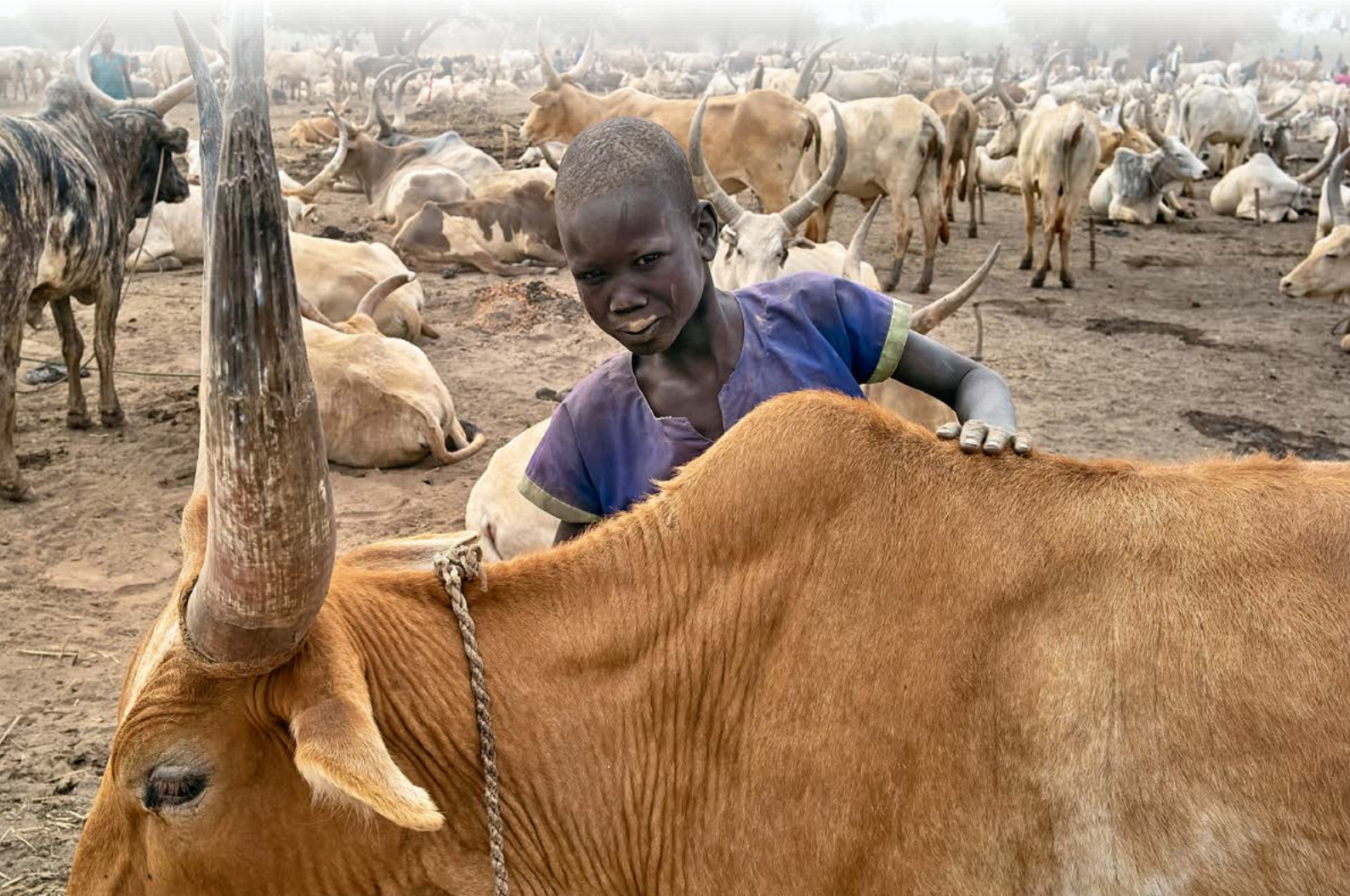


“A boy should be a fighter”

Addressing harmful masculinities driving cattle-related violence



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“A boy should be a fighter”

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Addressing harmful masculinities driving cattle-related violence

Written for IOM

by

Steven Chimwemwe Iphani

December 2020



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Steven Chimwemwe Iphani
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ACRONYMS

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FGD	focus group discussion
GBV	gender-based violence
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	key informant interview
NGO	non-governmental organization
TOCH	The Organisation for Children's Harmony

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This qualitative gender and gender-based violence (GBV) research was conducted in target areas of the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) Peacebuilding Project in the counties of Jur River (specifically, in Mapel and Kuajena) and Tonj South (Tanj Town, Malual-Muok and Wargiir, including the Abelek cattle camp). The study targeted 49 adolescent girls (ages 15–17 years), 7 adolescent boys (15–17 years), 53 young women (18–24 years), 35 young men (18–24 years), 88 women (25–59 years) and 37 men (25–59 years), as well as 27 men and 19 women over 60 years old, totalling 315 participants (106 males and 209 females). The objective was to identify gender norms that are supportive of women’s rights, on the one hand, and negative ones that perpetuate GBV and hinder accessibility of services for GBV survivors, on the other. The purpose of the research was to generate evidence for the contextual adaptation of a gender-transformative approach to peacebuilding under the South Sudan RSRTF Peacebuilding Project. It was conducted in December 2020 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the support of a national partner, The Organisation for Children’s Harmony (TOCH).

The study found that the socialization of boys is aimed at normalizing the use of violence and “bravery”, which results in intercommunal conflict and fighting over limited resources such as grazing land. Boys are socialized from a young age to defend their families’ landholdings and are valued in terms of the role they play in protecting their communities, which often includes launching pre-emptive attacks on other communities. The use of sexual violence, which inordinately targets women and girls, and violent retaliation against other communities are being normalized, as are ruined family and community livelihoods, as part of these intercommunal attacks.

The custom of paying a bride price (or bride wealth), a traditional demand in exchange for a woman’s hand in marriage, is a driver of cattle-related conflict. This practice commodifies and further marginalizes women and girls, reinforcing their secondary status in society, as they are valued primarily in terms of the bride wealth that they can command. The study also found, however, that women are not simple victims, and that they also play a role in promoting violence by singing songs that encourage intercommunal violence, with older men also reportedly instigating young men to fight against other communities. Men did not only commonly use violence against other communities, but also within their own – and even in their intimate relationships. Sexual violence (e.g. rape) is both common and normalized in these communities, with the police and customary leaders (“elders”) sanctioning various forms of GBV, including forced marriage, against girls. Considering that violence begets further violence, child, early and forced marriages often lead to domestic abuse, including marital rape.



“A boy should be a fighter”

In line with the above, the research found that women and girls have limited autonomy to decide on issues affecting their own lives, including whom and when to marry. A girl or woman is largely seen as the property of men, who must pay a bride price to her natal kin, who, owing to this custom, tend to see her largely as a source of income, mainly in the form of cattle. Marital residence is patrilocal, which means that a married woman leaves her family to move into her husband's family compound, securing her rights to him and his family. However, this contributes to the limiting of women's and girls' rights and freedoms, including those pertaining to education, constructive participation in peacebuilding forums and access to services. GBV is a common feature in the lives of women and girls, experienced not only in the context of intimate relationships but also at the intra- and intercommunal levels, due to prevailing, entrenched gender norms.

The study found young men to be the most common perpetrators of violence. As mentioned, older men instigate young men to go out and fight, while women sing songs that encourage them. In addition, while older women are sometimes consulted in peace processes, only older men are directly involved in them. Young men (and women) are left out, despite comprising a considerable part of the cattle camp-based, community-embedded armed groups that engage in conflict. In the midst of all these challenges, the research found that there exist intergenerational interventions, albeit limited, to address the issues.

There are numerous barriers that limit women and girls from accessing GBV response services. These include the long-distance travel necessary to obtain these services, the need to seek permission from men to access services, and poor-quality services due to a lack of supplies and the negative attitudes of service staff (which include police officers and health providers) around gender, thus hindering women's recovery after experiencing violence and abuse.

Basing on the research findings, this report recommends that peacebuilding efforts to implement the Marial Bai Agreement between farmers and cattle herders in the states of Western Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap, both affected by cattle-related conflict, address age-specific and gender-related drivers and social norms that tend to promote or normalize violence, reinforce intergenerational dialogue, and promote meaningful engagement of women and girls.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The dynamics of violence around the world are greatly shaped by gender constructs. It is estimated that men make up 95 per cent of people convicted of homicide and majority of combatants around the world. Men are also four times as likely as women to be victims of homicide and are more likely to suffer violent deaths during conflict (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013; Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2009). Women, on the other hand, are much more likely to suffer from non-lethal forms of violence, specifically sexual violence. Gender is a vital aspect of structural violence, as it is a basis of structural inequality. Minimizing structural inequalities decreases societal tolerance of violence, potentially leading to fewer instances of violence at the intra- and intercommunal levels (Caprioli, 2005:164). Conversely, when societal tolerance supports and legitimizes an environment characterized by structural violence, the incidence of both intra- and intercommunal violence is likely to increase as it becomes a way of life, including as a valid tool for settling disputes (ibid.:165).

South Sudanese youth often find themselves at the centre of violent political competition, their lives impacted by conflict, (economic) dependency and exclusion. Young men, for example, are mobilized by political and military elites to fight battles on their behalf but are denied access to profits reaped through such violence. Conflict leaves many young men dispossessed, robbing them of the resources they may have once had and making ownership or access to increasingly scarce resources subject to contestation. On the other hand, young women find themselves entangled in child and forced marriages and other forms of GBV, restricting their chances of actively participating in society and reinforcing their subordination to economic and social structures that treat them as property (IOM, 2019).

