

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Community Mobilization Strategy on Preventing Child Marriages among the Maasai Community, in Kenya

Judy Jebet Lamet

Assistant Inspector General, Director Community Policing Gender and Child Protection,
Kenya Police Service, Kenya

Solomon Njenga

Senior Lecturer, School of Governance Peace and Security, Africa Nazarene University, Kenya

Abstract:

Child marriage is a violation of human rights and it is illegal according to the Kenyan laws. Child marriage is a barrier to personal and community growth and development in the 21st century. The victims of child marriage are denied a chance to education, economic empowerment, and safety among other excellent opportunities and this leads to perpetual poverty cycles from one generation to the next. In Maasai community, the government and many NGO's have put forward many strategies to mitigate child marriages. These strategies include economic and social empowerment, community mobilization, education and awareness and enforcement of laws. However, in spite of having these strategies in place, cases of child marriages are still going on hence prompting the need to understand the reason why these strategies have not managed to end this vice among Maasai community in Ill Bissil Division in Kajiado County. The purpose of the study was to analyse the effects of the employed mitigating strategies in child marriages among the Maasai community in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study specifically aimed evaluating the influence of community mobilization strategy on preventing child marriages among the Maasai community in Kajiado County. The study adopted descriptive research design to collect both qualitative and quantitative primary data. The study targeted a population of 252 drawn from victims, parents, law enforcement officers, education officer; teachers, church leaders and NGO administrators. A sample size of 126 individuals was enrolled for the study. Purposive sampling method was used to select all key informants while complete census was used to select police officers. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the individual victims who were enrolled in the study. The parents were paired with the selected victims. Teachers were purposively selected from each class. Questionnaires and interview schedule were employed as data collection instruments. Collected data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that there was lack of coordination between the government and stakeholders who are involved in mitigating child marriages. Religious organisations and professionals were not largely involved in mitigating child marriages. The findings of this study will inform the government and stakeholders of the reasons why mitigating strategies adopted in Ill Bissil Division have not succeeded in preventing child marriages. This in turn will assist government and stakeholders to develop policies and intervention strategies that are relevant to curb child marriage in Ill Bissil Division in Kajiado County. The study recommends that policies be developed to guide on the community mobilization implementation of strategies for mitigating child marriages.

Keywords: Interventions, mobilization, prevention, mitigation and strategies

1. Background Information

Child marriage is a global problem that affects the development, wellbeing and life options of the affected individuals and their families. For the past ten years according to Foundation for Woman's Health Research and Development (FORWARD) child marriage has emerged as one of the neglected human rights violations and has only recently started to receive global attention (FORWARD, 2013). According to UNICEF (2007) child marriage is the formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18 years by both boys and girls as 18 years is the legal baseline age for marriage. A report by the United Nations Population Fund (2007) predicts that by 2020 a total of 140 million girls will be married off before the age of 18 years globally. This implies that an estimated one in three girls will be married before turning eighteen (UNICEF, 2014).

Marriage being a social institution is associated with socio-cultural, economic, community practices and demographic variables at a variety of levels (Akuma, 2015). Marriage issues are tightly bound in kinship, lineage, property ownership, and transfer, residence, social and political power, social reproduction, and biological reproduction. Early child marriage is attributed to various factors that are inclusive of conflicts, disasters and emergencies, poverty, gender inequality, weak legislation, traditional and religious practices, and economic stability among other factors (Coast, 2006). The extent of child marriages varies substantially between countries. The highest rates are found in West Africa, followed by south Asia, North Africa, Middle East and Latin America (Crifton & Frost, 2011). In India, many girls aged between 10-19 years are at risk of child marriage than other countries in the world. Given the population size and

significant rates of child marriage in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal, about one and half of the girls who are affected by child marriage live in South Asia (UNICEF, 2007).

