

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

MAIWUT COUNTY UPPER NILE STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

August 2020 - December 2020 FINDINGS



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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 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 state, Maiwut 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 Maiwut to identify protection concerns and right violations among girls. This report consolidates findings form 60 girls randomly sampled across different Payams in Maiwut, 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.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The safety of girls in Maiwut County is not guaranteed during cattle raiding and revenge killings, the girls are sexually abused. It is believed that the rainy season and floods that cut off roads has improved the security situation because criminals are unable to pass. The community is also facing challenges due to lack of food and access to water. Girls are forced into marriage at an early age in order to raise dowry for brothers who want to marry and have no cows. Some girls are forced to get married early because parents fear that they can either be raped, or impregnated which is a shame. Parents don't want to be associated with this type of shame. Early marriages have led to complications during child birth, some girls die on their way to hospital because the only hospital that can handle emergencies and rape cases are in Ethiopia.

The parents have been accused to be unfair to girl child. Girls believe their brothers are favoured and taken out of the country for further studies but girls are forced to drop out in primary six and wait for Marriage. 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 for example shoes, school uniform, pens. The girls are also forced into marriage as early as 12 years of age

Girls lack sanitary pads and other dignity items; this has led to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Some girls have no option but to take the gifts because parents are not able to provide them with pads. The humanitarian partners have not supplied pads in a long time. When girls refuse gifts from traders and men, they are hunted down and raped. 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. 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 Maiwut 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 security was bad at the beginning of the year 2020, but in June 2020, there was a cease fire between Jeckow and Maiwut communities which normalized the situation. The girls believed that the long rain season and floods that had cut road networks prevented movements of criminals in the two communities. They were worried that their safety was not guaranteed due to possible incidences of revenge killings and rape from the attackers. The girls are also sexually harassed by soldiers and other men on their way to school, while collecting firewood and when fetching water. They also face risks such as snake bites on their way to school and when collecting firewood. The community has a shortage of water, and food.

1.2 Menstrual Hygiene

Sanitary towels were not easily available, the ones available in the shops are however too expensive for them to afford. Consequently, most of the girls opt for thick rags and clothing during their periods. Nile Hope, ADRA and ICRC, had been distributing the pads sometimes back but they stopped. The girls therefore do not go to schools, churches during menstruation but only do household chores until after the periods were over. They said they had been pushed into receiving gifts from men so as to get what they needed most, the pad. They however believed that provision of (reusable sanitary towels) by organisations or well-wishers would help them perform their daily activities with ease. They also requested for soap, small light, basin, and underwear because not all parents afforded to buy for their daughters. With this, they suggested to be taken through a training that would help them understand how to use the dignity kits and keep themselves clean during menstruation period.

1.3 Access to Education

Parents are not fair according to the girls, as they favoured boys by taking them for further studies in other countries while it was not the case for girls. Most girls ended their education at primary six (highest level of education in the county) where parents declined to support them. They would be forced to stay at home helping their mothers with household chores until their time to be married off came. There were also other barriers that affected the girls' education and this was the lack of resources in certain families that would be willing to take the girls for further studies. Some girls also became pregnant which brought their education to an end because parents would not be willing to associate with the shame that comes with pregnancy. 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. There are few schools and the population of the students are high, this makes it very hard for anyone to get admitted early, so because of this some of them have to take an option of going to schools that are 3 to 4 hours away from home. Girls said apart from the problem of schools some parents or 95% of the parents wouldn't allow them to go to school because they expect them to stay home and do the house chores, their parents believe school is not safe for a girl child, and would rather concentrate on marrying them off.

