



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE INTERVENTIONS THAT ARE CHANGING COMMUNITIES' ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN 5 REFUGEE HOSTING DISTRICTS IN UGANDA.



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"Investing to end child marriage is not only the right thing to do, but also makes sense economically" [World Bank, Economic impacts of child marriage, 2017]

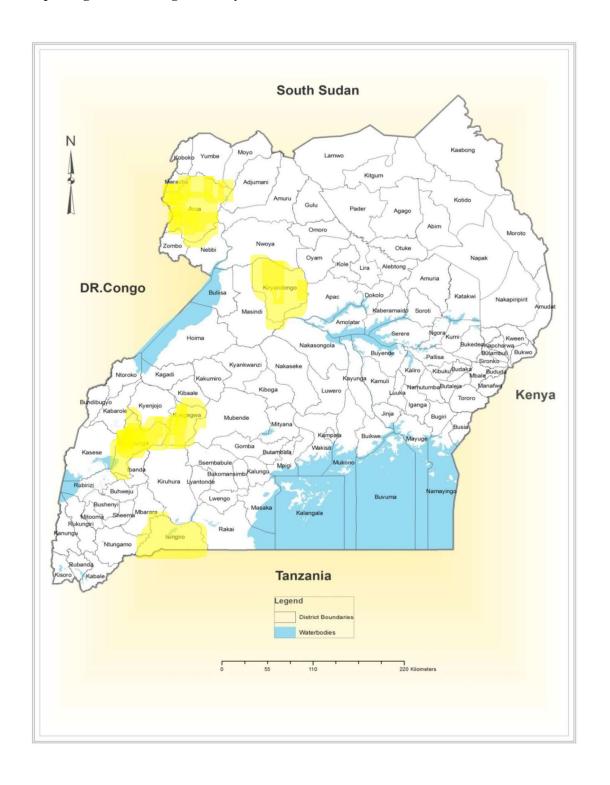
"More than one in three young women in Africa were married or in union before age 18, with levels varying widely across countries" [UNICEF, 2018-Accerelating Efforts to end child marriage in Africa]

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"The target of eliminating child marriage by 2030 is ambitious for a practice so widespread and persistent, but sends a clear message that there can be no tolerable level of child marriage"[UNICEF, 2018]

Map of Uganda showing the study districts.



ACRONYMS

AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ANC Ante-Natal Care

AVSI Association of Volunteers in International Service

C.I.D Criminal Investigation Department

CBOs Community Based Organizations
CDO Community Development Officer

CFPU Child and Family Protection Unit

CIA Child Initiative Agency

CPS Central Police Station

CSO Community Society Organization

DEO District Education Officer

DHO District Health Officer

DLG District Local Government

DPO District Probation Officer

ECM Early Child Marriage

FGD Focus Group Discussions

FHR Foundation for Human Rights

FIDR International Federation for Human Rights

FM Frequency Modulated

FRC Finish Refugee Council

G.o.U Government of Uganda

GBV Gender Based Violence

GNB Girls Not Brides

GNBU Girls Not Brides Uganda

GTA Gender Transformative Approaches

HC Health Centre

HCT HIV/AIDS Counselling and Testing

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HMIS Health Management Information System

ICOBI Integrated Community Based Initiatives

IEC Information Education and Communication

IRC International Rescue Committee

JFCU Joy For Children Uganda

LC Local Council

LG Local Government

MACDEF Masindi Child Development Federation

MDAs Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MoES Ministry of Education and Sports

MoGLSD Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

NGOs Non-Governmental Organizations

NRC Norwegian Refugee Council

NSCM&TP National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy

OVC Orphans and Vulnerable Children

PO Probation Officer

SASA Start Awareness Start Action

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

STDs Sexually Transmitted Diseases

STIs Sexually Transmitted Infections

TFR Total Fertility Rate

TPO Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation

UBOS Uganda Bureau Of Statistics

UDHS Uganda Demographic and Health Survey

UNICEF United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

UPE Universal Primary Education

USE Universal Secondary Education

UWESO Uganda Women Efforts to Save Orphans

VAC Violence Against Children

VAW/G Violence Against Women and Girls

Acknowledgement

The consultant acknowledges all the District heads of departments that were involved in the study that provided time and information that has been used to compile this report. The community leaders and all the individual respondents who were interviewed in the communities are thanked for having participated in this study.

