

Girls Not Brides Empower Project Narrative Report

Quarterly Report

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JOY FOR CHILDREN UGANDA

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INTRODUCTION

Joy for Children-Uganda (JFCU) is a non-profit children's rights centre and non-governmental (NGO) organization established in Kampala in 2005 to respond to the plight of vulnerable children in Uganda. Dedicated to working with children, families and communities to end injustice to children, JFCU attained NGO status in 2006 (registration number S. 5914/6687 under the NGO Act of 1989 of the Republic of Uganda).

Since December 2013 to August 2014, Joy for Children Uganda in partnership with Girls Not Brides Ugandan Alliance has been implementing a project entitled "The Girls not Brides Empower Project (GNB). The project targets 2 schools of Mahyoro and Kibyo Primary Schools that demonstrated highest numbers of girl children that drop out of school to child marriage in the area. According to an article by a Monitor newspaper reporter, 20 girls between the ages of 13-16 dropped out of school in a period of 3 months because they were married off. Most of the girls were attending the above mentioned primary schools.

The project employs three pronged approaches of awareness rising, education and economic empowerment in order to achieve the project goal.

Project Goal

- 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

PROJECT BACK GROUND

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. While the work done by different organizations to end child marriage is commendable, early marriage continues to be

widespread and is still socially accepted in many cultures in Uganda. According to International Center for Research on Women (ICRW, 2007), Uganda ranks the 9th with 54.1% of girls marrying before the age of 18. It is becoming increasingly clear that more effort needs to be made in terms of putting into action the recommendations emerging from these reports. It's against this background that Joy for Children together with the Girls Not Brides Ugandan Alliance proposed this pilot project in Karangura Sub County Kabarole District, Western to End Child marriage.

PROJECTLAUNCH



Figure 1 The Executive Director, Mr.Ntenga Moses with band at the GNB project Launch

On February 13, 2014, Joy for Children Uganda in collaboration with members of the Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance launched the Girls Not Brides Empower project at Kichwamba Technical College, Kabarole District. The launch was officiated by the Tooro Kingdom Prime minister Rt.Hon.Harriet Nyakake Abwooli who represented the Queen mother of Tooro Best Kemigisa Akiiki. The launch started with a match past at Kichwamba sub county through Kihondo trading centre with a great view of the Karangura Sub county on the foot hills of Mountain Rwenzori. The Launch was attended by the pupils from 4 primary schools, these included Kibyo,Mahyoro,Kitarasa and Kichwamba primary schools,Teachers from the four schools, local leaders, community members, different Civil society organizations and staff of Joy for Children Uganda. This launch brought together 265 pupils from the four different schools and 65 adults, these included teachers, local leaders, government representatives and other invited guests .The guest speakers at this launch were representatives from the local council and district leadership.

In her speech, Miss Nyakake Harriet Abwooli also the Chief guest informed the audience that her majesty the Queen mother of Tooro was not able to make it due to some inconveniences that came up

but she apologized and said that she was with the audience in spirit. Miss Nyakake informed the audience that her majesty had passed on her message, which she was to deliver as it written below. The Queen mother thanked JFCU for having taken the initiative to invite her to be the Guest of honour of the launch of the Girls Not Brides Empower project. Thanked Joy for children for the efforts and good community work that it has done in the kingdom and across the country. She thanked the different members of other civil society organizations present, the representatives from the government, Girls Not brides Uganda alliance members, community members, teachers and pupils from the schools represented. She mentioned that child marriage is still a big problem and a challenge in the region and needs urgent attention. The Queen mother asked the pupils and other young girls present to behave themselves during their time of school by respecting their parents, teachers and themselves and asked them to pass on this great information to other children who did not get the opportunity to attend the launch. She appealed to parents and teachers to always set a good example before their children. She cautioned teachers who are complying with parents to have children out for school for marriage and in return get small gifts or money and also those teachers that actually impregnated or marry girls from their schools.

