EDUCATION- FOCUSED GENDER ANALYSIS CASE STUDIES: PIBOR AND JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

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This study was conducted with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) provided specifically to prepare for the launch of Oxfam education projects in Pibor and Juba in South Sudan. However, its findings will also be useful to the wider NGO community working in the country, with recommendations provided for the Government of South Sudan and for future programming by donors. The analysis focuses specifically on education, but it also aims to analyse gendered power relations between men and women and boys and girls and the differences in their roles and responsibilities, decision-making power, the barriers and constraints they face and their coping mechanisms, along with the specific needs and concerns of girls and boys both in and out of school and gendered vulnerabilities and differential access to education in the locations selected.

The analysis concludes with a set of recommendations to ensure that agencies can move forward in a way that meaningfully addresses the gender inequalities that prevent access to their programmes for women, men, boys and girls.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	Adult literacy programme
CoC	Code of conduct
EFSVL	Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
GESS	Girls' Education South Sudan
KII	Key informant interview
IGA	Income-generating activity
MHM	Menstrual hygiene management
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
NFI	Non-food item
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PSEA	Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
PTA	Parent-teacher association
SADDD	Sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data
SMC	School management committee
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
CEFM	Child, early and forced marriage

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This gender analysis was conducted with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) provided specifically to prepare for the launch of Oxfam education projects in Pibor and Juba in South Sudan. However, its findings will also be useful to the wider NGO community working in the country, with recommendations provided for the Government of South Sudan and for future programming by donors. The analysis focuses specifically on gender issues as they relate to education, but it also aims to analyse gendered power relations between men and women and boys and girls and the differences in their roles and responsibilities, decision-making power, the barriers and constraints they face and their coping mechanisms, along with the specific needs and concerns of girls and boys both in and out of school and gendered vulnerabilities and differential access to education in the locations selected. The analysis concludes with a set of recommendations to ensure that agencies can move forward in a way that meaningfully addresses the gender inequalities that prevent access to their programmes for women, men, boys and girls, change negative gender norms and contribute to the empowerment of women and girls.

The research was carried out in November 2018 in Pibor town and in December 2018 in the capital city, Juba. In total, 10 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with staff members from development or humanitarian agencies and government representatives and 35 (12 female, 23 male) with community leaders (formal and informal), religious leaders and teachers. In addition, 76 focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with adult males and adult females and with groups of boys and girls aged 10–14 and 15–19, both in and out of school, on average 10-12 participants per group. The key findings and recommendations are presented below, with the general recommendations only in the summary. For specific recommendations to the two locations, please refer to the recommendations at the end of the document.

The two areas selected for this study are very different in terms of humanitarian needs and access to education. There are nonetheless some similarities, such as gendered household roles and a strong patriarchal dominance by men in both household and community decision making (though much more so in Pibor than in Juba). There have been many changes since the onset of the conflict in December 2013 and during the resulting protracted crisis in South Sudan, including in gender norms; there have been some improvements in Juba, but in Pibor county people remain particularly resistant to change. In both locations, access to education is limited for girls and women, but negative gendered social norms in Pibor make it one of the worst places in the country for Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and the barriers that this creates to girls accessing education. Boys are also affected by customary practices, and both boys and girls suffer due to inadequate infrastructure and the absence of a conducive environment in which to learn. Juba has the best conditions in the country, but in the areas targeted for this study, there are still barriers to accessing education, particularly for girls and women. In Pibor there is limited support for encouraging access to education for girls, empowerment programmes for women or adult literacy programmes (ALPs) for either women or men. In Juba, such programmes lack the support needed to ensure buy-in from men and boys in the community. Below are the general summarized recommendations as they emerged from the findings. For further detail and explanations, please read the recommendations in the document.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommendations for donors, UN agencies and civil society

- Support and work with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to implement Sustainable Development Goal 4 related to Education including funds for technical support and in particular towards policies specifically related to girls' education, to increase the number of female teachers, increase their salaries and capacity building opportunities and improve their qualifications, including support with funding gaps in special needs education programmes.

- Invest in or provide a dedicated fund for a sustained stand-alone gender transformative programming in the education sector that focuses on longer-term transformative change to gender norms, promote women and girls' agency, leadership and life skills.

- Fund education programmes that construct new schools and improve the infrastructure of existing schools (including providing lunches, school materials, adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities).

- Dedicated Adult Literacy Programmes (ALP) funding, extending it to rural and disadvantaged areas and ensure that women, men and young adults of both genders are included.

- Ensure that sex, age and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) are collected, analysed and reported on and push for accountability and monitoring.

B. Recommendations for the Government

- Enforce strong and practical measures to meet international (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and national commitments on education and gender equality through increased coordination and collaboration with NGOs and WROs to ensure robust implementation of gendered policies and strategies; ensure open discussions on these policies and strategies to engage stakeholders and to further improve ownership from community; support the enforcement of laws that require education to be free and universal for primary school level.

- Promote national initiatives which demonstrate a commitment from the government to prevent child marriage and on promoting girls' education. Enforce laws that prohibit CEFM and bring perpetrator to justice. Work together with customary and traditional leaders as well as mass level awareness-raising campaigns on early marriage.

- Focus on ensuring teaching as a profession is supported by increasing salaries for teachers; include better learning and professional growth packages/opportunities at the national level, across all schools in South Sudan; by providing continuous teacher training; by providing teaching materials across all schools, by developing and implementing school curricula that contribute to long-term shifts in gender norms and by investing all efforts in increasing the number of female teachers and improving their qualifications.

c. Recommendations for civil society

Gender programmes

- Ensure targeted interventions which specifically address traditional gender roles, expand on programmes dealing with unpaid care work and organize dialogues with all sections of the community, gender segregated and mixed, on the benefits of positive gender norms; further engage with men and boys separately to discuss gender norms, roles and relations and to promote positive changes on men and boys sharing unpaid care work, redefining masculinity and other harmful gender norms.

- Focus on community engagement interventions to challenge discriminatory beliefs and practices against girls' education, CEFM and sexual and reproductive health (SRH), in a safe manner; use community-based campaigning and existing national South Sudanese campaigns; and use male engagement groups to promote the end CEFM. Find and use role models from the community to sensitize community members on girls' access to education and mobilize

community groups to educate them on the importance of empowering girls. Engage with religious and community leaders and work with the influential leaders (both men and women) to promote these positive changes, while ensuring safety and managing any backlash.

- Strengthen women and girls' leadership by identifying exiting women's group (such as the Kabarze in Pibor), building their capacity on leadership and negotiation skills and mobilizing them through continuous support. Promote them as models of women's leadership. Introduce ALPs for women and technology or other numeracy skills training and continuously work with men and boys to promote and support them as role models. Ensure that measures are in place to prevent any opposition from men. Use existing mixed groups such as parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to further foster and encourage leadership by women. Encourage women's participation in PTA by including participation of couples' (husband and wife's) in PTA meetings. Work with community and religious leaders, elders and influential informal community leaders (both men and women) to promote these positive changes and to sensitize the community about the value of women's participation in leadership roles.

Education programmes

- Take innovative and affirmative action to promote girls' education; develop scholarship programs for girls; provide cash incentives to the family; develop reward and merit-based systems for good performance for girls; conduct monthly meetings with both parents; conduct half day sessions on the importance of girl's education, gender norms, unpaid care work, CEFM, women and girls as leaders and decision makers.

- Ensure community-based promotional campaign on the importance of education with specific campaigns on girls' and women's education through radio programmes, street dramas, songs, promotional visits by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, community leaders etc. Further adopt community-based approaches building on existing community structures to motivate the meaningful participation of women, girls, men and boys, separately and together in all education initiatives, while working together with Gender and Protection programmes to minimize backlash from men and boys.

- Support in the creation of an encouraging environment to retain and increase numbers of female teachers: build capacity of female teachers in teaching methodologies including women's leadership skill. Include affirmative actions such as providing special incentives for female teachers, for example advocacy for tax reduction by 10% for female teachers, promotional campaigns on female teachers as role models.

- Provide incentives for teachers at the local level and advocate for the increase of the salaries and other benefits (maternity and paternity leave, medical, higher educational opportunity or trainings) at the national level across all schools in South Sudan. Equip teachers with teaching materials and regular teacher training. Provide continuous training to teachers and ensure training is equally accessed by female and male participants.

- Ensure the implementation of school-based code of conduct (CoC) policies for teachers. Work with teachers, parents and students and with education programmes to establish these CoCs and monitoring, including girls and female teachers in discussions throughout. Ensure measures for strong implementation of CoCs such as induction and frequent orientation and ensure that the trainings are provided for teachers, PTAs and students.

- Develop and maintain confidential and robust incident feedback mechanisms for women, girls, men and boys within the schools for any violations, including for incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse within schools. This can be done by establishing and empowering child rights committees within the schools.

- Identify opportunities to promote women's leadership in PTAs and school management committees (SMCs), including quotas for women, while working with men in the community and with male teachers to minimize any backlash. Provide continuous training to PTAs and ensure that training can be accessed equally by female and male participants.

- Provide education on MHM, SRH and other life skills in order to minimize early pregnancies. Life skills training should include discussions on gender-based violence (GBV) and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), personal hygiene, the benefits of postponing marriage and pregnancy, methods of contraception and cultural restrictions for girls when on their period, always taking into account cultural sensitivities.
  - On strengthening a more gender equal school environment:

- o Ensure institutionalization of gender sensitive education such as: gender sensitive training for all teachers to discontinue the gender stereotypical school roles (such as sweeping always given to girls) and gender discrimination in schools including in classroom interaction but also volunteer roles outside the classroom. Train students, parents, teachers and PTA members on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Review school curriculum from a gender lens and advocate for gender sensitive educational materials. Identify opportunities to promote women's leadership in PTAs or SMCs, including quotas for women, while working with men in the community and male teachers to minimize backlash.
  - o Ensure extra-curricular and recreational activities such as drama, sports are gender-sensitive, allowing both girls and boys – together or separately - to participate.
- Ensure targeted education programmes for pregnant and lactating mothers; develop a pregnancy-friendly school environment and infrastructure; provide childcare facilities, bi-weekly family sessions on SRH, family planning, consequences of early pregnancy, importance of women's and girl's education and men's role in unpaid care work.
- Provide specific learning programmes for youths/adolescents (e.g. accelerated learning programmes (ALPs), skills development, literacy training), introduce vocational and technical training for women, men, boys and girls out of school and ensure that access to childcare is provided to enable the full and active participation of women and adolescent girls in education initiatives.
- Increase support to the MoGEI to include capacity building, monitoring and financial support, as well as support for policies that encourage the inclusion of disabled children.
- Advocate and push for all data collected relating to education to be disaggregated by sex, age and disability, across all 32 states, on enrolment, retention, drop-out and completion rates among learners as well as the attendance, training and qualifications of teachers.

Education related recommendations for:

A. Protection programmes

- Ensure the revision or creation of school CoC policies to specifically address school-related SEA, bullying and discrimination and to include reporting and referral mechanisms and robust support systems for survivors. Ensure that this is done in consultation with girls and female teachers and implement systems whereby girl and boy representatives monitor and provide regular feedback to PTAs on issues relating to SEA, bullying and discrimination in and around schools. Build the capacity of teachers, staff and community members to deal with GBV, sexual harassment and abuse and ensure understanding and awareness among teachers of the importance of avoiding any form of violence against girls and boys in schools, putting in place GBV monitoring and accountability systems for teachers.

- Work with men and boys to limit and address incidents of GBV, both within and outside of schools and conduct further research on GBV affecting men and boys as well as research on harassment and abuse occurring in schools.

- Sensitize and mobilize communities and aim to transform attitudes on CEFM through outreach and awareness-raising programmes, focusing on religious and community leaders, men and boys, making women and girls aware of their rights, and advocate with government to enforce laws that prohibit CEFM and to bring perpetrators to justice.

B. WASH programmes

- Provide regular distributions of menstrual pads both within and outside schools to all girls and women of menstruating age in the short term, and in the long-term train girls and women to make reusable menstrual pads, working with the Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods (EFSVL) team.

- Ensure the construction of safe, sufficient, segregated and MHM-friendly latrines (respecting local customs) in all schools and facilitate access to water through the construction of boreholes, engaging girls in the design and location of school sanitation facilities.

- Provide information to boys and girls, separately, on MHM and SRH (with health colleagues) through appropriate awareness-raising and sensitization initiatives and through teachers of the appropriate sex.

C. EFSVL programmes

- Provide opportunities for income-generating activities (IGAs) for women and men and build vocational skills for boys and girls, ensuring that these are gender-specific.

- Ensure the distribution of food aid to the community most in need, including food in schools and warm lunches on school days.

- Provide training for women and girls in leadership, life skills and entrepreneurship, and work with gender teams to sensitize men and boys to avoid any backlash. Include the provision of capital and consider joint sector business efforts such as the production of reusable menstrual cloth pads, based on a thorough and gender-sensitive market assessment.

- Work together with education colleagues on innovative approaches to cash intervention programmes in education focused on families with girls in school.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SOUTH SUDAN AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The cumulative effects of the past five years of violent conflict and multiple inter-related crises (hyper-inflation, food insecurity, population displacements) have continued to intensify in South Sudan, severely affecting the more than seven million people who are in need of humanitarian assistance and increasing the number of people who have fled to other countries to two million.[1] In this protracted crisis, the education system has deteriorated further, with 48 % of schools currently not functioning.[2] UNICEF estimates that up to 2.4 million children in South Sudan are not receiving an education – the highest rate of out-of-school children in the world.[3] Approximately 75 % of girls are not enrolled in primary school, and there are even higher disparities in the participation of children with disabilities or those living in very rural and remote areas.[4]

There are issues in accessing education on both the supply side and the demand side. On the supply side, schools are often far away from communities and are hard to access, with the destruction of schools and the departure of teachers from many affected areas due to the crisis having further impacts on access to education.[5] Schools are staffed by a much larger proportion of male teachers than female teachers.[6] In addition, teachers lack qualifications,[7] with only 47 % of teachers having received training and only 6 % of trained teachers being female.[8] As many as half of all schools in South Sudan are without permanent or semi-permanent classrooms,[9] and such schools are also likely to have minimal or no water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, let alone adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management (MHM); this is a factor that further discourages girls from attending. Travelling to and from school places girls at considerable risk of sexual violence and abuse and this deters them and their families. This can be seen in the country's dire education statistics: only 16 % of females over the age of 15 are able to read and write, and the most recent nationwide statistics (the most recent being from 2013) show that just 730 girls were enrolled in the final year of high school, from a total population of 12 million.[10]

On the demand side, the lack of resources means that impoverished families prioritize boys' education; this is exacerbated by widespread perceptions that educating girls is of less importance. Cultural beliefs and practices, and strictly delineated gender roles, also mean that families tend to rely on girls to do household chores, with many reports confirming that girls have a heavy burden of domestic duties.[11] A particular barrier to girls taking up or continuing schooling is child and early marriage, with various studies identifying this as the main reason for girls not going to school.[12] The legal age for marriage in South Sudan is 18 but it is estimated that 9 % of girls are married by the age of 15 and 52 % by 18, on account of a weak legal system and communities' adherence to customary laws.[13] With just 6 % of 13-year-old girls on average completing primary school, and statistics confirming that a young girl in South Sudan is three times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than to reach Grade 8 in school,[14] education and in particular education for girls should be a top priority.