Lastly but particularly important is the development partner that funded this study whose input into programming for ending early marriages and teenage pregnancy in Uganda is a national challenge and goal in the NDP III and Vision 2040.

JFCU

Across Africa, 125 million girls and women alive today were married before their 18th birthday[UNICEF, 2018-Accerelating Efforts to end child marriage in Africa]

Definitions of Terminologies

Terminology	Definition	
Adolescent	Adolescent pregnancy is defined as the occurrence of pregnancy in girls	
pregnancy	aged 10-19 years . [Ganchimeg T, Ota E, Morisaki N, Laopaiboon M,	
	Lumbiganon P, Zhang J, et al. Pregnancy and childbirth outcomes among	
	adolescent mothers: a World Health Organization multicountry study.	
	BJOG. 2014;121(Suppl 1):40–8. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.12630	
	PubMed PMID: 24641534]	
Child marriage	It refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the	
_	age of 18 years and an adult or another child"[UNICEF]	
Child/juvenile	It is a person below 18 years of age (children statute 1997)	
Crime	It is an act omission or attempt in violation of criminal law	
Crime rate	Is incidence of crime per 100,000 people	
Intimate partner	Refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical,	
violence (IPV)	sexual, or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual	
	coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviours (WHO 2013).	
Foster parent	Means a person not being the biological mother, father or relative of the	
	child who assumes parental responsibility of the child by way of a care order.	
Gender Based	An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's	
Violence	will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between	
	males and females.	
Guardian	Means a person having parental responsibility for a child	
Parental	Refers to all rights, duties, powers, responsibilities, and authority which by	
responsibility	law a parent of a child has in relation to the child.	
Perpetrator	A person, group or institution that inflicts, supports, or condones violence	
	or other abuse against a person or groups of persons.	
Physical Violence	The intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause death,	
	disability, injury, or harm. It includes; punching, kicking, whipping, and	
	beating with an object, strangling, suffocating, attempted drowning, burning	
	intentionally, using, or threatening with a knife, gun, or other weapon,	
Sexual Violence	among other acts. Any sexual act attempts to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments	
Scauar Violence	or advances directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any	
	person regardless of their relationship to the survivor, in any setting	
Dama	including but not limited to home and work.	
Rape	Defined as physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration even if slight	
	- of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object.	
Survivor	A preferred term for a person who has lived through an incident of Gender-	
	Based Violence and Violence against Children.	
Suspect	A person believed to be guilty of a specified offence or crime without proof.	
Violence against	Refers to "any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical,	
Children	sexual and psychological harm to children and girls, whether occurring in	
	private or in public.	

1.0 BACKGOUND INTRODUCTION

oy for Children (JFC) and Girls Not Brides Uganda (GNBU) through Girls Not Brides (GNB) received funding in 2020 (a one-year grant) from People's Post Code Lottery (PPCL), for 'Accelerating Progress towards Ending Child Marriage in Uganda'. The project is supporting five members of GNBU in 5 refugee hosting communities of Kamwenge, Isingiro, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa and Arua districts. The implementing partners for GNBU include; Raising Teenager Uganda (RTNU) in Isingiro district; Kaana Foundation For Outreach Programs (KFOP) in Kamwenge District, Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW) in Arua District, Development Foundation for Rural Areas (DEFORA) in Kyegegwa district, and Child Rights Empowerment and Development Organisation (CEDO) in Kiryandongo district.

Overall, nearly one-fifth of adolescents become pregnant in Africa. Several sociodemographic factors like residence, marital status, educational status of adolescents, their mother's and father's, and parent to adolescent SRH communication were associated with adolescent pregnancy. Interventions that target these factors are important in reducing adolescent pregnancy1. Teenage pregnancies are associated with many other social issues, including early forced marriage, lower educational levels, higher rates of poverty, inadequate basic education in the fundamentals of sexual and reproductive health, limited access to affordable contraceptive options and other poorer life outcomes in children of teenage mothers. Other factors include; the inadequate sex education by parents, relaxed awareness about the dangers of premarital sex, and unprotected sex among other factors. Currently, the average prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Uganda is as high as 25%, with 27% in rural areas and 19% in urban areas². This has contributed to social stigma among the young girls, increased HIV and AIDS infections, high girl's dropout rates in school, and poor academic performance among the pregnant teenage girls. Many of these are more likely to fail to graduate from primary to secondary school; given the negative social, economic and health impacts they suffer.