Ms. Nyakake asked parents, local leaders, teachers, religious leaders, Head teachers, Community Based Organizations and other institutions responsible to join hands and put an end to child marriage especially where the project is being implemented. She promised to fix some time and visit Karagura Sub County. She promised to join hands with the local leaders of communities and Organizations responsible to support a policy known as “Girls should go back to school and stay there until they finish their primary cycle”.

Her majesty promised to work together with Joy for Children as far as putting an end to child marriage is concerned. The district and local council leadership, and the community pledged their commitment to work with JFCU to end child marriage.



Figure 2. The Guest of Honour, Ms. Nyakake Harriet presents her speech at the launch.

During the project launch, there was also a testimony from one of the child marriage victim who gave her experience of what she has gone through and what it's like to get married at an early age. She urged the children present at the launch to always listen to the advice given to them by their parents, teachers and other leaders in the community so they do not go through what she went through. She said she has gone through domestic violence and her husband

always cheated on her with other educated women and always reminded her of her low education level. She preferred that we do not use her real names while reporting.



Figure 3 Child Marriage victim arrives at the launch venue.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

1. Awareness Raising

a) School Out reach

This was done through school visits by Joy for Children team which consisted of Phiona Kabahubya (Project Coordinator), Fanny Söderman (Volunteer) and Joshua Muganzi (Staff JFCU).

Beneficiary schools; Mahyoro and Kibyo primary schools have been visited on a termly basis to raise more awareness of the vice in the area and also to encourage teachers to put more efforts in discouraging early marriages in their schools. The first visits to the schools included meeting with teachers and head teachers and also signing of the memorandum of understanding between the schools and Joy for Children Uganda. These MOUs clearly outlined the different roles of the school and those of Joy for Children Uganda during the implementation of this project.

The visits also included talking to and visiting the first goat beneficiaries' homes and also selecting the next slot of girls to receive goats, then sign memorandum of understandings between Joy for Children and beneficiary parent/guardian.



Figure 4 JFC-U and Schools' representatives sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

Among the many stories documented were the joys and appreciations from the two school head teachers of Mahyoro and Kibyo Primary school that is Miss. Biira Drusila and Mr. Agaba Patrick thanking Joy for Children Uganda for having chosen their schools to benefit from the Girls Not Brides Empower Project. It's during these visits that teachers and head teachers were engaged to select the next goat beneficiaries

b) Establishing and Strengthening of Child Rights Clubs.



Figure 5 JFC-U Visits project beneficiary Schools.

As part of raising awareness on the project and the vice (Child marriage) school clubs were also formed. These have been named the Girls Not Brides School Clubs. These clubs are meant to bring girls and boys of the same age group (10-16 years) together so that they can always discuss the issues that concern them. These clubs are consisted of 30 children picked from 5 classes per school. Each class has 6 representatives in the club. Issues that are discussed in

these clubs include but not limited to; sexual and reproductive health, sex education, how to keep in school and avoid engaging in early marriages and how to perform better in class. With the help of teachers attached to each school club, the club meets 3 times per term that is once every month for discussions; the clubs also carry out music dance and drama activities to help spread the gospel against child marriage in the entire schools and communities that they live in. Club members were selected with the help of the teachers and they include pupils from primary four to primary seven. Ms. Kabahubya Phiona the project coordinator met and explained to each school club the different reasons why these clubs were formed in their schools. She also told the girls that this club is very important for both girls and boys because it will be used as a tool to disburse the information about the dangers of child marriage, school drop outs, and teenage pregnancies and also talk about the value of education.

Phiona informed the pupils that the clubs will be formed in all the beneficiary schools that will join the project in the near future as means to spread information of dangers of child marriage amongst all children in the community. She urged members of the clubs to be exemplary to other child and avoid involving in bad peer groups.



Figure 6 GNB Project Coordinator Ms. Kabahubya Phiona speaks to Mahyoro Primary School GNB club.