1.4 Forced Marriage

The girls in Maiwut county lived in fear in their own homes because the probability that their fathers would decide that they should get married was very high. Most girls are forced to get married in favour of a brother who wants to marry but has no cows, so the sister has to be married off irrespective of age, in order to raise cows. Culturally, forced marriages are a norm and are acceptable by the community. Girls had no option of determining whom and when they would marry. The father, brothers and uncles are key decision makers on who and when girls were supposed to get married to. Parents would force girls to get married early due to a number of reasons; get resources from dowry that is paid, to avoid shame when the girl gets pregnant at home and enable an elder brother acquire his own wife through the cows that will be paid from marrying off the girl. The right age for marriage was however 18 years according to them or after accomplishing education. A 14-year-old girl was the youngest age they had witnessed of late being married off to an old man of 60 years. This was done to help get more cows for the brother who was also getting married but had less cows. The decision makers were fathers with support from uncles and mothers and daughters had no right to speak about it in the community. Early marriages had challenges which the girls mentioned that it would lead into birth complications due to undeveloped reproductive systems of the girls. Due to long distances to hospital for operation (in Ethiopia) most girls would die before getting them to hospital. They also added that the responsibilities that they would be given were overwhelming and most girls developed stress due to frustrations. Unwilling girls were said to have run away with the boy friends whom they loved. Some committed suicide while others divorced after a short while and moved on with their lives either by remarrying or getting out of the county. Despite all the frustrations, the girls had no one to talk to for help. They however believed that advancing the level of education in Maiwut county from primary 6 to secondary level and college would help many girls complete their education. They also suggested on the need to sensitize parents on the importance of education to the girl children.

1.5 Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Girls said most of the men that abuse them, first get to their parents or close relatives like uncles because these are the decision makers, so it's only in rear cases that the girls are approached and when this happens, they always tend to agree because of the favour they get from the men, it's a village setting and most of the people here are from the unprivileged background. Gifts were given by men for sexual favours. The gifts include money as well as items from the shop. Perpetrators were mentioned to be armed and unarmed youths, alcoholic men, traders and teachers. However, this had negative consequences which included; pregnancy, dropping out of school and getting Sexually Transmitted Infections such as HIV. According to the girls, resisting some of the advancements and gifts from men was difficult because some of the basic needs they most needed were not being afforded by their parents. They recommended awareness raising in the community against SEA and its effect.

1.6 Conclusions

The safety of girls in Maiwut County is not guaranteed because of incidences of cattle raiding and revenge killings. There are many sexual coercion cases in the county, most cases are not reported. Girls commit suicide for lack of redress mechanisms. There is lack of affordable sanitary towels, 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 Maiwut 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



**Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Girls FGD**

**Date: 22nd July, 2020
Payam: Maiwut
State: Upper Nile**

Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 22nd July, 2020 and twelve girls attended the meeting. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General safety and security

The security situation had normalized since June, 2020 at the onset of rains and floods. The girls however said they lived in fear because the probability of possible attacks were very high. The girls also said that they were not safe since the distance they were covering to school was very far. On the way there were risks of sexual harassment from boys and men. They also said that they were swimming across a river to school and this was not very safe to them due to incidences of attacks and drowning inside the water. There were also insecurity issues that were reported during collection of firewood and fetching of water e.g. attack from animals and sexual harassment from soldiers who sometimes raped the girls.

Access to education

Girls understood the importance of education. According to them educated girls were able to help their parents and the society at large. Fathers were responsible for the girls' education. They however had challenges studying since the parents believed education that would take them far was risky due to high possibilities of them getting pregnant from boys. Most girls would therefore not be allowed to study in Gambella and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia because they would be far from their parents. Lack of resources was also a barrier to girls' access to education especially those who would have willing parents to take them to school.

Menstrual hygiene

Menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself during menstruation period. Pads were not readily available in the market and most girls would resort to use of other clothing during menstruation. The girls said some pads had been provided to them at some point by Nile hope and RI but it was not consistent. Menstruation without pads had challenges because most girls were not able to perform their daily activities efficiently or even go to school. They therefore recommended for more support through provision of pads and painkillers that would help reduce abdominal pains during menstruation

Forced marriage

Forced marriages happened in the community though girls had no authority to stop their fathers from the arrangements and decisions. In fact, the more the girls one had the wealthier families were because they would marry them off whenever there was need for resources (cows). The girls however felt that the most appropriate age to be married was 25 years and above. They said the youngest age they had witnessed being married off was a 14-year-old girl in Jeckow Payam. Girls were not happy with early marriage because they saw their freedom taken away from them. They would see a complete end to their education life due to responsibilities that they would have been put into.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Gifting for sexual return was usual in the community. The gifts would range from; smart phones and money which was mostly used in purchasing the basic needs such as; soap, underwear or even cloths. School girls were mostly engaged into sex by teachers in reward for good grades. Boys, men and traders were also mentioned. There were disadvantages that resulted from the sexual relationship which included unwanted pregnancies and contracting STIs such as HIV. Lack of resources and support from parents was said to be contributing a lot into the temptation of accepting the gifts from men. However, the girls admitted that they had no one to talk to when they found themselves in such situations of SEA. They believed though that having proper regulations in place in terms of laws and policies would help reduce their vulnerability to SEA

