Gender Based Violence
Is it different during COVID-19?

FSL CLUSTER MEETING May 13th – 2020
Presentation by WFP Gender and Protection Unit
Discussion topics

• What is Gender Based Violence (GBV)
• What are the forms of GBV found in South Sudan
• What is the pre COVID-19 situation of GBV in South Sudan
• What can we expect regarding GBV as a result of COVID-19
• What should we do to strengthen GBV prevention & Response during our responses?
• Key services for survivors & Referral pathways in South Sudan
• Resources
What is GBV?

- GBV can be defined as any act of violence directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of femininity and masculinity.
- Acts of GBV can occur in public or private. GBV categories include physical, sexual, economic, psychological and emotional abuse.
- Examples: beatings, sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence, honor killings, child marriages, young pregnancies and other harmful practices.
- Some of these practices specifically target females, most forms of GBV affect both women and men.
- The primary perpetrators of violence against women and girls, however, are men. Many acts of GBV are a crime in most countries in the world.
Situation of GBV in South Sudan (Pre-COVID_19)

• GBV is considered a life threatening risk for women and children in South Sudan

• Existing data tells us that:
  • 65% of women and girls have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime
  • 51% have suffered intimate partner violence (also known as domestic violence)
  • 33% have experienced sexual violence from a non-partner primarily during attacks and raids

• Legal system in South Sudan has weaknesses in preventing and responding to GBV
  • Sometimes dismissed as not serious by law enforcement
  • Victims sometimes punished by the law instead of perpetrators
  • Poorly resources justice system (police, courts, victim support)
  • Customary law is often used instead of formal legal system which can complicate appropriate responses to GBV (e.g. if the local systems / enforcers are not gender sensitive they can insist on things like marriage after a rape which is actually increasing the harm on the victim).
Emerging Gender / GBV Impacts of COVID-19

- **GBV rises during crisis** – This is something that we already know to be true. In all crisis, stress, poor coping options and skills, loss of income etc. all contribute to an increase in violence against women and girls

- **Quarantine** – Prevention against COVID-19 requires quarantine which has increased reports of domestic violence

- **Loss of livelihoods** – This is a reality of COVID-19 that increases stress (results in violence) and increases negative coping mechanisms (e.g. child marriages for dowry)

- **School closure** – Exposes girls to forced marriage, boys to forced recruitment, and both boys and girls to forced labour

- **Meeting basic needs** – People spending more time travelling and scavenging for basic needs (firewood, wild food etc.) which means they spend more time exposed to risk of violence (during travel, in the bush etc.)

- These are just a few examples!
Mitigating GBV in activities

• **GBV risk assessment of activities** – *Use existing knowledge and networks to assess all ongoing activities against GBV risks and mitigate accordingly. Also document the impact of activity suspension / closure on GBV.*

• **Staff awareness** - *Ensure all staff, especially frontline staff, are sensitized on GBV risks and responses, including how to receive, respond to and refer reports or observations of GBV.*

• **Community access to referral** - *Provide awareness raising on GBV and possible referral systems (if available in the locality) during all engagement with community.*

• **Community access to regular information** - *Always Consult local GBV actors and update referral pathways for protection issues regularly to reflect any changes in service delivery and communicate these to those most at risk rapidly via appropriate channels.*

• **Prevention of SEA** - *Ensure staff and partners remain aware of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) measures and requirements and implement them*
Practical steps during activity implementation

- **Protective accompaniment** - Engage with authorities to implement safeguards for women during activities – this might include protective accompaniment (by authorities, community leaders and/or community-based protection mechanisms) to and from implementation points.

- **Less walking time** - Where possible, assess and identify implementation points that require less walking time.

- **Daylight** - Ensure activities start and end during daylight to allow safe travel to and from.

- **Support to carry food** - For distributions, mobilization of community support will be key in supporting women with carrying larger quantities home as a way of promote security.

- **Helpdesks** - Ensure helpdesk is established during all activities. The helpdesk staff should be trained on GBV (what to ask, what not to ask, how to document, and how to refer / support).
GBV Pocket guide for non-specialists

- Are you familiar with the GBV Pocket Guide??
- It was developed to help non-specialists with what to do, and what not to do, when faced with GBV in the course of their work.
- It has also been tested in South Sudan so it is realistic for our context – it provides steps that you can follow if working in a remote or isolated location, or a location that does not have GBV services.
- Highly recommend that you and your staff become familiar with the pocket-guide and
- You can even download it on your smart phone and use without internet!
- Would you like training on the Pocket Guide?
  - Contact WFP Protection and Gender Team and/or GBV Sub-Cluster for remote training
Guiding GBV victims to where they can get support (referrals) is key!

- All your staff, especially front-line / implementation staff, should have up-to-date information on:
  - The GBV actors in their location, or nearest to their location
  - What types of services are available
  - How people can access the services
  - Contact details for services

- Not sure where to get this information...?
  - Contact the GBV Sub-Cluster
  - Contact WFP Gender and Protection Unit
Key Considerations when helping a survivor of GBV

- **SAFETY** concerns
- Confidentiality (consent/referral)
- Respect
- No discrimination/no judgement
- Trust and believe the survivor

Something to think about...are we ourselves role models against GBV?? How can we improve through our own actions at home, in our communities, amongst our colleagues...?
Resources

- GBV step-by-step pocket guide for humanitarian practitioners
- UNFPA South Sudan COVID-19 technical brief-Practical steps to follow in GBV case management during COVID-19 pandemic: A guide for GBV frontline workers
- UNFPA South Sudan COVID-19 technical brief- Addressing gender-based violence and covid-19 prevention, protection and response to promote gender equality
- IASC Gender alert for covid-19 outbreak- March 2020
- https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-andabuse/content/training
Please feel free to reach out to us

Thank you!

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