2. Economic Empowerment

a) Procurement and Distribution of Animals

A total of thirty five goats of the intended two hundred goats to be given out by the end of the project have been purchased and distributed to the most vulnerable girls in the two project beneficiary schools. These girls were selected with the help of both teachers and local leaders of the area and the team from Joy for Children Uganda.

Among the first group of girls who received goats at the launch, their goats have already reproduced bringing more smiles on both the girls and their parents faces. These goats were given out as economic incentives to support the homes of the vulnerable girls. The team from Joy for Children Uganda has visited the homes of the beneficiaries and signed the memorandum of understanding between the homes and Joy for Children Uganda. Ms. Kabahubya Phiona has explained to the homes how these goats are not supposed to be sold at any one point, they belong to the girls and in turn these girls must keep in school. When these goats give birth the kids will be used as a source of income to help the girl continue with her education.



Figure 7 Some of the GNB project goats that were given to vulnerable girls.

Activity Achievements (Success Story)

During the goat beneficiaries follow up visits, it has been noted that there has been a difference in the attendance of the goat beneficiary girls. At least 80% of the goat beneficiaries now feel more obliged to attend school and feel safe that their goats will help them access more scholastic materials in future though there have been other challenges that affect some of the beneficiary school attendance, like long distances and lack of scholastic materials.

Kahunde Rachael from Mahyoro Primary School is one of the beneficiaries of this project and during the routine follow up visits to the goat beneficiary homes, she mentioned how she has missed sitting for exams the previous term but after the receiving of the goat the parents paid her fees and at the end of last term she got the 3rd position out of the 30 pupils in her class. When asked many days in a term she attends the class, Kahunde said her parents now encourage her to attend school every day though she still finds difficulties with the long distance to school.



b) Training on Income Generating Activities

After the goats had been given out, it was wise that the girls and families that benefited be trained on how well they can keep and manage the goats. This training was held on the 5th of June, 2014 bringing together 35 girls from the two beneficiary schools that received goats, 4 teachers and 35 parents. The training's main aim was to train the goat beneficiaries on how well to keep the goats so that they are able to reproduce and help the families get out of

poverty and thus keep girls in schools. The training was officiated by the Vice Chairperson LC5 Kabarole district Mr. Ikagobyia Moses.



Figure 8 the district Vice Chair Mr. Ikagobyia Moses speaks at the Income generating activities training

The training was facilitated by Mr. Asaba Charles BS.PH, DIP.VET.CERT.RMM who led the parents and their children through the different ways of how well they can keep their goats and benefit from the products. The topics covered during the training included;

1. Good feeding
2. Good medication

3. Good housing
4. Use of local and available materials for treatment
5. Water giving and always taking the as part of them or as their family members.



Figure 9 The facilitator, Mr. Asaba Charles conducting the Income generating activities training.

3. Supporting Girls Education

a) Provision of scholastic materials

One of the main activities of the Girls Not Brides Empower project is to provide scholarstic Materials to the most vulnerable girls in the two project beneficiary schools of

Kibyo and Mahyoro primary schools. So far 50 children have received different scholastic materials including books, pens, bags, pencils and book covers of which, the book covers and school bags have engraved child marriages messages that will help spread the information amongst other children and members of the communities where these children come from. The different messages engraved on these scholastic materials provided includes; *Let girls be girls*, *Education is the Key to Success* and *An educated Girl brings prosperity to her family*.



Figure 10 Sample of the School bags that were given to GNB project beneficiary children.

b) Training on making reusable sanitary towels



Figure 11 The trainer, Mr. Muyinza Amos demonstrating how the reusable sanitary towels should be used.

It was noted by teachers that many of the girl children in the rural areas miss out on school during their menstrual cycle due to lack of what to use and fear of leakage while at school. They feel uncomfortable and out of the society thus shy about what happens to them. These monthly periods affect the performance of most of them because when calculated, on average the girl misses 15 school days per term due to her periods which in the end affects her performance in class and sometimes leads to drop outs.

