

**GIRLS 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 girls 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, 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 state, Longechuk County. A meeting was held with girls between the age of 12 and 17 years, the discussion sort to assess any protection concerns. The girls were asked questions about general safety and security of girls, access to education status, menstrual hygiene, forced marriages, sexual exploitation and abuse and domestic violence. This report is part of monthly series of FGDs and KIIs conducted in Longechuk to identify protection concerns and right violations among girls. This report consolidates findings form 60 girls 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 girls 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 girls want to go to school*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The safety of girls in Longechuk County is not guaranteed during cattle raiding and revenge killings, the girls are sexually abused. When girls refuse gifts from traders and men, they are hunted down and raped. In other cases, the girls could not turn down the offers because they viewed it as a means to get their necessities, as their parents could not provide due to poverty. The gifts included money as well as material items from the shop e.g. Clothes, shoes, underwear, sandals among others. Perpetrators were mentioned to be armed and unarmed youths, alcoholic men, traders and teachers.

The fathers and uncles make decision about the education of girl child, most of the time girls are withdrawn from school to concentrate on house chores like fetching water, firewood and taking care of siblings. Other barriers to girls accessing education were long distances to school, which was not safe for the girls and lack of basic needs provision by parents e.g. shoes, school uniform, pens. The girls are also forced into marriage as early as 12 years of age. Most girls who can't resist, run away from home, others commit suicide. Girls who get married at a young age are beaten by co-wives, and mother in-laws. Such girls also develop complications during child birth.

Lack of sanitary pads has been mentioned as one of the challenges facing girls. Girls depend on well-wishers for such items. There are no sanitary pads in the market, unless one goes to Ethiopia. The lack of pads has made most girls not to attend school. Girls stay at home until the period is over.

### Recommendations

1. The next project should be integrated, Child Protection, and Education
2. There is need for a WASH/ GBV project to provide dignity kits to the girls
3. There is need for construction of more schools in Longechuk County
4. Initiate a policy and law enhancement against forced marriages for children under the age of 18 years
5. There is need for psychosocial support to encouraging girls who are frustrated as well as helping victims of rape to cope

## 1.0 FINDINGS

### 1.1 General Safety and Security

The safety of girls in Longechuk County is not guaranteed because of cases of cattle raiding and revenge killings which were frequent between Mathiang Payam and Mading Payam of Nasir County. Girls who declined sexual advances were mostly affected because the young men would find them, rape them as well as beat them up in the bushes. The girls in Mathiang, Warweng and Jangok experienced the following protection concerns; gender-based violence, lack of food, lack of water and sanitation, lack of medical care, child protection issues, sexual exploitation and abuse, land & property issues as well as domestic violence. The schoolgirls experienced harassment and sexual abuse from youths, men and traders as they walk long distances to school and back homes. This would create fear; the girls would therefore choose to miss school. While doing their daily chores like fetching water, and collecting firewood, the girls were at risk of harassment and sexual abuse.

### 1.2 Menstrual Hygiene

Most girls lacked sanitary pads. This forced some girls to put on many clothes during their period, others would stay indoors and sleep all day, and others would take a bath three times a day. Sanitary pads were not readily available in the local markets. Most of these items would come from Ethiopia and the consistency in their supply was not guaranteed due to poor road networks especially during rainy seasons. Lack of sanitary towels was therefore a challenge to the girls as most of them would not go to school or even participate in other household chores until after their period was over. This contributed to girls performing poorly in school during exams. They believed that any provision or distribution of sanitary pads by a well-wisher in schools or even in the community would help them have their comfort during menstruation. They believed sanitary pads gave them freedom to carry out normal activities that include going to school without worries.

### 1.3 Access to Education

Fathers and uncles would make the final decision on whether a girl would continue with education or not. Many families apart from a few had their girls out of school and this is because most parents understood less about the importance of education. Local culture contributed a lot to girls not accessing education. Culturally, girls were a source of wealth for their fathers and they would do anything possible to keep the girls around including denying them education and marrying them off. Too much household responsibilities also contributed into girls staying home e.g. taking care of the siblings at the expense of education. Other barriers to girls accessing education were long distances to school, which was not safe for the girls and lack of basic needs provision by parents e.g. shoes, school uniform, pens etc. The lack of education for girls has contributed to girls lacking capacity to improve their standards of living, the poor living conditions in turn, forces the girls to get married at an early age. It has also contributed into them not knowing their rights. Because of no education, the girls also lack the capacity to contribute to community meetings.

## 1.4 Forced Marriage

Culturally, forced marriage was acceptable. It was a normal and common family affair and girls had no right to determine whom and when they would marry. In fact, to be born a first born daughter was unfortunate because they would marry them off as early as they reached 12 years of age in order to bring dowry that would be used to get wives for the elder brothers. As per the girls, it was normal and they had no voice over it. Their fathers, brothers and uncles were key decision makers on whom and when girls were supposed to get married and they would do so without seeking the consent of the girls. Early marriages posed a number of disadvantages to the girls. Their social life changed completely and their education ended prematurely as well. The girls' freedom of association was limited since she would be denied the opportunity to mingle with other girls of her age and who were not yet married. The girls also said that when they failed to accomplish certain tasks, first wives and their mothers-in-law would most of the time beat them up. Unfortunately, the husbands never intervened. Many would resort to committing suicide or run away from the community. Those who continued with the marriages were reported to develop birth complications during delivery, which was very risky to their lives. Girls would often persevere in the marriages because of the beating that they would receive from brothers whenever they would hear that the girls were not willing to continue. However, the right age for marriage according to the girls would be age 18-25 years old. The youngest age they had witnessed was a 12-year-old.