Using the *Accelerator Approach*, the project aimed to unlock the potential of a wide range of partners, by encouraging them to increase efforts and collaboration to demonstrate that accelerated change at scale is possible. This project envisaged that ending child marriage is possible when all relevant actors addressing child marriage in Uganda align with each other; and each actor individually intensifies and accelerates their efforts.

GNBU and JFCU believe there could be some existing relevant interventions this project could leverage on to achieve its intended outcomes, hence the reason to seek the services of an expert

¹ Prevalence and determinants of adolescent pregnancy in Africa: a systematic review and Metaanalysis Getachew Mullu Kassa1,4*, A. O. Arowojolu2 , A. A. Odukogbe2 and Alemayehu Worku Yalew.-November 2018

² UBOS and ICF (2016); Uganda demographic and health survey- key indicators report (PR80).

to map out the existing evidence and document effective gender transformative interventions that are changing communities' attitudes and behaviour towards ending child marriage.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was commissioned by JFCU in June 2020 with the following objectives:

- i. To map out and identify existing evidence-based interventions on ending child marriage in the target districts of Kamwenge, Isingiro, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa and Arua.
- ii. To generate a Research Report that clearly documents effective gender transformative interventions showing communities' attitudes and behaviour towards ending child marriage.
- iii. To develop recommendations based on experiences from JFCU partners, CBO's, local government, among other agencies within the target districts to end child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

2.1 Methodology used in the study.

The study was conducted in the month of July 2020 in 5 districts of Kamwenge, Isingiro, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa and Arua. Qualitative approaches to investigation and analysis of findings were largely adopted due to its notion of flexibility, naturality and ability to generate in-depth information from the respondents. The methodology emphasized the use of participatory techniques of data collection in relation to child marriage and teenage pregnancy issues. Key issues like; awareness of community members about teenage pregnancy, identifying NGOs/CBOs and other stakeholders involved in ending teenage pregnancy in the district and communities, causes, extent, tested interventions that are evidence based to be contributing towards the reduction or ending teenage pregnancy, effects of teenage pregnancies and early child marriages were key areas of interest in the study.

Worthy exploring and documenting were the existing mitigation and prevention strategies in communities that were showing positive results that could be replicated and sustained to end



child marriage. Data was collected using 3 key methods; that is to say; (i) Key Informant Interviews, (ii) Focus Group *Photo 1: An FGD with women -Arua District.*

Discussions and (iii) Documents reviews that relate to Policy, documented research, and report about child marriage and teenage pregnancy issues. Information was obtained from stakeholders like; like Police, community leaders, local government heads of departments, religious leaders. magistrates, and NGOs/CSOs.

Key informants were purposively sampled in line with the theme of the study and interviewed using a designed interview guide. The key informants reached included Community leaders (LCI in the sampled communities; the LCV Chairperson); Policemen /women in Police units in project area; District Health Officer; District Probation officers and CBO/NGO leaders within the study area that are involved in child related issues specifically but not limited to only child marriage; magistrates; District Education Officer; Resettlement commandant and the Implementing partner in the refugee settlements handling child related issues (SGBV/VAC). A total of 149 persons participated in the study and of these 35 were Key Informants and 114 participants in 13 FGDs meetings held with men, women, children aged between 12-18 years (boys, girls) and youths/adolescents (aged 10-35 years).



Photo 2: FGD with Refugee youths in Imvepi Refugee settlement, Arua District

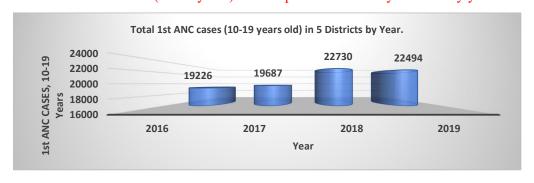
The study was conducted during the period of covid 19 pandemic and the adherence to SOPs was seriously put practice into control the spread of covid 19 during the meetings with the study participants. Wearing of face mask, sanitizing and washing hands with

soap was followed as per guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health Covid 19 Task Force.