These supply-and-demand-side barriers are heightened for boys and girls with disabilities, who face further challenges in accessing education, with a lack of schools for children with special needs and a lack of teachers trained in special educational needs.

1.2 PIBOR

Pibor town, part of Pibor county, is located in Boma state, but was previously part of Jonglei state. The country previously had 10 states, but in October 2015 a presidential decree reorganized these into 28 states, largely along ethnic lines, and in January 2017 these were further sub-divided into 32 states. Jonglei state was particularly affected by the conflict, with worrying statistics on populations in need in all sectors. The current Boma state has the worst statistics for education,

with only 16,719 children attending classes out of over 125,000 of school-going age in 2017 and the lowest number of schools – just 32 primary schools and no secondary schools in the whole state (though one was opened in 2018).[15] Where a school exists, it is often not open due to insecurity and conflict in the surrounding area.[16] As a result, Pibor is a particularly disadvantaged area and at present has the second highest level of need, with 87 % of the population having no education.[17] UNICEF is working in the state through a number of partners,[18] but coverage remains limited due to issues of accessibility, particularly in the rainy season when most areas are inaccessible, and also due to the sheer volume of need, with many areas in the state currently not being targeted.

This means that in Pibor the supply- and demand-side issues affecting access to education nationally are exacerbated. The main reasons for boys not attending school include long distances to travel, a lack of funding for school fees and a lack of materials, while for girls the main reasons include negative gender stereotypes (such as valuing education for boys over girls), early marriage, the burden of household chores, inadequate MHM facilities, as well as long distances to travel to get to school.[19] Other particularly worrying statistics are the low number of teachers in the state (156 in total) and the gender disparity among them, with just 13 % of teachers (20) being female and 87 % (136) male, at the time of this research in 2017.[20] Adolescent girls face additional barriers to education, such as their parents' fears that schooling may expose them to premarital sex or may make them 'strong-headed' and less traditionally minded, which would risk reducing their chances of getting married or fetching a high dowry price upon marriage.[21] The situation is even harder for adolescent girls who are already married and have children, due to the lack of childcare support and the lack of adult classes, extra demands placed on them by domestic chores or their husbands not allowing them to attend lessons.[22]

Pibor is home to the Murle tribe, with cattle-keeping Murle living in the lowlands area of the county and agrarian Murle on the Boma plateau.[23] Every ethnic group in South Sudan has its own customary laws, which regulate practices such as arranged marriages and bride prices paid in cattle, which are central to the culture and economy of South Sudan's pastoralist communities. Among the Murle, marriage always involves the payment of cattle as a bride price from the family of the groom to the family of the bride. In addition, in Murle culture a man can make a down-payment of cattle to the parents of a very young girl in order to 'book' her to be his wife when she is old enough to be married.[24] By the time the girl is six years old, half of the dowry is paid to her family, normally 35 cows. When she turns 12, the remaining half is paid and the girl is married; the local belief is that by the time a girl has her second period, she should be in her husband's home.[25]

Particular to the Murle tribe is a system of age-sets or generation groups of men, loosely based on age with approximately a 10-year range and with multiple social functions; a man will usually belong to the same age-set all his life.[26] Women usually belong to their father's age-set until they marry (or are promised to marry), at which point they shift to their husband's age-set.[27] The age-sets at present, from the youngest to the oldest, are the Kurenen, an emerging age-set of men born from the late 1990s onwards, who are in competition with the Laŋo, who were born in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, and the Bothonya, born in the late 1970s, the 1980s and early 1990s; the Thithi, born in the 1960s–1970s; the Muden, in the 1950s–1960s; the Doroŋwa, in the 1940s–1950s; the Maara, in the 1930s–1940s; the Nyeriza, in the 1920s–1930s; and the Nyakademu, in the 1910–1920s (though the last three groups have few surviving members).[28] These generational groups have become one of the major causes of intra-Murle violent conflict. They provide men with a meaningful sense of belonging to a social group, with ties and loyalties between those of the same age-set sometimes being stronger than ties between relatives and brothers from competing age-sets.[29] The age-set system has multiple social functions and remains a core element of Murle society – in everyday discussions, social relationships and friendships and in the ways in which cattle raids are conducted.[30] The different tribes in the areas around Pibor county and Boma state frequently mount raids on one another, with Murle men stealing cattle from the Nuer, Dinka and Jie tribes and vice versa, often in retaliation or revenge. Until the emergence of the Bothonya age-set, competition between the two youngest age-sets was considered to be a rite of passage, regulated by older age-sets and usually conducted through stick-fighting, with 'red chiefs'[31] able to control disputes. These competitions, however, have grown increasingly violent and harder to control.[32]

1.3 JUBA

Juba, now part of Jubek state, is the capital city of South Sudan and so is one of the most privileged areas in terms of access to education. Jubek is second only to Yei state for its number of schools, with 470. It has 74 % of male students and 69 % of female students enrolled in primary and secondary schools; the joint highest proportion of female students across all school types, with both Jubek and Yei states at 48 %; the highest number of teachers with a teaching qualification; and the best equipped primary schools, with 95 % having permanent or semi-permanent classrooms and access to water.[33] Nonetheless, challenges exist in Juba too: for example, there are many street children, with their numbers growing due to successive waves of violence and continued economic vulnerability. Most street children (70 %) are boys between the ages of 10 and 14, and originate from large families with 5–10 members.[34]

1.4 GENDER ANALYSIS OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, SAMPLING AND CHALLENGES

This gender analysis was conducted with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) provided specifically to prepare for the launch of Oxfam education projects in Pibor and Juba. However, its findings will also be useful to the wider NGO community working in South Sudan, and the recommendations it offers are relevant to all.

The study's objectives were to:
- Analyse the gendered power relations that exist between men and women and boys and girls and the differences in their roles and responsibilities, decision-making power, the barriers and constraints they face and their coping mechanisms.
- Look at the specific needs and concerns of girls and boys both in and out of school.
- Identify and analyse gendered vulnerabilities and differential access to education in the locations selected.
- Make recommendations to ensure that Oxfam and wider programmes move forward in a way that meaningfully addresses gender inequalities, specifically in education programmes, looking at inequalities that prevent access to education.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This analysis was conducted firstly by means of a desk review of secondary data, and secondly through a variety of primary data, gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). These took place within host communities and were led by a team of Oxfam staff and local enumerators in both locations. A group of four staff members (all female) and 12 enumerators (four female, eight male) conducted the FGDs and KIIs in Pibor, and a group of one staff member and 15 enumerators (nine female, six male) conducted them in Juba.

Separate FGDs (with participants averaging between 8 to 12) were conducted for men (aged 20+), women (20+), young girls (10–14), older girls (15–19), young boys (10–14) and older boys (15–19), and an effort was made to include people with disabilities in both locations. FGDs were held with both school-going children and out-of-school children; consent was obtained from parents, carers and the children themselves for FGDs with those under 18. Younger staff members and enumerators conducted these FGDs in both locations to ensure peer-to-peer discussions. The discussions were conducted in English or Murle in Pibor and in English and Juba Arabic in Juba, as necessary.

KIIs were conducted with male and female teachers, as well as with other key local leaders in the community, including religious leaders, community group leaders, leaders of women's groups, members and leaders of parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and members and leaders of school

management committees (SMCs), as well as informal community leaders. KIIs with key NGO and UNICEF staff and with key representatives from the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) were conducted by the author and Oxfam staff in both Pibor and Juba. A full list of the latter KIIs can be found in Annex 1.

Training for staff and enumerators was conducted over two days in each location – 26–27 November 2018 in Pibor and 6–7 December in Juba – and included key concepts of gender and gender analysis, orientation on the data collection tools including research processes and tips for note-takers and facilitators, Oxfam's Code of Conduct (CoC) and safeguarding, including training on GBV and sensitive behaviour. Although the tools used were not thought likely to cause discomfort, with limited discussions around GBV, information on referral and follow-up action was provided to staff and enumerators. The data collection was conducted on 28–30 November 2018 in Pibor and 10–12 December in Juba.

1.6 SAMPLING

Reflecting the planning for the education project, counties and areas around Pibor and Juba were selected on the basis of existing Oxfam projects, need and the absence of education services in those areas. FGD participants were selected randomly in the chosen areas, based on age and gender. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the areas selected and the type of data collected in both locations.

Table 1: Locations for the study and FGDs and KIIs conducted with community members

Boma state	Locations	FGDs	KIIs
Pibor county Gumuruk county	• Pibor town, including girls' and boys' schools • Akilo *payam** • Lenyeris *payam* • Lukurnyang *payam* • Kabacoch Pibor south • Thangajon *payam* • Gumuruk town, including Gumuruk primary school	• 3 with adult males • 1 with boys aged 15–19 in school • 4 with boys aged 10–14 in school • 5 with boys aged 15–19 out of school • 4 with boys aged 10–14 out of school • 3 with adult females • 2 with girls aged 15–19 in school • 4 with girls aged 10–14 in school • 5 with girls aged 15–19 out of school • 3 with girls aged 10–14 out of school	• 2 with female teachers • 6 with male teachers • 2 with male community leaders • 5 with female community leaders • 5 with representatives of MoGEI, UNICEF, Finn Church Aid (FCA), Across, Nile Hope
Jubek state	**Locations in Juba town**	**FGDs**	**KIIs**

Juba county	• Gudele (Kapuki and Gudele west), primary school and ALP centre • Francis Pitia in Gurei, primary school and ALP centre • New Rambur in Jebel Dinka, including primary school, ALP centre and a literacy centre for youth and adult women • Gumbo Basic Primary School • Women's empowerment programme (WEP) – literacy centre for youth and adult women	• 4 with adult males • 5 with boys aged 15–19 in school • 3 with boys aged 10–14 in school • 5 with boys aged 15–19 out of school • 4 with boys aged 10–14 out of school • 6 with adult females • 4 with girls aged 15–19 in school • 3 with girls aged 10–14 in school • 5 with girls aged 15–19 out of school • 3 with girls aged 10–14 out of school	• 3 with female teachers • 7 with male teachers • 5 with male community leaders • 5 with female community leaders • 5 with representatives of MoGEI, Plan International, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), World Vision, INTERSOS

* A payam is an administrative division, larger than a boma (the lowest level) but smaller than a county

1.7 CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge faced was a lack of accurate statistics for the data collection areas, as most education data were based on the former administrative division of 10 states nationally and did not reflect the more recent sub-division into new 32 states and corresponding counties; as such, data were not complementary or comprehensive. This challenge was overcome with support from UNICEF in Pibor, which provided the research team with the most up-to-date information it had available for the locations concerned.

A second challenge was access in and around Pibor town, with only the town itself and a few surrounding *payams* up to Gumuruk being accessible. It was also challenging to find girls and boys aged 15–19 who were in school in Pibor, as there is only one secondary school there, opened in 2018 and with only two girls enrolled out of 82 students in total. This challenge was overcome by conducting FGDs with girls in this age group who were still in primary school (primary school in South Sudan runs from Year 1 to Year 8) and conducting more FGDs with boys and girls out of school. Finding qualified female enumerators in Pibor also proved to be difficult, but this was resolved by having four female staff members support the enumerators to ensure consistent standards.

The main challenges in Juba were of a logistical nature. As the city is a hub for responding to national programmes, there were fewer staff available to support data collection on the ground. This difficulty was overcome by hiring highly qualified enumerators (including former staff members).

2 FINDINGS

2.1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The two areas selected for this study are very different in terms of humanitarian needs and access to education. For this reason, most of the findings of the study are presented separately for each location, with Pibor and surrounding areas first, followed by Juba. The areas where data collection was conducted in Pibor county were the most accessible, and therefore the ones more heavily targeted by NGO support. In Juba, on the other hand, the research targeted poor areas particularly lacking in support and where access to education was more difficult.

2.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.2.1 Pibor

The FGDs in Pibor county revealed very gendered divisions of labour, with consistent findings across all groups and ages. As explained by participants, women are responsible for all work relating to the household, including taking care of children, cleaning and sweeping the house and compound, fetching water, taking care of sick family members, cooking, washing clothes and dishes, pounding and grinding sorghum and collecting firewood. For women in rural areas, domestic work also includes milking cows, cultivating crops and cutting grass. Women also said that they engaged in income-generating activities (IGAs) such as collecting cow dung[35] for sale or gathering wild fruits for sale in the market. In all the FGDs for men, participants said that they were responsible for cultivation, hunting, fishing and digging fields, latrines and irrigation ditches, while those in rural areas also took care of cattle. Men are also in charge of cattle raiding, leadership and decision making for the family. In all FGDs with adults of both genders, participants stated that men were the head of the family and were responsible for ensuring that their family was taken care of; as one male participant put it: 'The man is the head of the home and his role and responsibilities are to protect the family.' However, FGDs with women indicated that they believed men do not do enough to help and that this has got worse since the crisis began. One woman said: 'Men only bring in money and go hunting, and sometimes they help by digging.' Women also said that men were spending more time playing games and cards since the crisis began. The FGDs also showed that women felt they had to conform to the role of respecting their husbands and keeping them satisfied. In addition, women said that in order to fulfil their household duties, they needed to 'produce children'. In return, women expected love and care from the husband and for the husband to provide food for the children.

One interesting aspect of Murle society, different from other tribes in South Sudan, is women's role in constructing the houses in which their families will live. This adds to the burden of domestic work, though for the female FGD participants in Pibor building houses was considered a normal part of their work. The study found that women were working long hours – on average 16 hours a day compared with an average of eight hours a day for men. However, daily activities vary from season to season depending on agricultural demands: during the rainy season hours can increase significantly, with activities such as collecting food and firewood being particularly difficult when the season is at its height.