## 1.5 Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Gifting for sexual return was a usual phenomenon in the community. Men would offer gifts for sexual favours. The girls reiterated that refusing the gifts would not help because the men would still go ahead and rape them especially while collecting firewood from the forest. In other cases, the girls could not turn down the offers because they viewed it as a means to get their necessities, as their parents could not provide due to poverty. The gifts included money as well as material items from the shop e.g. Clothes, shoes, underwear, sandals among others. Perpetrators were mentioned to be armed and unarmed youths, alcoholic men, traders and teachers. The outcomes of sexual exploitation and abuse was reported to be early pregnancies, dropping out of school and contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections such as HIV which led most girls into committing suicide. The girls in this community do not share SEA issues with the adults because they consider it shameful and that community members rarely keep any secrets as well fear of tough consequences that would befall them. They preferred to share only among themselves because they trusted each other.



## 1.6 Conclusions

The safety of girls in Longechuk County is not guaranteed because of incidences of cattle raiding and revenge killings. There are many rape cases in the county, most cases are not reported. Girls commit suicide for lack of redress mechanisms. There is lack of sanitary pads, lack of livelihood, which makes adults take advantage of girls and exploit them sexually. There is need for an integrated PROTECTION/GBV/WASH project to address the challenges

## 1.7 Recommendations

- 1 The next project should be integrated, Child Protection, and Education
- 2 There is need for a WASH/ GBV project to provide dignity kits to the girls
- 3 There is need for construction of more schools in Longechuk County
- 4 Initiate a policy and law enhancement against forced marriages for children under the age of 18 years
- 5 There is need for psychosocial support to encouraging girls who are frustrated as well as helping victims of rape to cope

**ANNEXES MONTHLY GIRLS FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020**

**Findings from girls FGD July**



**Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violations of Girls:  
Upper Nile State Report**

**Date: 25/7/2020**

**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 state, Longechuk County. A meeting was held with girls between the age of 12 and 17 years, the discussions sort to assess any protection concerns. The girls were asked questions about general safety and security of girls, access to education status, menstrual hygiene, forced marriages, sexual exploitation and abuse and domestic violence. This report is part of monthly series of FGDs and KIIs conducted in Longechuk to identify protection concerns and right violations among girls.

## General Safety and Security

Mathiang payam is not safe for girls, the area is experiencing the following protection concerns; gender-based violence, lack of food, lack of water and sanitation, lack of medical care, child protection issues, sexual exploitation and abuse, land & property issues as well as domestic violence. The schoolgirls in Mathiang area are not safe especially if they have to walk long distances to school and back home. This is because they normally experience harassment and sexual abuse from youths, men and traders. A recent example is a 14-year-old girl in Mator boma who was last year raped by a trader in the morning on her way to school. It is for this reason that at the age of 10 years, school girls are forced to drop out of school as their fathers consider it a way of protecting them from sexual harassment and abuse.

The girls in this area are unsafe while collecting firewood and fetching water. In June 2020, an 11-year-old girl from Mathiang town was raped while collecting firewood in a bush in Mator Boma. The perpetrator was a 23-year-old man. The incident, which happened in the morning hours, was reported to Relief International and to the police. As a way of resolving the issue, the family of the perpetrator was fined a number of cows. The girl was later taken to Ethiopia for checkup and medication since there was no better health facility in the area to handle the case. A separate incident happened on 26/07/2020 where a 16-year-old girl was raped in Phalang-A Boma on her way to collecting firewood around 10am. On the following day, it was reported that the girl had disappeared from the house and her whereabouts still unknown as at August 5th 2020

## Menstrual Hygiene

Girls understand menstrual hygiene to be a way of keeping oneself clean during menstruation period by using sanitary pads. They also believe sanitary pads give them freedom to carry out normal activities that include going to school without worries. Girls in Mathiang lack sanitary pads and are forced to put on so many cloths during menstruation, which makes going to school impossible. The lack of sanitary pads makes them miss school during period days. Sanitary pads are not readily available and there is no one distributing them to the girls. The main challenge that girls in Mathiang area face during menstruation is lack of sanitary pads. For those who can afford to buy, it is a challenge especially during the rainy season since getting to the market is difficult because the road from Mathiang town to Ethiopia is impassable. Consequently, this prevents girls from doing their daily activities as well as going to school. The girls recommended provision and distribution of sanitary pads in the schools and even in the community because other girls are not accessing school.

## Access to Education

The girls in Mathiang Payam believe that education is very important because by acquiring the knowledge, a girl will be able to differentiate right from wrong. Education will change their behavior and attitude. They also believe that an educated girl can support her family financially and support her community as well as advocate for equal rights. In this community, it is believed that fathers are responsible for the girls' education and they are the final decision makers about girl child education. Most of the families in Mathiang area do not allow girls to go to school. For the few that take girls to school, these schools are far, girls have to walk long distances to school. Some girls have been forced to drop out of school to work and support their families. Girls are considered a source of wealth, and are married off early. This is because most parents are ignorant on the benefits of education. The lack of education for girls has contributed to girls lacking capacity to improve their standards of living, the poor living conditions in turn, forces the girls to get married at an early age.