In Africa, over 42% of the girls are married before they reach the age of 18 years with millions of girls being given away just before they attain puberty (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). In addition, 31 out of the 41 countries where the prevalence rates of child marriage are more than 30% are African countries with East Africa being one of the regions with the highest number of child marriages (FORWARD, 2013). In Kenya, the practice of child marriage has been witnessed amongst many communities especially Maasai in Kajiado County (Cphoon, 2010). According to Spencer (2015) Maasai ceremonies are the major cultural practices attributed to marriage among Maasai communities in Kenya. The ceremonies mark a rite of passage to the occasion participant, they are used to show the level of self-determination and the rich Maasai traditional culture, with the main objective of preserving the cultural practices from one generation to the other. The Maasai community has also several traditional practices and marriage is one of the most essential practices that are regarded as a very important ceremony (Cphoon, 2010). The community is very biased on gender, since the boy is given more priorities compared to those of the girl child. The females in the community do not have their own age-set but are recognized by that of their husbands once they are married (Gali, 2011).

Circumcision ceremony is the most important ceremony amongst the Maasai community since it is a vital initiation of all rites of passage in the society. Initiation elevates an individual from childhood to adulthood. Both men and women of the Maasai society are traditionally eager to undergo circumcision (Gail, 2011). This initiation is performed shortly after puberty and the participants are rewarded with herds of cattle immediately, they go through the whole process successfully. The boys after circumcision are thereafter referred to as Moraans while girls undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). After the circumcision rites, most of the successful participants find themselves getting into early age marriage since the community recognizes them as grown-ups (Gayle, 2014). Formal education, national governments, occupation diversification, and integration into the monetized economy have significantly influenced Maasai marriages in the 21st century. Education and livelihood are socio-economic background factors related to age at entry into, and type of, marriage for Maasai men (Crifton & Frost, 2011). Child marriage negatively influences girls' education, which hinders their participation in social, economic and politics in adulthood (Ganira, Inda, Odundo, Akondo & Ngaruiya, 2015). The economic capacity of a family affects its ability to marry off their daughter early because of the dowry they would receive, reduction of school fee burden, ease the financial load of caring for a child and child to erase debts or settle feuds. Cultural practices among the Maasai contribute significantly to early marriages; girls are often married shortly after puberty to maximize their childbearing potential to ensure that the girl marries as a virgin and further to prevent out-of-wedlock births (Gali, 2011).

1.1. Statement of Problem

According to Birech (2013) these strategies include economic and social empowerment, community mobilization, education and awareness and enforcement of law that protects children against early marriages. In Uganda and Ethiopia, the use of community elders has been used to educate the community against child marriages (Alemu, 2007; Hodgkinson, 2016); There are numerous programmes in Africa for fighting child marriage that focuses on different interventions. These programmes intervene in the area of socio-economic empowerments of the community and victims. Though there are numerous interventions on child marriages in Africa, only 10% of these programmes have resulted in positive changes in mitigating child marriages (Kurz & Jain, 2007). According to Jain and Kurz (2007), the interventions such as socio-economic, community involvement and law enforcement used to fight child marriages have been found wanting in preventing this vice globally. Jain and Kurz (2007) argued that there is need to change the interventions approaches used by stakeholders to effectively tackle child marriages globally.

In Kenya there are many interventions used to fight child marriages through the government and stakeholders. These interventions assume socio-economic, community mobilizations and law enforcement approaches (Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle & Lee-Rif, 2011). Although there are legislative laws against child marriage in Kenya, traditional and religious practices make it difficult to enforce the laws. According to Gail (2011) the disregard of law has a profound effect on child marriage prevention. The enforcement of laws to protect children in I'II Bissil Division has been going involving police officers and other security agencies as mandated by law. The enforcement involves arrests and prosecutions of offenders in the court of law. The children office has also been involved in enforcing laws for protecting children with collaboration with other law enforcement agencies within and outside the government.

