometimes the boys were not consulted to find out their readiness/willingness into marriage. In search situations, the boys would talk to their paternal or maternal uncles who would always intervene in finding a solution. Parents should however be made aware about the importance of schooling for their children. For example, they would be told that educated children are able to get jobs and support them financially.

## Domestic violence

Domestic violence was common in families and it mainly involved parents especially when a man came home drunk. They would always fight the boys' mothers without any reason. Sometimes failure to prepare the meals early would trigger the fighting. According to the boys, this was disgusting and had contributed to dropping out of school and poor performance. A part from the untimely preparation of meals, the fights were also caused by unfaithfulness between the couples, when the mothers support their daughters against marrying and poverty. Disputes amongst boys and parents were however frequently settled by either maternal or paternal uncles. Boys would be guided into doing the correct things while parents will always be asked to give a second chance on issues. It was however recommended that creating awareness on peaceful coexistence between parents and children would be key as well as involving the local authority where children would be treated violently.

## Summary of findings

- 1 Child labor: Due to lack of means and proper structures to govern children welfare, children rights are violated by their parents and local traders
- 2 Forced marriage: Forced/child marriage is an acceptable traditional practice that silently takes place in the families. It however has negative impact in the children involved
- 3 Access to education: Children who come from poor family backgrounds face challenges meeting their schooling needs e.g. fees, school uniforms, and other scholastic material needs because they lack parental support and are vulnerable to dropping out of school.
- 4 Domestic violence: Fighting in families is real and is as a result of small misunderstanding over petty family matters. Due to the cultural back up, men are the source of most violence cases

## Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 There is need for community awareness on child labor through sensitization of parents and traders on the effects of child labour and importance of education
- 2 Need for provision of scholastic materials which would help support and keep children in school especially those who come from poor families
- 3 There would be need to raise awareness on the effects of child or forced marriages through targeting parents and community elders in order to change their mind set on the outdated cultural practice.
- 4 There would be need for awareness raising on effects domestic violence on the wellbeing of families



## Findings from Boys FGD November



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violation:  
Upper Nile State Report

Date: 17th November, 2020  
Payam: Mathiang  
State: Upper Nile

## Introduction

The focus group discussion with adolescent boys was conducted on 17th November, 2020 in Mathiang Payam Primary school. The discussion was attended by 12 Boys representing 11 Bomas of Mathiang (Kuembor, Palkach, Relbek, Mathiang, Boryuween, Paytath, Mataar, Payweng, New Site, Phalang A and Phalang B). The purpose of the discussions was to find out protection concerns affecting children access to education in Mathiang Payam and it was facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longuchuk County.

## Child recruitment and Abduction

The boys reported that the general security situation in Mathiang was normal. The issues they raised were that some of the girls and boys used not to be given chance by their parents to attend classes regularly due to home assignments which they were being given by their parents at the time they should be going to attend classes. They also stated that some of the boys missed lessons because they were engaged in the market by local traders to sell out their goods at 50 Birr payment per day only. Beside those issues, the boys reported that they used not to be taught regularly because some teachers did not come to school throughout the week since they didn't have incentives in terms of salary at the end of the month. This made them reluctant and would come to school whenever they wished. There was nothing the school administration would do about it. The boys also reported that some of their parents interfered with their studies by forcing them to get married before they completed their schooling. They reported these problems as major protection concerns that required advocacy from local authorities and child protection partners.

There were no safety concerns on the way to and from school as was reported by the boys. They had only two major concerns; long distances to and from school. Boys and girls promoted to primary 7 & 8 covered about 2 hours walk from Jangok and those from Warweng would do 1 hour daily to attend classes in Mathiang. Most of them would arrive when lessons would have already started or even ending. Another safety concern was the danger and risk of crossing rivers during the rainy season. Because of this, many children didn't attend school during the rainy seasons. The boys said the streams would get full and dangerous making it difficult for some children to attend school especially the young children. Some could only make it to school when accompanied by their parents.

## Child labour

Boys as young as 13 years old were engaged in running small businesses in Mathiang market at the expense of schooling. They further reported that the issue had been shared with school administration including Parents Teachers Association (PTA) but no action had been taken to stop such exploitation of young boys because they used to be hired by local traders who only paid 50 Ethiopian Birr a day. Some helped their parents in selling out family cows, goats and sheep to the market and this had resulted into a lot of school drop outs as well as poor performance for those who attended school irregularly. The boys recommended that such issues needed the attention of partners like Coalition for Humanity (CH) and local leaders to jointly address the issues in the community with the help of local leaders, teachers and Parents Teachers Association.