## Forced Marriage

Forced marriage in Mathiang area is common since the girls do not have any say on matters marriage. Their fathers are the final decision makers, and they do without seeking the consent from the girls. Marriage in this community is just an exchange for dowry and the way of being rich without considering the feelings of the girl. The girls believe that the appropriate age for getting married is 20 years old. In the recent past, a father married off her 10-year-old girl because he was poor and wanted to enrich himself by getting many cows that were paid as dowry. The girls believe that fathers and uncles are the decision makers concerning child marriages. Girls in Mathiang are aware that early marriages affect the life of girls in the community by ending their education prematurely. The girls' freedom of association is limited since she is not allowed to mingle with other girls of her age and who are not yet married. The girls' work is limited to domestic duties alone and she is isolated from the peers.

The girls strongly believe that there is no positive impact of early marriages in this community but a number of negative impacts. Girls are often married off to men who are much older. Their mothers-in-laws also physically abuse the girls. The girls in this community are helpless when they are forced to get married because they fear being beaten by their brothers. Other girls commit suicide or disappear from the village. There is no one in Mathiang community that the girls can talk to when they are forced into marriage since it is culturally accepted. Once the father decides it, the girls do not have an option other than to get married. The girls suggested awareness creation in the community on the effect of early marriages and importance of education targeting the parents, leaders, local authorities, chiefs e.t.c

## Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

A times, girls in Matiang area experience Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) from teachers who ask for sexual act to let them pass in the subjects they teach. Traders also abuse girls sexually because of what they can give in return. In exchange for sex, girls in this community are given money to buy the basic things like underwear, clothes, shoes etc. because their parents do not provide these needs to them. This forces girls to accept any help from any person in return for sex. A trader, men who drink alcohol, youth and even school teachers engages sexually with school girls in exchange for money. The girls believed that engagement in sex can lead to early pregnancies, dropping out of school and infected with HIV.

Girls are not able to refuse such sexual advances because of poverty; they feel they are doing it for their own benefit since their parents cannot afford to full fill their needs at home. The girls in this community do not share SEA issues with the adults because they consider it shameful and that people in this community do not keep secrets. They prefer to share only with friends because they trust each other. The girls suggested that there is need to support girls involved in SEA and prevent it from further happening in Mathiang community. They recommended the need for awareness creation in the community about SEA and its effects.

## Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is common in Mathiang. It happens when children fail to perform daily duties in the family. Sometimes conflict is caused by children and mothers not performing all the domestic work especially providing food. Girls and mothers are beaten. For instance, the father does not help in doing any domestic work but instead goes to the market place and stays in the restaurants, tea & alcohol places. At the end of the day, he expects the mothers and girls to cook good food for them while they do not contribute any money or doing anything to bring food home. Therefore, when they get no food for them to eat they beat the girls together with their mothers. Whenever there is dispute between parents and children, elders and uncles handle disputes between parents and their girls, sometime they do not handle it fairly especially if the parents were the cause of the problem they will still blame it on the children. If a parent in Mathiang abuses a girl, no one in the community will support or assist her at all. The whole community will stand against her by blaming her that she has no respect for her parents even when the girl was on the right. Therefore, the girls suffer a lot because there is no one they can express their pain to. The girls recommended massive awareness creation in the community concerning domestic violence and child rights

## Summary of Findings

Mathiang payam in Longechuck County, Upper Nile state is unsafe for girl child, girls are experiencing, gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, forced marriages. Fathers and uncles are the key decision makers on marriage issues. Girls are married off at an early age and are not given an opportunity to go to school. The girls themselves believe that 20 years old is the best age to get married. Sexual exploitation and abuse, rape is rampant in the area. The fear for girls being abused has let to parents withdrawing them from school. Girls lack access to sanitary pads,

## Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 There is need for awareness raising in the community about SEA and SEA capacity building training targeting teachers, men, youth local authorities, chiefs etc.
- 2 There is need for Provision of dignity kits in the schools or even in the community so that the adolescent girls practice their daily activities normally
- 3 There is need of massive awareness raising in the community concerning domestic violence, forced marriages and human and child rights and also capacity building training targeting men, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leader and church leaders to understand the effect of domestic violence in children.
- 4 There is a need for establishing women and girls friendly centre to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.



## Findings from girls FGD August



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violations of Girls:  
Longechuk County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan Report

Date: 25th August, 2020

Payam: Mathiang

State: Upper Nile



## Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in Mathiang Payam on 25th August, 2020 and twelve girls attended the meeting. All the girls came from the host community. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longechuk County.