The divide between different ethnopolitical groups has served as a basis for violent competition since the previous civil war with Sudan in the 1980s and 1990s. People are stripped of their assets, most notably livestock, which forms much of the foundation of their livelihoods. This has led to localized, livestock-related violence (largely perpetrated by youth), sour relations and open conflict between communities – thereby undermining peaceful co-existence. South Sudan is a highly militarized environment, and “youthhood” is frequently understood to manifest itself once a boy is old enough to carry a gun to protect cattle and defend his community (ibid.).

Cattle-raiding and other criminal activities have become a way for youth to reduce their dependency on community and political structures that they perceive as not representing their interests, with membership in cattle camps, youth-based militias and youth gangs as some of the few means through which they can access resources, as well as obtaining a sense of belonging and empowerment (ibid.).

Decades of civil war and conflict continue to undermine local communities with widespread socioeconomic deprivation that has left many of them without viable pathways for sustainable and prosperous livelihoods. Such deprivation creates an environment that facilitates youth military recruitment and the emergence of community militias. In addition, the widespread availability of small firearms and light weapons in many parts of the country fuels violent conflict. Communities are unwilling to turn in their firearms, as there is no reliable protection regime in place. A gun culture has thus become common, especially among young people, and is visible in everyday community life, even during activities such as dances and sporting events (Trias Consult, 2020).

The widespread availability of firearms has contributed to the militarization of the cattle economy, which is a significant proximate cause of conflict at the subnational and local levels. The cattle economy has vast sociopolitical implications for individuals and communities alike, as it affects marriage and gender relations, one's status in the community and relations between communities, especially in reference to grazing land. While the cattle economy is certainly not a root cause of conflict, it is one of the main systems through which conflict and peace are navigated. Local peace arrangements, for instance, regularly involve the transfer of cattle to compensate for losses of lives and livestock (ibid.).

A report by the international non-governmental organization (NGO), Saferworld, highlights that there often are differences between how men envision and experience their own masculinities, on the one hand, and the ideals of masculinity that their respective societies expect them to live up to, on the other. In some societies, patriarchal gender norms accord men power and privileges over women, but they also often put men under great pressure to conform to prevailing masculine ideals. Masculinity is usually seen not as something that men and boys automatically possess, but as something to be achieved by acting in accordance with these ideals. In many contexts, masculinity means being independent, courageous, aggressive and competitive, providing for the family, hiding one's feelings and not showing signs of emotional sensitivity – all of which are linked to achieving and wielding “power”. To draw connections between patriarchal masculinity and violence is not to argue that men are naturally violent, but that gender is a social construct and a system of power that shapes women's, men's, boys' and girls' lives, opportunities, rights, relationships, and access to resources (Wright and Welsh, 2014). Patriarchal constructions of masculinity and the normalization of interpersonal and intercommunal violence are common themes across South Sudan, where decades of conflict at various levels (intracommunal, intercommunal, county, state, etc.) have contributed to militarized masculinities, to which shows of force are essential to how men behave.

The research further highlights that it is important to note that “taking a gender perspective” should not be interpreted simply as “including women and girls” (i.e. as a component of gender mainstreaming) where they may otherwise have been ignored. Analysing the roles, attitudes and behaviours of men and boys from a gender perspective has the potential to deepen understanding of conflict and insecurity. At the same time, it is also important to transform women's understanding of their gender roles, attitudes towards gender and gender issues, and gender-based behaviours, so that they do not merely reinforce existing patriarchal gender norms. Ultimately, strategies for action should focus on how men develop and maintain positive, non-violent masculinities and use them to promote peace (ibid.). Where conflict analysis indicates that negative masculinities do play a role in driving conflict, as is the case in South Sudan, programming should begin challenging harmful gender norms as part of wider conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. In this case, gender norms

are not simply a matter of attitudes and beliefs held by individuals, but are produced and perpetuated by political, economic, cultural and social structures, including the education system, media, religious institutions, and the security and justice systems, to mention a few. In a manner of speaking, the study was conducted to inform the development of a gender-transformative methodology that seeks to engage men, women, boys and girls in violence prevention and peacebuilding across the ecological model.



A view over a cattle camp in Madhol, South Sudan. © IOM 2020/Alex McBRIDE

A cattle keeper stands for a portrait in a cattle camp in Madhol, South Sudan. © IOM 2020/Alex McBRIDE



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH SCOPE

The research was conducted from 1 to 9 December 2020 by IOM and its project partner, The Organisation for Children's Harmony (TOCH). The methodology was qualitative and engaged those affected by and engaged in intercommunal conflict in target areas of IOM peacebuilding and GBV programming in the counties of Jur River (specifically, in Mapel and Kuajena) in Western Bahr el Ghazal State, and Tonj South (Tonj Town, Malual-Muok and Wargiir, including the Abelek cattle camp) in Warrap State. The study engaged adolescent girls and boys, younger women and men (termed "youths" in the study), and elderly women and men to identify social and gender norms affecting peacebuilding outcomes.

2.2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the research was to generate evidence for the contextual adaptation of a gender-transformative approach to peacebuilding, as part of the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) Peacebuilding Project. Harmful norms pertaining to masculinity and femininity are core drivers of conflict, leading to high levels of male-perpetrated violence at the interpersonal, intracommunal and intercommunal levels. The main objective was to identify positive gender norms, which are supportive of women's rights), and/or negative ones, which perpetuate GBV and undermine the accessibility of services for GBV survivors.

2.3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research was qualitative and cross-sectional in design, in order to enable understanding of prevailing issues related to gender and social norms, taking into account their historical context(s), and assess the availability of GBV services. The following questions were asked in focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) as part of the research:

- (a) What are the root causes of the prevailing forms of violence that exist in interpersonal, intracommunal and intercommunal relationships?
- (b) What are the key issues that contribute to intimate partner violence and violence in the public sphere? How can these be addressed to promote more peaceful, gender-equal and harmonious homes and communities?
- (c) Is there a difference in the way young men and women are socialized? If so, what are the differences and what effects do they have?
- (d) What are the community's beliefs regarding violence and aggression? Is violence perceived as acceptable in the community? Why/Why not?
- (e) How are women and girls viewed in the community? What is their level of experience of violence? Is such violence accepted in the community? Why/Why not?

- (f) How can programme participants be engaged to be at the centre of the change required to prevent violence and build sustainable peace?
- (g) How can any programme meaningfully address prevailing gender stereotypes and roles in the target communities?
- (h) What would be a relevant and effective way to transform attitudes, beliefs and behaviours pertaining to gender that would lead to a positive view of and improved outlook for women and girls?
- (i) What key issues faced by youth encourage violent behaviour among them? How can these issues be addressed?
- (j) How do perceptions of gender and gender roles change in times of conflict and what are the harmful effects of such changes in perception?
- (k) Are there programmes that aim to (re-)establish positive norms and communal interactions and to bring communities together to restore past relationships and highlight common interests?
- (l) Where does violence normally take place, as experienced by male and female participants?
- (m) What is the availability and accessibility of response services for GBV survivors and what can be done to strengthen referral systems?

2.4. SAMPLING AND SAMPLE SIZE

The research took a sample of programme participants from Tonj South, in the areas of Wargiir, Tonj Town and Malual-Muok, where GBV prevention and response interventions were to be implemented. For the county of Jur River, a participant sample was taken from the *payams*¹ of Mapel and Kuajena. Stratified sampling by age group was used with convenience sampling based on who was available in each age group in the locations accessed by the research team. A total of 29 FGDs (including 8 participatory photography FGDs) were conducted in Tonj South and Jur River, with a total of 315 participants (106 males and 209 females) (Table 1).

Table 1. FGD participant numbers, Tonj South and Jur River

Age group	Tonj South						Jur River				Total		
	Wargiir		Tonj Town		Malual-Muok		Mapel		Kuajena		M	F	Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
15–17	2	5	1	15	4	21	-	8	-	-	7	49	56
18–24	9	16	9	29	8	2	9	-	6	-	35	53	88
25–59	13	16	8	43	9	18	6	-	1	11	37	88	125
60+	12	7	4	9	10	3	-	-	1	-	27	19	46
Total	36	44	22	96	31	44	15	8	8	11	106 (33.7%)	209 (66.3%)	315

¹ The *payam* is the administrative unit one level lower than the county.

2.5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research team consisted of four male and four female IOM GBV programming staff members and staff members from the national partner, TOCH, all in the 25–59-year-old age range. Considering the cultural context and the sensitive nature of the issues discussed, only female data collectors, accompanied by female translators, collected data from female respondents during FGDs and KII, with male data collectors and translators doing the same with male respondents, making it more likely for participants to feel safe to share their views. To ensure adherence to World Health Organization (WHO) ethical and safety standards for gathering data on sexual violence (WHO, 2007), data collectors were trained in psychological first aid and referral procedures for cases of GBV disclosure. The approach to and tools for community engagement were designed to minimize risks of harm.

All FGDs in Tonj South and Jur River were conducted in the Dinka and Luo languages, respectively, with the assistance of four translators (4 male and 4 female, equally split between the 18–24 and 25–59 age groups), who were trained on basic research skills and the data-gathering tools used. A total of seven KIIs were conducted (5 with men and 2 with women) (Table 2). Key informants were selected based on their understanding of the local context and on their holding of an office or leadership position, to ensure that responses would add value in relation to the objectives of the study. Qualitative data was recorded directly on interview guides and, where possible, notepads. Content analysis was employed to identify themes emerging from the data. These themes were refined during data analysis to ensure consistency.

Table 2. Key informant interviews conducted during the study

Type of KII	Frequency/number	Sex of respondents
Cattle camp leaders (Manjongwud)	1	Male
Government officials	2	Male
Women's leaders	1	Female
Paramount chiefs	1	Male
TOCH field staff	2	1 male and 1 female

2.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COVID-19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Oral informed consent was sought from each key informant and FGD participant prior to the interviews. An information sheet was read aloud to the respondents in their respective local languages. For respondents below the age of 18, oral informed consent was obtained from their guardians through community leaders. The study mitigated any potential or perceived harm by having single-sex FGDs and KIIs (in which everyone, including the facilitator and translator, were either all male or all female), to create a space where the respondents felt safe to speak freely. All data was anonymized to ensure confidentiality in this report. COVID-19 infection prevention measures were strictly implemented throughout data collection: social distancing between researchers and respondents was observed; masks were worn; and the team had hand sanitizers during the FGD and KII sessions.