Domestic violence

Fighting in the families was a normal thing in Jeckow. The girls said fathers and uncles would often beat them together with their mothers and there was nothing that would be done because it was culturally acceptable. Sometimes the men would force the women to give them money from their small business which when they refuse they get beaten up. According to the girls, no one was there to help them because culturally the fathers were always right.

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Summary of findings

1. Girls are sexually assaulted and they receive no assistance because of how the society has positioned the female gender
2. Domestic violence is a family issue that no outsider is allowed to interfere with. It is culturally normal and acceptable
3. 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 centres to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.
2. 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.
3. 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 perform their daily activities normally.

ANNEXES MONTHLY GIRLS FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020

Findings from Girls FGD August



**Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Girls FGD**

Date: 18th August, 2020

Payam: Maiwut

State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 18th August, 2020 and twelve girls attended the meeting. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General safety and security

Security in the area was generally good since June after a cease fire between Jeckow and Maiwut communities. The girls attributed this to the long rain season and floods that had cut road networks hence preventing movements of criminals in the 2 communities. They therefore added that their safety was not guaranteed due to possible incidences of revenge killings and rape from the attackers. The girls lived in fear in their own homes because the probability that their fathers would decide that they should get married was very high. The situation was even worse because they would often be married off to old men whom they didn't love. Lack of corporation to this type of arrangement was said to be a disaster because it would call for serious beating. The girls would also be sexually harassed on their way to school, while collecting firewood and during fetching of water where they were also faced by other risks such as snake bites.

Access to education

Girls highlighted that education was important because educated girls were able to help themselves, their parents and the community at large. When these girls get married, they said they would bring up their children to become better people. Parents were however not fair according to the girls. They said the parents favoured their brothers more by taking them for further studies in other countries while it was not the case for them. According to them, most girls ended their education at primary six (highest level of education in the county) where parents declined to support them. They would be forced to stay at home helping their mothers with household chores until their time to be married off came. There were also other barriers that affected the girls' education and this was the lack of resources in certain families that would be willing to take the girls for further studies. Some girls also became pregnant which brought their education to an end because parents would not be willing to associate with the shame that comes with pregnancy.

Menstrual hygiene

Menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself during menstruation. Pads were not readily available according to the girls and most of them would resort to using thick clothing during the periods. Nile Hope had been distributing the pads sometimes back but they stopped. This was the reason as to why many girls were facing challenges during menstruation and most of them would not go to school, church or even participate in other household chores until after the periods were over. They said they had been pushed into receiving gifts from men so as to get what they needed most, the pad. They however believed that provision of the items (reusable pads) by partners such as CH will help them perform their daily activities properly. They also requested for soap, small light, basin, and underwear because not all parents afforded to buy for their daughters. With this, they suggested to be taken through a training that would help them understand how to use the dignity kits and keep themselves clean during menstruation period.

Forced marriage

Generally, forced marriage was part of the society. Parents would let girls get married early due to a number of reasons; get resources from dowry that is paid, to avoid shame when the girl gets pregnant at home and enable an elder brother acquire his own wife through the cows that will be paid from marrying off the girl. The right age for marriage was however 18 years according to them or after accomplishing education. A 14-year-old girl was the youngest age they had witnessed of late being married off to an old man of 60 years. This was done to help get more cows for the brother who was also getting married but had less cows. The decision makers were fathers with support from uncles and mothers and daughters had no right to speak about it in the community. Early marriages had challenges which the girls mentioned that it would lead into birth complications due to undeveloped reproductive systems of the girls. Due to long distances to hospital for operation (in Ethiopia) most girls would die before getting them to hospital. They also added that the responsibilities that they would be given were overwhelming and most girls developed stress due to frustrations. Unwilling girls were said to have run away with the boy friends whom they loved. Some committed suicide while others divorced after a short while and moved on with their lives either by remarrying or getting out of the county. Despite all the frustrations, the girls had no one to talk to for help. They however believed that advancing the level of education in Maiwut county from primary 6 to secondary level and college would help many girls complete their education. They also suggested on the need to sensitize parents on the importance of education to the girl children.