## General safety and security

The security situation could not be guaranteed as safe according to the girls. This is because cases of cattle raiding and revenge killings had been experienced frequently between Mathiang Payam and Mading Payam of Nasir County. "People from Mading would come to Mathiang at night and move around looking for specific people from the community. If they find you on the way, they would ask you about your clan. When they find you being the target they take you and kill you in the bush as a way of revenging" they said. A number of concerns were also reported ranging from; lack of enough food, lack of sufficient water and sanitation, lack of medicine in the hospital (drugs spoiled after medicine soaked as a result of heavy rains), gender based violence, child protection issues and domestic violence. Going to school was a risk in itself because of the experiences girls encountered on the way such as harassment and sexual abuse from youths, men and traders. The girls had the same experience while collecting firewood and fetching water. Girls that had been seduced and refused to enter into the relationship were the most affected because the young men would ensure they find them by force through rape as well as beating them up in the bushes. In July, 2020 at around 6:30pm, a 17 years old girl who had been engaged to a certain man was raped on her way back from the water point in New side Boma. The repercussions were bad because the man who was to marry her declined after the disappointment. It was a big problem in the community and the family of the girl swore to look for the perpetrator and kill him. The case was not reported to any organization in the area because they wanted to solve it locally

## Access to education

Education was important to the girls and they understood that those who were educated had a better chance to support their families financially, initiate good plans for the community and give good advice for growth of the County and they would also be able to identify problems in the community and find solutions to those problems. It was also added that the educated had their attitudes and behavior changed and they also reasoned maturely. Fathers and uncles were responsible for the education of the children and would make most decisions concerning their daughters' education.

Other barriers also stopped girls from accessing education; long distances to school which were not safe to the girls, lack of basic needs provision by parents e.g. shoes, school uniform, pens etc. other responsibilities at home to support the family and the tradition that girls were a source of wealth so they could be stopped at any level of their schooling and married off for cows. Little or no education badly affected the girls. They said uneducated had no capacity to improve their lives hence most of them ended up getting married early due to lack of options.

## **Menstrual hygiene**

Menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself during menstruation by showering twice a day when using sanitary pads. For those without access to sanitary pads, it would mean taking shower three times a day to keep clean all the time of the menstruation period. Pads were not readily available in the market because the girls would sometimes miss them. Most of these items were said to come from Ethiopia and their consistency was not guaranteed due to poor road networks especially during rainy seasons. This was the reason as to why many girls were facing challenges during menstruation and most of them would not go to school or even participate in other household chores until after the periods were over.

## **Forced marriage**

Generally, early child marriages have been part of the community since and they frequently occur. As per the girls, it was normal and they had no voice over it. However, the right age for marriage according to them would be age 18-25 years old. The youngest age they had witnessed was 12 years old. This girl from Relbek Boma was forced into marriage so as to settle a case of rape that required a lot of cows in compensation. To solve this, the girl's family resorted to marrying off their daughter to the family of the rape victim to balance the matter. These decisions were made by the fathers of the girls.

However, the early marriages had consequences on the girls. They said they would miss the company of their childhood friends who were not yet married because of the extra responsibilities that they would have been added. They also reported that the first wives would beat them up when the girls failed to accomplish certain tasks as shall have been assigned. Unfortunately, the husbands never talked about it or even defend them. Education life would also end due to untimely responsibilities. There was therefore nothing positive about early child marriage. Some girls would even commit suicide due to frustrations. It was highlighted that these girls had no one to talk to because culturally, forced marriages were acceptable. Based on this, the girls believed a massive awareness raising in the community on the effects of early marriage and the importance of education would change their situation. The suggested targeting of parents, community leaders and the entire community members during sensitization.

## Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Gifting for sexual return was said to be a usual phenomenon in the community. This was frequently perpetuated by men who were not relatives. They sometimes experienced SEA from the sellers in the market especially those who came from Ethiopia with a lot of goods. The traders ask for sex with the girls in exchange of goods at the shop. Teachers were also reported to award more marks to girls for sex. The gifts include; clothes, shoes, sandal and money to buy basic things that parents were not able to provide. Therefore, Youths, traders, men who drink alcohol and even school teachers engaged with girls in sex. This had negative impact to the girls because it led to early pregnancies and sometimes HIV infections which caused many girls to drop out of school. Girls cannot be blamed sometimes for this because poverty pushes them into such behavior. They said their fathers lacked resource to take care of them when it comes to the basic unavoidable needs. Due to tough consequences, most girls would choose not to report cases of sexual abuse. The only people they would attempt to talk to were close friends because other people would not keep their secrets. They however believed awareness raising would help address the consequences of SEA issues in the community

## Domestic violence

Fighting in the families was a normal thing in Mathiang and would sometimes happen without any concrete reasons. Collection of firewood until late would lead to caning by brothers and fathers despite the long distances travelled. The girls said this type of frustrations and lack of freedom had affected them physically and mentally and most of them performed poorly in school. Other conflicts would come as a result of lack of food at home. Despite not providing, fathers would demand for food which when it misses girls and their mothers are beaten up. Girls who got abused had nowhere to go because nobody would want to listen to them because of the community mentality that everything that a parent does was right and justifiable. To stop the violence against girls, awareness raising in the community was recommended to address issues concerning child rights and domestic violence. Capacity building training for fathers, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leader and church leaders was also suggested so as to initiate a critical understanding about the effect of domestic violence on children.