For boys and girls domestic work is also gendered, in ways similar to their parents: girls help their mothers to collect firewood and wild fruits, fetch water, cook food, pound grains for flour, milk livestock, wash clothes and take care of younger siblings, while boys help their fathers with fishing and hunting. Boys aged 10–14 have a particular responsibility for grazing the family's smaller animals (sheep and goats), and boys aged 15–19 are responsible for tending the cattle and ensuring that none are lost. One boy said that if he lost any animals, 'there will be beatings from my

father'. The FGDs with boys in both age groups showed that they believed age-set fighting to be part of their 'household' responsibilities.

Conversations with girls in both age groups showed that they spend on average 11.5 hours a day on work, while boys said that they worked on average four hours a day. There were differences in hours worked for girls and boys out of school, especially for girls in the 15–19 age bracket, who on average work more than 16 hours a day, with some saying that they worked without rest and that they only slept for six hours. Girls in both age brackets also said that boys of their age mostly played around or spent time on leisure activities. The boys aged 15–19 (both in and out of school) said that on average they spent four hours a day working on domestic responsibilities, as did boys aged 10–14, who helped primarily with grazing animals and sometimes helped to fetch water or collect firewood. The girls in school said that they worked on average seven hours a day, and did not have enough time to spend on homework. There were also differences between urban and rural areas of Pibor, with girls in the villages and cattle camps having more domestic work to do, including milking cattle and collecting wild fruits. All the FGDs with girls in school confirmed that domestic work made it harder for them to attend school and that they were left with only 30 minutes to an hour in the evenings for their homework. Activities that girls said were particularly hard and time-consuming were pounding and grinding grains (sorghum and maize) for flour, followed by sweeping the compound. For boys, the most difficult activities were cattle grazing and herding; these were mentioned in three of the five FGDs with boys aged 15–19 and in all of the FGDs with boys aged 10–14, both in and out of school.

It was particularly worrying that in all the FGDs with girls (in both age brackets), participants said that the reason they did housework was to avoid being punished by their parents. They reported that punishments could include verbal reprimands, beatings and in some cases even being denied food. One girl, said: 'We have no choice. If we refuse we will be beaten up by our mother and sometimes denied food.' This forces them to conform to their domestic roles, even if they find them tiresome or difficult or they take time out of school work or homework. In two FGDs with girls aged 15–19 out of school, participants reported they did these tasks because they felt obliged; it was either a preparation for marriage or an obligation if they were already married. One girl said that housework was 'what I am bought for', and that her husband would divorce her if she was not 'good enough' and her parents would not take her back. FGDs with boys showed that they also performed their roles out of fear of abuse (mentioned in four out of five FGDs with boys aged 15–19 out of school and in all those with boys in school), but also out of a sense of responsibility. One boy in a group for 15–19-year-olds out of school said that he did such tasks 'because they are important', while another said: 'If my father calls me to help him at home, obviously I will do what he asks me to.' A boy in a 10–14 group said that he took care of his household responsibility for grazing animals 'because it is the only resource we have in our family and we must take good care of it'.

2.2.2 Juba

The division of roles and responsibilities in the areas of Juba where data were collected were also largely gendered, with women responsible for caring for children, cooking, fetching water, cleaning and washing clothes, although productive roles were also mentioned, such as 'selling at the market' and 'working for money'. Men are responsible for digging (fields, latrines, irrigation ditches), grazing animals, repairing houses and 'working to provide for the family'. Girls help their mothers with washing clothes, cooking food, preparing breakfast, fetching water, sweeping the compound, cleaning the house and looking after siblings. Boys said that they washed their own clothes and cleaned their rooms, and occasionally helped with fetching water, digging and cultivation, building houses to live in, cutting grass in the compound and going to the market. Boys in school (in both age groups) helped with household chores for an average of two hours per day, while those out of school (in both age groups) said that they did an average of five hours. For out-of-school boys, farm work, looking after animals and small daily IGAs such as washing cars or working in construction were also included as part of their roles and responsibilities under domestic work. Girls in school do domestic chores for an average of five hours per day (both age groups), while girls aged 10–14 who are out of school do twice as much – on average 10 hours – and girls out of school aged 15–19 spend 15 hours a day doing chores, including looking after animals. This was very similar to the responsibilities of adult women, who also said that they worked 15 hours a day. Men reported that on average they worked 10 hours, though all these hours were spent on productive activities. FGDs with men indicated that that they felt responsible for farm work and for offering protection to the family, offering basic needs at home such as shelter and providing food and education. When asked why they conform to these roles,

women said that it was because they are expected to be respectful and obedient, though they also expect their husbands to be respectful and loving to them. Men said that they did so because they are expected to be protective, to provide basic needs for the family and to be 'responsible for decision making'.

As in Pibor, both girls and boys said that they did household chores because they were afraid of punishment and beatings (this was mentioned in 10 of the FGDs). Boys aged 15–19 cited additional reasons: because 'it is our responsibility' and 'if I don't do it, no one is ready to help'. Girls aged 15–19 in school felt that they had to do the work so that their parents were not 'unhappy' with them; one said: 'If I don't do it, I may be sent out of the home.'

2.3 DECISION MAKING AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

2.3.1 Pibor

In terms of decision making, it was evident from all the FGDs that men are the main decision makers in the household, followed by their eldest sons, and that men decide on the use of resources and assets. Participants in all the FGDs said that 'by tradition' men owned and controlled all resources. In FGDs with men, participants made assertions such as: 'A woman cannot take a decision unless she is a widow'; 'Women must depend on men's decisions'; and 'Men are the head of the family and they are the ones to make decisions on things like the family budget, sending children to school, or whether any family member can get married.' However, widowed women in female-headed households, where they are the sole breadwinner and have assumed all responsibilities for the household, are able to make decisions. One woman explained: 'I am a single mother who can decide or allow my daughter to decide who to marry. Also, in terms of education, my kids can attend school as much as they want.' Women who are not widowed but who are the sole head of household, due to separation or abandonment by their husband, are able to make decisions if they have small children until the husband returns (if he ever does). If the family has an adolescent son, however, in the absence of the father he would decide. One girl in a 15–19 out-of-school group said: 'Boys work alongside their fathers, who are the decision makers, and they can decide in the absence of the father what the family should do in case of famine.' That boys have decision-making power in the absence of their fathers was also mentioned in FGDs with women and men, and confirmed in FGDs with boys.

A small positive trend was observed in that women said there was now more joint decision making than before the crisis. In all but one of the FGDs with women, participants confirmed that women would like to participate more in decision making, especially at the household level. Women said that they would like to be able to decide on more things because they have become breadwinners following the crisis, are facing hardships and need to supplement their income. Decisions they wanted to take included 'marriage of our girls', 'sending girls and boys to school' and 'whether husbands should marry a second wife or not'. One woman said that she would like women to 'be able to decide to go back to school, because we women also want to be educated so that we can support our families'. Men also requested adult literacy programmes (ALPs) and support. Given the education gaps in Pibor, ALPs would be a vital investment in the county.

Some decisions are taken jointly between husbands and wives, but only 'if the man is understanding', according to one female FGD participant. Joint decisions usually relate to whether children will attend school. Women are sometimes consulted on decisions about arranging marriages for their daughters, but this is rare. One male FGD participant said: 'No, they are not made jointly – the man is the head of everything at the household level and he is the only person to make decisions.' In relation to education, it seems that men decide if children will attend school and where, and also when and to whom to marry their daughters (which limits girls' access to education). In FGDs with women and girls, the education of children was reported to cause differences of opinion, with women wanting to send all their children to school but men favouring schooling only for boys. One woman said: 'It's a cause of disagreement especially when it comes to sending the girl child to school because the father wants to marry her off for cattle.'

Girls have no decision-making power within the household; one female FGD participant said of her daughter: 'She has no voice or any right to decide anything.' In contrast, boys can often decide when and who to marry. One female FGD participant said: 'Yes, boys can participate in deciding when and who is to marry their sister, deciding when and who they are to marry themselves, when to go to school, which kind of household work they want to do.' This was confirmed in FGDs with boys and girls.

2.3.2 Juba

In the capital, female participants in FGDs reported that some decisions are taken jointly with men, particularly on questions of disciplining children and about their education, while men take all other decisions relating to the household (though one woman said that men took 'all decisions'. Women also reported that in some families more decisions are taken jointly by husbands and wives, specifically if the woman is educated and has a job. Discussions with men revealed a different power dynamic in household decision making. One man said: 'At times I do allow my wife to make some decisions'; another reported: 'At times, but only when I am not around, and she mostly has to consult me first, especially on decisions about education or security.' Even these remarks indicate that it is ultimately up to men to make decisions; indeed, almost all the men in FGDs said that they did not take decisions jointly because 'men are the head of the family'. One man said: 'I don't allow any female in the household [to] make any decision'; another stated: 'Decisions are supposed to be made by men. In the Bible, God made man as the general decision maker.'[36] Another participant made a similar assertion: 'Since the beginning of time men were made by God to be the decision makers, and women should follow.' Only a couple of men said in the FGDs that decisions about matters such as birth control and taking care of children were made jointly.

On the subject of education, women in FGDs said that 'men don't want to contribute' and that 'men tend to support only boys in school, leaving the girls behind'. This can cause disagreements in the family, given that men generally make all decisions relating to education. Across all the FGDs, it was confirmed that boys can make decisions about the discipline of their sisters but, again, girls have no decision-making power in the household.

2.4 DECISION MAKING AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

2.4.1 Pibor

In Pibor county the power of women to make decisions at community level is just as limited as it is at the household level. Women said in an FGD that, in mixed meetings, 'We are always stopped and told by our husbands that we don't know how to talk, during the meeting and at home'; and that in general 'men are given more chances to speak than women'. A female teacher interviewed for the study said: 'Some men restrict their wives because they believe that women talk nonsense.' Another woman said in an FGD: 'Some men don't allow their wives to participate in community gatherings because they believe that they will be seduced by other men.' Women also said that they were not allowed to sit with men, attend community meetings or make any decisions. In addition, when they are menstruating or have recently given birth, they are considered 'unclean' and cannot sit in meetings with men (this was confirmed in several of the KIIs).

Discussions with men, girls and boys all indicated that men are the sole decision makers in community groups. Men themselves said that 'most decisions are made by men' and that women 'feel shy and isolate themselves'. They added that 'women have no power to share shade or sit together with men' and 'our custom will never allow women to make decisions while men are still there, unless we are all dead bodies'; this indicates a strongly patriarchal culture. The KIIs confirmed these findings.

However, there are some female-only community groups, with the most popular among FGD participants being a peace group called Kabarze, [37] women in 10 of the FGDs reported that they

knew of and respected this group, as did the majority of key informants. It is involved in a peace-making process and unification of the warring age-sets. Several other female-only groups have been supported by NGOs, mostly with a focus on agricultural support but in other areas too. One woman said in an FGD: 'Yes, after the crisis some organizations now encourage women to participate in community decision making, especially in electing women representatives and also discussing what is affecting them in meetings for women.' These women's groups are reported to work very well, though several of the key informants reported a need for further capacity building. Interviewees also said that women's groups would benefit from capacity building on leadership skills and conflict management and resolution skills. They also need places to meet: one female FGD participant said that women met under trees, which was particularly difficult in the rainy season.

Older women taking part in these groups are well respected. A male teacher interviewed for the study reported: 'Older women are considered to be knowledgeable and experienced and therefore they are encouraged to take part in the women's groups so they can support the younger women.' Further research would be needed to look into the decision-making power of these respected older women in the household. It is important to note that when women participate in community groups, their domestic responsibilities are transferred to their daughters. As a result, some girls reported that when their mothers participated in public activities, they were tasked with additional domestic chores, limiting their ability to attend school.

With regards to education, there are mixed parent-teacher association (PTA) groups in the schools where the FGDs and KIIs were conducted. A female PTA member who was interviewed said that decision making in the PTA was taken jointly by men and women, though a female participant in an FGD said that 'women are normally given low positions since they are considered unfit to decide for the community'. A male teacher who was interviewed reported: 'Both men and women are encouraged to take up leadership roles in the PTA; however, more men participate than women.' In addition, there are very few female teachers – just 15 in Pibor county according to data received during this study[38]– and they are generally drawn from a small pool of educated local women who have mostly attended school outside South Sudan, in refugee camps and elsewhere, and have returned to work with NGOs (this was confirmed by the KIIs).

Generally, not only do women have little participation in community affairs, and then only in women-only meetings, but they also receive far less information on matters affecting the community. One woman said: 'Women are not aware of anything in the community.' However, all the FGDs with women showed that not only would they like to receive information, but also to participate and make decisions, 'especially any decisions affecting us', as one woman participant in an FGD said. Girls have no decision-making power in the community, but boys have some power through their participation in age-set groups.

2.4.2 Juba

In general, in the areas studied in Juba, community decision making in mixed gatherings also rests primarily with men. However, in two of the five adult female FGDs, women said that they can now make decisions. In one group, women said that they could take part in women-only forums: 'We can participate openly and freely in community forums for women.' In the two other FGDs, participants said: 'Women are oppressed by men. They are not given a chance to discuss things.' The FGDs with men confirmed that decision making rests primarily with them. Men made comments such as: 'Women can participate in minor community decisions'; 'Yes, we do allow women to participate, and last week we allowed one of our female participants to represent us, but only through places like churches and women's associations, no more than that'; 'Women can make only some decisions, mostly in church and when it comes to the women's association groups.' Other comments included: 'Most women try to force themselves into positions that are meant for men, but they cannot make decisions as effectively as a man'; 'Women should not participate more in decision making because they might forget their roles.' A group of boys aged 15–19 said: 'We don't allow girls to decide for us, as men we decide for ourselves', which demonstrates the prevalence of patriarchal beliefs across the generations. KIIs with several male leaders confirmed these beliefs; one interviewee argued: 'Women still have less decision-making power in the community, because males dominate decision making.'

Some men in the FGDs expressed different views, though only to a limited extent. For example: 'Women's access to community decision making has changed because women can now make decisions that men make'; 'Yes, women today want to assume the responsibilities of a man, hence some are making the decisions'; 'Yes, we give the floor to everyone, men and women. Here we consider men and women to be equal.' This is likely due to Juba as the capital being more urbanized and developed, with higher levels of education for both men and women and exposure to positive gender norms and female role models. Nonetheless, although progress has been made, there is a need to engage men further in women's empowerment programmes to ensure wider buy-in and to avoid backlash.

