PERSPECTIVES AND FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH DIALOGUES ON CURBING CHILD MARRIAGE IN UGANDA
Child marriage, according to Ugandan law, is a marriage where either the girl or boy or both are below the age of 18.

Source: UNFPA
Introduction

LETS LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

30% Rate of Teenage Pregnancy in Central Uganda

25.6% Rate of Teenage Pregnancy in Northern Uganda

30.6% Rate of Teenage Pregnancy in East Central

Source: UNFPA
24% of Ugandan women aged 15 to 19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child.

This implies that one out of every four girls aged 15 to 19 is pregnant or has already had a child.
There is a National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy.

10%

The Let Girls Be Girls community engagements feed into the National Strategy and the main goal of the engagements is to reduce child marriage by at least 10% for the next five years.
DRIVERS OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN UGANDA

- Poverty
- Limited access to education for girls
- Traditional and social norms
- Weaknesses in legal and policy actions

Source: UNFPA Uganda; Child marriage Country Profile, 2012.
We echo that our young girls need to be in school, studying and thinking about being empowered citizens who can drive social and economical development, not mothers to fellow children.

The dialogues structured to engage the communities to have a mindset shift and stop making girls home makers but change makers by ending child marriages and consequently teenage pregnancies.
HOW WE DO IT

- The dialogues are held in strategic locations e.g. district headquarters and open places to attract masses which pays off.

- During the ground discussions, we engaged district leaders, teachers, students, parents, victims of child marriage and the general public.
The discussions are re-echoed on social media platforms using the hashtags #LetGirlsBeGirls #EndTeenagePregnancy and #EndChildMarriage where debates continue to attract more attention.
HOW WE DO IT

- We engaged media as our partners to air out the activities as a way of creating awareness far beyond the dialogue.
Blogs and quizzes were also used to make it fun for young people to participate through answering questions and reading the blogs to share with their peers.
OUR REACH SO FAR

Dialogue attendance by District:
1. Mubende 132
2. Kanungu 152
3. Butaleja 143
4. Katakwi 127
5. Moroto 135
6. Gulu 153
7. Kampala (IGD) 350

1,192+ attending the community dialogues
Online, we attracted over 141,164 and counting
OUR REACH SO FAR

With an online engagement of over 141,164+ users and still counting.
GENERAL FINDINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

- Child marriage is still very alive in all communities across the country.
- Culture and tradition still play a fundamental role on the lifestyles of citizens in the countryside.
- Many are not aware of the effects which child marriage puts on child
- There is a lack of awareness about the laws on child marriage and teenage pregnancies across the country.
- Parents have abandoned the traditional role of teaching their children about life skills and left it entirely to teachers in schools.
- Absence of a strict implementation of the laws against child marriage.
THE CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE THAT WE FOUND OUT

- The negative attitude that parents have towards the education of the girl child i.e., a girl is better off in homes and not in schools.

- Abject poverty in the countryside which forces parents to look at their girls as a source of income through exchanging them for a few items for their survival for example livestock such as cows, goats etc.

- Culture and tradition still influence the way people live their lifestyles in the countryside.

- Peer pressure among teenagers to follow the ‘example’ which their peers are taking like having older boyfriends/girlfriends for upkeep.
WAY FORWARD

- Parents should take up their roles in being the life skills educators of their children and not only leave this duty to the teachers.
- Parents who find that their children have been victims of child marriage need to report the cases to police and not just turn to negotiations with the culprits.
- Continuous community dialogues to sensitize the masses about the dangers of child marriage up to the village level.
- Empowering boys and men who can stand up in society to advocate for girl child education and empowerment to improve society.
Pull out your phone let’s make a commitment
#EndChildMarriage
#EndTeenagePregnancy
#LetGirlsBeGirls
Learn more about the project at www.reachahand.org/ecm

Thank you