## Summary of findings

- 1 GBV issues are common in Longechuk County and girls have no rights over their lives.
- 2 Girls are sexually assaulted and they receive no assistance because of how the society has positioned the female gender
- 3 Domestic violence is a family issue that no outsider is allowed to interfere with. It is culturally normal and acceptable
- 4 Girls lack sanitary pads. Most of these items are not readily available even at the local market which has resulted into many frustrations during menstrual periods. Girls literally miss school because of periods.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

- 1 There is a need for establishing women and girls' friendly centers to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.
- 2 Need for massive awareness raising in the community concerning domestic violence, forced marriage and human and child rights violation and also conducting capacity building training on human rights and protection concerns targeting men, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leader and church leaders to understand the effect of domestic violence in children.
- 3 Need to actively create awareness in the community about effects of SEA and capacity build the teachers, men, youth, local authorities and chiefs on the same.
- 4 Need for provision of dignity kits in the schools or even in the community so that the adolescent girls are able to fully attend school and practice their daily activities normally.



## Findings from girls FGD September



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violations of Girls:  
Longechuk County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan Report

Date: 10th September, 2020  
Payam: Warweng  
State: Upper Nile



## Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in Warweng Payam on 10th September, 2020 from 10.00am to 11.00am. Twelve girls from Benjiel, Mokley, Wunkiir and Kuryith Bomas attended the meeting. All the girls were from the host community and the discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longuchuk County.

## General safety and security

General security was normal though a number of protection concerns came up from the discussions; lack of food, lack of health facilities in Warweng, lack of clean and safe water, lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities, malnutrition and gender based violence issues e.g. rape. Due to distance, girls were not safe on their way to and back from school. In November, 2019, a 15-year-old girl from Mokley Boma was raped on her way back from school by a youth between Mathiang and Warweng Payam. She was rescued by an old man who informed the family and was rushed to Mathiang hospital for treatment. The police started a man hand for the perpetrator though he disappeared from the village up to date. The girls also hinted that the family was doing their own search for the perpetrator whom they would kill when they find. Insecurity was generally high for the girls during firewood collection and fetching water. In August, 2020, a 17-year-old girl was raped by an armed man while she collected firewood at around 10am in a nearby forest. It was highlighted that the man had threatened to shoot her if she had refused to cooperate. The case was reported to the police though they never followed up until the perpetrator left the village. The girls said he went to Maiwut County for fear of being killed by the survivor's family.

## Access to education

The girls' education perspective was encouraging. They believed that successful future was dependent on education since daily struggles of firewood collection, selling of items in the market for survival and fetching water from distant water points would end with education. They also believed educated girls were financially stable, helped their families and were empowered to differentiate good from bad. Fathers and uncles supported girls most in terms of education and their decision was final on whether a girl would continue with education or not. A lot of families apart from a few had their girls out of school and this is because most parents understood less about the importance of education. Local culture attributed a lot to girls not accessing education. Culturally, girls were a source of wealth for their fathers and they would do anything possible to keep the girls around including denying them education and marrying them off. Too much household responsibilities also contributed into girls staying home e.g. taking care of the siblings at the expense of education. The lack of education had affected many girls and they believed it had contributed into them not knowing their rights

## Menstrual hygiene

In their own opinion menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself by bathing twice a day i.e. morning and evening and putting on a sanitary pad during menstruation periods. They also added that for those who would not afford to have the pads, menstrual hygiene would mean staying in the house/sleeping the whole day and bathing three times a day. Sanitary pads were inaccessible in Warweng unless one walked to Mathiang town which was also not a guarantee to get. During rainy seasons, this would worsen since the items would not be moved from Ethiopia to Longechuk due to poor road accessibility. It was therefore evident that there were no pads in the community and most girls would not use anything during their periods other than sleeping and bathing. This meant that they would neither engage in any daily activities nor go to school until the periods were over. They however believed that any provision or distribution of sanitary pads by a well-wisher in schools or even in the community would relieve them the stress of having to stay at home during the periods

## Forced marriage

Culturally, forced marriage was acceptable. It was a normal and common family affair and girls had no right to determine whom and when they would marry. In fact, to be born a first born daughter was unfortunate because they would marry them off as early as they reached 12 years of age in order to bring dowry that would be used to get wives for the elder brothers. Eighteen (18) years and above was however the best age for girls to get married. This was not the case for a 13-year-old girl in Benjiel Boma who was forced into getting married to an old man in July 2020 so her father could get himself the fourth wife from her dowry. The father, brothers and uncles were key decision makers on who and when girls were supposed to get married. Early forced marriage affected girls because once married, their social life changed completely. They would no longer associate with their unmarried friends in the community despite being the same age.

The girls also added that early marriage ended their education life forever because they would have been handed over full family responsibilities of looking for firewood, cooking and raising children. Therefore, the girls believed there was nothing positive about marrying early instead a lot of negative aspects befell their lives e.g. the girls experienced birth complications due to undeveloped reproductive systems, a lot of them became mentally sick due to the trauma and frustrations and they also got physically violated by mother-in-laws and first wives in the family due to their subordinate status. Most girls would not do anything about the forced marriages because of the possible beatings from their brothers and fathers. However, the few who would not persevere were reported to commit suicide or disappear from the village. Unfortunately, the girls reported not to have anybody to report to about their frustrations because marrying them off was completely a family affair and they had no voice over it. They however believed that awareness creation through sensitization of the community on the effects of early marriages and informing the community about the importance of educated girls would have an impact over time even if it wouldn't be felt immediately. Based on this they recommended parents, leaders, local authorities and chiefs to be targeted.

## Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Gifts were given by men for sexual favours. The girls reiterated that refusing the gifts would not help because the men would still go ahead and rape them especially when they found themselves cornered in certain places like when they collect firewood from the forest. The gifts included money as well as material items from the shop. Perpetrators were mentioned to be armed and unarmed youths, alcoholic men, traders and teachers. The aftermath of this was said to be pregnancy, dropping out of school and Sexually Transmitted Infections such as HIV which lead most girls into committing suicide.

According to the girls, resisting some of the advancements was difficult due to lack of certain basic needs that parents would be unable to afford/provide. These issues were not shared with anybody apart from close friends because the society would expose them something they said they wouldn't bare the shame. They recommended awareness raising in the community about SEA and its effect and SEA capacity building training for teachers, men and youths.

## Domestic violence

A lot of domestic violence was said to be happening among parents and the genesis was when fathers came home drunk. The girls said they would always look for petty issues to fight them and their mothers. This had affected children mentally including their performance in school. Some children were stressed up and always lived in fear. The disputes would be settled by elders or uncles if they reached certain extents though they were occasionally unfairly resolved. Abused girls at home had no one to stand for them since parents were always right and blames often times went back to them as children who had no respect for their parents. The girls however recommended massive awareness raising in the community concerning domestic violence and child rights. They also suggested capacity building training for their fathers, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leader and church leaders to understand the effect of domestic violence on children.

## Summary of findings

- 1 Forced marriages and domestic violence are culturally acceptable hence there are no formal structures handling grievances from girls
- 2 Girls are sexually exploited and abused in the community by men, youths, traders and teachers who take advantage of their vulnerability
- 3 Girls have got the desire for education but they are limited by negative cultural beliefs. No one including the local authority have come out strongly to advocate for their rights to education
- 4 Girls have got limited channels to report Gender Based Violence issues that affect them  
Girls lack sanitary pads and there is nothing they use during menses apart from sleeping and bathing. This denies them the opportunity to go to school during menses as well as performing other daily duties

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

- 1 There is need for massive awareness raising in the community about the effects of domestic violence, forced marriages and human and child rights violation.
- 2 Need for capacity building training targeting men, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leaders and church leaders to understand the effect of domestic violence in children.
- 3 Need for support and provision of dignity kits for adolescent girls in school and in the community to ensure they don't miss going to school during menses and can also comfortably perform their duties while at home.
- 4 There is need for awareness raising in the community about PSEA for girls
- 5 There would be need for SEA capacity building training that would target teachers, men, youths, local authorities and chiefs
- 6 There is a need for establishing women and girls' friendly centers to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.



## Findings from girls FGD October



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violations of Girls:  
Longechuk County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan Report

Date: 20th October, 2020

Payam: Jangok

State: Upper Nile



## Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in Jangok Payam on 20th October, 2020. Twelve girls attended the meeting. All the girls were from the host community and the discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longechuk County.

## General safety and security

The general security was normal however, some protection concerns were mentioned as follows; there was lack of enough food in the homes, lack of sufficient clean and safe water, lack of good sanitation facilities at home and school, lack of medicine in the health facilities, GBV issues, child protection issues and domestic violence. There were safety concerns which the girls said to have mostly affected them on their way to and from school. Due to the long distances they covered from home to school, they would often be sexually harassed by youths and men. Safety was also not guaranteed during firewood collection and fetching of water. They gave an example of a 13-year-old girl who was raped in February, 2020. They said the young girl was raped on her way from the forest after collection of firewood in Tochwangthok Boma in the evening hours. The case was however never reported due to shame that would get the girl plus her family.

## Access to education

Education was compared to light by the girls. They believed those who were educated were more exposed and had improved living standards. Educated girls were also able to help their families financially as well as make decisions that would assist the community at large. Fathers and uncles were said to be key decision makers concerning girls' education and whatever they decided was final. They however faced challenges relating to their studies; long distance walking to and from school and lack of basic needs e.g. shoes, school uniforms, pens etc. Lack of education was said to affect them because they lacked power to talk in the community meetings and they also ended up getting married early.

## Menstrual Hygiene

Menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself by bathing twice a day i.e. morning and evening and putting on a sanitary pad during menstruation periods. They also added that for those who would not afford to have the pads, menstrual hygiene would mean staying in the house/sleeping the whole day and bathing three times a day. Sanitary pads were inaccessible in Jangok unless one walked to Mathiang town which would roughly take someone 2 hours. Getting the pads was also not a guarantee and the situation was worse during the rainy season due to inaccessibility. It was therefore clear that there were no pads in the community including in school and most girls would not use anything during their periods other than sleeping and bathing. This meant that they would neither engage in any daily activities nor go to school until the periods were over. They however believed that any provision or distribution of sanitary pads by a well-wisher in schools or even in the community would help them have their comfort during menstruation.

## Forced marriage

Early marriage was there but not very common as per the girls. They said they had no right to decide upon whom and when they were supposed to marry. Fathers were final decision makers on the issue of marriage and would arrange it whenever it pleased them. They preferred the age for marriage to be between 18-24 years of age. They had however not heard of any early marriages in the community below 18 years. Early marriage had some disadvantages. The girls said first wives of the husbands and the mother in-laws were very cruel and would most of the time beat up the young girls when they failed to accomplish certain tasks that would have been assigned to them. Unfortunately, the husbands never intervened. This also led to an end in education of the girls and the reason as to why many would resort to committing suicide or escape away from the community. Those who continued with the marriages were said to develop birth complications during delivery and was mostly very risky to their lives. Girls would often persevere in the marriages because of the beating that they would receive from brothers whenever they would hear that the girls were not willing to continue. The girls recommended on the need to raise awareness on the effects of forced marriages and the importance of education. This they suggested to target parents, community leaders and the community members at large.

## Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

According to the girls, they had not experienced a case where girls had been given gifts by men who were not their relatives for sexual relationship. They however said there were a lot of rape cases that were caused by men and youths who drank alcohol though they had no one to report to. The girls recommended awareness raising in the community on the effects of sexual harassment and assault.

## Domestic violence

Domestic violence was common according to the girls. Small mistakes like delaying in the forest during firewood collection would lead to being beaten up by brothers and fathers. They would less consider possible causes of the lateness such as long distances covered. The lack of freedom and unjustified punishment affected the girls mentally and physically and contributed to their poor performance in school. It was also added that lack of early food preparation would cause some fight especially when fathers came home drunk. Despite not having left money to buy food, the men would still demand to be provided with food. Elders and uncles mostly handled the issues. They however reiterated that the issues were most of the time not fairly settled because their fathers would always be favoured. In fact, they would always be blamed for the problems together with their mothers. Those who would be abused/beaten by parent would hence not take the complaints anywhere other than keeping it to themselves. The community had the mentality that anything that a parent would do to a child was always right and therefore nobody would dare go against. They however believed that awareness creation in the community concerning children rights would improve their status against domestic violence and other forms of abuses. They also recommended on the need for capacity building of fathers, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leaders and church leaders to under the effects of domestic violence on children.

## Summary of findings

- 1 Forced marriages and domestic violence are culturally acceptable hence there are no formal structures handling grievances from girls
- 2 Girls have got the desire for education but they are limited by negative cultural beliefs. No one including the local authority have come out strongly to advocate for their rights to education
- 3 Girls have got limited channels to report Gender Based Violence issues that affect them
- 4 Girls lack sanitary pads and there is nothing they use during menses apart from sleeping and bathing. This denies them the opportunity to go to school during menses as well as performing other daily duties

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1 There is need for massive awareness raising in the community about the effects of domestic violence, forced marriages and human and child rights violation.
- 2 Need for capacity building training targeting men, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leaders and church leaders to understand the effect of domestic violence in children.
- 3 Need for support and provision of dignity kits for adolescent girls in school and in the community to ensure they don't miss going to school during menses and can also comfortably perform their duties while at home.
- 4 There is a need for establishing women and girls' friendly centres to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.

## Findings from girls FGD November



Protection Assessment, Analysis and Rights Violations of Girls:  
Longechuk County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan Report

Date: 20th November, 2020

Payam: Mathiang

State: Upper Nile



## Introduction

The girls' focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in Mathiang Payam on 20th November, 2020 and twelve girls attended the discussion. All the girls' participants came from the host community. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Longechuk County- Mathiang Payam.

## General safety and security

According to the girls the security situation could not be guaranteed as safe for them. This is because there were cases of cattle raiding and revenge killings which used to be experienced frequently between Mathiang Payam youth and Mading Payam of Nasir County which sometimes created fear for the girls to attend classes. According to girls "people from Mading would come to Mathiang at night and move around looking for specific people from the community. If they find you on the way at night, they would take you aside and ask you about your clan. When they find you belonged to the targeted clan in Mathiang, then they would take you and kill you in the bush as a way of revenging" they said. A number of concerns were also reported by the girls ranging from; lack of feeding program in the school, text books, lack of incentive for teachers to enable teach freely in the schools, lack of enough food in their families which made some to feel reluctant to attend classes, lack of sufficient water and sanitation in the school, school latrines have become old and could not be used by them, lack of dignity kits to be used by girls during their periods, among other concerns such as GBV related cases, child protection issues and domestic violence. Going to school was a risk in itself because of the experiences girls encountered on the way such as harassment and sexual abuse from youths and drunk men whom they meet with on their way to school and from school. They said that they used to report such incidences to the school administration and their parents but no action had been taken so far because issues affecting girls and women used to be taken very lightly by men and the local leaders due to cultural mindset that overlooked issues affecting women and girls in the community.

## Access to education

Girls stated that education was important to them, and they understood that those who were educated had a better chance to; support their families financially, initiate good plans for the community and give good advice for growth of the County and they would also be able to identify problems in the community and find solutions to those problems. It was also added that the educated girls had their attitudes and behavior changed and they also reasoned maturely when people discussed important community concerns. According to girls, fathers and uncles were responsible for the education of the children and would make most decisions concerning their daughters' education.

Girls mentioned other barriers which also stopped girls from accessing education; long distances to school which were not safe to the girls, lack of basic needs provision by parents e.g. shoes, school uniform, pens, text books, etc. other responsibilities at home to support the family especially the responsibility to look after young ones, and the tradition that girls were a source of wealth so they could be stopped at any level of their schooling and married off for cows. Little or no education badly affected the girls. They said uneducated girls had no capacity to improve their lives hence most of them ended up getting married early due to lack of other available options.