Currently, most women's empowerment activities are done with women-only groups; several different groups were mentioned in female FGDs and in KIIs. There is some role for women in decision making in mixed community groups, though this is rare and sometimes not well received by men. Across the FGDs and in KIIs, it was reported that older women, experienced women and educated women can participate in mixed groups, mostly focused on peace building and the 'unity of people'.

In education, PTAs exist in all the schools for which data were collected, and in a number of FGDs it was reported that both women and men participate in these, with women participating actively because 'these are groups that concern the future of their children'. However, in KIIs with community leaders and teachers, interviewees argued that 'men are still dominating' and that generally the women would need more training and support to be able to participate fully. The female teachers interviewed said that they did take part in decision making in schools in mixed groups.

2.5 CHANGES IN ROLES, POWER AND DECISION MAKING

2.5.1 Pibor

'Before the crisis my husband used to give me money for food and sometimes he would buy food and bring it home, but since the war happened he no longer does that. I am the one who collects firewood, cuts grass and milks the cow to sell in the market so we can buy food. My husband lost his job and these days he mostly stays in the market playing games.'

Roles and dynamics have changed in communities in Pibor since the crisis began. Negative changes, as reported by many women, include the fact that some men have 'abandoned their responsibilities' as breadwinners and have left the burden of both income generation and domestic work to women. Other men have died, lost their jobs, fled the area or are currently fighting for the army. As a result, responsibilities have increased for many women along with the amount of work they are expected to do, as they have to perform both productive and reproductive roles. Many women in the FGDs and a couple of the key informants were single mothers and the sole breadwinners for their families. One woman said: 'Before the conflict, men used to take full responsibility for the family, such as feeding them and sending children to school, but now most men don't do that because they have lost their jobs, or others are in the army fighting and don't come home for months.' Another stated: 'Work has increased for women. Many women have become single mothers since the crisis so now they are the sole breadwinners in the family, and they have to work up to midnight, lighting fires for the cattle and baking bread in the night for sale the following day. Others brew alcohol in the night to raise money to support the family.'

Several women said that men have started drinking in addition to spending time playing card and board games (ludo). It seems that this is likely to be a negative coping strategy to deal with the stress caused by the crisis and by potentially being no longer able to support their families. One woman said: 'Work has reduced for most men, they lost their jobs. Others fear the responsibility because they have married many wives and have many children that they are not able to support,

so you find most men playing games in the market places and expecting their wives to do all the work to support the family.' In discussions with men, however, they tended to claim the opposite – that their workload has also increased (as well as that of the women) and they are forced to look for any job opportunity to support the family.

Some positive changes were also mentioned: for instance, women said that they could now work while previously they were not typically expected to do so. In households headed by a single female, women have had to take over some of the work relating to cattle, in the absence of elder sons; again, this is usually a responsibility reserved for men. In one FGD, women said that they were now also responsible for ensuring the security of their families. Conversely, a boy in a 15–19 out-of-school group said: 'Sometimes we cook when girls or mothers are absent, and we sometimes collect firewood when mothers are not present.' Two men said that they helped their wives when they were sick, and another two said that they always helped with cleaning the compound. Another positive change was that boys reported that they were now less involved in cattle raiding and instead focused mostly on hunting, fishing and gathering fruits. Women also said that fewer boys now went cattle raiding. This is likely due to efforts by the state government and to peace campaigns across the state, according to local Oxfam staff in Pibor. Another positive development mentioned in the FGDs was that some boys help their parents to fetch water or take care of younger siblings, though only in families that have no daughters.

At the community level, the formation of women's groups and the fact that a number of NGOs are supporting them has created more opportunities for female empowerment. Where women's groups already exist, women can be more easily mobilized, especially in the currently relatively safe environment. Women also expressed a desire for education, as well as being able to make decisions. Several of the teachers interviewed said that adult literacy and numeracy skills were key in enabling women to participate more, but one female KII group leader said: 'I really want to go to school but there is no way I can because there are no facilities available for us women', further confirming the need for ALPs. However, gaining support from their husbands, both in terms of managing domestic work and getting them to agree to their active public participation, is more difficult. One key informant, a male teacher, reported that married women have a harder time participating in decision making than single women, and several other interviewees said that nothing had changed and men still held the main decision-making power. Improving women's participation would require full engagement and buy-in from men. Women's groups could be used as agents of change and could be targeted with ALPs, but it would also be necessary to tackle the challenges created by Pibor's rigid traditional and patriarchal norms and to have dialogues with men on the topic. At the time of writing there were only a limited number of NGOs focusing on women's empowerment and on changing cultural norms and encouraging positive gender norms.

2.5.2 Juba

FGD participants and key informants in Juba mentioned a number of recent changes. One of the more positive is that more women have taken on work responsibilities. Female FGD participants said that women now 'play the roles of men and women' due to the economic crisis following the conflict, with one even saying that now 'some men don't work, but depend solely on women'. However, as a result the workload for women has increased and, despite some household changes, the burden of domestic work still lies primarily with women. In two FGDs, women said that men helped with some housework, though not enough, while a woman in a third group said that 'those who help just do minor work at home, such as carrying a child'. Stronger views were expressed in the FGDs for men. For example, one man said: 'I do not help with the housework. I have people who do that for me, namely my wife and kids'; another declared: 'No, I don't because I think that housework is basically for women and girls'; while one even said: 'A woman who complains about housework is a lazy woman.' These comments show that men believe very strongly that they should not help their wives with care work.

Boys and girls mentioned some changes. For example, in two FGDs with boys aged 10–14, participants said that they did more housework if they did not have a sister or their sisters were not around. Fathers in an FGD reported: 'Boys now share some housework with their sisters, which could include fetching water or washing utensils.' This could indicate the start of a more equal sharing of housework chores between siblings.

As for changes in the community, women in FGDs said that there were more women in leadership positions and that more women had knowledge and a voice. All the FGDs with women indicated that they want more participation and more decision-making ability. One male FGD participant agreed,

saying: 'Women should participate more. Times are changing and people need to change their thinking to move forward.' Women also said that there are now many women's associations where they can build their capacity. In KIIs with community leaders and group leaders, both men and women, interviewees were hopeful and positive about change. One female group leader said: 'Now women have more decision-making power; because of the crisis women are playing roles in peace making and are contributing to family life.' Others said that 'women have good ideas which can help the community'; 'women in the community are involved in decision making and give their views on how to improve the community'; and 'women have more power in decision making because nowadays there are many educated women in the community'. Overall, female participants in FGDs and key informants agreed that the women's community groups are capable but they need more support and capacity building to be more effective, including financial support and training in business skills.

2.6 ACCESS AND BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

2.6.1 Pibor

There are many barriers to accessing education in Pibor town and the surrounding areas, on both the supply and demand sides and especially so for girls. In discussions with all age groups and with both genders, 'booking'[39] and early marriage emerged as the main reasons why girls are not able to access education, with girls being unable to make decisions either whether they can continue school or who or when to marry. Boys, on the other hand, are free to decide who to marry, as well as whether to drop out of school or continue with their studies. Girls in the out-of-school FGDs, both the 10–14 and 15–19 age groups, gave many additional reasons for their inability to attend school, including the burden of domestic chores, their fathers not allowing them to go, not having financial support from their parents, distance from school, menstruation and the school environment. Reasons cited by boys for not attending school included poverty, lack of value in education or lack of awareness about the importance of education. Parents focused more on the lack of infrastructure and on poverty. These key areas are examined in further detail below.

'Booking' and child, early and forced marriage

Pibor county has particularly negative gendered social norms, which make it one of the worst places in South Sudan for CEFM and the barriers that it creates to accessing education. CEFM is customary in other parts of the country, but the Murle's practice of 'booking' wives further hinders girls' chances of attending school. Across all FGDs and in the KIIs, 'booking', CEFM were cited as the greatest barriers to girls accessing education. Some respondents cited cases of girls 'booked' for marriage at the age of seven and married by the age of 13. The chance that these girls will attend school is extremely low, because as soon as they are promised their families start preparing to hand them over to the husband's family (this was mentioned in all the FGDs with girls and women). Hence, they consider school 'a waste of time', as one girl put it. Another girl said in an FGD that 'my parents stopped me from going to school after being booked for marriage'. Another reported: 'My parents do not allow me [to go to school] because they gave me out for marriage.' Research conducted by Oxfam on masculinity in Pibor further confirms that booking traps girls who are promised, given that half of the dowry is paid in advance and undoing booking arrangements is very complex and is likely to cause tensions.[40]

Decisions on CEFM are taken by fathers, uncles and brothers, according to women, men and boys in the FGDs. A male community leader said in a KII: 'Some decisions in our culture are taken by men: for example, decisions to marry or to book a girl child for marriage are taken by men.' The age of prospective husbands ranges from 18 (the age at which boys said they got married) upwards, with two key informants saying that men as old as 50 'booked' girls. In such cases, these girls could be the first or second wife in a polygamous relationship, although this research did not look deeper into this aspect of Murle culture. The dowries demanded for brides involve large numbers of cattle, so it is likely that only rich men could afford to pursue multiple wives; further research is needed in this area.

It was noted in the FGDs with girls that 'booking' and CEFM were stress factors for them, with many seeing themselves as objects to be sold. One girl said that 'the major reason [for not accessing

education] is CEFM, where a father will decide to give his daughter for marriage just to get cows'. Another girl in the 15–19 age group, going to school, said: 'Girls are treated like property – they sell us off if someone has enough cattle, they marry us off at the age of 14 and sometimes 13 years old.' Another girl stated: 'Our parents don't want education, they want cows.' Menstruation is closely connected with early marriage in Pibor: the onset of puberty for girls means that they are married off if 'booked' already or are then 'booked' for marriage, according to a group of girls aged 10–14 in school. One girl in a 15–19 out-of-school group said that puberty means that girls are 'ready for marriage and producing children'. Another said: 'I will be prepared to go to my husband's house.'

A female FGD participant said: 'They fear being married. When I was young and my menstruation started, I was afraid to tell my mother because they would marry me off.' This is confirmed by statistics for primary school enrolment, which show a higher percentage of girls in Years 1–4 but then numbers slowly decreasing after Year 5.[41] There is also a cultural belief that school will 'spoil' girls and they will no longer get married; this was mentioned by several key informants. A female teacher confirmed that girls are being denied education because 'they are believed to be a source of income'. A male FGD participant said: 'When girls reach the age of 15 or above, the parents decide to give them out and exchange them for cattle, and girls are not allowed to attend school any more, to avoid early pregnancy.' This is connected to a desire to avoid girls forming relationships with boys and to ensure virginity, which means a higher dowry. A girl in a group aged 10–14 said that their parents were afraid that 'they [booked girls] will get another husband than the one who booked them'. Another teacher stated that CEFM was 'one of the most dangerous barriers to girls' education, because once a girl is married there's no return, she must remain at her husband's place; whether she is ready or not she cannot go to school'. This shows that is virtually impossible for married girls to continue attending school.

When asked which girls were not able to go to school, FGD participants of all ages replied that 'booked' girls, followed by married and pregnant girls, were specific groups who were excluded from education; this was confirmed in the FGDs with girls themselves. Once a girl gets married and gets pregnant, she no longer receives any support to attend school from her family, her husband, her husband's family or from the school itself, so it is impossible for her to continue her studies. This was explained further by two girls in an FGD for the 10–14 age group. One girl said of girls 'booked' for marriage and girls who were already married: 'They can't go to school because they are no longer girls.' Another added: 'Pregnant and lactating young mothers are not allowed to attend school, because they are considered to be unfit for school and only fit to take care of their husbands and in-laws.'

Girls said that if they did receive support it would be from their mothers, but they still could not go to school because schools do not allow pregnant girls to continue attending, and also because pregnant girls themselves would usually not want to go or would feel ashamed. Once girls get pregnant, their role is to 'take care of their child', according to one girl. The teachers interviewed added that once girls get pregnant they do not 'feel comfortable' continuing with school or 'no longer have an interest to come to school', and 'they are not supported; instead they stop coming to school once they become pregnant'. In the FGDs for adult women, participants also cited early pregnancy as a reason why they were unable to go to school or continue with school when they were young themselves. There is clearly a combination of reasons why child mothers cannot continue with their studies, including a lack of support from both family and school, as well as feelings of shame.

A particularly worrying trend observed was that girls are getting married at a younger age due to hardship resulting from the crisis. When asked about the age of marriage and how it has changed over the years, the opinion across all ages and groups was that the marriage age has fallen, with girls as young as 12 being married now, compared with 15 before the crisis. A woman participant said: 'Girls are booked and married out by their fathers at the age of 12 in order to get money to eat.' A similar trend was reported for boys, with boys getting married now at the age of 15 compared with 18 before.

However, for boys, CEFM is not such a major issue as it is for girls. Only one boy in a 15–19 FGD said that his responsibilities as head of family prevented him from going to school; this boy was already married with children. The practice of 'booking' is also limited to girls. For boys, puberty means that they 'become ready to fight' and participate in cattle raiding, hunting, rearing animals and

leadership roles. After puberty, boys are exempted from grazing cows and move on to taking care of family matters. One boy observed: 'At this age we can ask to get married, we are given an opportunity to raise complaints in our families, we are given a lot of responsibilities.' FGDs with boys of all ages, both in and out of school, found that they can decide when and who they marry, and they can also continue their studies when they do get married if they have rich or supportive families. Poorer boys have to participate in cattle raiding or in age-set fighting to be able to get married. Most boys said that when they take on responsibilities as head of the family, they drop out of school. One participant in an FGD for boys aged 15–19 said: 'Few of them can go back, but others choose to remain at home to find food for their family.' This indicates that getting married at a younger age can also affect access to education for boys.

