



Experience by SOS Children's Villages
In Western Uganda



Background:

Child marriage was a norm in Western Uganda and communities attached greater value to the boy child and paid little attention to the plight of the girl child. Reasons for child marriages were seen in socio cultural norms and low levels of education. Child marriages can lead to severe birth complications and economic hardships. Local communities observed these challenges but did not have the capacity to intervene.

The solution was

1. Identification of cases of child marriage and reporting to SOS, local authorities and the police.
2. Awareness creation and counselling on the effects of child marriage among households.
3. Sensitization activities on child protection at community level and in schools.
4. Training for school girls on life skills.

Experience description

Child marriage has been successfully made more difficult and perpetrators were arrested and prosecuted through legal channels. Bribery of local administration and the police has reduced. There was an increased awareness of child protection and increase in enrollments and retention of girls in schools. Communities established mechanisms for tracing and reintegrating young girls, who were already married off. With support of SOS, these girls successfully went through vocational trainings. The declaration „No to child marriage“ was passed nationally.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- Perpetrators were arrested and prosecuted
- Bribery of administration and police was reduced
- Awareness of child protection was increased
- Enrolments and retention of girls in schools was increased
- Mechanisms for tracing and reintegrating already married off young girls
- "No to child marriage" was passed nationally



CHALLENGES

- High expectation for allowances was a major impediment to SOS's activities
- Uncooperative local leaders were a challenge
- Highly entrenched cultural norms, beliefs and gender stereotyping that disadvantaged girl education remained
- Some of the offenders were released after bribing the police



LESSONS LEARNED

- Taking into account cultural norms, beliefs and gender stereotyping is key in order to plan awareness creation and sensitization activities
- Bribery reduction of local administration and police has to be part of the strategy in order to enforce prosecution
- Networking on a national level to face the challenges jointly is very effective

Sector: Human Rights – Civil Society

Period: (Year – Year)

Further material: www.sos-childrensvillagesuganda.org

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