2.7. STUDY LIMITATIONS

As some research team members were not conversant in the local languages, the team had to rely on the accuracy of the translations, which, however, diluted some of the nuances that are important in qualitative studies. In addition, it was possible to visit only one cattle camp due to security and safety concerns. Another challenge, experienced in the county of Jur River, was that the participatory photo FGDs allegedly featured more photos of people who were not of the tribe of the respondents, offending some of them, with a few opting out of the study.

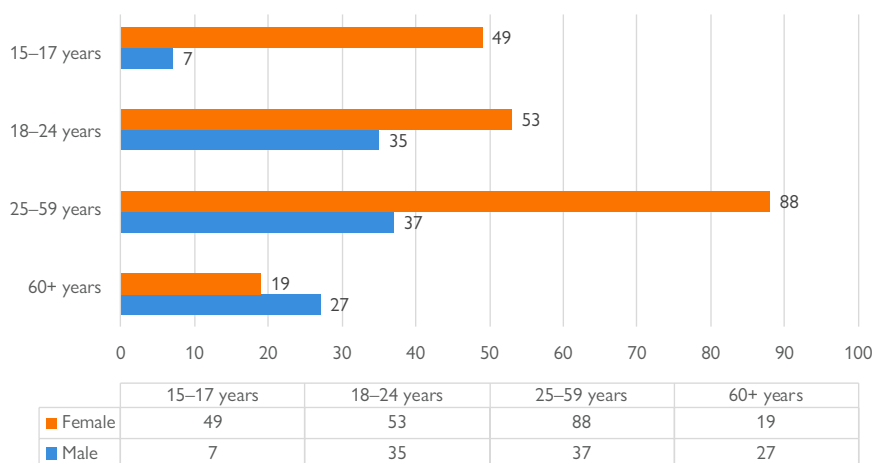


3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

As noted in Table 1 (in Chapter 2) and Figure 1 (which shows the percentage distribution of participants by sex and age), 66 per cent of the research participants engaged were female and 34 per cent were male (with age disaggregation as provided). Therefore, this report is informed by data collected mostly from women and girls – who are more affected by violence in both public and private spaces. Majority of the respondents (88 females and 37 males) were in the 25–59 age group (which also has the widest age range).

Figure 1. Sex and age characteristics of participants



3.2. THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH

A number of themes emerged from the research, including on perceptions and conceptions of masculinity and femininity that clearly promote violence in both private and public spaces and the domestication of women and girls, limit the autonomy of women and girls, and support structural and systemic barriers to accessing GBV response services.

3.2.1. Constructions of harmful masculinity

When respondents were asked about the upbringing of boys, including rites of passage, and the qualities of an “ideal” man or boy, it was evident that harmful masculinities that lead to violence are normalized in their communities. FGD participants in all age–sex groups in Tonj South mentioned that rites of passage for boys include undergoing head scarification and the removal of their lower teeth. Boys are not expected to cry, as a sign of bravery, at any point during these procedures despite the physical pain. This is part of their socialization process to become “protectors” of their community – often through the use of physical force and, potentially, violence.

“During initiation ceremonies of Dinka boys, head-marking is done and the lower teeth are removed as a mark of bravery and maturity. No one is expected to cry. We are told to fight for our land even if we are to die in the process.”

Key informant (male youth), Tonj South

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“A boy is brought up to be a warrior to defend his community... He should be strong...and if he does not have these qualities, he will be called a coward and lazy.”

FGD participant (male youth), Tonj South

.....

This socialization of boys aimed at cultivating bravery takes places against a background where intercommunal conflict is common, often as a result of fighting for limited resources such as grazing land, cattle and water. As such, communities socialize their boys to defend their land, which, in some cases, also implies carrying out pre-emptive attacks on other communities. Such socialization is a major contributor to intercommunal violence.

During times of conflict, sexual violence and violent retaliatory attacks against other communities are normalized.

“If a man rapes my wife or my daughter, I will also go and rape his.”

“I will call my brother and we go and kill the person.”

FGD participants (adult males), Tonj Town

.....

These sentiments not only reveal that rape occurs during times of conflict, but also that violent ways of resolving conflict are likely to cause more suffering and perpetuate conflict in a vicious cycle. The belief, shared by a group of peers, that violent retaliatory attacks and sexual violence are justifiable reinforces current constructions of masculinity that evidently promote violence.

As highlighted in the literature review, the widespread availability of firearms contributes to the militarization of the cattle economy, which is a significant proximate cause of conflict at the subnational and local levels. When boys are given guns after undergoing initiation, there is a high likelihood that they would intend to use the guns, and this contributes to intercommunal violence.

“We buy a gun for the boy so he can go fighting in defence of his community and give him cattle to manage.”

FGD participant (adult male), Tonj Town

.....

The expectation is that a boy who has completed his rite of passage should be able to defend his family or community’s resources, such as cattle, with a gun. There were similar findings among Luo communities in Kuajena.

“A boy or a man should be a fighter... A boy is more celebrated, especially during the “naming” ceremony, and is prioritized for education.”

“During our initiation ceremony, we are sent to the bush to stay naked for 14 days, and after those 14 days we have to fight the youth from other communities to prove we are men.”

FGD participants (male youths), Kuajena

.....

Thus, being a “fighter”, with the ability to use physical violence to defend the community, is a key quality of men and boys that was clearly underlined during the discussions. Men and boys who do not meet this expectation are not considered “important” in their communities.

Normalizing the use of violence in intimate relationships

Another dimension of harmful masculinities relates to intimate partner violence. An FGD participant mentioned the following:

“A man who does not beat his wife to discipline her when she misbehaves is called abuna or “pastor”... [People say] either “He is weak” or “[He gets] beaten by his wife.”

FGD participant (male youth), Tonj Town

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In other words, violence against women in intimate relationships is seen as the norm. This was seconded by another male youth:

“A man can beat his wife to discipline her. A man who does not beat his wife is weak and he is a “woman” himself.”

FGD participant (male youth), Malual-Muok

.....

This implies that women are perceived as weak and underscores women's subordinate status. An elderly man expressed the following:

“Let us not pretend here that gender-based violence does not happen. As we speak, there are some men beating their wives in their houses... This is very common here”.

FGD participant (elderly male), Wargiir

.....

Men are socialized in a way that normalizes violence against women. If they deviate from these commonly held beliefs and norms, they are called derogatory names or those that have negative connotations, such as *abuna*, as quoted above. The findings highlight that coming-of-age rituals, in particular, reinforce male violence. It was also evident from the discussions with participants that the socialization of women teaches them to accept certain behaviours, including violence, towards them.

3.2.2. Commodification of women and girls

The study found that unmarried daughters in the two counties are largely seen by their biological families as a source of cattle wealth through the bride price custom. One man highlighted the following:

“We celebrate the birth of a girl in the family because she is a source of income [through] her dowry. She brings hope [for the family] to recover expenses incurred when her mother married into the family. Girls are our “banks”... A girl has no choice on whom and when to marry, so long as someone brings enough cows”.

FGD participant (adult male), Wargiir

.....

This insight implies that women and girls are largely seen as a means of bringing cattle into the family and may not be respected in their own right, which is why girls rarely have a choice of whom or even when to marry. On the other hand, a young man would tend to join cattle raids on neighbouring communities in order to afford to pay or contribute to the bride price demanded from his family by that of his prospective bride. As such, the bride price custom is another key driver of intercommunal conflict. The insight augurs the previously mentioned sentiment that boys' education is prioritized over girls' – largely because there is no incentive in investing in the education of girls, who would be put under the care of their husbands' families and become their responsibility. The lack of opportunities for girls to go to school is a clear impediment to the enjoyment of their other rights, including the right to economic independence, which would give them the ability to make their own decisions on issues affecting them. Women's economic dependence and the bride price system are often used as means of control by their husbands and affect their ability to leave abusive relationships.

Forced and child marriages

Although there have been some reports, external to this study, on improvements in girls' rights regarding the age they marry and the opportunities they have to go to school, such were not commonly reported by our respondents. Majority of research participants confirmed that it is common for a family patriarch to choose a man who offers the most cattle to be the husband of a prospective bride.

“A girl has no right [to a] choice on who to marry. As long as a man brings her enough cows and her family accepts, she cannot say NO.”

FGD participant (elderly male), Wargiir

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The research team observed a “marriage bidding” meeting at the Abelek cattle camp in Tonj South where three prospective grooms were in negotiations with a girl’s family. The highest bidder was heralded by a group of girls brandishing guns, ululating as they moved around the camp perimeter.

“Forced marriage is common because if I leave my daughter at home and a man comes and impregnates her, I will have no choice but to marry her off. And if she reaches puberty and a man comes for her hand in marriage with cows, I can also give her to him.”

Key informant (local chief, male), Abelek cattle camp

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In both Tonj South and Jur River, forced and child marriages are common and are commonly arranged once a girl reaches puberty.

“A girl has no right to make any decision on her marriage. If she refuses to get married, she will have to be forced... If she still refuses, we can beat her up very well and [get some] youth to drive her to the man’s [groom’s] house by force.”

“If she refuses me, I will call my friends and we wait for her on her way to fetch water and we will carry her and I [will] rape her, and she will become my wife because no one else will accept a raped woman.”

FGD participants (male youths), Tonj Town

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FGD participants termed such rape as “approved rape” because the rapist is actually the man that the girl’s family wants her to marry, and her parents are aware and approve of the plan to help ensure that she marries him.

