

2014

GIRLS NOT BRIDES EMPOWER PROJECT!

School and home visits

REPORT ON CREATING GIRLS NOT BRIDES CLUB AND VISITING THE
1ST TEN GOAT BENEFICIARIES IN MAHYORO AND KIBYO PRIMARY
SCHOOLS, KARANGURA SUB COUNTY KABAROLE DISTRICT

PROJECT CORDINATOR
JOY FOR CHILDREN UGANDA
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CONTACT DETAILS



JOY FOR CHILDREN-UGANDA

Plot 349, Nsimbiwome, Bukoto
After Victory Church Ntinda and Bidandi Ssali's
People's Progressive Party (PPP) Headquarters.
P.O Box 15383, Clock Tower
Kampala, Uganda

Mr Ntenga Moses, Executive Director
Telephone: +256-414-380 417
Mobile: +256 703 653 233 | +256 712 982 301

Email: info@joyforchildren.org
Website: www.joyforchildren.org

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INTRODUCTION

Joy for Children Uganda (JFCU) is a registered non-governmental, non-profit making organization advocating for children's rights and fighting issues of poverty, health, neglect, abuse and exploitation, poor education and illiteracy.

The Girls not Brides (GNB) project is implemented in Karangura Sub County Kabarole district due to the high rate of early marriages in the area. The project targets 2 schools in specific, Mahyoro and Kibyo Primary Schools in Karangura Sub County.

The project employs three pronged approaches of awareness rising, education and economic empowerment in order to achieve the project goal, which is to reduce the cases of child marriages around Karangura Sub County by the end of 2015. The specific objectives of the project are

- To contribute to the understanding of the causes and impact of child marriage in Karangura sub county in Kabarole district by 2015
- To ensure at least 75 % of girls from Mahyoro and Kibyo primary education complete primary education by end of the project thus reducing high rates of primary school drop outs in the area
- To improve incomes of at least 100 families in Karangura Sub county by 2015
- To raise awareness about dangers of child marriage and reduce the number of girls married off before their 18th birthday

As for this project, activities to be implemented include

- Project Launch
- School Outreaches

- Formation and Strengthening Child Rights Clubs
- Community Events to Communicate messages of ending child marriage
- Publication of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Materials
- Initiating Income Generating Activities
- Supporting Girls Education
- Monitoring and Evaluation

On February 13th 2014, Joy for Children Uganda together with members of the Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance launched the Girls Not Bride Empower project at Kichwamba Technical College, Kabarole district. The launch started with a march to the main venue. At the main venue, the audience, that consisted of the pupils from 4 primary schools that is Kibyo, Mahyoro, Kitarasa and Kichwamba primary schools, teachers from the four schools, local leaders, community members, different Civil society organizations and staff Joy for Children Uganda, was given many interesting speeches concerning the issues of child marriage. All the pupils were provided with bags that contained books, pens, covers and pencils. In addition, all together 10 goats were given to girls who had been identified to be vulnerable to end up in child marriage.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Child marriage is a health and human rights issue, especially for girls and women in the developing world, Uganda inclusive. In Karangura sub country lies along Mt. Rwenzori ranges, the problem is high compares to other parts of the country. Karangura is mainly inhabited by Kakonjo and Bamba tribes of Uganda that live in highlands and the slopes of Mount Rwenzori covering districts of Kasese,

Kabarole and Bundibugyo districts. Child Marriage is one of the harmful practiced by these tribes in areas within and long Mt Rwenzori. Girls as young as thirteen are married off either with men within their age brackets or much older than them in exchange of goats, chicken or gardens of cassava.

