



Republic of Uganda

A PRESENTATION IN A STAKEHOLDER'S WORKSHOP ON GENDER AND RESILIENCE KNOWLEDGE
SHARE FAIR ON GOOD PRACTICES IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN CROSS-BORDER RESILIENCE
INTERVENTIONS

THE EXPERIENCE, LESSONS LEARNT ON CHILD TRAFFICKING & UNSAFE OUT-MIGRATION IN UGANDA
(A CASE OF NAPAK DISTRICT-UGANDA)

.....
16TH – 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2021-ETHIOPIA

Prepared by: Koryang Timothy
**PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY/CHAIRPERSON-LAW COMMITTEE
NAPAK DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT-UGANDA**

Email: tkoryanga@gmail.com

Tel: +256 772 845 080

16/9/2021

1

BACKGROUND TO CHILD TRAFFICKING & UNSAFE OUT-MIGRATION IN NAPAK DISTRICT-UGANDA

1. CAUSES:

A) HISTORICAL FACTORS

- ▶ During the 1979 overthrow of Idi Amin, the Matheniko broke into Moroto barracks armory and accessed guns, which they later used to terrorize the Bokora leading to loss of lives and livestock. Some people then left the county to other neighboring places like Teso and beyond. Some people went as far as Busia, Mbale, Masindi, Iganga and Jinja. Some of the youthful people started petty businesses like hawking merchandise and later became rich and successful. They set up businesses in some of these towns which has continued to be an attraction to their relatives, with the hope that they can also become rich in towns
- ▶ Besides, the ensuing famine of 1979 to 1980 acted as the last nail to drive more people out of the region to look for alternative livelihoods elsewhere and later found themselves in towns
- ▶ The continued food shortage, coupled with continued cattle rustling especially before the disarmament exercise became facilitating factors for unsafe outmigration for a very long time

HISTORICAL FACTS CONTD;

- Interventions to stop cattle rustling and promote food security were put in place by state and non-state actors however the influx of the Karimojong to the major towns increased, mostly involving children, women and girls. Studies revealed change of trends, outlining the pull and push factors, as indicated below.

B) EMERGING ISSUES

(i) Push factors

- ▶ Outmigration transformed from the search for safety, into commercial business whereby children are sent to towns to work for money, which they keep remitting home. It is now a livelihood option for most families and that is why some parents deliberately transport their children to these towns
- ▶ The girls returning from the towns come back home when they are looking well fed, well dressed and come with a lot of belongings, which has acted as a motivating factor to the rest of the girls at home to join them. Sometimes they move secretly without the knowledge of their parents.

PUSH FACTORS CONTD;

- ▶ There are also issues of neglect of parental responsibility, leading to failure to provide for their families even when they are able to. This has led to frustration, leading to some children opting to run away from home.
- ▶ Due to increased alcoholism, there is a lot of gender based violence affecting mostly girls and women which has led to some of them opting out of their homes
- ▶ Due to high illiteracy rates, most illiterate parents have a poor attitude towards education, especially for the girl child. They feel that educating a girl child is a disgrace in society as they fetch less cows in marriage. Due to inadequate support in schooling, most girls drop out of school and get to the streets to fend for their lives

(II) PULL FACTORS

- ▶ All major towns that the girls and women go within and outside Uganda have better facilities than their district of origin. They have good road network, electricity, running water, cheap food etc. These facilities are a source of attraction for the rural girls and women and would like to settle where life seems easier
- ▶ There are readily available casual work opportunities for them e.g. house maids, sorting beans, maize and groundnuts in markets etc. Because they offer cheap labour, compared to the residents, most people prefer to employ them for casual work. This pulls them to towns and they make more money than they would if they stayed in their home district.
- ▶ Availability of mobile money services also makes it easy for them to transact financially e.g. sending money home to their parents, so they don't have to move back and forth
- ▶ Towns beyond Uganda, like Nairobi provide better pay than Ugandan towns and this has pulled most of the girls and women to such places where they can make more money

2. FACILITATING FACTORS/CHALLENGES

- ▶ Napak district has so many porous borders. Despite police efforts to carry out surveillance and use check points, some children cross borders on foot and board after the known police check points. Some go through Kotido, Amuria, Kapelebyong, Iriiri and so on. This makes it difficult to carry out effective interceptions
- ▶ Inadequate funding and transport for the probation and Social Welfare department to carry out surveillance, tracking and follow ups of the rescued and resettled children in the community
- ▶ Porous international borders, making it difficult to curtail unsafe outmigration to neighboring countries like Kenya. This explains why the majority of Napak Children are in towns like Eastleigh in Nairobi. The bigger question is how do they cross the borders without the required documentation?
- ▶ There is an emergence of middlemen and middle women who are child traffickers. They transport girls from Napak and connect them to people who require maids and they are paid, they then decide what to remit to the parents of these children back home