“It is the brothers and uncles who decide on marriage. They inform the girl about her impending marriage. If a girl refuses, she is forced... It is different for a boy, as he can refuse to get married.”

FGD participant (adolescent girl), Kuajena

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When respondents from both counties were asked about the age when a girl can marry, they were unanimous in saying a girl can marry once she reaches puberty, which is almost always before the age of 18. It is evident from these sentiments that child and forced marriages are common and that the wishes of girls and women are not considered in the decision to marry them off. They have no say on whom and when to marry, let alone whether they receive education past a certain age. It is also clear that this custom of forced marriage is reinforced through the use of violence, including sexual violence (e.g. rape), which is normalized and widely accepted in the communities under study. Girls, in particular, do not have a voice.

The commodification of women and girls is therefore a contributor to gender inequality, as they are largely perceived merely as a source of income. They are generally given little respect and have no right to make their own choices on whom and when to marry and are often denied opportunities to attend school. The payment of a bride price (commonly referred to as “dowry”), often in the form of cattle, by the groom and his family is also used as justification for intimate partner violence (IPV).

“When you marry a woman, you pay cattle as dowry. So some men feel that they own the woman – because of how much cattle they paid – and [that] they can do anything to her. When the woman decides to leave such a husband and go back to her family, she is forced to go back to her husband because her family cannot afford to pay back the cattle her husband paid for her dowry.”

FGD participant (elderly male), Malual-Muok

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In summary, a woman may be trapped in an abusive relationship because of the hefty bride price that her husband’s family paid for her hand in marriage and because the use of violence is normalized in the communities.

Gender-based violence rooted in the commodification of women and girls

Respondents were asked about what happens to a woman and her children after her husband dies. Responses from across age, gender and ethnic groups all confirmed that a widow has no say on the matter.

*“A widow will be inherited by the brother of the deceased husband. She has no other options. She remains the **property** [emphasis added] of the [deceased husband’s] family.”*

FGD participant (male youth), Tonj Town

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“A widow is not involved in decisions regarding her children. The family of her deceased husband normally chooses [from among themselves] a man to [procreate] with her. She will be beaten up if she refuses, and she is stopped from working outside the home so that she does not meet a new man”.

FGD participant (adult female), Kuajena

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“A widow has no say on whether to marry again. The family elders choose a man to [procreate] with her... So, yes, the elders of the family of her deceased husband appoint a person to carry on the lineage.”

FGD participant (female youth), Mapel

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“A woman has no choice but to marry a relative of her deceased husband, as decided by the elders, because they paid dowry for her. Her role is to bear more children... Similarly, a girl has no right to choose a husband because [the] dowry [system] her that right. She goes to whoever pays cows to the family.”

FGD participant (elderly male), Abelek cattle camp

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The above responses concretize the fact that a woman has no say on whom to marry after the death of her husband because she is the property of her husband’s family and faces threats of or actual violence if she tries to defy their decisions, “oversteps” her bounds and disrupts the family power structure. Her perceived role is mostly that of procreation, with her family and in-laws having little or no regard for her personal choices, leaving her to merely abide by what the family patriarchs decree.

It is also difficult for women to decide to leave their marriage:

“If a woman decides to leave her husband, she will be beaten or taken to the police. She is threatened that she could lose her children and she is called names like prostitute.”

FGD participant (adult female), Kuajena

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This statement further supports the claim that women have limited autonomy to make life decisions:

“A woman is married with [a dowry of] many cows, and she has no right to leave her marriage or choose whom to marry. For example, if her husband is impotent, he “gives” [her] to his nephew or younger brother to sleep with. If she disobeys, she will be arrested and jailed.”

Key informant (local government official, male), Tonj South

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The responses show that, in addition to women having very little autonomy, if at all, customary law supports the notion that they can be forced to engage in sexual relations with relatives of their husbands for the purpose of procreation, and such would not be considered by the community as rape. It is also clear that the police tend to reinforce such customary law, including the condonement of such rape, because they are often members of the communities where it applies. All these issues related to marriage and women’s limited autonomy imply the need for a shift in how men and women are perceived or socialized in society, as well as associated violence prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

“Being beaten by our husbands is common. Rape by drunkards or men wondering around the community is also common. It is most risky at night, but it can happen at any [time]. Forced marriage is also common here... If a girl refuses to get married, she will be beaten. If the mother tries to defend her daughter, they ask her to pay back the bride price paid for her.”

FGD participant (adult female), Kuajena

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“Here, most cases are of domestic violence. Most of the men are always drunk... Men are perpetrators because they have money to go and drink alcohol and later go back to their homes and beat their wives.”

Key informant (paramount chief), Jur River

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The above statements further consolidate the fact that women experience all forms of violence within the home, as well as in public spaces. While alcohol abuse or consumption is not a cause of violence per se, it emerged as a significant contributing factor, particularly in Jur River. A respondent revealed the following:

“A wife can be beaten if she is unable to give birth to children. She also gets beaten when [her husband] is looking for another wife... Women and girls can also be raped, especially if they move to a cattle camp”.

FGD participant (elderly woman), Abelek cattle camp

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In other words, women are “punished” even for situations they are not responsible for, such as inability to get pregnant. It is therefore clear that the lives of women are characterized by their experience of violence, motivated by different reasons, within their homes and communities.

Research findings suggest that intimate partner violence in all forms (physical, emotional and sexual) is common in the lives of women and girls, with alcohol consumption emerging as a significant contributing factor to such violence, especially in Jur River. Acts of GBV are also common in public spaces, especially in times of intercommunal conflict and during the cattle migration season. Violence against women and girls has been normalized in the target communities, with patriarchal values reinforcing community systems to favour men. Project interventions therefore need to aim at shifting prevailing patriarchal gender norms towards more equitable ones.

3.2.3. Intercommunal violence: Age and gender dynamics

Respondents were asked using participatory photo FGDs about gender and peacebuilding within their communities to explore the age and gender dynamics in the perpetration and incitement of conflict, as well as those that, on the other hand, contribute to peacebuilding. The findings show the following in relation to the role of younger men vis-à-vis that of older men:

“Young men are most likely to use violence in the home. They are also the most likely to use violence [against other] communities because they are strong and fast. They would also do it to raid for cattle, due to disputes over girls or to retaliate in response to an attack.”

FGD participant (adolescent girl), Abelek cattle camp

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As expressed in the above, young men tend to commit acts of violence, such as cattle-raiding (partly as a means to pay a bride price) and revenge killings (as highlighted earlier), as well as pre-emptive violent attacks in defence of their communities, to “demonstrate their worth”. There were also responses pointing towards young men being forced to fight by the local elites.

It was further mentioned in an FGD for elderly men that:

“Older men are the ones who tell young men to go and attack other communities because the young men are energetic... Some women also sing songs that encourage young men to go and fight. But we cannot involve young men in peace meetings... Some years ago, we tried to involve young men in such meetings, but they could not hold their temper during discussions and they caused violence, which resulted in the death of one person... Sometimes we involve older women by consulting them to get their views during community discussions and peace meetings.”

FGD participant (elderly male), Abelek cattle camp

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Upon further investigation, it became clear that women are sometimes consulted only through informal discussions, as highlighted above, and not during formal peace meetings or processes. The finding above means that there is a need to also ensure that older men or those responsible for socializing boys are not part of problem by meaningfully engaging them in peacebuilding processes. The fact that older men are the ones who encourage young men to fight and that women sing songs that encourage or inspire young men to fight is a clear indication that violence has been normalized in both counties covered by the research. Hence, it is important to ensure that all these age groups are targeted to address their corresponding roles in conflict and peacebuilding.

It is clear from the findings that young men are the most likely group to be involved in direct physical perpetration of intercommunal violence, but incitement and motivation are provided by, in particular, older men, as well as women of various ages. Opportunities for this kind of violence provide space for young men to demonstrate their bravery and strength and reinforce their reputation for possessing such qualities. It has also been highlighted that young men are the most likely group to perpetrate domestic violence because they do not know how to control their anger, which calls for targeted interventions for young men in the area of violence prevention, including more targeted support to help them unlearn violent attitudes and behaviours and to control their anger. It is interesting to note that young men are incited by older men, and given inspiration by women through song, to engage in intercommunal violence. In some cases of violence, for example, those that involve cattle-raiding, the objective is to obtain economic benefits, with young men and older men sharing the spoils, and with some of the men using the cattle to pay a bride price, benefiting families within their community. The study did not endeavor to find out if there is there a major cattle trade out of Tonj South to other areas, such as Juba and other market centres. At any rate, it was apparent that there are intergenerational tensions only when young men start cattle-raiding without prior approval from family or community elders.

It is also worth noting the finding that women sing songs that encourage young men to resort to violence and attack other communities, be it for cattle-raiding or other reasons. This shows that cultural activities reinforce gender norms and that peacebuilding activities that reinforce the celebration of cultures are needed to combat these cultural instruments for the incitement to violence and the reinforcement of harmful masculinities and femininities. It also highlights the need to promote and enable more gender-equal and peacefully coexistent communities.

Conflict-related sexual violence

Study participants reported the occurrence of sexual violence related to intercommunal conflict. A male key informant from Tonj South County highlighted that areas bordering Tonj South and Jur River are hotspots for safety and protection issues for women and girls.

“Rape is common during intercommunal conflicts and is usually perpetrated by young men. During conflicts in the border areas of Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal states, women and girls are raped and mutilated as a sign of victory. During the last conflict, four women and girls were raped.”

Key informant (male), Tonj South

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Another clear demonstration that intercommunal conflict negatively and disproportionately affects women and girls pertains to the conflict between two ethnic groups:

“There is intercommunal conflict between the Jur and the Dinka during cattle migration in the dry season... When there are these conflicts, rape cases are common. Women are also at higher risk of violence, especially rape, when they go to fetch firewood in the forest...and they get physically or emotionally abused at home when their partners abuse alcohol, something which is common in this area... Adolescent and younger women are most at risk of violence, perpetrated either by random boys or someone they are in a relationship with, when they go to fetch water, fetch grass... This is common in War-Kaar, Waar Rak and Nyiel.”