The problem of child in the area has been precipitated by conflict as a result of Allied Democratic Front (ADF) that attacked Western Uganda in 1996. In 1998, the rebel Allied Democratic Forces significantly heightened their activities, which included repeated attacks on civilian targets, trading centers, and private homes, resulting in hundreds of deaths and abductions. The ADF continued to plant land mines extensively and increased its attacks on both rural and urban civilian targets, police outposts, and UPDF encampments. In February 1998, 30 students were abducted by ADF rebels from Mitandi Seventh Day Adventist College in Kasese. In April 1998 rebels attacked a woman in Bundibugyo district and cut off her ears and nose. The ADF forces hacked two civilian women to death in Kasese district in May. The ADF's deadliest attack of the year occurred on 08 June 1998, when rebels killed 80 students of the Kichwamba Technical College in Kabarole district by setting locked dormitories on fire. Until 2007 rebels were still operating with in and around the Rwenzori area. As a result of this war, many families and social settings were disrupted for more than a decade of civil unrest. Many people were killed, women and girls kidnapped and given as rewards to war combatants or given as wives for loyal and high ranking rebel officials. The same community has low value for education and its common finding boys in primary school when they have wives at home. However, girls are disproportionately discriminated as

married boys continue attending school girls miss out on education despite if it being free at primary and secondary level. Ignorance of the parent on risks associated with marrying girls at an early age, poverty, traditional norms and practice, illiteracy among others are some of the factors that perpetuate child marriage.

VISITING MAHYORO AND KIBYO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

On March 4th and 5th 2014 the JFCU team, Phiona Kabahubya, Fanny Söderman and Joshua Muganzi, visited Mahyoro and Kibyo primary schools respectively to follow up on the project activities in the school. The visit included talking to and visiting the first goat beneficiaries' homes, forming the GNB club in the school and also selecting the next slot of girls to receive goats, then sign memorandum of understandings between JFCU and the school and between the parent/guardian and JFCU.



It was a good reception we received from the teachers and pupils of the school. While at the school we shared with the teachers in charge, of how the next 20 girls should be selected and what criteria should be used, when they were to choose the most vulnerable girls, those at the verge of dropping out of school and those likely to be exchanged for marriage soon. The teachers said that the selection will be done

through engaging in different discussions with the girls especially from primary five classes up to primary seven.



FORMATION OF GNB CLUBS

On the same school visit days we formed the GNB clubs in Mahyoro and Kibyo primary schools with the help of the teachers, we managed to get pupils from primary four to primary seven as the first members of the club.



We talked to the first members of the club, formed and explained the GNB project including the different reasons why the club has been formed. Among others Ms. KabahubyaPhiona told the girls that this club is very important for both girls and boys of their age, that it will be used as a tool to disburse the information about the dangers of child marriage, school drop outs, teenage pregnancies and also talk about the value of education.



She informed the pupils that the clubs will be formed in all the beneficiary schools of which the two school clubs will be involved different activities that will help spread the message across their schools and communities. The clubs will be involved in debates, music, dance and drama with messages to help sensitise the community about the dangers of child marriage and the value of educating a girl child.



SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENTS

The memorandum of understandings that are to be signed between the beneficiary school and JFCU show how the goats shall be handled and details on the different obligations for both parties and terms and conditions.



VISITING THE HOMES OF THE GIRLS GOAT BENEFICIARIES FROM MAHYORO PRIMARY SCHOOL

1st Family

Kanyemura village, Karangura Sub County.

**Beneficiary: Grace Bwakota, P.5
Mahyoro primary school**



This family lives very far from the school, which was held as a risk for dropping out school. The goat was given to the family

to encourage the girl to continue to go to school and perform well.

Grace stays with her guardian from maternal side Ms. Mbambu Faith, she normally does farming as her main activity at home, at the time we arrived even when she had been informed about our intended visit she decided to wait for us in the nearby garden, from where Grace rushed to pick her when we arrived at their home.

Ms. Mbambu welcomed us to her humble home and she expressed her gratitude that we had moved all the way to the hills to visit her. She said they do not normally receive visitors. When we asked about her relationship with the child, she begins to narrate her story. She tells us the father of Grace passed away when she was still a baby and after some time the mother had to move away to go find food to eat. She left to a place called Karugutu, in another district called Bundibugyo, and they have not heard from her, though she calls sometimes to check on them. Grace has two siblings, 2 girls, and they also live with the same guardian.



When asking about her view on child marriage, she said she does not support it, and says she knows that the education for young girls is important. Though she insisted that sometimes when these girls lack support they opt for marriage.