Domestic violence

Fighting in the families was a normal thing in Jeckow and would sometimes happen without good reasons. 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.

Summary of findings

1. Girls are sexually assaulted and they receive no assistance because of how the society has positioned the female gender
2. Domestic violence is a family issue that no outsider is allowed to interfere with. It is culturally normal and acceptable
3. 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.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Need for more training on human rights and SEA
2. Need to raise awareness on the importance of girls' education
There is need to empower the girl child
3. Need to train the local authority on how to support the education system so as to ensure that all levels are attained

ANNEXES MONTHLY GIRLS FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020

Findings from Girls FGD September



**Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Girls FGD**

**Date: 23rd September, 2020
Payam: Mathiang
State: Upper Nile**

Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 23rd September, 2020 and twelve girls attended the meeting. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General safety and security

The security situation had normalized since June, 2020 at the onset of rains and floods. The girls however said they lived in fear because the probability of possible attacks was very high. The girls also said that they were not safe since the distance they were covering to school was very far. On the way there were risks of sexual harassment from boys and men. They also said that they were swimming across a river to school and this was not very safe to them due to incidences of attacks and drowning inside the water. There were also insecurity issues that were reported during collection of firewood and fetching of water for example attack from animals and harassment from soldiers who sometimes rape the girls.

Access to education

Girls understood the importance of education. According to them educated girls were able to help their parents and the society at large. Fathers were responsible for the girls' education. They however, have challenges studying since the parents believed education that would take them far was risky due to high possibilities of them getting pregnant from boys. Most girls would therefore not be allowed to study in Gambella and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia because they would be far from their parents. Lack of resources was also a barrier to girls' access to education especially those who would have willing parents to take them to school.

Menstrual hygiene

Menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself during menstruation period. Pads were not readily available in the market and most girls would resort to use of other clothing during menstruation. The girls said some pads had been provided to them at some point by Nile hope and RI but they were not consistent. Menstruation without pads had challenges because most girls were not able to perform their daily activities efficiently or even go to school. They therefore recommended for more support through provision of pads and painkillers that would help reduce abdominal pains during menstruation.

Forced marriage

Forced marriages were common in the community though the girls had no authority to stop their fathers from the arrangements and decisions. In fact, the more the girls the wealthier families were because they would marry them off whenever there was need for resources (cows). The girls however felt that the most appropriate age to be married would be 25 years and above. They said the youngest age they had recently witnessed being married off was a 14-year-old girl in Jeckow Payam. The father decided to marry her off to an old man so as to get cows that would be used to cover the brother who had impregnated a girl from a certain family. Girls were not happy with early marriage because they saw their freedom taken away from them. They would see a complete end to their education life due to responsibilities that they would have been put into. Some girls however mentioned that the only advantage would be that they would give birth to many children while still young and their families will become wealthier from the cows that would be paid to them when they are married.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Gifting for sexual return was said to be a common thing in the community. The gifts are smart phones which will enable communication between the girl and the man, money which would be used to purchase basic needs such as; soap, underwear or even clothes. Some would send airtime. On 20th Sept, 2020 one of the girls said she had met someone in a bus when she was coming from Lare to Jeckow. The man requested for her phone to communicate with the brother. After that the guy took her number and in three days, he sent her some airtime and requested if she could visit him. She refused after sensing something was not right. School girls were most engaged into sex by teachers in reward for good grades. Boy, men and traders were also mentioned. There were disadvantages that resulted from the sexual relationship which included unwanted pregnancies and contracting STIs such as HIV. Lack of resources and support from parents was said to contribute a lot into the temptation of accepting the gifts from men. However, the girls admitted that they had no one to talk to when they found themselves in such situations of SEA. They believed though that having proper regulations in place in terms of laws and policies would help reduce their vulnerability to SEA.

Domestic Violence

Fighting in the families was a normal thing in Jeckow. The girls said fathers and uncles would often beat them together with their mothers and there was nothing that would be done because it was culturally acceptable. Sometimes the men would force the women to give them money from their small business which when they refuse, they get beaten up. According to the girls, no one was there to help them because culturally the fathers were always right.