Age-set groups and fighting

The main reason mentioned by boys in both age groups, and in all the KIIs, for boys not accessing education was their participation in age-set fighting. This practice is harmful for the whole community in Pibor as it can escalate and severely affect the daily routines of all groups. FGDs with boys of both age groups showed that in particular it can affect their access to education. One boy said: 'Age-set fighting is one thing we are not safe with. When conflict starts, we flee from our homes and miss school; that is often the reason we are not in school.' In FGDs with boys aged 15–19 out of school, participants said that boys often drop out of school to take part in such activities and that this further 'hinders some of us to join school'. Boys have a very strong connection and involvement with their age-set groups and, as mentioned in several FGDs and KIIs, when age-set fighting begins they are forced to participate. One boy said: 'The issue of age-sets has to be addressed so that we stop killing each other in cold blood.' A male teacher interviewed for the study said that age-set fighting was the main reason for boys missing school, adding: 'They are afraid to come to school for fear of being beaten up by another generation.' Another teacher said: 'When there is no problem among their generation, they are safe to move.' Belonging to an age-set group is enforced by peer pressure (often linked to violence) and boys are expected to actively participate in both defence of the group and attacks on others, as confirmed by Oxfam research on masculinity in Pibor.[42] However, participation in age-set groups affects boys even when they are not fighting, because of peer pressure. According to several FGDs and KIIs, boys are always on the move with their age-sets and not attending school; NGO staff interviewed for the study said that if boys in different age-sets were in the same school they might start fighting and that could quickly escalate. Another key informant said that roads to school could be dangerous if boys encountered others from different age-sets; this was confirmed by boys aged 10–14 who said that the only thing they feared when walking to school was 'a beating from some other age-set group'. Boys aged 10–14 in school said that peers who are excluded from education are those who 'exclude themselves because they participate in age-set activities'. This cultural practice clearly has many negative effects on boys, including perpetuating a culture of toxic masculinity. It seems to be one of the most persistent practices in Pibor and a powerful driver of insecurity in the community, with the only change over the years being an increase in the level of violence, particularly between the Laŋo and Kurenen age-sets.[43]

Value of education and parental support

Aside from the problems of CEFM and age-set fighting, the FGDs with girls and boys showed that support from the family is crucial, with girls in school saying that the reason they attended school was because they had parents who valued education, parents who were educated themselves or parents who were able to support them financially. This was particularly the case for girls aged 15–19 in school.

Overwhelmingly, cultural beliefs in Pibor favour giving boys an education and not prioritizing girls. All the key informants pointed out that a general lack of awareness about the importance of education has led to the community not valuing it, especially when it comes to girls. One interviewee said: 'The culture mostly promotes education of the boy child, and girls are considered as a source of wealth.' A girl in school in an FGD for 10–14-year-olds said: 'My brother goes to school, so the only money we have is for him.' Many other girls said that they had been denied schooling by their parents. A girl in an out-of-school 10–14 group said: 'My friend who lives next to my home has had everything she needed. Her parents sent her to Uganda because they are educated and understand the meaning of education – unlike me: I am booked for marriage.' As a result, girls in school often feel a need to double their efforts in order to be allowed to continue.

One girl stated that she needed 'to participate and perform well so that I change their [her parents'] ideas about school'.

As the father is the main decision maker in the household, decisions about going to school rest with him. A girl aged 10–14 out of school confirmed that the reason she was unable to attend was because 'my father does not want me to go to school'. Another said: 'My father does not want me to go to school but my mother supports the idea.' A female teacher reported that 'women tend to have greater input than men on such matters; they want their daughters to go to school, though it is still hard for women who have husbands to take action'. In addition to women's lack of decision-making power, they need girls to help them in the household, given the amount of domestic work they have to deal with. Participants in one FGD for women described the different types of support they needed from their daughters, including washing, cooking, fetching water and helping take care of younger children. Girls who are married would need approval from their husband and from the husband's family to attend school – but the study found no examples of such approval being given. A male teacher said: 'Once they are married their husbands will not allow them to continue schooling, for fear of them getting a second husband.'

The FGDs with girls in both age groups showed that, in addition to constraints of poverty and cultural beliefs that favour boys, there are perceived dangers associated with attending school which prevent parents from sending their daughters. Many girls said that their parents feared them getting pregnant at school by boys; for example: 'My parents don't allow me to attend classes because they think I will go and play around with boys'; 'I am not allowed to mix with boys'; 'I am not allowed to mingle and play with boys.'

For boys, a lack of financial support from their parents was cited as a key reason for them not attending school; this was mentioned in four of the five FGDs for boys aged 15–19 out of school. One boy said: 'Our parents don't let us go to school, they prefer us herding cattle instead of schooling.' All the FGDs with boys in school confirmed that support from their parents was the main reason why they were able to attend. Some parents argued that they cannot afford school materials or uniforms for their children and they need them to support them at home and in IGAs, so that the family has enough food. One man said: 'We are really poor; we have no support to give them.'

Infrastructure

The shortage of schools, the condition of those that do exist, the state of roads to schools and distances from schools were issues raised by FGD participants of both genders and all ages. The KIIs confirmed that school infrastructure and access were major concerns. Infrastructure is a key area that needs improvement: in rural areas the limited number of classrooms means that classrooms are shared or lessons are held under trees, and most schools lack WASH and storage facilities and even fences to keep cattle out. The crisis has further degraded school infrastructure, with schools looted, burned or otherwise destroyed. In addition, in the rainy season the lack of road infrastructure makes it impossible for many students, teachers and even NGOs to access schools in the *payams* surrounding Pibor town, which leads to low levels of attendance by both teachers and students and limited support from NGOs.

Overall, in the areas studied, schools have insufficient classrooms, desks, chairs and blackboards, lack sufficient or appropriate WASH facilities and often have no fences. In schools in remote *payams*, classes are often held under trees, with no infrastructure whatsoever. Girls in school said they did not feel safe going to latrines, especially girls in rural areas as the latrines are not segregated; there was one mention of latrines having no doors. Two boys aged 10–14 in school also said that they feared going alone to the latrines, likely due to harassment from other boys, though this was not investigated further in the FGD.

The lack of food provision in schools was also mentioned as a disincentive for parents to send their children, and food was mentioned by boys and girls in school as one of the additions they would like to see. Some even said that because there was no food in school they had to stay at home to support their parents in hunting, gathering wild fruits and fishing.

Girls in school in both age groups said that one of the reasons they were able to access education was living in close proximity to a school. With many security issues in the area, girls said that they feared being abducted and raped on their way to school if it was too far from home and they had to

go through the bush. Boys out of school also cited distance as an issue but did not mention fear, only that the school was too far away.

The rainy season in Pibor also has a huge impact on access to school for both girls and boys, limiting their ability to walk to school in some areas, and even needing boats for access. During the rainy season, most roads are muddy and flooded, which means that even girls and boys who do manage to get to school take more than an hour to walk even short distances. Some *payams* are completely cut off because the river is impossible to cross; participants in FGDs in those areas said: 'During the rainy season we cannot cross the river from Lenyeris. If we had boats or a school in our *payam* we would be able to attend.

Domestic work

For girls aged 15–19 who are out of school, domestic work appears to be the main responsibility, with participants in all seven FGDs for this age range stating that household chores were what prevented them from engaging in any activity outside the home. One girl said: 'Housework is what is stopping us from working. I work at home so my siblings can come home and find food ready.' Another stated: 'I am alone so I have to do a lot of housework while my brother goes to school.' Orphan girls who have become heads of household have sole responsibility for domestic work, and so for them access to school is impossible. For girls aged 10–14 out of school, housework is also a reason why they do not attend; one girl said 'because my mother leaves me with children at home,' and another: 'I must help my mother with housework to allow my younger sisters and brothers to attend classes.' In an FGD with girls in school, one participant said that the reason she was able to go to school was that 'I have my mother who does the housework'. As already mentioned, there are differences in the domestic burden of work between rural and urban areas of Pibor county: girls in rural areas have extra responsibilities beyond cleaning, cooking and taking care of younger children – they also have to take care of cattle, and subsequently have less time available to access education.

Girls in school said that they arrived at school later than boys because of housework, and they generally do more domestic work than boys; even girls who attend primary school do not benefit from the same opportunities as boys. Overall, the burden of domestic work on girls is very heavy and disproportionate compared with boys, who generally did not give housework as a reason for not having time to go to school. Boys in one out-of-school group aged 15–19, however, did say: 'It's because of cattle keeping that we do not have the opportunity to go to school'; while boys aged 10–14 out of school said that responsibilities for animal grazing, which fall solely on them and often during school time, hindered them from attending. This is particularly the case in the more rural areas, and it is particularly difficult for pastoralist families who move around with their cattle during the dry season. For these families, access to school becomes impossible in the six months from November to May.

Menstrual hygiene management

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) was another key barrier mentioned by both women and girls that prevents girls from going to school. A lack of appropriate facilities and the non-availability of menstrual hygiene items, both at home and in school, compound the shame and stigma attached to menstruation.

The availability of appropriate WASH facilities varied across the schools visited for this study. There is a clear difference between urban and rural areas, with schools in Pibor town generally having segregated and sufficient latrines, with water available in some, while the schools in the *payams* around Pibor and in Gumuruk town have very poor ones WASH facilities or none at all. Coupled with the lack of water or soap at home and the lack of menstrual hygiene items, this makes MHM very difficult for girls and limits their access to school. Sanitary pads and soap were no longer available in the schools visited for the study, although they were distributed by a number of NGOs in different locations before the start of the rainy season, as confirmed in KIIs with NGO staff.

The majority of girls and women said that they used reusable cloths, though some also reported receiving sanitary pads from NGOs. However, all mentioned the challenges they faced in needing to bathe multiple times a day, with water points far from their homes, MHM and washing facilities unavailable at school and the need to wash reusable cloths at night. Girls in school in both age

groups specifically mentioned menstruation as a key barrier to attendance, especially for girls with no access to reusable pads, who formed the majority taking part in the study. Women and girls in both age brackets use pieces of cloth, but one girl in a 15–19 out-of-school group said that these 'are uncomfortable, sometimes causing wounds and itching'. Both women and girls said that more dignity kits, soap, towels and underwear were needed, both at school and at home.

Girls also said that they faced cultural restrictions during menstruation, such as not being allowed to greet people or to interact at all with boys (girls aged 10–14), not being allowed to cook or to visit neighbours, friends or family, not being allowed to plait anybody else's hair and not being allowed to 'associate with boys' (girls aged 15-19). One girl in a 15–19 age group (out of school) said that 'to avoid embarrassment, we stay inside the house until the last day [of our period]', and another that they are not allowed to greet age-mates because it is believed that they will also start menstruating. Another said: 'Girls are not allowed to attend community meetings during menstruation, and they also go away during menstruation.'

In FGDs with women, many of the same MHM challenges were highlighted, with women saying that they did not have enough water or soap for bathing and washing during menstruation. They also said that during their period they are not allowed to sit or associate with men or even to meet other women because, as with the girls, it is believed that they will also start their periods. One woman said in an FGD: 'Most girls stop attending school because it might embarrass them, and also it is a sign that their body is ready to produce babies, so means it they are too old for school.' Again this shows that, for girls, the onset of puberty and menstruation is a key reason for parents to marry them young.

Girls in both age groups in school said that they had received information on menstruation and pregnancy and other information related to puberty and health at school from NGOs working in the area or, in the case of the girls' school in Pibor town, by two female teachers as well. However, in four of the five FGDs for girls aged 15–19 out of school, participants said that they got no information on early pregnancy, childbirth or healthy MHM. Those who did receive information reported that it was provided by NGOs.

School environment

While the school environment itself was not mentioned as a reason for non-attendance in any FGD or KII, a number of issues emerged which could inhibit attendance for both boys and girls. For example, in the schools where data were collected there were only two female teachers (both in the girls' school in Pibor town), and there are only 15 female teachers currently registered by UNICEF in the whole of the county. There is a serious lack of female role models and little encouragement for girls to value schooling. A point mentioned by several key informants was that girls lack motivation due to the absence of role models; one female key informant said: 'My own daughter tells me that she wants to stay home because she doesn't see any female teachers'; while others said that girls could not share personal issues with male teachers. A female key informant said: 'In our culture, a man cannot talk about reproductive and menstrual management in front of girls or women'; this is a constraint that further limits girls' access to information.

Overall, there is a lack of teachers in Pibor. The MoGEI puts the total number of students in the county at 3,543 (2,193 boys and 1,350 girls) and the number of teachers at 61 (only four of whom are female). UNICEF estimates the total number of students in Pibor and Gumuruk at 7,880 (5,287 boys and 2,593 girls), with 153 teachers (138 male and 15 female).[44] KIIs with teachers indicate that more training is needed for teachers and PTAs, that schools do not have enough teaching materials, that teachers are not being paid enough and that more support is needed from NGOs – this latter point was mentioned by all the teachers interviewed for the study.

In FGDs with both girls and boys in school, students reported a lack of adequate scholastic materials in all schools, highlighting the need for desks and blackboards and also for materials for individual students such as books, pens, school bags and uniforms. Asked about the language of instruction, both girls and boys in and out of school said that they would like to be taught in both English and the Murle language, though in three FGDs girls in school said that they were not as fluent in English as boys.

When asked what they would like to see changed in classroom interaction, responses from girls in both age brackets included 'we want the teacher to give girls more chances to give answers' and

'allowing me to contribute without being intimidated by boys'; these comments indicate a gender bias among the predominantly male teachers. In terms of school roles, girls aged 10–14 in school reported in particular that activities were gendered, with girls sweeping classrooms and the school compound, collecting rubbish and fetching water while boys played football (two FGDs) though sometimes they also helped to sweep the compound (also two FGDs). Class leaders are boys (as reported in three FGDs), apart from the girls' school in Pibor; this was confirmed by all FGDs with girls in school, who said that they had no decision-making power. Boys in school aged 10–14, however, said that they did help with sweeping the compound.

In one FGD with girls aged 10–14 in school, girls said that they would be beaten by the teachers if they arrived late in the morning, even though this was due to the amount of housework they had to do before leaving home every day. This indicates a lack of teacher training, which was confirmed by KIIs with teachers themselves. Teachers reported that the small salaries they receive meant that better-qualified teachers would find roles elsewhere, most often with NGOs. This could also be part of the reason why some schools have allegedly demanded school fees, according to students, even though education should be provided free of charge. In all of the FGDs with girls and boys, both in and out of school, participants said that it was impossible for their families to pay school fees and that this was a major impediment to them being able to continue in school. In several of the KIIs, interviewees insisted that schooling was free and that there was no call to introduce fees; above the minimum required administrative fees.