Ms. Mbambu Faith, expressed how happy she was when the child came back home with a goat on the eve of 13th February, 2014. She said that Grace told her she was

chosen to receive a goat so as to keep in school and avoid getting married when she is still a young child. She told us receiving that goat has encouraged the guardian to put the other two younger siblings to school as well. She feels encouraged and she is happy to know that someone else somewhere cares about her children going to school.

Ms. Mbambusaystries her best to make sure Grace continues to secondary school.



The terms and conditions about the goat were explained to the guardian and she signed the letter of understanding. These terms and conditions include; the goat is not for sale, the parent/guardian should help take care of the goat while the child is at school, as long as they have this goat the girl child must be going to school or else the goat will be taken away, the kids of the goat are to support the child in school for example they can be sold so as to buy uniform, books, shoes and pay school fees for the child, in case of any sicknesses or death, the parent shall inform the school and JFCU immediately, the girl child must not drop out of school and also making sure that she completes her primary level.

Grace's Views about child marriage and receiving the goat

Grace is against child marriage because she knows that getting married at a young age doesn't guarantee that the man can look after her. She knows this because her auntie was married off at the age of 13

after an older man had impregnated her. The husband maltreated the auntie, who later returned home to the guardian with the baby. Now the auntie stays home and cannot return to school.

When asked what she will do to avoid dropping out of school she says she will make sure she avoids the boys who tries to engage her into having sex, continue going to school and read hard and pass her exams. Grace dreams about becoming a nurse when she grows up.



2nd family, Nakarunga village Karangura Sub County

Beneficiary: Akugizibwe Milly, 14 years old, Primary 5, Mahyoro primary school



Milly stays with her mother Ms. Kastayona Mathe in Nyakarunga village, she is a widow with 9 children of which some are married off already. She told us that Milly's father died 5 ago and

ever since then she has laboured to feed for her family.

When asked about her view on child marriage, she said she as a person doesn't like it because many girls who are married off at a young age, will not educate themselves and it makes life hard for them. She cited examples of her own children who got married when they are so young, she says much as now they have grown up they suffered alot during their early years of marriage.



Ms.Mathe said that when Milly brought the goat at home, she explained that the goat was given to her, so that she can keep in school. As amother, she was delighted and happy that her girl has now received support and she saw array of hope that her child will finish school some day. A dream that has not been accomplished with many of her children, because of dropping school and getting married.

She also expresses that by receiving the goat she now has a better perspective of education and what the value of education is. Though she still cites challenges with the scholastic materials andlong distances, which are a risk for dropping the school.However, she says she will do her best to keep her daughter in school.

NB: In addition, the child is suffering from anaemia, which result that sometimes she has to stay home from school.



The terms and conditions were also explained to her which included: the goat is not for sale, the parent/guardian should help take care of the goat while the child is at school, as long as they have this goat the girls child must be going to school or else the goat will be taken away, the kids of the goat are to support the child in school for example they can be sold so as to buy uniform, books, shoes and pay school fees for the child, in case of any sicknesses or death the parent must inform the school and JFCU immediately, the girl child must not drop out of school and also making sure that she completes her primary level after which she signed the memorandum of understanding.

Milly'sviews about child marriage and receiving the goat



Milly understands the child marriage as a marriage that takes place when the girl is still young.

She says that after the launch of the Girls not Brides project on the 13th February, she is more encouraged to stay in school due to all the information she received and also the receiving of the goat has motivated her to better and concentrate at school. She appreciates that she was chosen to benefit from this project and she says she will use this opportunity that has come her way.

Milly says she has a sibling that has been married off at a young age and now has children. If Milly could retrospectively give an advise to her siblings before they got married, she would tell them not to marry young, because men will dump them after having children.

In order to keep in school, Milly will avoid having sex before marriage and be aware of the boys along the road to school. Also she says that she will concentrate on school. Her dream is to become a nurse.

**3rd family busoma village,
Beneficiary: Biira Harriet, 14 years old,
Primary 5, Mahyoro primary school**



Harriet stays with her grandmother, MS, Kyakimwa Joice, who is also her guardian. Harriet's mother died of Malaria when she was only 3 years old. After the death of her mother the father abandoned the family and up to now they have never heard from him. That is how she ended up with her grandmother, the only parent that Harriet has known.