3.0 STUDY FINDINGS BY OBJECTIVE

Objective 1: Existing evidence-based interventions on ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy in the target districts.

First, child marriage and teenage pregnancy is still a big and serious challenge in all the districts surveyed. Data obtained from District Health Information System for girls aged 10-19 years that attended first ante natal attendance shows an alarmingly high cases of teenage pregnancies. Figure 1: Total Annual 1st ANC(10-19 years) cases reported in all study districts by year.



In 2019 there were 22,494 teenage pregnancies recorded in the 5 districts compared with 19,226 cases recorded in the same districts in 2016 reflecting an increase of 17.0% within 3 years period alone³. Cleary this indicates an increasing trend of teenage pregnancy cases in the 5 districts surveyed.

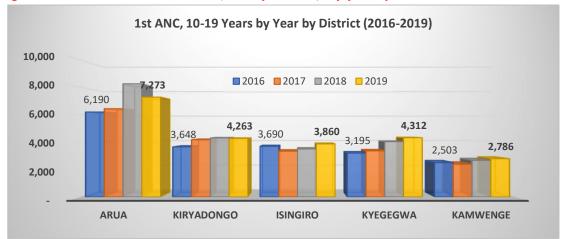


Figure 2: Total 1st ANC attendance (10-19 years old) by year by district

Source: DHOs Arua, Kiryandongo, Isingiro, Kyegegwa and Kamwenge.

The study findings reveal that a number of Local based and International NGOs are involved in programs directly and indirectly addressing ending of child marriages in the districts. Local government departments of Probation office, Community Development, Education , Health are also providing services that promote ending child marriage and teenage prevalence. The Police, in particular the Family and Child Protection unit including the Criminal Investigation Department, is also carrying out legal actions of prosecuting the perpetrators of child marriage especially handling cases of defilement. Many of the International NGOs which are better resourced than the local NGOs/CBOs are operating in refugees' settings while the local based NGOs are operating in the non-refugee's communities. Consequently there are more services being provided to the refugee communities than the local host communities about child related issues .

The interventions reported being carried out to end child marriage include, sharing information and sensitising parents and other stakeholders about child marriages, training and teaching para legal and social workers in the community, mass media-sensitization programmes on GBV, VAC, Education, etc, OVC support, child protection education, support to Local government/NGOs in children and GBV issues, undertaking advocacy against child marriages, follow-up cases of Child defilement using Para social workers structures at community level, establishment of child village committees, establishment of school clubs to help their fellow children who are survivors of child marriage, enforcing law especially to arrest and prosecute the perpetuators, documentation of data related to child marriage especially children coming for ANC in health facilities, establishment of "ending child marriage champions" in the communities, conducting community dialogues on child marriage issues, lobbying for budget inclusion on ending child

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³ Data Source: DHO Kamwenge, Isingiro, Kyegegwa, Arua and Kiryandongo districts- June 2020.

marriage in the DLG budget, popularising the NSCM&TP 2015-2020 in the districts. The media especially the FM radio stations were among those that were reported to be playing a similarly fundamental role of sensitizing communities and adolescents about the dangers of teenage pregnancies.

Despite all the different interventions by different stake holders, a number of challenges were mentioned that contribute to failure to effectively ending child marriages and teenage pregnancies among the community. These challenges mentioned include and not limited to, High poverty levels of some of the community members, ignorance of the laws about defilement and VAC related issues, not effectively implementing the laws by the judiciary system, weak laws to punish the perpetrators, the influx of refugees who come with their cultures that promote child marriages that are different from the Uganda's cultures, the bad and negative cultural beliefs and practices that promote early child marriages, for example in the Alur Culture people believe that when a child develops breasts she is ready for marriage, limited personnel among the police and limited resources specially to help the office to arrest the perpetrators or follow up reported cases for prosecution of the perpetrators, low financing policy of government to the CDO office, the low level of literacy among the refugees, and nonfunctionality of community structures due to lack of resources to effect planned activities to address child marriage and teenage pregnancy issues in the communities.

According to the information gathered during meetings with community members and key informants, some of the child marriages manifested in the form of incest. This was common with divorced families where some men turn their biological daughters into wives. Majority of the child marriage cases were unreported for various reasons including fear of shame of the family where the incident happened, and due to the cultural taboo for a girl child to become pregnant while still in the care of the family. In other cases, parents of the children (boy and girl), negotiate to have the matter resolved at family level without involving the law.