Summary of findings

1. Girls are sexually assaulted and they receive no assistance because of how the society has positioned the female gender
2. Domestic violence is a family issue that no outsider is allowed to interfere with. It is culturally normal and acceptable
3. 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 centres to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.
2. 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.
3. 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 perform their daily activities normally.

ANNEXES MONTHLY GIRLS FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020

Findings from Girls FGD October



**Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Girls FGD**

Date: 23rd October, 2020

Payam: Jeckow

State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 23rd October, 2020. Twelve girls attended the meeting and the discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General safety and security

General security was normal since the conflicts that were experienced in June between Maiwut and Jeckow. A number of protection concerns were however mentioned; Lack of food, lack clean and safe drinking water, sexual harassment, forced and child marriages, child labour, lack of healthcare services and gender-based violence. The girls said they were not safe to school because the schools were very far and they needed also to swim at some point on their way. This was not safe to them because there were a lot of risks in terms of animal attacks in the water as well as drowning especially during rainy seasons. The girls also reported incidences of sexual harassment and abuse on their way to school from the youth and me. As such, parents feared sending their girls very far; Gambella and Addis Ababa to acquire education due to the risk of unwanted pregnancies. They were also not very safe during collection of firewood and fetching of water due to attacks from animals and sexual harassment from the army.

Access to education

The girls' believed education is good. They said educated girls were intelligent and had more knowledge about life and could fight for their rights. Educated girls were also in position to help themselves, their parents and the society and hence they believed that successful future was dependent on education. Fathers and uncles supported girls in their education and their decision was always 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.

Menstrual hygiene

In their own opinion menstrual hygiene meant taking good care of oneself by bathing and putting on a sanitary pad during menstruation periods. They also added that for those who would not afford to have the pads, would be forced to stay in the house, sleeping the whole day and bathing three times a day. Sanitary pads were inaccessible in the community and girls would often depend on supplies from NGOs such as RI. During the periods, most girls would neither engage in any daily activities nor go to school due to lack of pads.

Forced marriage

Culturally, forced marriages are acceptable. It is a normal and common family thing and girls had no option of determining whom and when they would marry. The father, brothers and uncles are key decision makers on who and when girls were supposed to get married to. Early forced marriage affected girls because once married, their social life changed completely. The girls also added that early marriage ended their education because of new responsibilities. Some girls however believed there was something positive about early marriage. They said the girls would get children early and parents would get wealthier from the dowry that would be paid. Most girls would not do anything about the forced marriages because of the possible beatings from their brothers and fathers. Unfortunately, the girls said there was nobody to hear their frustrations because marrying them off was completely a family business 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 would not be felt immediately.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Gifts were given by men for sexual favours. The gifts include money as well as items from the shop. Perpetrators were mentioned to be armed and unarmed youths, alcoholic men, traders and teachers. However, this had negative consequences which included; pregnancy, dropping out of school and getting Sexually Transmitted Infections such as HIV. According to the girls, resisting some of the advancements and gifts from men was difficult because some of the basic needs they most needed were not being afforded by their parents. They recommended awareness raising in the community against SEA and its effect

Domestic Violence

According to the girls, there was a lot of domestic violence at home. They said fathers were beating them plus their mothers and sometimes the uncles and this was culturally acceptable. They added and said that children were the most affected especially when a mother decided to leave the home because nobody cooked for them or even fetch water for them. The children also became psychologically disturbed and they performed poorly in school. Most conflicts were caused by alcoholism of men. Girls said this made their fathers not understand anything and they would become very violent when they return home. The girls would also be beaten up when it was discovered that they had a relationship with a boy or even when they got pregnant before they were married off. Mothers and their daughters would also face it rough when they refused to abide by an arrangement of marriage which would have been made by the men. The mothers would also be beaten up when the men demand for money from their small businesses and they fail to give.

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
5. 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 creating and raising in the community about the effects of domestic violence, forced marriages and human and child rights violation.
2. 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.
3. There is need for awareness raising in the community about PSEA for girls
4. There would be need for SEA capacity building training that would target teachers, men, youths, local authorities and chiefs
5. There is a need for establishing women's and girls' friendly centres to respond and prevent GBV cases through case management, counselling and psychosocial support services.