When asked about the guardian's view about children who are getting married when they are still young, she says that children should go to school instead of getting married because that is how they will have better chances to take care of the parents and the rest of the family once they have an education.

The grandmother thought that the goat was given by the government, because she was not able to attend the launch on the 13th of February 2014. However, Phiona explained to her that JFCU is a non government organization, which is working on issues to do with violence

against children and right to education. Ms. Kyakimwa expressed how grateful she was for her granddaughter to have received a goat that will support her through school. She said her prayer is that Harriet realises the importance of education and doesnot join peer groups that will lead her astray thus spoil her future.



Harriet's views on child marriage and being agoat beneficiary

Harriet says that after the Launch of the project, she learned that getting married at a young age is bad. Because the man will leave you after you have given birth to children and go to look for more educated girls elsewhere. She expresses her willto work hard so that she is capable to support her self and her family in the future. She narrates how her older sister was impregnated at the age of 13, and now is married and has children but cannot afford to look after them and is now living in aggravated poverty.



She says her dream is to become like us (officials from Joy for Children Uganda), referring to the staff of Joy for Children so that she can be able to help her community.



4th family, Kibyo village Beneficiary; MasikaHarriet 12 years, Mahyoro primary school.



Harriet stays with her stepmother and grandmother in her family with other siblings and cousins. The stepmother, Ms. Kabugho, Georgina received us at their home while the rest of the family had gone to the farms. She told us how Harriet's mother divorced 3 years ago and left little Harriet with the father, up to now they do not know the whereabouts of the mother. The father Mr. Pauli Mulikiwho also does not stay around. He has been trying to help Harriet with school fees and scholastic materials. He works in another district and sometimes when he has not sent anything then Harriet misses school till they get money to pay her school dues.



Her Stepmother states that child marriage is currently very rampant in the region and that many young girls in this village are getting married. She stresses how bad it is that even some girls who have finished their primary, instead of continuing their studies or going to work, get married. In addition she says that there are also many others who do not even finish the primary and rather run into marriage. She says of these girls some are forced and yet others go for marriage willingly, even run away from home to go get married in other districts.

At this point she was explained why Harriet was given a goat and why we have visited their home on follow-up basis of Harriet's education. The terms and conditions explained to the stepmother included: the goat is not for sale, the

parent/guardian should help take care of the goat while the child is at school, as long as they have this goat the girl's child must be going to school or else the goat will be taken away, the kids of the goat are to support the child in school for example they can be sold so as to buy uniform, books, shoes and pay school fees for the child, in case of any sicknesses or death the parent must inform the school and JFCU immediately, the girl's child must not drop out of school and also making sure that she completes her primary level after which she signed the memorandum of understanding.



Harriet's views on child marriage and being a goat beneficiary



Harriet's opinion concerning child marriage after the launch is, that child marriage is suffering, because it often includes domestic violence and in order to avoid early marriage, she will make sure to attend all the classes and not escape from school. She wants to become a nurse, because nurses cure people.

5th family, Kibyo Village

Beneficiary: Kabugho Dorothy, 12 years old, Kibyo Primary school.



Dorothy's parents were not at home during our visit, so the older sister was interviewed and asked to sign the letter of understanding. It was also agreed that the parents would later visit the school and the teacher in charge will explain the terms and conditions of the letter of understanding and the goat receiving.

Dorothy's older sister called Biira Enid is 17 years old and has a baby who is 6 months old. She told us how she had to drop out school because she had been impregnated by an older man who had been sweet talking her while on her way to school for a long time. The man had not engaged her to marry him, so she stays at home with her parents place. She said she wanted to return to school but the parents now donot have the money to take her back to school. Her advice to other young girls is to avoid the men and avoid getting pregnant thus concentrate on their studies, on this she cautions how she would not want her sister to be like her.



Enid tells us that their parents, whosupport child marriage, sometimes have challenges with paying the scholastic fees and think when a child gets married the man can take care of her, which in most cases is not true.By far, the girls have insisted their parents to let them go to school. Their family has 3 more children in addition to Enid and Dorothy. The rest of the children are in P-6, P-2 and P-1.