Key informant (female), Tonj South

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These responses further cement the fact that intercommunal violence is common in the border areas of Tonj South and Jur River. Violence against women is commonly used as a sign of victory, which contributes to the increasing prevalence of violence, regardless of the long-lasting consequences such violence has on the lives of women and girls. It is evident that the risk of GBV is also high within the community, especially in places where women go to fetch water and firewood, which are often bushy (and therefore concealed) areas far from their homes.

“Riverside-Tonj in Munyangok is more risky for women. Young men perpetrate violence against women and girls [e.g. rape] during intercommunal conflicts... There [are] also honour killings of girls when a spear-master dies, which is largely perpetrated by community leaders.”

Key informant (male youth), Abelek cattle camp

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There was no chance to further investigate the issue of honour killings of girls after the death of a spear-master. As such, there is a need to conduct further research on the issue to determine the accuracy of the claim and the extent to which it is a problem in cattle-keeping communities. At any rate, the finding further confirmed the high prevalence and risks for violence against women and girls, which is a result of prevailing gender attitudes and norms. This was repeatedly expressed in other FGDs and summarized by an adult man from Kuajena:

“There is no specific area where women feel unsafe because they are unsafe everywhere, especially during cattle migration. Rape, physical violence and bullying (when a lady wants to talk, she is shut out by men) of women is common here. Forced marriages perpetrated by young and older men is also common.”

FGD participant (adult male), Kuajena

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This shows that women and girls experience violence widely and there is potential that wherever they go, they are likely to experience some form of abuse. Moreover, this finding confirms that violence against women is common in public spheres.

3.2.4. Peacebuilding: Age and gender dynamics

In relation to the influence of women and girls in community decision-making regarding peacebuilding, adolescent girls from the Abelek cattle camp said the following:

“Young women and older women are ignored and are not included in the community decision-making and peace meetings.”

FGD participants (adolescent girls), Abelek cattle camp

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In other words, in line with the social norms of limiting women and girls to the domestic sphere, they are not involved in decision-making during conflict resolution and peace processes, even though they are key stakeholders. Older women may sometimes be consulted, but only informally. The responses of respondents and key informants attest to the systemic exclusion of women and girls, who are not involved in formal violence prevention or peacebuilding processes. As such, there is a need to empower women and address their continued marginalization from actively participating in such processes. There is a minimal formal role of women in peacebuilding largely because of prevailing social norms that limit women to domestic affairs and leave them out of communal deliberations and decision-making, although they are the most affected by intercommunal violence. The same applies for girls, who are also expected to be shy and not speak in public.

“Older men are the ones who are involved in community decision-making and peace meetings because they know what is good and what is not right... Young men can decide to shut people up during meetings using violence.”

FGD participant (adolescent female), Abelek cattle camp

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In other words, involvement in peace meetings is exclusive for older men. Young men, excluded from having a voice in these forums, utilize violence to be heard:

“The young men are the most likely to use violence to solve issues because they are energetic. They are strong and lack experience, which makes them use force to get what they want. They do not know that dialogue can solve problems.”

FGD participant (male youth), Mapel

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The above implies that there is a need to engage young men to learn to solve issues through dialogue. One way of doing that is involving adolescent boys and young men in learning alternative and peaceful means to be heard by their elders and address their issues. It further requires intergenerational engagement, particularly with older men, to ensure that conflict resolution is much more inclusive of younger voices and contributions. The age dynamic also calls for age- and sex-disaggregated groups in gender dialogues to facilitate gender-transformative discussions, in addition to having intergenerational sessions on peacebuilding.

Gender roles and expectations

The study sought to understand the safety and protection issues that women and girls face in the target communities, and it was evident from the responses of participants that GBV is a common feature in the lives of women and girls. It was also evident that violence is common in intimate relationships (i.e. within the private sphere of the home) and at the community level.

From the various discussions with women and girls in Tonj South and Jur River, it was clear that gender roles limited them to the domestic realm. When asked about the rites of passage for girls and expected roles of women and girls, as well as those of men and boys, the following responses were obtained:

“We hope a boy can be a person who can bring development to the community. He can bring a borehole, can be a president or a doctor. A boy can be responsible for everything”.

FGD participant (adult male), Wargiir

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This quote is important because it sets the tone for the discrepancy between how men and boys, on the one hand, are perceived and, on the other, what the social expectations for women and girls are. It is clear that men and boys are given opportunities, including in education and leadership positions, so that they can take up decision-making responsibilities within their communities. In contrast to how boys are treated, girls are expected mostly to stay and work at home.

“The birth of a girl is celebrated because she will be able to cook, wash clothes, fetch water, sweep the [family] compound and take care of the kitchen. She is expected to listen to elders, not to move around but stay in one place [at home], welcome visitors at home and take care of children”.

FGD participants (adolescent girls), Mapel

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An older woman highlighted these expectations of women:

“A woman is expected to be respectful to her husband and family, fetch water and firewood, welcome visitors in the home, be shy if she is in public gatherings and not to react when her husband is beating her”.

FGD participant (elderly female), Kuajena

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The above findings were corroborated in both men’s and women’s FGDs and are summarized by one respondent as follows:

“Women have a right to decide on chickens and goats because they belong to the domestic realm. But they have no right to participate in decisions concerning cattle”.

FGD participant (adult male), Mapel

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Another respondent highlighted that:

“People celebrate when a girl is born because she can bring resources, like 100 cows. She will work closely with her mother in cooking, washing clothes and taking care of the home. She can also be enrolled in school so that she becomes independent when she grows up, especially these days. Then she will marry to produce children”.

FGD participant (elderly male), Tonj Town

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This shows the strong relationship between the role of women and girls in the domestic sphere to the issue of bride price. Apart from the fact that girls are seen as a source of potential cows, they are also looked at in the context of taking care of their homes just like their mothers. Some responses from research participants implied that girls who are “less traditional” – meaning those who are not limited to the domestic realm – would have difficulty fetching a decent bride price because they are perceived as being unable to remain in the home and carry out domestic chores. A participant in an FGD of elderly men said:

“We expect a girl or a woman to be hardworking in the home, respectful and polite. She must not involve herself in men’s activities”.

FGD participant (elderly male), Kuajena

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Men’s activities are considered to be outside the home, earning an income and making community and family decisions. Hence, by implication, the respondent was highlighting that women should stick to their domestic roles and leave the rest to men. Dissecting the sentiments of study participants gives an overall picture that women and girls are expected to be in the home and that they have little or no involvement in decision-making at the community level. They are sometimes consulted, but it is clear that their role is expected to be away from the public eye. All FGDs with boys, girls, men and women in both Tonj South and Jur River obtained similar findings to the ones quoted above. Women are expected to be submissive and go by what is decreed by family elders, who are often men who limit women’s role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

3.2.5. Lack of meaningful intergenerational dialogue

Based on the insights and sentiments of research participants, there was little evidence to suggest that there is intergenerational engagement to address issues of violence, conflict or peacebuilding. It is clear that social norms reinforce the notion that it is the responsibility of older men to make decisions related to peacebuilding, while young men and women regardless of age are excluded and have no platform to voice out their views.

“The old men are the ones who initiate violence by inciting young men to use violence. They are also the ones who make community decisions and attend peace meetings... Women and girls are the ones who suffer the most, but they are not involved in community decisions or peace meetings”.

FGD participant (male youth), Mapel

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This clearly shows a lack of intergenerational engagement in peace processes. All decisions are left in the hands of older men, regardless of the fact that other groups are also affected by violence. As highlighted in the section on masculinities, it is evident that the only level at which there is some level of intergenerational engagement is during rites of passage, when older generations pass on or teach the values associated with “being a man” or “being a woman” to the younger generation. However, this interaction tends to promote certain gender-inequitable attitudes and harmful practices.

It is also evident from the section highlighting intercommunal violence that older men (and, in some cases, older women) incite young men to perpetrate violence against other communities. These interactions largely follow a top–down approach, with the young men directly being told what to do. There is no platform for the young men and women to meaningfully engage the older generations on issues of violence and peacebuilding, which makes it clear that they mostly just to fit into what the community prescribes for them and are not involved in shaping a new or different way of thinking and doing things.

In addition, as highlighted in earlier sections, young men are not involved in peacebuilding activities (e.g. meetings) because they tend to lose their tempers and resort to violence during negotiations. This shows that they lack skills in non-violent communication, which has not been addressed, except by simply shunning them from peace meetings.

3.2.6. Barriers to accessing GBV response services

The study has established that there are numerous barriers limiting women and girls from accessing GBV response services. The findings highlighted below identify the key barriers in these communities:

“Men are the only people to escort survivors to the hospital. A mother has no right to do so because the woman should always be at home with the kids and the man wants to know the result of the tests, especially in cases of rape so that he can [take] revenge... There are three police officers given to us in [the] cattle camp. But they have no right to interfere in cases of forced or child marriage... Police are not trained to handle GBV cases.”

Key informant (local chief, male), Abelek cattle camp

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This finding shows that it is also men who are likely to minimize and remedy the violence experienced by women, whom they are supposed to escort to safety and shield from perpetrators. However, it also reveals that men “own” women and girls and may prevent the reporting of cases of violence. Men have to be informed before a victim or survivor in the family accesses a service, and the male head of the household may decide that it is not a case for others to know about. It is also likely that such men would speak on behalf of the victim or survivor if a case makes it to a service provider, through which she loses autonomy, as well as the respect of others, further decreasing the likelihood that she would seek support from outside the family.

“It is rare to report GBV cases. Cases are usually resolved at the family level because reporting cases can create conflicts including death. So women try to follow the norms by going through family elders. Cases of GBV handled at the community level are also few because they are mostly handled at the family level”.