In KIIs with representatives of NGOs, interviewees said that parents were not sufficiently involved in supporting schools by participating in PTAs and that they requested financial support from NGOs. Poor administration and management of schools was also mentioned as an issue, with teachers lacking administrators who could lead them effectively. NGO informants also mentioned a lack of school clubs for students and a lack of training and support for such clubs. School clubs could cover a range of topics and could be used to promote girls' leadership and participation in different school roles. When asked what other skills they would like to learn at school, girls in both age groups mentioned tailoring, hairdressing/plaiting, building beds and making bags, and reading and speaking skills; some said they would like to become a teacher or treat people in hospital. Boys listed writing, reading and speaking skills, medical skills (becoming a doctor), getting information on health and hygiene and Arabic (English is already taught in school), as well as football, volleyball and basketball.

2.6.2 Juba

In Juba, data were collected in remote parts of with the city in schools targeted by Oxfam for support, and so do not represent the situation in the city as a whole. The study found both supply-side and demand-side side factors affecting access to education for boys and girls, with a few issues in particular standing out; these are examined in more detail below.

Parental support

For boys and girls in school in Juba, in both age groups, financial support from parents for school fees was the main reason why they were able to attend school (tuition is free, but all students in Juba must pay a small annual administration fee). This finding was confirmed in all the FGDs with boys and girls out of school, who said that a lack of parental support was the reason they were unable to go to school; one boy in the 15–19 age group said that he was not in school because 'my father has no money'. Having the necessary scholastic materials was another reason given for school attendance in all the FGDs with boys and girls in school, with necessities such as school uniforms, books, bags, notebooks and pens being provided by their parents 'as needed'. One girl said: 'If my father has money for school fees then I will go to school.' Parental support was particularly important for girls; in FGDs, participants said that they did their housework 'so that I receive family support, food and school fees' (girl aged 10–14 in school); or because 'if I don't do the work my school fees will not be paid' (girl aged 15–19 in school); or that achieving good results in school meant 'working hard for my parents to support me' (girl aged 15–19 in school).

Infrastructure

Distance was raised as an issue by girls and boys in school in both age groups in Juba. Students mentioned the need to take buses or moto-taxis to school and thus the need for money, the risk of being robbed on the way, the fact that traffic congestion might mean they get to school late, or that during the rainy season journeys are more difficult due to muddy roads. In addition, girls in half the FGDs said that routes might be unsafe due to the presence of gangs (especially girls aged 15–19). Girls in school also said that short distances to travel were one of the reasons why they were in school (in three of four FGDs with girls aged 15-19). Both men and women agreed with these points; women in FGDs said that 'parents have to give money for transport'.

Most of the schools in the areas where data were collected had sufficient and segregated WASH facilities with water also available, while only one school had shared toilets (according to boys in school in both age groups and girls aged 10–14 in school). Girls aged 15–19 in school, however, were not as happy with the latrines, with girls in two FGDs saying that they were not segregated and were not adequate. In addition, boys and girls in school in both age groups said that they needed more desks, benches, blackboards and even chalk, and that fences around schools needed renovation.

Domestic work

As in Pibor, in the areas studied in Juba girls in both age groups said that domestic chores were an impediment that limited their access to school, but this was not raised as an issue in any of the FGDs with boys. Instead, boys aged 10–14 said that boys who were not in school chose to leave themselves; in one FGD with boys aged 10–14 who were out of school, participants said that one of the reasons they did not attend was because they did not like school. Other groups mentioned peer group influence as a reason. In FGDs with women, participants reported that for boys the reason for non-attendance was not housework but rather 'labour and income-generating activities – more boys prefer going out to do low-paid labour to survive' and that 'most of them are now looking for money instead of going to school'.

By contrast, domestic work affects girls' education to a large extent, as confirmed by all the FGDs with girls in both age groups, both in and out of school, by all the FGDs with women and men and also by the KIIs. Girls out of school in both age groups all cited housework as one of the main reasons they were unable to attend. Girls aged 10–14 in school said that domestic chores made them late for school or meant they missed classes. One girl said: 'Yes, sometimes when I wake up and prepare tea it takes me time and I get to school when the door is closed'; another said: 'When the work is too much you feel tired, and this causes me to miss school.' Domestic duties also limit the amount of time that girls in school can spend on homework or study. One girl reported: 'It makes it hard because there's not enough time for revision – even doing exams becomes hard'; another said: 'There is no time left for homework, since after school going to market, cooking, bathing children, serving food and fetching water all consume the hours.' The limited burden of domestic work for boys, on the other hand, leaves them with time to do homework. In most FGDs (including those with girls), in-school students said that they received support to do homework from their older siblings.

Menstrual hygiene management

Girls and women across all FGDs said that challenges with MHM made, or had made, it harder for them to attend school. Women said that they managed their periods with difficulty and often had to stay at home during menstruation. They bathe frequently and use cloths or sanitary pads, but the latter only if they have the financial means to buy them; because of the crisis women and girls said that they could not attend properly to their menstrual hygiene as they lacked money to purchase pads. Girls in both age groups mentioned similar challenges but also said that they did not have enough underwear, had to use pieces of cloth and had to 'bathe three times a day'. NGOs have provided soap, pads and money to girls and women, but this is not done regularly, and when the study was conducted girls said that there was no soap in school. Some girls mentioned cultural restrictions during menstruation such as not entering the kitchen or staying indoors, though the latter could be self-imposed; one female key informant said that 'during menstruation girls tend to remain at home'.

CEFM and early pregnancy

In Juba, early marriage was not a key barrier to girls accessing education, but it is still an issue even in the capital. Where CEFM is concerned, it is again men who make the decisions, according to women in the FGDs. One woman said: 'Fathers are the only decision makers in marrying girls at an early age, and because of the war and economic crisis child marriage has increased.' However, another claimed: 'Nowadays it's the girls who are interested in marrying, not the parents deciding.' In an FGD with men, one remarked: 'I think now parents want their children to study first, and marriage will follow'; while another added: 'Most communities have started to learn that CEFM can damage a child's future.'

In FGDs with girls aged 15–19, CEFM was mentioned as a barrier to some girls attending school, while forced marriage was raised as an issue in FGDs with girls aged 10–14. However, neither CEFM was mentioned as an issue by boys in either age group. Girls in both age groups who were out of school said that CEFM was the reason why they could not attend, particularly those in the 15–19 age group, and early pregnancy was given as an additional reason. In an FGD with women, participants said that CEFM was a coping mechanism for many girls following the economic crisis, and as a result the number of CEFM had increased. Girls in school cited early pregnancy as an issue that could affect their education, and said that many girls became pregnant outside marriage. This is despite the fact that information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including MHM, is given in schools by senior female teachers and is also available in the community from older women, NGOs, via women's groups or on the radio (this was mentioned by girls in both age groups in and out of school). In school, teachers confirmed that they conveyed messages on SRH and MHM, though all the teachers interviewed said that there was no training or materials to help them provide such information. When asked in FGDs what puberty meant for boys and girls, female respondents said that they started 'associating' with the opposite sex. Girls mentioned unwanted and early pregnancies and CEFM, and as a result dropping out of school, as other potential impacts of puberty.

When students in both age brackets were asked which groups were excluded from education, both boys and girls answered orphaned children, disabled children and street children (FGDs with adults reported an increase in the number of street children). Girls in both age groups in school also said that pregnant girls would be excluded 'because they feel ashamed' or 'it will spoil the image of the school' and 'it can influence others to join them'. Girls said that those who became pregnant were not supported by the school; although some might be supported by their families, 'they still would not feel free to continue with school'. This was confirmed by the majority of key informants, both teachers and community leaders and male and female. One interviewee said: 'Mostly breastfeeding mothers and pregnant girls are excluded from school because if they are allowed to remain they can influence others.' Another said: 'They are free to continue schooling as long as they have support from teachers, parents, community leaders and NGOs' – however, the likelihood of this happening is very limited. Bucking this trend, one teacher said: 'If married or pregnant mothers are willing to re-join school, they are allowed; that's specifically why we have afternoon sessions.'

School environment

Boys and girls in schools in Juba in both age groups described a more gender-equal segregation of school roles: girls sweep the classroom and compound and fetch water, while boys collect rubbish, clean blackboards, dig toilets and cut grass in the compound and collect water for staff latrines. Further, both girls and boys can be class leaders and monitors and can participate in decision-making roles. This was confirmed in seven FGDs for boys and girls in both age groups, but in one FGD with boys aged 15–19 in school and another with girls of the same age participants said that there was some discrimination in activities assigned them by teachers, with girls mostly responsible for cleaning and boys mostly in charge of organizing school events.

Girls said that they were encouraged at school to express themselves as freely as boys, that 'they both have equal opportunities to participate in school' and that 'girls are encouraged to express their opinions, needs and concerns freely to the school administration' (in three of the four FGDs for girls aged 15–19). Further, both boys and girls felt that they could make decisions in school clubs, such as peace and health clubs, drama groups and Bible study sessions. The KIIs with teachers confirmed these findings, but one teacher said: 'I think both are benefiting, but boys complain and they think girls are being treated better than them, for example in the case of money [being provided] for girls' education'; this might indicate a lack of information and sensitization provided to boys on such issues. When asked what they would like to see changed, on the other

hand, girls aged 10–14 said that they 'wanted the teachers to give them equal opportunities with boys in class interaction'. Girls aged 15–19 in school also said that they would like to see 'equal interaction with boys' in class and 'polite language to girls'. These remarks indicate that girls in both age groups are being discriminated against by teachers and are being harassed by their peers, demonstrating that traditional gender norms are being socialized at school level.

Boys aged 10–14 in school said that they would like to receive school materials and food at school as further incentives for participating and completing their studies. They also complained of being beaten by teachers for arriving late or even for no reason at all, again indicating a lack of teacher training. Boys aged 15–19 said that they would like to see more extra-curricular activities, such as debating and drama groups and football. Asked what skills they wanted to learn, boys aged 10–14 in school said mechanics, medicine, learning to fly a plane, theology, Arabic and training to be a humanitarian worker, while those out of school said drawing or how to operate a camera. Boys 15–19 in school said that they would like to learn computer skills, social studies and politics, carpentry and building skills, while those out of school said mechanics, carpentry and engineering.

Girl aged 15–19 in school wanted to learn skills such as leadership, accounting, agriculture, arts, Arabic, medicine and computing, while those out of school nominated computer skills, writing, accounting and teaching. Girls aged 10–14 in school said teaching, engineering, medicine, writing, computing and flying a plane, while those out of school mentioned business skills, hairdressing, computing, medicine, midwifery, mechanics and being a pilot. In KIIs, interviewees said that vocational training for boys and especially girls would be very useful.

Other issues raised included the shortage of teachers (by all students), with the lack of female teachers highlighted by girls in both age groups. In schools where data were collected, there were on average four female teachers out of an average staff of 14 (according to teachers interviewed). The lack of female teachers is undoubtedly a problem, and girls emphasized that they would benefit from having more female teachers. One girl said: 'The lack of female teachers affects girls because, if there are no female teachers, some girls will be afraid to express their concerns.' One female teacher remarked: 'Female teachers are vital in the school, and not having them means that girls cannot report issues that affect them because they are afraid to tell male teachers.' The teachers interviewed reported that women mostly teach the younger classes, meaning that girls aged 15–19 in particular are left without role models. They also reported poor performance by teachers, high student-teacher ratios, poor salaries and delayed payments. A male teacher said: 'Teachers are no longer given salaries, which sometimes makes it hard for them to come and teach'; indeed, teachers often have to work without payment.

For themselves, women said that they would like more centres where they can study. One woman said: 'Here in the women's empowerment programme there are a lot of women, but few sewing machines and even fewer learning materials. Also, the space is small and the students are many.' This indicates a need for more women's empowerment programmes and more ALPs. Men said that they would also like to see empowerment programmes for men and boys, and more classrooms to cater for everyone – boys, girls, women, men and all school drop-outs.

2.7 PROTECTION AND GBV ISSUES

While the study did not look in detail at protection or GBV issues, it did include questions about safety, security, information about services, schools' codes of conduct (CoCs) and reporting mechanisms, which touched on these important issues. The findings are presented below.

2.7.1 Pibor

When respondents were asked about specific risks in the community for each age and gender group, the general consensus was that men and boys faced risks such as attacks by armed groups, recruitment by armed forces, being killed in cattle raids and revenge attacks and age-set fighting, the latter particularly affecting boys. For women and girls, the main risks mentioned were rape and abduction, especially for girls; two key informants said that girls were vulnerable to being raped when walking to school. Girls themselves, in both age groups and in and out of school, also

said that they feared being raped or abducted by strangers while fetching water, collecting firewood, bathing by rivers or streams and walking long distances, especially at night. However, they said that they felt safe going to school, unless there was age-set fighting. Girls aged 15–19 said, for example, that they feared walking long distances as age-set groups of boys might abuse them along the way. Boys, on the other hand, felt much safer overall, mentioning only issues around age-set fighting, while men mentioned issues of insecurity, primarily during conflict.

As for GBV issues at school, girls in both age groups said that they did not feel safe going to the latrines, especially in schools in rural areas where latrines are not segregated. Girls in school also said that they sometimes faced sexual harassment from boys. One particularly worrying comment made by a girl in an FGD was that 'a girls' school is needed so that we do not fear being made pregnant by male teachers or boys'. Girls in both age groups said that they did not know how to make complaints in school and usually reported cases of harassment to their mothers or to aunts or older women in the community. There are also very few female teachers, and all these factors mean that cases of GBV in schools are likely to be under-reported. As well as a lack of female teachers, few teachers are trained on how to deal with GBV cases. When asked if their school had a CoC, only half of the teachers interviewed knew if there was one or what its contents were. There is no national CoC for schools; it is the responsibility of each school to establish its own.

Asked about changes in levels of safety and security, respondents of both genders and all ages felt that security had worsened since the conflict began, with more cases of rape and more age-set fighting. Particularly relevant to access to education were the comments of two teachers who reported that girls who had been raped during the crisis subsequently dropped out of school due to 'fear of being stigmatized'.

2.7.2 Juba

In Juba, the protection risks mentioned by men and boys were theft, violent robbery (for boys, especially when going to the market), armed men and groups and gangs. Women and girls cited rape as their number one fear, followed by harassment and abuse and then robbery and attacks. In addition, men mentioned domestic violence as a risk for women, though women themselves did not raise this in the FGDs, perhaps because domestic violence and types of GBV experienced did not form part of this research.