Dorothy's views on child marriage and being a goat beneficiary



Dorothy has the example of her big sister, of what can happen when you are not careful with boys. She says that she is against child marriage, and in order to avoid it, she will not be moving at night, and will not be playing with boys. She will continue going to schooland taking good care of her goat. She wants to become a nurse because there is a need for more nurses in the area.



6th family Butulya Kitarasa village
Beneficiary: Masika Marion

Marion stays with her mother Ms. Ester Kyakimuro in Kitaras village. It is a very distant village from the school. Marion has to work a very long way to make to school every day. Their family has 6 children, 3 of them are in school and 3 are at home. When asked her view about child marriage, the mother says she does not support it. She says husbands make their young wives dig and cook all the days of their lives. They become their slaves because they cannot decide anything in a home.



She narrated how happy she was when her child got a goat from JFCU and was preparing to come and visit the school and

also visit JFCU offices to thank them for their support.

At this point she was explained the terms and conditions of the goat and later she signed the agreement. However she was advised that since she had relatives near Marion's school, she could send Marion to the relatives during the school term so that Marion does not have to move along distance to her school every day. She agreed and also said she was planning on doing that in the next school term. She promised that as a mother, she will now double her efforts to make sure that Marion finishes school and live a brighter future. She also promised to talk to her neighbours about the dangers of child marriage since she has witnessed many of her neighbours children get married at tender ages.



Marion's views on child marriage and being a goat beneficiary

Marion says, she now more than ever realises how bad child marriage is and that she will put her efforts for the goat to give birth, and she promises to stop moving outside at night and she will be

reading harder her school books. Her dream is to become a teacher when she grows up.



7th family,

Kihondo village

Beneficiary: ThungoRonet 13 years old, Kibyo primary school.



ThungoRonet stays with her mother Ms. Getunda Elizabeth. She has a family of 9 children, of which some are married off, other dropped out schools due to lack of school fees and others are in school also struggling with the school dues. She expressed how happy she was when the child got support from JFCU she says she now has hopes that her daughters will atleast finish primary level.

When asked about her statement on child marriage she says she believes that girls should first grow, study and be mature enough when marrying, in order to able to take care of the house and family. However, she says that is not the case anymore with many homes and families around. She says child marriage has now become an option for all girls who have issues with school fees.



Term and conditions were also explained to her, and she later signed the letter of understanding

Ronet's views on child marriage and being a goat beneficiary

She says since we launched GNB empower project she has put in more efforts to go school, and study harder and get a job. She says, she will tell her friends at school who talk about getting married to concentrate on their studies. Her dream is to become a nurse because they treat people and they look smart in their outfit.

8th family

Kiondo village

Beneficiary: Kistma Getrude, 15 years P.6

She stays with the father Mr. Yona who welcomed us into his home. He has a family of 7 children. Their mother was not present at the time of interview but the father stated how grateful the mother was for her daughter to have received a goat from JFCU.



Father was at the launch of the Girls not Brides project and he understood quite well what the whole project was about; he said he was ready to support the project by campaigning against child marriage in his area. He narrates how child marriage is not good, and some young girls even die while giving birth at a young age. Ever since the launch, he wants his all children to go to school and have an education. However he points out that school fees for all is a problem that is why some of them are still at home waiting for when the father can get money to take them to school.

After this, he was explained to the terms and conditions of the goat and he later signed the agreement.

Gertrude's views about child marriage and being a goat beneficiary



She says that she has been encouraged to stay in school and respect her parents. She wants to succeed in life and be of great importance to her family. She says her father has struggled a lot to see them through school though now some of her siblings are at home. She is also very grateful for the goat and promised to look after it well so that it take care of her and support her education. She says maybe one day she will also join University.

9th family Kibyoa village beneficiary; kahindo Flavia 12 years in p.5

Flavia stays with the father Mr Bihamba Tomasi who welcomed us into his home. He has a family of 15 children. Their mother was present at home and she was grateful that the daughter got a goat.