## Menstrual Hygiene

Girls defined menstrual hygiene as taking good care of oneself during menstruation by showering twice a day while using sanitary pads before and after showering. For those without access to sanitary pads, it would mean taking shower three times a day to keep clean all the time of the menstruation period. Sanitary pads were not readily available in Mathiang market because the girls would sometimes miss them. Most of these items were said to come from Juba, Ethiopia, and their consistency was not guaranteed due to poor road networks especially during rainy seasons. This was the reason as to why many girls were facing challenges during menstruation and most of them would not go to school or even participate in other household chores until after the periods were over. This contributed to girls performing poorly in school during exams.

## Forced marriage

According to the girls, child marriages have been part of the community since and they frequently occur. As per the girls, it was normal and they had no voice over it. However, they said that the right age for marriage according to them would be age 18-25 years old. The youngest age they had witnessed was 13 years old being forced into marriage because her parents wanted cows, for example, in Matar Boma, a 13-year-old girl was forced into marriage by her parents so as to settle a case of her elder brother who was getting married, but the cows his parents had were not enough to pay the girls dowries. To solve this, the girl's parents decided to marrying off their daughter to the family of a man who was older than their daughter, but they didn't care because they were interested in his many cows which he was willing to offer them as long as they gave him the girl. These decisions were made by the fathers of the girls without even consulting her.

According to the girls; early marriages had consequences on the girls. They said they would miss the company of their childhood friends who were not yet married because of the extra responsibilities that they would have been added. They also reported that the first wives would beat them up when the girls failed to accomplish certain tasks as shall have been assigned since she has been married as second wife. The girls said there was therefore nothing positive about early child marriage. Some girls would even commit suicide due to frustrations while others disappeared from their husbands' homes for good. It was highlighted that these girls had no one to talk to because culturally, forced marriages were acceptable. Based on this, the girls believed a massive awareness raising in the community on the effects of early marriage and the importance of education would change people attitude in the community. This awareness should be targeting parents, community leaders, and the entire community members.

## Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Giving of gifts with the intention for sexual return was said to be a usual practice in the community, but it used to be done secretly by traders, and leaders holding key positions in the community. This was frequently perpetuated by men who were not relatives to the girls. They sometimes experienced SEA from the sellers in the market especially those who came from Ethiopia and Sudan with a lot of goods. The traders ask for sex with the girls in exchange of goods at the shop or school materials. Teachers were also reported to award more marks to girls for sex mostly during exams. The gifts traders offer to girls include; clothes, shoes, sandals, and money to buy basic things that parents were not able to provide. Therefore, Youths, traders, and men who drink alcohol and even school teachers engaged with girls in sex secretly in the community, but no one reported them. This silent business had negative impact to the girls because it led to early pregnancies, drop out of school, and sometimes HIV infections which caused many girls to leave school. Girls couldn't be blamed sometimes for this because poverty pushed them into such behavior. They said their fathers lacked resource to take care of them when it comes to the basic unavoidable needs. Due to tough consequences, most girls would choose not to report cases of sexual abuse. The only people they would attempt to talk to were close friends because other people would not keep their secrets. They however believed awareness raising would help address the consequences of SEA issues in the community and establishing of PSEA focal points in the community and among the NGO partners in Mathiang Payam.

## Domestic violence

According to girls, fighting in the families was a normal thing and would sometimes happen without any concrete reasons. Collection of firewood and fetching of water until late hours would lead to caning by brothers and fathers despite the long distances travelled. The girls said this type of frustrations and lack of freedom had affected them physically and mentally and most of them performed poorly in school. Other conflicts would come as a result of lack of food at home. Although some fathers do not provide anything in the house, they would demand for food which when it misses girls and their mothers are beaten up. Girls who got abused had nowhere to go because nobody would want to listen to them because of the community mentality that everything that a parent does was his rightful responsibility. To stop the violence against girls, awareness raising in the community was recommended to address issues concerning child rights and domestic violence. Capacity building training for fathers, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leader and church leaders was also suggested so as to create a critical understanding about the effects of domestic violence on their children.

## Summary of findings

- 1 GBV related issues are common in Mathiang Payam and girls have no rights over their lives since no one advocate against these issues.
- 2 Girls used to be sexually assaulted and they receive no assistance because of how the community overlook girls and women issues as normal.
- 3 Domestic violence is a family issue that no outsider is allowed to interfere with it because it is culturally normal and acceptable.
- 4 Girls lack sanitary pads when on their periods because they are not readily available even at the local market in Mathiang which has resulted into many frustrations during menstrual periods and girls end up missing school because of periods.
- 5 There are cases of SEA but they are done behind closed doors.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1 Need for establishment of women and girls' friendly spaces to respond and prevent GBV related cases by conducting case management, counselling, and psychosocial support services.
- 2 There is need for massive awareness raising in the community concerning domestic violence, forced marriage, and respect for human and child rights violations, and also conducting capacity building training on the same targeting men, community leaders, local authorities, chiefs, opinion leader, and church leaders to understand the effect of domestic violence in children.
- 3 There is need to actively create awareness in the community about effects of SEA and conduct capacity building for the teachers, men, youth, local authorities, and chiefs on the same.
- 4 There is need for provision of dignity kits in the schools or even in the community so that the adolescent girls are able to fully attend school and practice their daily activities freely.


# GIRLS RIGHTS VIOLATION, PROTECTION ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND ANALYSIS REPORT, DECEMBER 2020


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