ANNEXES MONTHLY GIRLS FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020

Findings from Girls FGD November



Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Girls FGD

Date: 23rd November 2020
Maiwut County
State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion for the girls was done on 23rd November 2020, in Maiwut County. The meeting was attended by 12 girls between the ages of 15 to 18 from the five Payams (Jotome, Kizgile, Maidiet, Thoch, Pinythor). The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for humanity Field staff based in Maiwut County.

General safety and security

Girls said their safety in greater Maiwut is not fully guaranteed. Movements from one place to another during fire wood collection and fetching water are risky due to incidences like sexual harassment, sexual abuse, physical assault and emotional assault, girls said they are at least safe on their way to school for those coming from within Maiwut. According to them there were a lot of protection incidences happening in the community and they gave an example of child soldiers in the area.

Access to education

Girls said they face a lot of problems more especially when it comes to access of education, because there are only three schools in every Payam and the population of the students are high, this makes it very hard for anyone to get admitted early, so because of this some of them have to take an option of going to schools that are at a distance of 3 to 4 hours away from home. Girls said apart from the problem of schools some parents or 95% of the parents wouldn't allow them to go to school because they expect them to stay home and do the house chores, their parents believe school is not safe for a girl child, and would rather concentrate on marrying them off.

Menstrual hygiene

Girls said they last received sanitary pads 3 months ago when ADRA and ICRC donated the sanitary pads, this makes it hard because the time they received these pads was long time ago and they haven't had anything to use in these few months, girls said they instead take constant showers or stay indoors when it's time for their menstruation period because the pads at the shops are very expensive and they cannot afford to buy.

Forced marriage

Girls said there was a high rate of forced marriages in this particular community, children between 13-19 years are forced to get married and start bearing children. Girls said that their parents wouldn't even let them get to 18 years of age before they marry them off. Girls said their parents would start talking of marriage as soon as they suspect them of being in puberty, their fathers and uncles would even go as far as beating their mothers if they refuse to get married. Being forced to get married may make them traumatized or could even make them choose suicide as an option out of frustration.

Creation of awareness on forced marriages and educating the parents on the dangers of early and forced marriages. Encouraging the parents to take their children to school and telling them the positive impact the school does to their children may be a little solution to the problem of forced marriages hence reducing the rate of forced marriages.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Girls said most of the men that abuse them or first get to their parents or close relatives like uncles because these are the decision makers, so it's only in rear cases that the girls are approached and when this happens, they always tend to agree because of the favour they get from the men, and since it's a village setting and most of the people here are from the unprivileged background.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was said to be an act that the girls came across every day, Girls said growing up they have always seen their fathers beat their mothers and the neighbours beat their wives too, so it is a normal practice in this particular community.

Alcohol was said to be one of the factors that led to domestic violence, the men spent the whole day out of their houses and came back drunk at night and any complaint from the women was said to be enough to start a fight. The relatives of the parents always tried to come in to solve the problem but most times nothing much was done and the process became a continuous sequence. Girls suggested that enforcement of laws that are against domestic violence and creating laws against domestic violence can be a great solution to domestic violence.

Summary of findings

GBV issues are common in Maiwut County and the girls have got no rights over most issues. Though they never mentioned how many cases of rape had occurred due to the fact that most of these cases were turned into marriages, which could explain reasons as to why most girls were married off from the ages of 13-18 years old and even younger than that, we still believe there are so many rape cases. Physical assault and intimate violence are common since it is heavily supported by the culture and norms. Safety of girls is also not guaranteed due to sexual assault, sexual harassment and violence on the way to fetch firewood and water. The lack of schools in these areas have made it very hard for the girls to get education that they deserve, making them vulnerable to so many factors like sexual exploitation and abuse.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. There is need for increase of schools in each Payam, to make it easy for the girls to get education.
2. Youth and men need awareness on negative impact of sexual harassment, domestic violence and economical violence.
3. There is a need for the donation of sanitary pads and other basic needs to the girls in this community.
4. PSEA awareness should be carried out within the community in order to educate them on the negative impacts of SEA.
5. Parents, local authority and other stake holders should awareness training on the importance of girl child education.



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