In his views, Mr. Tomas said that it is not right for the child to get married at an early age because she is likely to get complications during child birth. “I am in support of this campaign against child marriage and I want my children to study and finish school so that they can get married officially. I felt happy when I learnt that my child was given a goat by Joy for Children. This has encouraged me to keep supporting my child in school until she finish. I have 15 children and only 5 are in school.” Tomas narrates.

Flavia’s views about child marriage and being a goat beneficiary

In her views, KahindoFlavia said that, she is not ready to get married until she finishes studies. “I will stay in school until I finish primary seven and be able to join secondary. I want to be a nurse.” She narrates.



Parents mind about food and not the future of the girls since the parents themselves got married when they were still young.

10th family

Masika Molly 13 years old in primary five at Mashyoro primary school also benefited from a goat. She is daughter to Bukombi Patrick. She stays with her uncle Tembo Denis, 26 years, in Kiby village. “I am very happy for my daughter to get a goat from Joy for Children Uganda. I am told the goat is to support the education of my child. I am in support of the campaign against child marriage. I am also going to support my child to complete her education. It is bad for the girl child to get married at early age. Girls get problems while giving birth because their bodies have not yet matured. Child marriage ruins girls future life as they do not attain their full education.” Dennis narrated. He acknowledged that child marriage is very common in Karagura since the people have low attitude attached to education and they prefer to be given food or goats and the girls away for marriage.



Molly's view about child marriage and being a goat beneficiary

She said that since she attended the launch she now knows that getting married before finishing school is bad, because there are many problems associated with early marriage, such like domestic violence.

She said that she will always read hard and complete her primary school, also she lamented that she will stop going out with many boys and playing with them.

CHALLENGES THAT WERE DISCOVERED DURING THE VISITS

- One of the challenges that we discovered and experienced when we visited the homes of the families is difficult the journey that the girls have to travel twice a day in order to go and return from school. Some of the homes are extremely far from the schools, and even the path is very hard to climb. During the rainy season the conditions for claiming must be extremely dangerous.
- There are also other challenges and dangers related to that long school road, than just the difficult path. Many of the young girls are ambushed by boys and older men along their way to school. We heard several stories where a girl had been impregnated by a man who has been harassing the girl during the school road. A number of teenage pregnancies are started in the bushes during the long journey to school, when men whether sweet talk the girls into early sex, or abuse them.
- Another problem that most of the families had difficulties providing the school fees for the children. When the parents were interviewed on their views on child marriage, every parent/guardian we talked to was against child marriage, and thought it does not provide the conditions for a good future for the young girl. However, when a child drops out of school due to lack of school fees they easily end up getting married.
- Also, when the girls were interviewed about their thoughts on child marriage, most of them expressed that they did not want to end up in child marriage because the man would beat them and leave them. Some girls stated that they do not support child marriage, since they want to finish school so they can be independent and take care of themselves.
- The conclusion is that the interviewed girls are aware of the domestic violence that appears in many cases of child marriage, but also the importance of being economically independent is something that should be highlighted for the girls. And the best way to achieve that independence is to finish schools. In addition the issues related to the health existed among the girls where by some girls during the formation of the GNB clubs asked the dangers of child marriage to their bodies. The Girls not Brides clubs will tackle the issues concerning both the importance of education and health.
- As for the challenges that Joy for Children as an organization is facing, is the limited funds. The project has a three-year-plan, and by far, there are funds covering the first year.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Project Launch was a success considering the awareness rising on child marriages. During the interviews, both the girls and parents stated, that the Launch had taught them new thing about child marriage. Especially, the parents who had

attended told that now they are motivated to keep all their children in school. This shows that it is very important to keep the parents in the target group as well, and sensitize them also in the future activities.

- The pupils from the beneficiary schools, both boys and girls, are more aware of the dangers and bad consequences of child marriage.
- All the goat beneficiaries are still in school, and haven't dropped out or ended up married. The beneficiaries' families are in whole more motivated to support the education of the children in the families.
- By providing some pupils with goats, has also motivated other children in the beneficiary schools to do better in school.

Advocacy and Action for Children.