Key informant (male), Tonj South

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The fact that family elders – who are usually men – with gender-inequitable attitudes are the ones to resolve cases of violence makes it difficult for women to access fair resolutions or disposal of cases. It is almost automatic that a woman would lose because she is considered the property of her husband by virtue of the bride price paid to her family. If anything, “family courts” are likely to suppress women’s need for services by telling them to “persevere” because what they are experiencing is “normal”.

“There are two main health service providers. But the distances to these facilities are long and they do not provide services for GBV survivors. The Tonj civil hospital has no supplies... The majority of the police officers here are Dinka men, so they cannot go against their culture. They are guided by customary law. They do not handle GBV cases because they are supposed to be handled at the family level. Mostly they handle cases of a girl being impregnated, eloping and marriage where perpetrators are asked to pay cows or money as fines... The public prosecutor who works at the court usually handles only cases of rape while the other cases like GBV and forced marriage are handled at the family level.”

Key informant (male), Tonj South

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The quotation above highlights various issues in services and their delivery. First, this shows that there are challenges in service provision – specifically, limited facilities that are poorly stocked to respond to women’s urgent need for supplies and services. The long distances to such services, for example, those provided in hospitals, are already a barrier on their own. The lack of supplies in the health facilities also makes taking the long journey to accesses needed services pointless for many women. Social norms regarding support-seeking behaviour (e.g. having family elders to consent to cases being taken to formal service providers) makes it even more difficult for women to even think of going to seek support. However, it is also evident that the gender attitudes of some service providers, like the police, as highlighted by the key informant, are a key barrier to a woman reporting cases of violence, knowing that she would either be blamed or face more victimization by these service providers. That police officers believe GBV cases should be handled at the family level implies that they either trivialize the issue or that they are not properly trained to handle such cases.

In addition to what has already been presented, one woman highlighted that:

“Women do not report cases of GBV because of the fear of shame in public... Hence, cases of physical violence or forced marriages are hardly reported. Other issues that mean women are unable to access services include long distances to health facilities, lack of protection personnel in the service centres and lack of transport.”

FGD participant (adult woman), Tonj South

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These factors contribute to lower levels of women reporting violence because they fear the retaliation of the perpetrators. The impunity of these perpetrators, who have no sense of accountability, to an extent, contributes to the normalization of violence. The issue of long distances was a recurrent one, highlighted in many FGD sessions, which shows that GBV response services are not only unavailable in some health facilities but are also inaccessible for many women who experience violence. The distance alone is a deterrent for a woman who has survived violence and does not have transport money to seek support services without fear of experiencing more violence once she returns home. There are also risks of experiencing more violence when travelling these long distances. In addition, there is the clear dimension of men controlling access to services through the familial hierarchical structure, with elders supposed to give consent before cases are reported. This is a major barrier that affects women’s ability to access services even if they are available.

In an FGD with men in Jur River, a participant mentioned that:

*“If a woman reports that she was raped, the community will put her to shame and she will find it hard to get married...if she is married, she will not be divorced but there will be misunderstandings... Community leaders also handle cases of GBV. A woman is supposed to report to community leaders and must seek **permission** [emphasis added] before going for help to PHCC... But cases of physical violence are handled at family level because it is **normal violence** [emphasis added]”.*

FGD participant (adult man), Jur River

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Thus, victim-blaming is common towards survivors of sexual violence, which deters support-seeking behaviour. Physical violence is referred to as “normal violence”, which is handled at the family level and it is likely that because it is normal, perpetrator accountability is not even considered. Women must seek permission from husbands and community leaders to go and seek support services, which undermines empowering survivor-centred principles and the autonomy of women. GBV may also have a series of consequences with a primary consequence being shame, and a secondary consequence being difficulties in getting married for the woman or girl.

It is also worth noting that some men from Tonj South aged 25–59 said that they saw no need for GBV response services because violence was no longer happening in their communities.

“Violence rarely happens now but it used to be common in the past.”

FGD participant (adult male), Tonj South

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Even though the above view was not widely supported by FGD participants, it still pointed to the fact that some men would rather not have issues of violence on the agenda. This does not only imply that violence has been normalized, but also that there is no urgency in addressing it, especially among men who appeared to be dismissive as to why violence against women and girls were even being discussed.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the research findings makes it clear that targeted interventions need to be implemented to prevent violence against women and girls as part of peacebuilding activities. The following recommendations are derived from the analysis.

Recommendation 1: Address and transform harmful masculinities

The gender-transformative interventions of the project need to address harmful masculinities, especially among young men, and constructions of gender norms and roles that subordinate women and girls and reinforce normalization of GBV. The interventions should focus on changing the socialization of boys and men so that they are able to understand that the use of violence is learned and to apply practical ways to regulate emotions and communicate in their interpersonal relationships, as well as in communal and intercommunal conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. The interventions also need to focus on the fact that society has accorded men and boys more privileges and fewer and less severe restrictions while according women more and greater restrictions, with no or few privileges, to clearly show the limitations of women (e.g. lack of autonomy on who or when to marry and issues related to the bride price custom), in order to address the violence that results from them. The curriculum also needs to highlight issues on causes, contributing factors and consequences of violence, gender roles for men and women, as well as discussions on prevailing cultural practices, in order to agree on a “new” culture that balances power between men and women. Men also need to be supported to look at their own vulnerabilities so that they do not project their insecurities on women or victimize women for things they are not responsible for.

Recommendation 2: Transform the acceptance of violence

The project should include activities aimed at building the self-esteem and self-confidence of women and girls so that they are able to challenge existing norms, including those around marriage, gender roles and education. Women and girls should also be taken through sessions on identifying key GBV risks and on engaging all circles of influence to impact change in gender attitudes and norms alongside men. This will enable women and girls to not just be passive recipients of violence, but to be agents of change in their own right. There is also a need to ensure that men, women, boys and girls are engaged through interventions with a gender-transformative approach to enable them understand the issues of injustice that women and girls face, support women’s empowerment journeys, prevent violence and hold perpetrators accountable.

Recommendation 3: Modify cultural norms that promote gender inequality and violence

It is recommended that the project work with community leaders to begin processes of changing perceptions of women and girls as being valuable in terms of bride wealth, as a long-term solution to the commodification of women through community dialogue group sessions designed to trigger reflections and discussions on changing norms around bride price. Interventions should also be designed to: (a) support an enabling environment that gives women the right to (among other things) decide whom and when to marry, and, more generally, which does not view them as the property of men, who pay their dowry; (b) model women and girls beyond the roles in the domestic realm; (c) promote girls' education to increase their chances of economic independence; and (d) ultimately ensure equality of opportunity for girls and boys, and women and men.

Recommendation 4: Intensify the engagement of young men and women in peace processes

The project needs to ensure that young men and women, as well as older women survivors of violence in intercommunal conflicts, are engaged in peacebuilding processes. Peacebuilding dialogues, cultural events and other established avenues for peacebuilding must be utilized as important entry points for challenging harmful social and gender norms that reinforce violence and the exclusion of youth and women. The engagements should also sensitize all community members on the provisions of the Marial Bai Agreement² as an instrument for preventing intercommunal violence during seasonal cattle migration to ensure its full implementation, especially to ensure that peacebuilding interventions include young men, women and girls.

Recommendation 5: Conduct GBV risk identification and mitigation

The project should engage community members, leaders and local authorities in GBV risk identification and mitigation to identify key protection risks and to implement mitigating measures in different places that women and girls frequent – for example, where they fetch water and firewood – and during the cattle migration season. These measures will apply at both individual and community levels to ensure that women's and girls' risks of GBV outside the home are reduced.

Recommendation 6: Engage GBV service providers in gender-transformative dialogues

The study has found that there are limited GBV services and that these are not easily accessible to women and girl survivors of gender-based violence, especially as men (in particular, husbands and community leaders) control women's movement and access to services. In addition, there are high levels of stigma and victim-blaming, and the police reinforce norms that underpin high levels of GBV perpetration. There is a need for the project to engage service providers, including the police, health facility staff supporting GBV survivors and community leaders who have control over reporting of GBV cases in gender-transformative dialogue and individual behavioural change to address attitudes towards GBV and effectively respond to the needs of women and girls.

² The Marial Bai Agreement of 2016 intends to regulate the relations between farmers and pastoralists in border areas between the states of Western Bahr el Gazhal and Warrap.

Recommendation 7: Engage the GBV Subcluster on resourcing for GBV services

The project should also engage the GBV Subcluster and other service providers around resourcing and training of service providers, as well as considering providing mobile services, to address the issue of long distances expressed by study participants.

Recommendation 8: Integrate gender issues and violence prevention in cultural events

Cultural events and activities need to ensure they do not reinforce harmful gender and violence norms, and instead promote intergenerational communication, especially by encouraging youth and women's contribution to peacebuilding. The project needs to harness efforts to raise awareness on these issues with programme participants.



A young boy hoes the ground in a cattle camp in Madhol, South Sudan. © IOM 2020/Alex McBRIDE



A young man walks through a cattle camp in Madhol, South Sudan. © IOM 2020/Alex McBRIDE

5. CONCLUSION

The study has established that there are clear linkages between gender norms, gender-based violence and drivers of conflict, particularly those in relation to the generation of bride wealth and the normalization of male violence. As a consequence of GBV, women and girls have limited autonomy over their lives and experience long-lasting effects of violence. The socialization of boys versus that of girls clearly highlight discrepant societal expectations that create gender inequality and promote violence at the household, community and intercommunal levels. Men and boys are expected to be brave and strong, which often implies being violent, while women and girls are expected to be submissive to men and are limited to the domestic sphere. This contributes to violent behaviours by men and silence on the part of women. Women and girls are also not expected to participate in public affairs, which limits their participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. This calls for more efforts to be invested in the prevention of violence at the individual, community and intercommunal levels. The assessment also found that GBV response services are not readily accessible due to various barriers highlighted in this report. As such, there is a need to invest efforts in ensuring that the demand for response services increases but also that the services supplied are of good quality.