On the 31st of July and 1st of August, JFCU held a two days training for pupils from Mahyoro and Kibyo primary schools on how to make and use reusable sanitary towels. The training was attended by 95 children, 2 teachers, 2 tailors, 1 staff from Joy for Children and 1 trainer, making a total of 101 people.

The training was led by Mr. Muyinza a senior trainer on these sanitary towels who took the participants through the menstrual cycle and how girls can handle themselves when in their periods, he advised girls to embrace their periods because it's a sign that they are healthy and growing well. He told them not to be shy because even boys get boys changes while growing up which girls no nothing about example voice changes and bed wetting. The children were taught how to use and make these sanitary towels and wer asked to concentrate so they can go and get teach others who have not gotten this opportunity. Mr. Amos asked the teachers and pupils to thank Joy for Children for giving them this golden opportunity because many girls out there do not get this chance. First he took them through the cleanliness required during this sensitive period and how to also clean the reusable sanitary towel, With this, he mentioned that reusable sanitary towels like any other cloth need to be kept clean he gave different tips on how well they can wash the sanitary towels without sustaining them. He said they can always

sock the used pads in cool water for a few minutes like 5 for the pad to sock well and release the blood, then change the water and wash thoroughly with a lot of water and soap. When all this is done, the pad should be hanged where it can get some direct light. Amos said its good for the pad to dry under direct sunlight so it keeps clean and avoid being dump otherwise it would pull off a funny smell and eventually cause girls some rush.



Figure 12 The trainer, Mr, Muyinza Amos demonstrates how the reusable sanitary towels materials should be cut.

The children were also taught how to make the sanitary towels, a process that was very exciting and enjoyable, and the smiles on the

girls faces could tell it all how happy they were to learn the whole process and be able to do them themselves.



Figure 13 Girls from Kiby primary school demonstrates their finished cut materials at the training.

At the end of the training children received the made sanitary towels and a pair of knickers to help them during their menstrual cycle.

Most girls requested that we give them more knickers next time we have such training because it's also one of the other things they lack as girls in the rural areas. They explained how its gets hard when such days come and they do not have both the sanitary and the towels. They also requested that if possible we can buy and stock

these knickers with the senior women in their schools so that a girl is free to access them when in need. Ms. Joy, the senior woman from Kibyo primary school supplemented on this point saying most parents cannot afford to buy knickers for their children and that is why some of them choose to stay at home during their menstrual periods because it's hard to go without knickers on.



Figure 14 Girls show off their given knickers after the training.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

In efforts to keep track of how the project is faring on ground, the team from Joy for Children Uganda always visits the homes of the goat beneficiaries to note the changes in the homes if any and how the family is fairing. All goat beneficiary families have been visited

and it has been such an experience that has already note a number of achievements. During these visits we have noted that most families value their girls more than before and have a positive attitude towards the girl child education than before.



Figure 15 JFC-U team visits one of the beneficiary homes.

With our continuous efforts in raising awareness on the vice and value of education from the day of the project launch, many parents have noted that now they believe that actually a girl can finish school, get a job and be able to help herself and her family.

Schools have also been visited to see what children now think about child marriage after the launch and giving out of goats.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

a) SUCCESS STORY

During the course of the projects implementation, the first goat beneficiary homes were revisited and most of the goat had given birth to their first kid. The excited of the children and their parents could tell it all when asked how they felt about the goats' delivery. A case in point is Biira Joyce whose goat gave birth to its first kid which looked exactly like its mother.



Figure 16 One of the project beneficiary girls, Biira Joyce shows off her goat and its kid.

The colours of the kid excited Joyce and she also enjoys the privilege of now having more than one goat to her name encourages her to read harder.

JFCU is privileged to report that the project has achieved a number of successes that have been realised and documented during the different project activities. Most of the achievements are normally realised when the follow up visits and school visits are conducted.

Below is a list of the achievements that the project has realised thus far.

