



# Empowering Girls and Women in SOUTH SUDAN

## REPORT FROM THE FIELD

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### Background

The scant available data we have (from the 2006 Sudan Household Health Survey and anecdotal updates) conveys the dire situation of girls and women in South Sudan. Earlier assessments have shown that girls in Southern Sudan are more likely to die in childbirth than complete primary school. No other country reports numbers this bad:



- Maternal mortality ratio: 2,054 (per 100,000 live births)
- Infant mortality rate: 101 (per 1000 live births)
- Contraceptive use: 3.5%
- Women aged 15-24 who are literate: 2.5%
- Primary school girls' net attendance rate (in 2006): 14.0%

- 36% of those enrolled in primary school (in 2009) are girls
- Marriage before age 15 for women: 16.7%
- Marriage before age 18 for women: 40.7%

### World Bank Initiatives

PRMGE began work in South Sudan in early 2009, with support from Norway (of about US\$4.5 million). In addition, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for South Sudan (MDTF-SS) has committed \$10 million to a Gender Support and Development Project. In a year's time, Bank staff, including a locally hired gender specialist, have made heartening progress, especially considering the challenging environment<sup>1</sup>.

### Building the Private Sector With Women

Civil war decimated the private sector. Markets, roads and commercial credit disappeared. A WB-led PSD project (under the MDTF) seeks to develop an enabling environment for private sector growth in South Sudan. GAP added \$500,000 to this project to strengthen women's entrepreneurship. 25 female entrepreneurs were each awarded \$20,000 through a commercial bank to use as collateral. They were selected as part of a Business Plan Competition (BPC) for entrepreneurs and received business development skills training. The competition drew more than 1,600 applications from across all Southern states.

We visited a Poultry Farm set up by Florence (in the photo), one of the winners, and met with several other female BPC winners. Florence is growing indigenous poultry (bought in Uganda). She had difficulties finding the material to build the shed, getting the permits, transporting the chicks, and getting the vaccines. But she has succeeded and expects substantial profits once the chicks grow and she can sell the broilers in Juba. Florence was able to get communal village land for her enterprise. Another winner in the competition, Mary (on left in photo), had won the BPC award to construct 'Juba Modern Toilets' (flush toilets) next to a marketplace but had been unable to access government land. She was likely going to channel the funds to build a health clinic. Janet is in the brick making business. They and the other women we met



<sup>1</sup> Bank staff and consultants working on this agenda in South Sudan include: (i) Alwaleed Alatabani, TTL of the PSD project and Dorothy Daka Matanda, Private Sector Development Specialist; (ii) Yasmin Tayyeb, TTL of the AGI and the Gender Support and Development Project, and Verena Phipps, consultant - Shubha Chakravarty, Economist is managing the impact evaluation with the support of Salman Alibhai, a consultant based in Juba; and (iii) Tesfaye Bekalu, TTL for the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation project and Gunther Gutknecht, Water & Sanitation Specialist. Museme Munira Issa is the Bank's Gender Specialist in Juba and supports the integration of women's economic empowerment issues in all of these (and other) projects.

were motivated, clear about their business needs and very resourceful. On their own initiative, they have spearheaded the launch of the first *Southern Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association*. This is a welcome, unanticipated benefit of the project and should help to strengthen women's participation in the nascent private sector. We will support the legal, spatial and IT set-up of the association with additional GAP funds, and support capacity building activities that respond to the needs expressed by the Association.

A second GAP award of \$500,000 has been channeled, also within the PSD project, to local microfinance service providers to extend loans to women. PSD project funds will be used to provide TA and collect information for monitoring and evaluation. The project's monitoring and management information systems will disaggregate data by gender. We will offer gender training to local project staff on how to design and use gender-sensitive monitoring.

### Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women



South Sudan is one of the 6 countries in the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) and, after Liberia which started a year earlier, is among the first to begin implementation. The \$3m initiative will reach 3,500 adolescent girls in 4 states with technical, life-skills and business

development training for income generation/employment. 100 village-level Adolescent Community Clubs (photo) will provide safe spaces for girls to receive the training. The implementing agency is BRAC, an NGO with headquarters in Bangladesh, that has schooling and micro-credit programs throughout South Sudan and will be able to offer joint savings and micro-credit to the girls who have successfully completed the training. The Bank is overseeing a rigorous project impact evaluation (with treatment and control groups). The baseline survey (of 4,200 households) for the impact evaluation has been designed and is about to be rolled out; the first adolescent club will open this July/August. We visited two communities where BRAC operates and where the AGI is likely to be implemented. We were very favorably impressed with the organization's reach in these poverty-stricken communities and with young women's intense interest in getting training (in computers and business, they mentioned) for income generation. Reflecting the statistics quoted above, nearly all of the girls we spoke to were young mothers with one or more children.

### Fostering Women's Participation in Rural Water Management



\$500,000 in GAP monies will seek to build women's capacity to manage, operate and maintain rural water supply and sanitation services (16 water points/small distribution networks and 5 ablution blocks), as part of a larger rural water and sanitation project. The project

became effective in May 2010 and the implementation of the component to empower women would begin tentatively later this fall. The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation is fully on board and has already identified a project coordinator for the women's empowerment component.

### Gender Support & Development Project

Increasing the government's capacity to mainstream gender issues and coordinate programs that help girls and women is a key complementary element to the above initiatives. With \$10 million in funding from the MDTF-SS the Bank is helping the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs develop a gender mainstreaming policy and build its institutional capacity. Project components include: a country gender assessment to inform future gender policies; a capacity-building training program intended for GoSS and State Ministry employees; and a grant competition seeking proposals from local NGOs and CBOs for economic empowerment programs targeting local women. In the first round of the grant competition, nearly 50 proposals were selected out of 177 originally submitted by local groups from all 10 states in South Sudan, with a total allocation of approximately \$1.5 million. A total of \$4 million has been allocated for this component, with a second call for proposals already underway. Finally, the gender project will support the Ministry through the construction of new office facilities to help centralize and improve internal coordination.