In all the FGDs with boys, participants reported that they felt safe at school. However, the FGDs with girls aged 15–19 in school revealed that they did not feel safe, with several worrying mentions of sexual harassment. One girl said that boys were 'forcing girls to fall in love with them' and another that 'teachers are forcing us to love them', while a third said: 'Some male teachers are forcing us to be in a relationship with them.' Girls also said that they were sometimes insulted or mocked by boys, indicating also that bullying is an issue. This was also a concern for girls aged 10–14 in school, and was mentioned in all FGDs with girls in this group. The younger girls also said that they feared walking to school because of car accidents and abduction threats from strangers, and because routes are overgrown with vegetation and therefore unsafe.

These reported incidents of harassment, and the fact that in half of FGDs girls in school said that they did not know how to make a complaint in school, mean that there is a high risk of sexual abuse and harassment taking place. Only six of the teachers interviewed said that their school had a CoC; three said there was none and one did not know. Three teachers said that sexual harassment was covered in their CoC, but only three said that measures were documented and applied in cases of misconduct. Female teachers said that normally girls would report any issues at school to them, but there is still a risk of under-reporting and a lack of follow-up action. Neither did any of the girls or boys knew how or where to give feedback to NGOs. In KIIs, respondents of all types (male and female, teachers and community leaders) said that more awareness programmes were needed and that referral pathways should be established; one interviewee stressed that 'making people aware of where to go for help in case of any problem and how people protect themselves in the community' was very much needed. Others said that psychological support and counselling were needed. A female teacher added: 'We want some women in the community to be elected in order for women and girls to be able to report incidents that happen to them.'

2.8 GENDERED STRATEGIES AND COPING MECHANISMS

2.8.1 Pibor

Men, women, boys and girls have all adopted different coping strategies. Asked about protection issues, for example, women said that they walked in groups and girls that they walked in groups to school and back and sometimes walked with their brothers. Both women and girls avoided being out at night-time, and parents expected girls to be home early. In one FGD, girls aged 10–14 said that wearing school uniform made them feel safer; however, in two other groups, girls aged 15–19 said that they felt helpless and could only 'pray to God for safety'. In two FGDs, girls aged 10–14 in school said that they were willing to risk their safety in order to keep attending; one girl said that she was 'prepared to risk my safety walking to school because I love to be in school, and I know when I finish school I will be employed'. Girls in both age groups said that boys were safer when walking to school because 'they are careful', 'they move with their fighting sticks' or 'they are stronger than us'. Boys said that in age-set fighting they tried to protect themselves by not participating and by 'isolating themselves'.

In the event of threats to safety and security, girls said that they would seek help (in order of preference) from their mothers and from hospitals, youth leaders and teachers. Women also mentioned neighbours and community leaders. Boys mentioned the police, hospitals, refugee camps, protection centres and traditional chiefs. However, one male teacher said in a KII that in the event of GBV cases, 'community members solve some of the cases traditionally whereas others go unknown, unresolved' and one female key informant said that girls 'fear reporting cases, and even if they do report them, no action is taken because [such behaviour] is considered normal'. These observations indicate a need for improved reporting and follow-up mechanism. There is also a need for more services outside of Pibor town, a point raised by several key informants; one said: 'We do not have any support unless we go to Pibor town.'

In terms of coping mechanisms to deal with poverty and lack of opportunities, female FGD participants gave several examples of IGAs they have started, including selling milk, cooking or making tea in restaurants, and making and selling bread. Men mentioned activities such as traditional cattle trading but also working with aid organizations, joining the army or working with the government. Boys engage in casual labour and help their fathers in the cattle business, while girls help their mothers or engage in similar types of IGA. One woman said in an FGD: 'Girls are now meant for raising income to feed the family due to the economic crisis which has come with the conflict.'

However, community members raised many issues that they felt were outside their power: for example, having boreholes for water and firewood available nearer to their homes, having enough food, being free of attacks, having health services and child-friendly spaces and having jobs. One female FGD participant offered some solutions that would help women's lives: 'Women should be educated in order to improve their lives, services like water and fuel should be brought closer to women's homes, and the government should enforce laws and security.' Another said: 'We want to go to school and we need organizations to employ us or to give us some capital to do business, so that we can support our families. We need NFIs [non-food items] because we lack cooking materials, jerry-cans and basins; we need tailoring school to become tailors and earn some income.' The KIIs with teachers highlighted the need for ALPs to target both women and men.

2.8.2 Juba

In terms of protection, respondents in all groups mentioned coping strategies such as walking in groups, avoiding dangerous routes and overgrown areas, avoiding walking at night and using moto-taxis or cars. In addition, boys mentioned a strategy of avoiding 'bad friends' or 'associating with gangs'. In all FGDs across all groups and ages, participants said that safety had deteriorated since the crisis. If a security-related incident occurred, men would go to the police, local authorities, churches or community chiefs, and women would go to their husbands, religious

leaders, relatives, neighbours, elders, chiefs, the police, hospitals, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) or the government. However, depending on the severity of the incident, they also said: 'We sit down and sort it ourselves before taking it to the concerned authority.' Girls of both age groups would go to parents, aunts, uncles, friends, elders, chiefs, the police, hospital or government, while boys of both ages would go to parents, teachers, community leaders, the police or the army to report an incident. All groups believe that boys can defend themselves in the event of an attack more easily than girls; girls said: 'Boys, they can manage to fight their enemies.'

Responses across the FGDs show that, in terms of coping mechanisms to address poverty, women have started to cultivate produce and sell it in the market or are working in beauty salons, men have taken on daily construction work, while boys are selling water on the street or working as mechanics or drivers. Girls have begun to sell tea or to work in hotels as maids or in salons. FGDs with women, however, also highlighted negative coping mechanisms for boys and girls – prostitution (girls), drug abuse (boys) and joining gang groups (both). Men reported in FGDs that 'young boys are dropping out of school and pursuing a wrong life' and said that younger people had joined gangs.

2.9 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The information in this section was compiled with the help of several INGOs and the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, whose staff and representatives in both locations kindly met with the research team to discuss education issues. A list of interviewees is provided in Annex 1.

2.9.1 Pibor

Despite numerous efforts by NGOs present in Pibor that are specifically focused on education, needs still outweigh capacity. NGO initiatives have included teacher training, induction trainings for new teachers, trainings for PTAs, a push to hire female teachers, starting up school clubs to disseminate hygiene and peace messages, and the construction of classrooms and latrines; however, much work remains to be done. For example, key informants reported challenges around registration and record-keeping of attendance for both learners and teachers, as well as the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD), all of which makes monitoring and evaluation difficult for partners. Though the opening of the only secondary school in Boma state has been a success, it has not so far managed to attract girls, with only two girls enrolled out of 82 students (one of whom did not finish the year, according to KIIs with NGO staff) and with only eight teachers, all male. There were plans to open another secondary school in February 2019, though no firm update has been received on this.

In the rainy season, the education cluster often goes months without being able to meet, and it has only one female representative. Most intervention areas are inaccessible during the rainy season, making supervision and monitoring difficult. The research team faced access challenges even in the dry season, and so can confirm that, with very limited access and restrictions on movement, the rainy season presents particular challenges to the community in Pibor in terms of accessing education and receiving humanitarian support. Insecurity is also a major challenge to access, and is caused by protracted violence between age-sets and inter-communal conflict. Due to the lack of access, most NGOs tend to provide support to the same schools and areas, which leaves some of those further away and harder to reach without any support.

One particular success in 2018 was a school feeding programme, which increased attendance by at least 100 students per school in a very short period of time; however, it was focused only on primary schools and only four of the five operational schools in Pibor were targeted. Cluster members pointed out that the programme needs to be expanded and its sustainability ensured.

Despite teacher training, and teachers being brought in from other areas of the country, poor standards of teaching are still an issue. The MoGEI is currently working on a strategy to address this issue and a strategic educational plan for Boma state is in process for 2019. In KIIs with NGO staff, interviewees stated that teachers' salaries needed to be increased to attract qualified candidates and to ensure retention, and a grassroots mobilization strategy is needed to sensitize the community on school attendance for both girls and boys. These points were confirmed in KIIs

with teachers themselves, who further noted that schools require more regular support and delivery of aid, including school materials, menstrual hygiene items and food aid. None of the teachers interviewed said that they had received any support in the past six months.

More attention also needs to be paid to the particular challenges that girls face in attending school and to the gender discrimination that exists both at home and in school. A number of NGOs have held sensitization sessions on the importance of education, but two of the INGO representatives interviewed said that staff had been attacked at sessions, and there was a clear need for care when organizing sessions in the future. This chimes with Oxfam's research on masculinity in Pibor, which found that it is dangerous to be publicly acknowledged as a change-maker or a non-violent role model, let alone to proactively participate in any public initiative, for fear of reprisals. This research concluded that any effort to promote potential role models needed to be accompanied by measures to reduce levels of stigmatization and violence.[45]

One area in which girls in Pibor receive support is the provision of MHM items, though supplies are not regular and are often only given to girls in school, as indicated by FGDs with girls. Boarding schools were mentioned by all INGO interviewees as a possible solution to girls' access to education, particularly for girls in secondary school. However, this was not suggested as a solution in discussion with girls themselves. In the FGDs, girls reported that organizations did not consult them on their needs, and they did know how to make complaints to NGOs. A few girls told enumerators that distribution points lacked toilets and they had to wait for long hours sitting or standing in the hot sun.

2.9.2 Juba

KIIs with INGO staff in Juba pointed to many successful programmes and much support provided to schools in the capital, such as distributions of educational materials, training for teachers and PTAs, the construction and rehabilitation of temporary learning spaces and of child-friendly spaces, distributions of MHM materials, cash incentives for girls' education and women's empowerment programmes, among others. However, the challenges highlighted by participants in the study emphasize the fact that there are still many improvements to be made. As highlighted by the FGDs and the KIIs with community leaders and teachers, as well as the KIIs with INGO staff, needs include more training for PTAs, more adult learning programmes, improved school infrastructure, more female teachers, increased awareness in communities, support for youth programmes, the regular provision of dignity kits, environments free of bullying and SEA, further empowerment of women and girls and incentives and support for their education, to name just a few. This last point is especially important. Some programmes have focused on increasing girls' enrolment, such as the Girls' Education South Sudan programme (GESS),[46] which has encouraged girls to attend school, but there is room for improvement. The quality and standard of teaching and the prevalence of gender discrimination and bullying and harassment are still all barriers for girls. Tellingly perhaps, although all NGO staff interviewed for this study said that they consulted with all groups, participants in only half of the FGDs with boys and only one of those with girls reported being consulted on their needs by NGOs.

A senior representative of the MoGEI was consulted in both locations. Both answered that currently the ministry had limited capacity and financial capability, and it needed support from INGOs and from UNICEF to be able to provide continued support to schools and to implement its policies.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of recommendations is based on findings from the research and suggestions emerging from the FGDs and KIIs, including recommendations from INGO staff members and technical gender and education experts. Many apply to both locations but, because of the differences between them, some are specific to Pibor and some to Juba, hence the separation. It is hoped that these recommendations will be helpful to the NGO community and will encourage the MoGEI and donors to support particular efforts.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommendations for donors, UN agencies and civil society

- Support the government to achieve international and national commitments on education and gender by focusing on education issues in both supply and demand sides:

    o For the supply side, establish gender sensitive education in all institutions and support infrastructure development such as constructing new schools and improving infrastructure of existing school (including providing lunches, school materials, adequate WASH and MHM facilities as well as adopting and promoting inclusive approaches in education and infrastructure to disadvantaged groups (orphan, street children and children with special needs).

    o For the demand side, focus on targeted gender interventions to bring long-term sustainable and transformative changes to address the deep-rooted gender norms: given long standing patriarchal norms, gender stand-alone programming is required to ensure transformational changes in the community; Male family members hold the power to decide whether girls will go to school or not or at what age they will get married. It is thus crucial that the interventions are targeted at men and boys but also women and girls, the elderly as well as at key change-makers in the community to further internalize the importance of education. A possible way to do so would be to engage the out of school men and women in ALPs and connecting it to livelihood opportunities. It is also necessary to extend ALP funding to rural and disadvantaged areas and ensure to include women, men, young female and male adults.

    o On both supply and demand side, ensure affirmative and innovative approaches to promote girl's education in particular, such as: scholarship program for girls (including uniforms and stationary materials), cash for education for girls; support and work together with the Ministry of General Education & Instruction (MoGEI) and Ministry of Gender in the implementation of policies specifically related to girls' education and to increasing the number and qualifications of female teachers. This should include the strong implementation of school CoCs and promote provisions which strongly address safeguarding, child rights and child protection concerns, works towards and includes the Strategic National Action Plan to end child marriage by 2030, as well as other developed education policies.

- Demand for and ensure Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) is collected, analysed and reported on through internal trainings to staff, administrative school bodies and continued support to education coordination bodies across South Sudan.

B. Recommendations for the Government

- Enforce strong and practical measures to meet international (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and national commitments on education and gender equality through increased coordination and collaboration with NGOs and WROs to ensure robust implementation of gendered policies and strategies; ensure open discussions on these policies and strategies to engage stakeholders and to further improve ownership from community; support the enforcement of laws that require education to be free and universal for primary school level.

- Promote national initiatives which spell out commitment from government on preventing child marriage and on promoting girls' education and enforce laws that prohibit CEFM whereby perpetrators should be brought to justice, working together with customary and traditional leaders as well as mass level awareness raising campaigns on CEFM.

- Focus on ensuring teaching as a profession is bolstered by increasing teacher's salary to also include better learning and professional growth packages/opportunities at national level, across all schools in South Sudan; by providing continuous teacher training; by providing teaching materials across all schools, by developing and implementing school curricula that contribute to long-term shifts in gender norms and by investing all efforts in increasing the number of female teachers and improving their qualifications.

C. Recommendations for civil society

Gender programmes

- Ensure targeted interventions which specifically address traditional gender roles, expand on programmes dealing with unpaid care work and organize dialogues with all sections of the community, gender segregated and mixed, on the benefits of positive gender norms; further engage with men and boys separately to discuss gender norms, roles and relations and to promote positive changes on men and boys sharing unpaid care work, redefining masculinity and other harmful gender norms.

- Focus on community engagement interventions to challenge discriminatory beliefs and practices against girls' education, CEFM and SRH, in a safe manner; use community based campaigning and existing national South Sudanese campaigns; also use men engagement groups to promote the end of CEFM. Find and use role models from the community to sensitize community members on girls' access to education and mobilize community groups to educate them on the importance of empowering girls. Engage with religious and community leaders and work with the influential leaders (both men and women) to promote these positive changes, while ensuring safety and managing any backlash.