1. 500 community members and 450 pupils from the two beneficiary schools know about the dangers of child marriage in Karangura Sub County and are willing to support the cause. Most of these got to know about the vice from the launch and the different project printed materials that have been distributed to them.
2. 31 girls and families and 4 teachers have received goats from the project as an incentive to motivate them support/keep girls in schools. Many of these families have expressed their gratitude to JFCU and pledged their commitments to support their girls keep in school.
3. Also some of these goats have already had their first kids which will double the number of goats by the end the project.



Figure 17 Dorothy, one of the project beneficiary girls and her family show off the project given goat which has already produced a kid.

4. 75 members inclusive of the goat beneficiaries, their parents, teachers and district leaders received training on how well to rear goats so that they can realise huge benefits from them and be able to sustain their children in schools.
5. 50 children from both Kibyo and Mahyoro primary schools received school bags that carried wordings campaigning against child marriage and the value of education.



Figure 18 The Executive Director Mr, Ntenga Moses gives out Scholastic Materials to the beneficiary girls at the GNB project launch.

6. 100 children have received scholastic materials including book covers, books, pens and pencils. The children were happy and it has been noticed that they carry these to school every day.
7. Joy for children has been recognised by the district leaders as an organization working to end child marriage in the district. Most of the district leaders including the area member of parliament Hon. Kagwera Steven thanked Joy for Children

for the tireless efforts in a report he was giving on another launch.

8. 100 girls from the two beneficiary schools and 2 teachers got skills in making reusable sanitary towels which is a major tool that will help keep girls in schools.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

Like any other project implementation Girls Not Brides Empower project has met some challenges during this reporting period and these include the following;

1. Poor roads and highly areas, the project is located in the foot hills of Mt.rwenzori which is quite a hilly area. Accessing most of the children homes and schools has had challenges as it sometimes drags work because one can only reach a few homes in a day.



Figure 19 The Project Coordinator, Ms.Kabahubya Phiona and Fanny Sonerman (Volunteer) struggling down the slopes to reach the project beneficiary homes in the foot hills of mount Rwenzori.

2. Managing expectations, most families are expecting more than the project can deliver. For example, most girls have a challenge of school fees and almost all the scholastic materials yet the project can only provide a few scholastic materials and not school fees. JFCU received requests from different families with suggestions to provide direct sponsorship to their girl children. These families are worried if in future they

don't raise money for school fees of their girls in upper classes they may end up getting married off.

3. More children in the school want to also receive goats just like they have seen their colleagues get and yet the can only provide 50 goats for the first year. With this Joy for Children continues to tirelessly look for funding for the other 2 years so that more girls could benefit from the project.

LESSONS LEARNT

From the time when the project was launched to date, we have noticed some change and positive attitude of teachers, parents and girls on the issue of keeping girls in schools till they finish. This has mostly been associated with talks that goat around the community members about Joy for Children and its goat project for keeping girls in school.

Miss. Gertrude, the senior woman from Mahyoro primary school noted that “most of the parents embraced the goat giving part of the project; they feel like they have a reason to keep the girl in school because this goat will help them acquire school fees and scholastic materials for their children in future. This model is goo and working well”, she said.

As a team from Joy for Children we have learnt that addressing the needs of the families may actually help in keeping girls in school till the end and we hope to replicate this model in other areas in the struggle to wipe out child marriages in the country.

CONCLUSION

Girls not Brides empower project is a model that has worked well in Karangura sub county because it involves the participation of all stakeholders. It's a model that JFCU thinks can be replicated in other areas to put an end to child marriage. Another successful tool

of this project is the Girls Not Brides school clubs, they have proved to be a good platform where children especially girls share their views on child marriage and career. The debates that are carried on seem to be motivating the children to work hard in class and also to be exemplary to other pupils of the entire school. We at Joy for Children hope to replicate and expand the project to other parts of the district and the country and we are ready to work and look for support and partners that can help deliver this cause and end the vice in the entire country.

EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT, MARRIAGE CAN!