ANNEX 1

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GENDER AND GBV-RELATED ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES FGD GUIDE

Objective

The aim of this tool is to increase understanding of gender attitudes, beliefs, practices and norms underpinning the use of violence at the interpersonal, intracommunal and intercommunal levels.

Instructions

- This questionnaire is to be used in focus group discussions (FGDs) with women and girls of different ages in target communities.
- Gather 5–10 persons in a focus group. Any person joining after this maximum number is reached should be told politely that this is a private group.
- The FGD session should not last more than 1 hour and 30 minutes, in order to ensure alignment with COVID-19 prevention measures, which also include facilitators wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and not shaking hands.
- Location is important, as you should be able to talk privately (possible venues are schools and churches). Do not gather in the middle of the village, by the roadside or at the chief's house, as it would be difficult to maintain privacy and manage group dynamics.
- The FGDs must be conducted in single-sex and similar-age groups (see table below). The facilitator, the note-taker and all participants must be of the same sex.

Female groups (with female facilitators)	Male groups (with male facilitators)
Adolescent girls (15–17 years old)	Adolescent boys (15–17 years old)
Young women (18–24 years old)	Young men (18–24 years old)
Women (25–59 years old)	Men (25–59 years old)
Older women (60+ year old)	Older men (60+ years old)
Women with disabilities (Note: They may join their respective age groups.)	Men with disabilities (Note: They may join their respective age groups.)

- It is essential that FGD facilitators mobilize participants themselves instead of community leaders. Furthermore, community leaders and people belonging to other age–sex groups should not be invited to listen in on or join despite what some group members might say.

- The FGD facilitator and the note-taker must sit at the same height as participants. Do not expect to be given chairs, so bring two (2) plastic mats to sit on. If none of the participants are sitting on chairs, do not sit on them either. Make sure to maintain physical distancing (minimum of 2 metres) and always wear a mask correctly.
- Although the questions are open-ended, suggestions and probing questions will guide you through the interview process to ensure that you collect the right data.
- Questions are grouped by subject. During the interview, try to refer the answer to the right section to facilitate data analysis.
- Ensure that you are trained in the procedure for handling disclosures of gender-based violence (GBV) and have a copy of the local referral pathway schematic on hand. If you have any questions, contact Dr Achai (IOM) at 0920881028.
- Ensure that you are trained on inclusive communication and encourage people with impairments to join the age–sex groups for discussion.
- Make sure to take detailed notes and directly quote participants, rather than just summarizing answers.

For FGDs with adolescents as participants, obtain the consent of parents before engaging them. If parents are not there, clearly explain to participants what the FGD is about. Ask if they would like to participate and inform them that they are free not to do so. If they agree, mark this as informed assent. Let them know that they can choose to discontinue at any time.

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION				
Facilitator's name, position and organization				
Note-taker's name, position and organization				
Translator's name, if any; indicate language translated from/to				
Date				
Start time		End time		
Location (state, county, <i>payam</i> , <i>boma</i>)				
Number of participants	Group		No. of persons without disabilities	No. of persons with disabilities
	Adolescent girls (15–17 years old)			
	Adolescent boys (15–17 years old)			
	Adult women (18–24 years old)			
	Adult men (18–24 years old)			
	Adult women (25–59 years old)			
	Adult men (25–59 years old)			
	Adult women (60+ years old)			
	Adult men (60+ years old)			

Introduction script:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am working for TOCH/IOM. My name is _____ I am working on behalf of IOM/TOCH. We would like to ask you some questions about men and boys and what makes someone a "real man" and, for women and girls, what their expected activities are. We would also like to discuss different types of security issues and violence that people in this community are concerned about, especially with regard to conflict between communities. We anticipate that our discussion will take about two to three hours. Confidentiality will be maintained; hence, no names are required. Even if you tell us your names, we will not keep them or refer to them in our report. There is no direct compensation for your participation; however, the information collected will be used in various interventions that may benefit your community.

This interview is confidential, and you do not have to participate if you do not want to. You may choose not to answer any question that you do not feel like answering and to stop participating in the discussion at any time. There is no problem if anyone does not wish to participate. Although we will take down notes, your names will not be written down and your individual answers will stay private. We will treat everything that you say today with respect. The discussion will take about an hour and 30 minutes. Is everyone happy to take part?

Yes (wishes to participate) No (does not wish to participate)

If all do not wish to participate, discontinue the FGD.

For adolescents (over 15 but below 18 years), discuss further about the discussion and whether they are interested in continuing. Are the adolescents happy to continue?

Yes No

If informed assent is not obtained, discontinue the FGD.

We may touch on some sensitive subjects. If you or someone you know is affected by any of the topics under discussion, especially on the safety and security of women and girls and access to services for those who have experienced any form of violence, you can come to us to ask for information about available services after the group discussion. Please do not share specific incidents of violence that you may have heard about or experienced within the group. Does everyone understand this?

Yes No

For all of us to participate, it is important that each one feels that they can contribute their ideas. Please give each other a chance to answer the questions. We will also ask different people in the group if they want to answer different questions so that we get to hear everyone's ideas.

Does anyone have any questions before we start the discussion?

Start with a round of names before asking questions.

SECTION 2. GENDER ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS		
Question	Probe/Prompt	Answer/Response
1. When a boy is born in this community, what are the hopes for him and how he will grow up to be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will people celebrate his birth? Why/ Why not? • What will he be expected to do in terms of activities? • What are the qualities that his family/ community admires in men, that they would hope to see in him? • How should he behave as a boy and as a man? 	
2. What are the rites of passage so that a boy becomes a man?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ceremonies are performed? What do they symbolize? • What test will he have to pass? Why is this important? 	
3. What are the most important qualities that men should possess in this community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should a man behave to be considered a “real man”? • How should he talk and act? What things should he do? • How do men demonstrate the qualities of a “real man”? • Should a man ever share decisions with a woman? 	
4. If a boy or man did not demonstrate these qualities and skills, what would people say about him? What might they do? What consequences are there for not behaving this way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What names/things would he be called? What do they mean by these names/things? • Has there been anyone that did not meet the expectations of being a man? What happened to him? 	
5. When a girl is born in this community, what are the hopes for her and how she will grow up to be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will people celebrate her birth? Why/ Why not? • What will she be expected to do in terms of activities? • What are the qualities that her family/ community admires in women, that they would hope to see in her? • How should she behave as a girl and as a woman? 	
6. What are the rites of passage for when a girl becomes a woman?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ceremonies are performed? What do they symbolize? • What will determine when she is ready to get married? What skills or maturity will she have to demonstrate? 	
7. What are the most important qualities that a woman should possess in this community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should a woman behave to be considered a “real woman”? • How should she talk and act? What things should she do? • How do women demonstrate the qualities of a “real woman”? • Can women be decision makers in the household? 	
8. If a girl or woman does not demonstrate these qualities and skills, what would people say about her? What might they do? What consequences are there for not behaving this way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What names/things would she be called? What do these names/things mean? • Has there been anyone that did not meet the expectations of being a woman? What happened to her? 	

SECTION 3. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS		
Question	Probe/Prompt	Answer/Response
9. What are the main safety and protection issues of women in this area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for sexual violence, harassment, child/forced marriage, abductions and domestic violence • When are women most at risk as regards these protection/safety issues? What activity(-ies) are they engaged in when they are most at risk? • Where are the areas or communities which have higher risks of incidents of this kind of violence? What are the reasons for this? • For each of the types of women's safety/protection issue, who are the main perpetrators of this violence? 	
10. What are the main safety and protection issues of adolescent and younger girls in this area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for sexual violence, harassment, child/forced marriage, abductions and domestic violence • When are adolescent and younger girls most at risk as regards these protection/safety issues? What activity(-ies) are they engaged in when they are most at risk? • Where are the areas or communities which have higher risks of incidents of this kind of violence? What are the reasons for this? • Who are the main perpetrators for the types of violence mentioned for adolescent and younger girls? 	
11. Who makes the decision about the marriage of a girl?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who makes the arrangements? • How does it get arranged? What are the requirements that the family of the bride and the family of the groom must fulfil for marriage to take place? • Is this different for the marriage of a boy? • What decisions can the girl make about marriage? • What would happen if a girl does not want to get married to that person? Would she be listened to? 	
12. What would happen if a woman's husband dies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would she have to get married to another male relative chosen by her deceased husband's family? • What would people say about her? • Would she have a choice not to remarry? Under which circumstances is this possible? 	
13. Is it common for men to hit, beat, slap and shout at their wives and children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what circumstances are any of these justified? • Are any of these behaviours expected and important in a marital relationship? Why/Why not? 	

14. What would happen if a woman wants to leave her marriage because she is unhappy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arrangements could be made and by whom? • What do people say about women who want to leave their husbands? 	
15. When does rape/sexual assault happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is most affected by this type of violence? • Who is most often perpetrating it? • What is the punishment for it? • Who is involved in providing or arranging the punishment? • Would a marriage be arranged with the person who committed the rape? Under what circumstances does this happen? 	
16. If a woman or girl reports that she has been raped or sexually assaulted, what would the people here say about her?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would she get treated? • Would she be able to get married (if unmarried)? • Would her husband divorce her if she is married? 	
17. Do women and girls usually seek help when they experience any of the different forms of GBV?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main reasons why a woman or girl may not seek help? Which type(s) of violence would a woman or girl be least likely to seek help for? • If a woman or girl they try to seek help, do community leaders, her husband or the wider family have to provide an agreement? For which types of GBV is this the case? Is there any time they can seek services on their own? • What are the main challenges for survivors of GBV in accessing health care, protection support or the police? How are they treated at these services? 	
18. How do communities here deal with GBV?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for cultural ideas about consequences, compensation, justice, etc. and what capacities exist in the communities to deal with GBV. • Probe for women's groups, associations, religious groups working for support of survivors and any community protection groups that might support GBV survivors. 	