FACILITATING FACTORS/CHALLENGES CONT'D;

- ▶ **There are also incidences of poor case management**, mostly as a result of compromise by police and connivance by parents to cover the child traffickers. This is coupled with poor documentation of cases. Where evidence is lacking suspects go Scott free
- ▶ **There has been poor timing of resettlement**. Sometimes people are rounded off from the streets and forced back to the district when it is off season for farming activities and when they fail to produce their own food, they sell off some of the resettlement items and get back to the streets
- ▶ **Inadequate co-operation from the transporters**. In most cases they do not discourage the young un accompanied children from boarding their vehicles and even when intercepted, they say they are doing their business. This is a loop hole because there is no law that can support their prosecution.

3. EFFORTS IN PLACE TO MITIGATE CHILD TRAFFICKING AND UNSAFE OUT MIGRATION

- 1) Community sensitization on the dangers of child trafficking and unsafe outmigration, done through community meetings and radio talk shows
- 2) Community dialogues involving parents and other duty bearers
- 3) Training in and out of school children on their rights and responsibilities
- 4) Training of school management committees on children's rights and responsibilities as well as their roles in supporting schools to attain the required enrolment, retention and completion rates
- 5) Go back to school campaigns by leaders

EFFORTS CONTD;

- 6) Back home and stay home campaigns carried in and outside the district hotspots like Kisenyi and Katwe in Kampala, involving key district technical and political leaders
- 7) Interceptions within and outside the district by Police & Local leaders
- 8) Rescues from the streets, rehabilitation, tracing, resettlement and follow up
- 9) Livelihood support to returnees, mostly for the initial one to two months and thereafter expected to cope on their own
- 10) Formulation of various supportive ordinances like: control of excessive Alcohol consumption; Child protection and child trafficking; and education ordinance approved by District Council and awaiting Solicitor general's approval. These are aimed at protecting children against violence both at home and in school as well as ensuring that they enroll in school, stay and complete school
- 11) Collaboration meetings with stakeholders of the hosting towns for strategic thinking and actions

EFFORTS CONTD;

- 12) Dissemination of the Parenting guidelines developed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, to all key technical and political stakeholders at the district and sub-county levels
- 13) Promotion of sexual reproductive health rights including menstrual hygiene management and use of safe places in schools to reduce on girl child dropout rates, associated with poor menstrual management.
- 14) Arbitration in cases of child neglect and failure to provide
- 15) Strengthen enforcement of the mother law, : The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009 & other related laws, Policies & Local laws/Ordinance Bylaws at community level.

Note: The overriding challenge to attainment of these policy recommendations is the inadequate sustainable funding source & Supportive projects for boys, girls and women at community level, coupled with weak enforcement of existing laws.

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Need for comprehensive resettlement whereby the resettled boys, girls and women have all the basic facilities to support them for the initial one year or so until they are able to live independently
- 2) Need for sound transport e.g. a vehicle for the SPSWO and motorcycles for sub-county CDOs with fuel for them to carry out tracking and surveillance. The Same applies to Police CFPU at the district and sub-county levels so that they can timely respond to reported cases and also carry out interceptions.
- 3) Need for emergency fund for speedy response to child trafficking, maintaining intercepted children as well as tracing, reunification and continuous follow up
- 4) Need to set up a scholarship scheme for returnee children of school going age as well as the other vulnerable children who cannot afford the costs of schooling (But inadequate funding from Gov't)
- 5) Village leaders to be supported to register and monitor all children in their villages and report the missing children (Supportive resources?)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS CONT'D

- 6) Need to carry out a needs assessment of the youths in towns and skill them to enable them lead decent lives in those towns, other than begging on the streets. Those that are of school going age can also be supported to study while those that are willing to come back home should be comprehensively supported and routinely followed up
- 7) Gov't & Partners to provide adequate support for improved enforcement at all levels. E.g step up surveillance and checks at the international borders to ensure that the unaccompanied children are intercepted, traced and resettled back
- 8) Fast track approval of the ordinances submitted to Solicitor general so that they can support implementation of stipulated actions therein.
- 9) Advocacy for sustainable projects targeting especially vulnerable girls and women in respective communities.

5. CONCLUSION

Child trafficking and unsafe outmigration is no longer a Napak issue alone but goes beyond international borders as these children have been sighted in Nairobi, South Sudan, Somalia, Chad Republic and Arab world. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted, multi-sectoral and cross border approach. We call upon all humanitarian actors to join hands with Napak District and GoU to address this dehumanizing act of Child trafficking and unsafe out migration

-----END OF PRESENTATION-----

Thank you for listening & Being attentive

“ALAKARA NOOI” (THANK YOU VERY MUCH)