## **Access to education**

The boys stated that education made someone important in the community and also in the nation because an educated person could work anywhere in the world. They also added that educated children had a brighter future compared to those who were not educated because they would be employed and support their parents. Those who would not be educated would not support their parents financially instead they become burdens to their parents. It was therefore the responsibility of parents to take their children to school since they would benefit from their children schooling in future. The boys also mentioned that children who came from poor families rarely accomplished their studies due to lack of parental support with provision of basic needs such as food and educational needs while in school. They also underperformed due to lack of concentration in class. Other problems reported to have hindered boys from accessing education were; lack of enough teachers (due to lack of incentives for them), lack of scholastic materials, lack of feeding program in school, walking long distances to school, flooding of streams during rainy seasons and child labor (some children worked during school time). These challenges were reported to have increased the rate of school drop outs every year.

## **Forced marriage**

Early or forced marriages were said to be a traditional practice that allowed children/boys who were born single to their families to get married early so that parents could avoid spending resources on other close relative's children. The marriages were arranged by one's parents without their consent. Parents believed they knew what was best for their children. It was therefore clear that children who went against their parents' wishes were considered indiscipline and would sometimes be ex-communicated by their parents and even the entire community. Those children who complied were praised for being a good example to the rest in the community. The boys further reported that forced marriages were real and normal since it was part of their culture. No one therefore cared about the unfairness to do with it not even the local authorities and the community elders. They had therefore not heard about it because they believed the arrangements were done silently without the knowledge of the public. Those who were not comfortable at all were said to escape from their homes, commit suicide through hanging on trees or even shoot themselves either with a gun or by piercing themselves with spears.

According to the boys' opinion, the choice of parents to arrange for marriage for them was good in the sense that they often did a thorough background check about the girl's family before proposing for such marriage but the bad side of it was that sometimes the boys were not consulted to find out their readiness/willingness into such marriages. In situations where the boys were unhappy, they would talk to their paternal or maternal uncles who would always intervene in to finding a solution by talking to their parents and advising them accordingly. For example, they would be told that educated children were able to get jobs and support them financially in case they wanted to stop them from continuing with their education.

## Domestic violence

The boys reported that domestic violence was common in their families and it mainly involved parents especially when a man came home drunk or when a woman failed to carry out her duties and responsibilities as expected by her husband. Sometimes when the man come home drunk, he would always fight the wife without any reason at all. Sometimes failure to prepare the family meals early would trigger the fighting. According to the boys, such issues contributed to dropping out of school and poor performance. Besides the untimely preparation of family meals, the fights were also caused by unfaithfulness between the couples and when the mothers supported their daughters against marrying a man who would not be of their choice. The disputes amongst boys and parents were however frequently settled by either maternal or paternal uncles. The boys however recommended that creating awareness on peaceful coexistence between parents and children would be key as well as involving the local authority and community elders where children would be treated violently by their parents.

## Summary of findings


- 1 There were issues of child labour as reported by the boys: This is due to the lack of child protection partner in Longechuk and proper structures in place that could govern children welfare, and as such children rights are being violated by parents and traders.
- 2 Forced and early marriage: Forced and child marriage were said to be an acceptable traditional practice that silently happened among many families. It however had negative impact in the children schooling.
- 3 Access to education: most children who came from poor family backgrounds faced many challenges meeting their schooling needs such as school fees, school uniforms, and other scholastic material because they lacked parental support and were vulnerable to dropping out of school or poorly perform in exams and home works given by teachers because they would less concentrate
- 4 Domestic violence: Boys reported that fighting in their families was real and was brought about by misunderstanding over small family matters between parents themselves and parents with the children.


## Conclusions and recommendations


- 1 Need for community awareness on child labour through sensitization of parents and local traders on the effects of child labour and importance of education for their children.
- 2 There is need to provide incentive for teachers and also provision of scholastic materials which would help support and keep children in school especially those who lacked proper parental support.
- 3 There is need to raise awareness on the disadvantages of early or forced marriages through targeting parents, community elders and sensitization of local authority in order to change their mind set on the outdated cultural practices that are harmful to their children.
- 4 There is need for awareness raising on disadvantages of domestic violence in the families and importance of maintaining peace in the homes.

**BOYS RIGHTS VIOLATION, PROTECTION ASSESSMENT,  
MONITORING AND ANALYSIS REPORT  
DECEMBER 2020**

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