END OF QUESTIONS.

Please thank participants for their time and participation in the exercise.

ANNEX 2

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE KII GUIDE

Objective

To understand more about the GBV issues that women and girls experience, activities and gaps in GBV prevention and response activities of organizations and communities

Guide for interviewers

- These interviews are to be conducted by senior staff only – project managers or officers who are trained on and experienced in GBV programming.
- This questionnaire is to be used for key informant interviews – United Nations or NGO staff working on GBV, health, justice, community police, etc., community leaders, local government authorities (RRC, SMOGCSW).³ Ensure that you also interview women KIs as well as men.
- Please select the questions from the below which you think are the most relevant. Although the questions are open-ended, a few suggestions and probing questions will guide you through the interview process to ensure that you collect the right information for the project.
- The interview should last about 30–45 minutes and no longer than one hour (please keep an eye on the time). Please only ask the questions relevant for the person you are speaking to.
- Ensure compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures, including facilitators wearing masks and facilitators and participants maintaining social distancing and not shaking hands.
- Location is important, as you should be able to talk privately and not in front of a lot of other people.
- Make sure to write details of and quote what participants say, rather than just recording summarized answers.

Introduction

My name is _____. I work for TOCH South Sudan. TOCH has received funding from IOM to implement a GBV project in Jur River and Tonj South counties. The project aims to:

1. Improve access to GBV response services in underserved locations;
2. Strengthen the protective environment for women and girls.

.....
³ (a) Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and (b) Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

I wish to ask a few questions with you regarding the different types of violence that are happening in this area that affect women and girls, what the Government, other agencies and communities are doing to address this issue. Please note that the information gathered here will be used to help improve GBV services and prevention activities in this community. We will keep personal data and this interview confidential; only the programme team from TOCH and IOM will see the answers you provide. The interview should take about 30–45 minutes of your time. At any time, you can decline to answer the questions. Are you comfortable to proceed with the questions? YES/NO (If NO, discontinue the discussion).

Details of key informant interview

Name of interviewer, position, organisation	
Name of translator and languages translated from/to	
Name of organization/ service	
Person interviewed (name, position, gender)	
Age (approximate):	18–25() 26–35 () 36–59() 60+()
Date of interview:	
Location of interview (state, county, payam)	

Questions

1. What are the main safety and protection issues women in this area? (Probe for sexual violence, harassment, sexual violence, forced marriage, abductions, domestic violence, etc.)
 - o When are women most at risk of these protection/safety issues? What activities are they doing when they are most at risk?
 - o Where are the areas or communities which have higher risks of incidence of this kind of violence? What are the reasons for this?
 - o For each of the types of safety/protection issue for women, who are the main perpetrators of the violence?
2. What are the main safety and protection issues adolescent and younger girls in this area? (Probe for sexual violence, harassment, sexual violence, child/forced marriage, abductions, domestic violence, etc.)
 - o When are adolescent and younger girls most at risk of these protection/safety issues? What activities are they doing when they are most at risk?
 - o Where are the areas or communities which have higher risks of incidents of this kind of violence? What are the reasons for this?
 - o Who are the main perpetrators for the types of violence mentioned for adolescent and younger girls?

3. What are the rites of passage for young men/boys? What qualities or skills do they have to demonstrate?
4. What are the rites of passage for young women/girls? What qualities or skills do they have to demonstrate?
5. What do people think about women's rights here? What kinds of decisions are women able to make alone at the household and community levels (including the decision on whom to marry)?
6. Which organizations, groups and individuals are working on preventing or responding to GBV in this area?
 - o Which national or international NGOs or United Nations work to address GBV in this area? What do they do? What services do they provide? What kinds of staff do they have to run these services/activities?
 - o Is there an office of/under the Ministry for Gender, Child and Social Welfare operating in the state and what services do they provide here? How many staff do they have and what are their roles?
 - o Are there any women's groups or associations? What activities or advocacy do they do? Who leads the group? Are there any main groups of women excluded? Please write and record contact details that you are given.
 - o Do religious leaders or groups work on women and girls' rights here? What do they do and what do they say about GBV? Please write and record contact details that you are given.
 - o How do the police handle cases of domestic violence? Rape/sexual assault? Forced or child marriage? Please write and record contact details that you are given.
 - o What health services are available here or how far do you have to go to reach them (e.g. in hospitals, PHCCs, PHCUs, etc.)? What services do they provide for GBV survivors? Please write and record contact details that you are given.
 - o How do the traditional courts handle different types of GBV cases? (Probe for sexual violence, harassment, sexual violence, child/forced marriage, abductions, domestic violence, etc.)
 - o Is there a functioning of formal court system? Please write and record contact details that you are given.
 - Are there any advocates working on GBV cases here?
 - Is there a public prosecutor?
 - What types of GBV cases are normally heard at the formal courts and what kind of sentences are they giving? (Probe for sexual violence, harassment, sexual violence, child/forced marriage, abductions, domestic violence, etc.)
 - Has there been a roving court working on GBV cases here?

7. Do women and girls usually go for help when they experience different forms of GBV?
 - o What are the main reasons why they may not seek help? Which types of violence are they least likely to seek help for?
 - o If they try to seek help do community leaders/husbands/wider family have to provide an agreement? For which types of GBV is this the case? Are there any times they can seek services on their own?
 - o What are the main challenges for survivors of GBV to access health care, protection support and police services? How are they treated at these services?
8. How do communities deal with GBV? (Probe for cultural ideas about consequences, compensation, justice, etc.) What capacities exist in the communities to deal with GBV? (Probe for women’s groups, associations, religious groups working to support survivors and any community protection groups to prevent GBV).
9. What kind of messages and awareness raising have you heard in this area? Who is providing the messages? What do they say? What media is being used (Probe for media, politicians, NGOs, United Nations agencies, women’s groups, religious leaders, etc.)
10. What do you think are the key achievements in responding to GBV in this area?
11. What challenges and gaps exist in relation to GBV prevention and response services in this area?
12. What needs to be done to address GBV in this area? (Probe for opportunities, groups to target, community initiatives that have worked, role models in the community, etc.)

Closing statement

We have come to the end of our discussion. Your responses were very informative. Do you have anything you would like to add that we may have forgotten to ask about? Do you have any questions you would like to ask? If you have any concerns about our discussion today regarding GBV issues, we can advise you accordingly.

Thank you for your participation.

ANNEX 3

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GENDER, GBV AND PEACEBUILDING PARTICIPATORY PHOTO FGD GUIDE

Aim of the tool

To understand the perceptions of men and women around the use of violence, in order to develop and adapt the gender-transformative approach contributing to peacebuilding in the tri-state area

Instructions

Print out the 6 photos (3 men – teenage boy, young man, middle-aged man, older men, and 3 women – teenage girl, young woman, middle-aged woman, older woman):

Sample: At least one FGD with each age/gender group in each location.

Process: Gather adults who have agreed to participate (and for teenagers, only those that have provided informed consent). It should be a small group between 6–10 persons of the same age and gender:

- Boys 14–17 years old
- Girls 14–17 years old
- Male youth 18–24 years old
- Female youth 18–24 years old
- Adult men 25–45 years old
- Adult women 25–45 years old
- Elder men approximately 46+ years old
- Elder women approximately 46+ years old



The group facilitators and translators must be the same gender as the group participants.

Facilitator's note: Please ask these three questions below and during each question discussion use probing questions to understand more about what participants think about this question.

Note-taker's note: Take a photo of how the children/adults arrange the photos for each question (label each photo correctly, e.g. PGD Photo question 1_leader) and write down all the details about why they think certain things about the placement of who is most or least likely (not a summary) of what the participants say.

Introduce yourself and the purpose of the group discussion:

Introduction: My name is _____, we work for IOM/TOCH. We are here today to talk about the water, sanitation and hygiene situation in this school, so that we can explore how to improve together hygiene and sanitation in the school and our own households. This activity will last for 45 minutes to one hour. This is a voluntary activity and you can decide not to participate at any time. It is also important that you are respectful to one another and give space to each other to talk. We will not record any names and will not share with others the information gathered here. We will take photos of the way you arrange the photos we will use in this discussion to help us understand more about what you all think.

Questions

1. Looking at all these images, together could you try and place them in order, from the one who you think is **most likely to use violence or their power to solve an issue at home** to the least. Please work together to try and come to an agreement.

Why do you think this person is most likely to use violence to solve an issue?

Why do you think this person is least likely to use violence to solve an issue?

What kinds of violence are used in the home by those mostly using violence?

Who is mostly affected by this kind of violence?

What are the impacts of these different types of violence on those affected by it?

2. Looking at all these images, together could you try and place them in order, from the one who you think is **most likely to use violence to solve an issue between communities** to the least. Please work together to try and come to an agreement.

Why do you think this person is most likely to use violence to solve an issue between communities? Why do you think this person is least likely to use violence to solve an issue between communities? What types of violence are being used between communities?

Who else is influential in supporting violence when it happens?

Who is most affected by this kind of violence?

What are the impacts of these different types of violence on those affected by it?

3. Looking at all these images, together could you try and place them in order, from the one who you think is **most likely to be involved in community decision-making and peace meetings** to the least. Please work together to try and come to an agreement.

Why do you think this group of people are most likely to lead community decision-making and peacebuilding?

For those, least likely, what is the reason that they are least likely?

For the age/gender-based discussion group: Why have you placed someone like yourself at this point in the list?

Are people that should be involved in community decision-making and peacebuilding left out?

If yes, what impact does this have on community development and peacebuilding?

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“A boy should be a fighter”

Addressing harmful masculinities driving cattle-related violence



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