There are no reliable data sources in all the districts about total cases for child marriage and therefore it is not possible to provide reliable and exact data on the status of child marriage cases in the districts. The lack of information systems that capture cases of child marriage in the districts complicates the determination of the extent of child marriage situation numerically.

In conclusion, without adequate and reliable data to measure the implementation progress impact by the different interventions to end teenage pregnancies in districts, there is no evidence-based interventions that can be directly correlated or associated with reported or assumed reduction in child marriage and teenage pregnancies. <u>Instead, the data available based on health information systems show an increasing trend in teenage pregnancy in all districts under study.</u> However there are efforts in the districts to address the issue of child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Objective 2: Gender transformative interventions that are changing communities' attitudes and behaviour towards ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) are programs and interventions that create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities, and address power inequities between persons of different genders. GTA create an enabling environment for gender transformation by going beyond just including women as participants. GTA are part of a continuum of gender integration, or the integration of gender issues into all aspects of program and policy conceptualization, development, implementation, and evaluation. However, evidence shows that gender transformation is possible, but can also be long term, is often generational, and needs sustained investments over time.

The findings show that a number of interventions being implemented in the communities by various stakeholders mentioned in above in a way are gender transformative interventions universally aiming at ending child marriages and teenage pregnancy in the communities including sexual and gender-based violence. At District Local Governments level, this is done through the Education, Health sectors, the Probation and Social Welfare Officers and Police through the Family and Child Protection Unit. These have either sensitized or trained communities and other stakeholders about child protection and the dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Police has arrested perpetrators as a deterrent to VAC. The NGOs are implementing similar interventions either directly or indirectly through Community based structures.

Based on information obtained during several meetings and interactions with respondents, there is a remarkably felt high positive attitude and need by the community themselves, community leaders and development partners towards ending of teenage pregnancy. The following gender transformative strategies and interventions that have been identified to have potential in reducing teenage pregnancy in district. These are:

- i. Activities of sensitization, education and counselling of children and families about early marriages and teenage pregnancy. These are implemented by local government (Probation Department and Community Development at district and sub county levels) with support from development partners on issues of GBV and VAC including child marriages, and teenage pregnancy.
- ii. Sensitization about the importance of taking children to school by parents and guardians to prevent early child marriages before completion of the education cycle;
- iii. Creation of awareness about child abuse and gender-based violence by the cultural leaders to address negative and bad cultural practices that promote early child marriages and gender-based violence e.g. demands for bride price/dowry by parents;
- iv. Sensitization by Religious leaders of community members about the dangers of child abuse, children's rights and gender-based violence in homes and communities; through promotion of the notion of responsible parenthood and peaceful-co-existence;
- v. Government health facilities involvement in treating the survivors of child abuse and gender-based violence including provision of medical examination results which are used as evidence for prosecution of perpetrators in courts of law.

- vi. Arresting and prosecuting the perpetrators by the law enforcement institutions; (e.g. Police) to control the re-occurrence of defilements some of which end up in early child marriages and teenage pregnancies through negotiations by families to settle the matter other than taking it to court for prosecuting the perpetrators.
- vii. Counselling, referral and follow up of reported child and gender-based violence cases by the Child and Family Protection Unit in collaboration with the department of Probation and Social Welfare Officers and NGOs/CBOs;
- viii. Referral of teenage pregnancy and child abuse survivors to other relevant authorities by community leaders and community resource persons on child issues for further support and management; e.g. through medical services provision, legal actions, and psychosocio support among others;
- ix. Education and information provision about child abuses, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence issues by various stakeholders; e.g. by teachers for school going children, CBOs/NGOs; to increase awareness and protection.
- x. Formation and building the capacity of community-based structures to address the issues of child abuse and gender-based violence.

In conclusion, behaviour change is a complex issue that requires long term and holistic integrated approaches addressing socio, culture and economic facets of humanity. In this respect of behaviour change on issue of child marriage, seen to be having cultural and economic facets, it will require long term holistic and integrated programmes focusing on culture, religious, literacy and economic issues to effectively reduce and end child marriages and teenage pregnancy in future.