- Strengthen women and girls' leadership by identifying exiting women's group (such as the Kabarze in Pibor), building their capacity on leadership and negotiation skills and mobilizing them through continuous support. Promote them as models of women's leadership. Introduce ALPs for women and technology or other numeracy skills training and continuously work with men and boys to promote and support them as role models. Ensure that measures are in place to prevent any opposition from men. Use existing mixed groups such as parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to further foster and encourage leadership by women. Encourage women's participation in PTA by including couple (husband and wife's) participation in PTA meetings. Work with community and religious leaders, elders and influential informal community leaders (both men and women) to promote these positive changes and to sensitize the community about the value of women's participation in leadership roles.

Education programmes

- Promote innovative and affirmative action to promote girl's education; develop scholarship programs for girls; provide cash incentives to the family; develop reward and merit-based systems for good performance for girls; conduct monthly meetings with both parents; conduct half day sessions on the importance of girl's education, gender norms, unpaid care work, CEFM, women and girls as leaders and decision makers.

- Ensure community-based promotional campaign on the importance of education with specific campaigns on girls' and women's education through radio programmes, street dramas, songs,

promotional visits of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, community leaders etc. Further adopt community-based approaches building on existing community structures to motivate the meaningful participation of women, girls, men and boys, separately and together in all education initiatives, while working together with Gender and Protection programmes to minimize backlash from men and boys.

- Support in the creation of an encouraging environment to retain and increase numbers of female teachers: build capacity of female teachers in teaching methodologies including women's leadership skill. Include affirmative actions such as providing special incentives for female teachers for example advocacy for tax reduction by 10% for female teachers, promotional campaigns on female teachers as role models.

- Provide incentives for teachers at local level and advocate for the increase of the salaries and other benefits (maternity and paternity leave, medical, higher educational opportunity or trainings) at national level across all schools in South Sudan. Equip teachers with teaching materials and regular teacher training. Provide continuous training to teachers and ensure training is equally accessed by female and male participants.

- Ensure the implementation of school-based code of conduct (CoC) policies for teachers. Work with teachers, parents and students and with education programmes to establish these CoCs and monitoring, including girls and female teachers in discussions throughout. Ensure measures for strong implementation of CoCs such as induction and frequent orientation and ensure that the trainings are provided for teachers, PTAs and students.

- Develop and maintain a confidential and robust incident feedback mechanisms for women, girls, men and boys within the schools for any violations, including for incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse within schools. This can be done by establishing and empowering child rights committees within the schools.

- Identify opportunities to promote women's leadership in PTAs and school management committees (SMCs), including quotas for women, while working with men in the community and with male teachers to minimize any backlash. Provide continuous training to PTAs and ensure that training can be accessed equally by female and male participants.

- Provide education on MHM, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and other life skills in order to minimize early pregnancies. Life skills training should include discussions on gender-based violence (GBV) and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), personal hygiene, the benefits of postponing marriage and pregnancy, methods of contraception and cultural restrictions for girls when on their period, always taking into account cultural sensitivities.

- On strengthening a more gender equal school environment:
    - Ensure institutionalization of gender sensitive education such as: gender sensitive training to all teachers to discontinue the gender stereotypical school roles (such as sweeping always given to girls) and gender discrimination in schools including in classroom interaction but also volunteer roles outside the classroom. Train students, parents, teachers and PTA members on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Review school curriculum from a gender lens and advocate for gender sensitive educational materials. Identify opportunities to promote women's leadership in PTAs or SMCs, including quotas for women, while working with men in the community and male teachers to minimize backlash.
    - Ensure extra-curricular and recreational activities such as drama, sports are gender-sensitive, allowing both girls and boys – together or separately - to participate.

- Ensure targeted education programmes for pregnant and lactating mothers; develop a pregnancy-friendly school environment and infrastructure; provide childcare facilities bi-weekly family sessions on SRH, family planning, consequences of early pregnancy and importance of women's and girl's education and men's role in unpaid care work.

- Provide specific learning programmes for youths/adolescents (e.g. accelerated learning programmes-ALPs, skills development, literacy training), introduce vocational and technical training for women, men, boys and girls out of school and ensure that access to childcare is provided to enable the full and active participation of women and adolescent girls in education initiatives.

- Increase support to the MoGEI to include capacity building, monitoring and financial support, as well as support for policies that encourage the inclusion of disabled children.

- Advocate and push for all data collected relating to education to be disaggregated by sex, age and disability, across all 32 states, on enrolment, retention, drop-out and completion rates among learners as well as the attendance, training and qualifications of teachers.

Education related recommendations for:

a) Protection programmes

- Ensure the revision or creation of school CoC policies to specifically address school-related SEA, bullying and discrimination and to include reporting and referral mechanisms and robust support systems for survivors. Ensure that this is done in consultation with girls and female teachers and implement systems whereby girl and boy representatives monitor and provide regular feedback to PTAs on issues relating to SEA, bullying and discrimination in and around schools. Build the capacity of teachers, staff and community members to deal with GBV, sexual harassment and abuse and ensure understanding and awareness among teachers of the importance of avoiding any form of violence against girls and boys in schools, putting in place GBV monitoring and accountability systems for teachers.

- Work with men and boys to limit and address incidents of GBV, both within and outside of schools and conduct further research on GBV affecting men and boys as well as research on harassment and abuse occurring in schools.

- Sensitize and mobilize communities and aim to transform attitudes on CEFM through outreach and awareness-raising programmes, focusing on religious and community leaders, men and boys, and by sensitizing women and girls on their rights and advocate with government to enforce laws that prohibit CEFM and to bring perpetrators to justice.

b) WASH programmes

- Provide regular distributions of sanitary pads both within and outside schools to all girls and women of menstruating age in the short term, and in the long-term train girls and women to make reusable sanitary pads, working with the Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods (EFSVL) team.

- Ensure the construction of safe, sufficient, segregated and MHM-friendly latrines (respecting local customs) in all schools and facilitate access to water through the construction of boreholes, engaging girls in the design and location of school sanitation facilities.

- Provide information to boys and girls, separately, on MHM and SRH (with health colleagues) through appropriate awareness-raising and sensitization initiatives and through teachers of the appropriate sex.

c) EFSVL programmes

- Provide opportunities for income-generating activities (IGAs) for women and men and build vocational skills for boys and girls, ensuring that these are gender-specific.

- Ensure the distribution of food aid to the community most in need, including food in schools and warm lunches on school days.

- Provide training for women and girls in leadership, life skills and entrepreneurship, and work with gender teams to sensitize men and boys to avoid any backlash. Include the provision of capital and consider joint sector business efforts such as the production of reusable menstrual cloth pads, based on a thorough and gender-sensitive market assessment.

- Work together with education colleagues on innovative approaches to cash intervention programmes in education focused on families with girls in school

For location-specific recommendations for both Pibor and Juba as well as practical programmatic recommendations for NGOs working in those areas please refer to annex 2.

ANNEX 1: KIIS WITH MOGEI REPRESENTATIVES AND NGO STAFF

Key informant interviews in Pibor

Name	Gender	Position	Organization
Joseph Lilimoy	Male	Boma State Minister of Education	MoGEI
Kutiyote Steward Francis	Male	Education Specialist	UNICEF
Kajasuk Jackson	Male	Field Team Leader	Finn Church Aid (FCA)
Aloo Budrus	Male	Education Officer	Across
Baba Sebit	Male	Field Coordinator	Nile Hope

Key informant interviews in Juba

Name	Gender	Position	Organization
Angelo Laye	Male	Secretary of Education, Monitoring and Evaluation	MoGEI
Tiger Koang	Male	Education Coordinator	INTERSOS
Caesar Mori	Male	Project Assistant Education Officer	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Allen Poni	Female	Communication Officer	Plan International
Muni Emmanuel	Male	Education Manager	World Vision

ANNEX 2: LOCATION-SPECIFIC AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Pibor

Gender programmes

- Work with protection teams to organize community dialogues on forced and child marriage and the practice of 'booking' brides, with the aim of stopping these harmful practices; discussion topics should include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Advocate for women's centres combined with EFSVL programmes, with a focus on women's empowerment and leadership and IGAs for women, while working with husbands to minimize any backlash.

- Conduct further research on polygamous relationships and their influence on gender norms and their gendered impacts on education and GBV.

- Conduct further research on building the decision-making power of older women in the community and the extent of their decision-making power in the household.

Education programmes

- Advocate for the government to provide and to promote free and obligatory primary education, with no additional school fees.

- Organize awareness-raising and sensitization sessions with different sections of the community, together and separately, to discuss the importance of education.

- Extend adult learning programmes to the wider community, including in harder-to-reach areas.

- Construct temporary safe and protective learning spaces, to include sufficient classrooms, desks, blackboards and other relevant scholastic materials.

- In the meantime, consider introducing double shifts using existing school infrastructure to reduce overcrowding and to extend ALP programmes.

- Ensure that the recruitment of female teachers is prioritized, and in cases where there are not enough trained female teachers train female teaching assistants from the community through professional development courses.

- Promote recreational activities in schools, especially games and sports such as football, netball, basketball and volleyball for both girls and boys.

- Form and train male-only and female-only student clubs and other single-sex forums to provide feedback to PTAs to help shape the education agenda.

- Look into the creation of mothers' clubs for child mothers to avoid them feeling embarrassment and stigma.

- Provide continuous capacity building tailored to teachers' needs, especially untrained volunteer teachers and female volunteers, on best practices in education and teaching skills.

- Provide trainings on children's rights for teachers, parents and learners.

- Provide schools with materials and recreational kits, including cash incentives for uniforms for both boys and girls.

- Provide cash incentives for families to send girls to school and introduce other targeted measures to enhance school enrolment rates for girls, and discuss the provision of cash for education with men and boys.

- Provide adult education centres and classes focused on female literacy and numeracy.

- Focus on alternative education approaches for both men and women.

- Pay particular attention to marginalized girls and boys (e.g. girls who are mothers, former boy soldiers) and provide flexible and open programmes, with early childhood education programmes if needed.
- Create safe spaces for children to play and to act as day-care facilities for mothers.
- Look into the possibility of creating segregated boarding schools for children who live a long way from any school.
- Sensitize communities on the importance of access to education for girls and women, working with gender teams; this can involve radio messages, dramas, flyers and television and mobile communications in areas that have coverage.
- Develop strategies to ensure that women and men actively participate in PTA meetings and in trainings, with attention to appropriate meeting times and locations, the provision of childcare facilities and holding single-sex meetings when necessary. Further include and support women in leadership positions in PTAs.
- Engage both women and men in school-related activities beyond PTA responsibilities, such as school feeding programmes or arranging escorts to school.
- Create specific learning programmes for male and female youths/adolescents (e.g. accelerated learning programmes, skills development, literacy training).

Protection programmes

- Continue to strengthen referral mechanisms and continue to inform communities about the pathways and services available.
- Work with gender programmes to organize community dialogues on CEFM and the practice of 'booking' brides, with the aim of stopping such harmful practices; discussion topics should include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Initiate and promote peace-building programmes and activities that promote peaceful co-existence between different age-set groups and among cattle raiders.
- Ensure that information is provided on reporting mechanisms both within and outside of school.
- Provide information on referral mechanisms via radio programmes or through church services to ensure wide dissemination, as well as to target women and girls who are illiterate.
- Sensitize and educate the community on GBV through entertainment such as community theatre, drama and dance.

Juba

Education programmes

- Provide education on SRH, MHM and other life skills, in order to minimize early pregnancies. Life skills training should include discussions on GBV and PSEA, personal hygiene, the benefits of postponing marriage and pregnancy, methods of contraception and cultural restrictions for girls on their period.
- Ensure that preference is given to recruiting female teachers in all schools in Juba and advocate for policies nationwide to increase the number of female teachers. In the interim, promote female volunteers, mentors and women from the community as role models.
- Focus on ensuring access to education for street children, orphans and children with disabilities, to include free and flexible schedules.
- Sensitize families about the importance of girls completing formal education.
- Look into the development of policies to support pregnant or married schoolgirls and school-aged mothers to continue with school. In the interim, use flexible schedules and ALP programmes.
- Create girls' clubs and safe spaces for girls and women only. Look into the creation of mothers' clubs for child mothers.
- Ensure that both mothers and fathers attend and actively and equally participate in PTA meetings and activities.

- Advocate with the MoGEI for increases in teachers' salaries and for policies to be implemented and monitored, specifically policies that encourage girls to attend school.

WASH programmes

- Ensure, in consultation with girls, that WASH facilities are improved and are sited in well-lit areas, are segregated, are sufficient in number and have doors that can be locked from the inside.
- Improve school infrastructure, including classrooms, school materials and WASH facilities.
- Improve the quality and increase the availability of adult education programmes.

EFSVL programmes

- Extend financial support and training in business skills to both women and men and diversify livelihood opportunities.
- Include vocational training for boys and especially for girls, with a focus on marketable skills.
- Work with men and boys on empowerment programmes aimed at women and girls to ensure wider buy-in and support.

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[28] Ibid. The age-sets overlap, though it is unclear at exactly what point individuals are assigned to one set or another. More research would be needed to establish this.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Historically, red chiefs were the prime holders of law and order in their communities. In places where the state does not reach – for example, in villages and cattle camps – they continue to play this role. However, in towns and other semi-urban areas, the role of the red chiefs has changed.

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[35] Cow dung is gathered and burned to protect cattle from mosquitoes and other biting insects.

[36] Religious belief among the Murle is a mix of animism and Christianity. For more information, see: https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/church-and-conflict-south-sudan or https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/south-sudanese-culture/religion-03546c84-668a-4651-986c-a4a88af937b1

[37] Different versions of the group's name were given in FGDs; this was the one most commonly used.

[38] According to UNICEF data, received from UNICEF representative in Pibor via email.

[39] In Murle society, 'booking' is the practice of paying a family a certain number of cattle for a daughter as young as two, with the expectation that she will marry as soon as she starts menstruating. There have even reports of this happening with pregnant women, on the assumption that the child will be a girl.

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[46] GESS is led by the MoGEI, with support from four implementing partners. For more information, see: http://girlseducationsouthsudan.org/

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This research report was written to share research results, to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy and practice. It does not necessarily reflect the policy positions of the publishing organizations. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the publishers.

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