

Ignoring the power of women to influence men

Learning from failure *AT A GLANCE*

KNOW-HOW
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Experience by Loyoro Catholic Parish In Karamoja Region, Kaabong District, UGANDA

When this parish arrived in the region, there was rampant insecurity such as raiding of animals, looting of gardens and killing and robbing of women. All these atrocities were being carried out by men of two groups: the Dodoth and the Jie.

The solution was to work with men for reconciliation and provide them with an alternative livelihood to enable them to abandon cattle rustling.

Main characteristics

- Cross border dialogue and sharing of the experiences and impacts of cattle rustling and killing
- Introduction of men to an alternative source of livelihood through farming and skills training
- Distribution of seeds and farm inputs to men

Experience description

At the beginning men were enthusiastic about participating in the project. But when we held cross boundary meetings, more raiding took place. After providing men with land to cultivate, we realised that their wives and daughters were the ones who worked on the farms. Moreover, when men harvested the crops from the gardens, they sold the products and spent the money on alcohol instead of on their families. Besides, women still suffered humiliation and death when going to search for vegetables and fruits from the forest.



Other characteristics



REASONS FOR FAILURE

- The traditional thinking that men wielded the power.
- The lack of experience and knowledge of the culture and social interactions between genders.
- The assumption that the majority are right, as this was the approach other organisations were taking.



LESSONS LEARNED

- It is important to spend time learning about a culture and underlying social relations before embarking on any project.
- A project not based on indigenous knowledge can do much harm to the society by supporting the very problem one is trying to address.



CORRECTIVE MEASURES

- Shift of target group from men to women and girls
- Focus on small groups
- Creation of a sharing forum for women where men could only listen and watch but not respond.

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Sector: Human Rights – Civil Society

Period: 2010 – 2014

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