Objective 3: Recommendations based on experiences from JFCU partners, CBO's, local government, among other agencies within the target districts to end child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

The following recommendations were identified by JFCU partners, NGOs/CBO's, local government, other key informants and community members to be critical to end child marriages and teenage pregnancies both in the short and long term;

Short term recommendations

- 1. *Focused interventions*; in communities and schools where the reported teenage pregnancies and child marriages were highest;-sensitizing children in schools, youths and parents about dangers of teenage pregnancy and early marriages.
- 2. Designing of effective and efficient strategies; for reaching out to stakeholders, communities and adolescent girls about the dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Such strategies include among others; use of music, dance and drama for

messaging about the negative impacts of teenage pregnancy; use of FM radios for messaging that reach out to a wider section of stakeholders; facilitating and working very closely with community-based child protection structures to sensitize, monitor, report and refer cases of child abuses including defilements; supporting the Justice, Law and Order Sector(JLOS) e.g. Police, Courts of Law, and other relevant District level Departments like Community Services, Health and Education sectors with resources (transport logistics, finance, capacity building and human resource) to effect justice to survivors of defilement and cases of teenage pregnancy.

- 3. Facilitation Support; to local governments, Police Child and Family Protection Units to implement activities in their annual work plans that aim to address child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and other gender-based violence issues in the district. This includes arresting and prosecution of offenders of defilement. The local community-based structures offer great potential for local government leadership and sustainability of programmes. However this demands continuous capacity-building and support to enable them to monitor the programmes.
- 4. Partnership and collaboration with CSOs and NGOs; to support the implementation of child rights protection activities in communities. These partners have more resources and other capacities to supplement government efforts in ending child marriages and teenage pregnancies.
- 5. Strengthening referral and reporting mechanisms; support the already existing community-based structures to identify, report and refer cases of child abuses including early marriages, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence in the community.
- 6. Promotion of responsible parenthood among communities through sensitization that provides for the needs of their children.
- 7. Supporting the formation of community-based information systems to capture information and data on cases of violence against children in particular early marriages and teenage pregnancy to monitor incidences and impact of project interventions of ending child marriages. The community information system on teenage pregnancy and child marriage can be scaled up to district and to national level.
- 8. Massive education about laws and policies on children's rights to dispel some of the misinterpretations around these laws should be undertaken. Children should be sensitized about their responsibilities and obligations.
- 9. Support districts that have in place developed plans to end child marriage and teenage pregnancy in districts e.g. Arua district and support others to develop such plans.

Long term recommendations

1) Legal Frameworks; support districts and targeted sub counties to draft local content and generic by-laws on ending child marriages and teenage pregnancy including Gender Based Violence. Advocate for reviewing and repealing the current laws on defilement to also make it criminal for those involved in teenage pregnancy and early marriage.

- 2) Sustainable Impact Strategic Planning; support project districts to draft longer impact Strategic Plans that span for averagely (5-10 years) to end child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and Gender Based Violence in the districts and affected communities.
- 3) Capacity building; support districts to train and equip community-based volunteers (Para social workers) structures, child protection committees, and Village Health Teams, to increase monitoring incidences of VAC and VAC, referral and reporting to relevant authorities of such incidences. Work with the LCs, cultural and religious leaders for that purpose as well.
- 4) Design long term programmes to address bad cultural norms that do not value lives of girl child. This should target cultural institutions and leaders .
- 5) Skills training for livelihood: Provision of technical and vocational education for the out of school adolescents provides an alternative to sources of incomes to reduce child marriage. This should be supplemented by other interventions such as integration of skills training in the school curriculum and establishment of technical schools in the communities.
- 6) Prevention of teenage pregnancy by scaling up adolescent sexual reproductive health services and skills especially in primary and secondary schools.

In conclusion, the will to end child marriages and teenage pregnancy in Uganda exists but it's the resources that are limiting sustained and diversified multiple efforts to effectively end child marriages and teenage pregnancy. Most of the NGOs in the districts have short term non sustained efforts with extremely limited resources to effect noticeable change. For effective programming, long term plans with adequate resources and putting place systems to monitor progress and building local community-based capacity to sustain activities will significantly contribute towards ending child marriages and teenage pregnancy in the long term.



Photo 3: FGD with youths in Kyegegwa District