However, in spite of having these strategies in place, cases of early child marriages are still going on hence prompting the need to understand the reason why these strategies have not managed to end child marriages among the Maasai community. Previous studies on early child marriages have covered early marriages in different perspectives hence leaving a major knowledge gap in literature on the effect of mitigating strategies on child marriages among Maasai community in Kajiado County. This study aims to fill this missing knowledge gap by establishing the effect of the employed mitigating strategies on child marriages among Maasai community.

1.2. Purpose and Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyse the effects of the employed mitigating strategies in child marriages among the Maasai community in Kajiado County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to evaluate the influence of community mobilization strategy on preventing child marriages among the Maasai community in Kajiado County.

2. Reviewed Literature

According to UNICEF (2014), early and forced child marriage is any marriage performed illegally, in which physical or emotional trauma is a factor. Early child marriage is a violation of human rights and must be eradicated as soon as possible to ensure a fairer future is established and achieved for all in the world- community. Child marriage denies the victims a chance to access education, economic empowerment, safety among other excellent opportunities available for them in the current century. The universal laws observed all over the world prohibits early child marriage. Unfortunately, in many countries especially in the developing counties the existing laws on marriage and the respective age are often not enforced. The community practices are that the parents' consent is enough or the adoption of traditional and customary laws, which encourage early child marriages (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). A report by UNICEF (2014) had the following facts on early child marriage; one in every three girls in the developing world in which Kenya is not an exception. The victims of early and forced marriage typically have children at a very young age. Approximately 70,000 girls die in labour every year because their bodies are not ready for childbirth.

Poverty and early child marriage is closely linked to poverty and low levels of economic development hence, the victims especially the girls' end up marrying and thus developing a continual poverty status in their entire life, therefore, the girls who marry at a young age and are not educated, are more likely to be poor and remain poor (Malhotra, *et al.*, 2011). According to Mengistu (2015), low income families see a daughter as an economic burden to be shed off through marriage as early as possible to get dowry that can subsequently be used to sustain the essential requirement of the family and help empower the boy child. Economic gains from the marriage of a daughter may also motivate low-income families (Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni & Wodon, 2015).

Countries with low GDPs in the developing world tend to have a higher prevalence of child marriage. In Senegal, a Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)-eligible country; girls in the poorest 20 percent of households are more than four times as likely to be married at an earlier age compared to their wealthy counterparts (UNICEF, 2007). Child marriage hinders its victims from accessing formal education that is currently being used to enhance economic development. The practice drains the country of the innovation and potential that would enable the youth who end up in child marriage a chance to thrive. According to Plan International (2012), research conducted in Pokot, Maasai, and Samburu communities in the rural areas, 43% of girls, and 11.6% of boys were married before reaching 18 years. The study findings indicate that child marriage in those communities is more rampant and the Maasai being a minority community too is not an exception. The girls between 12-17 years of ages are more exposed to child marriage than boys in these communities because of the traditional and cultural practices of the communities. These revelations imply that prevention of child marriages among these communities is still a challenge.

Marriage is seen as the safeguarding factor to sexual immorality practices in the community, and thus, parents marries off their daughters at an early age to ensure they marry as virgins. This act is perpetuated by traditional and religious practices in our communities (Musinge, 2011). According to the African Union (AU) Campaign study funded to End Child Marriage in Africa, over the past ten years, religion and cultural tradition have been identified as having a role in not just the persistence but also the elimination of child marriage on the continent (AU, 2012). The highly guided cultures of communities that practice child marriages pose a major challenge of preventing child marriage vices (Waritay & Wilson, 2013). It will mean that if the strategies used to prevent child marriages are not well thought out and executed well, prevention of child marriages will not be achieved.

The African Union campaign are aimed at identifying the available evidence of early child marriage geared towards designing an effective model of policies and programs that will help reduce and ultimately eliminate child marriage. The model designing process must involve all stakeholders in the society, for example traditional leaders, religious leaders, parents, teachers, political leaders among others (Ngoitiko, 2008). An observation by the African Union campaign study, noted that religious communities and traditional leaders are uniquely positioned to prevent and respond to the call to end child marriage (AU, 2015). The drivers of early child marriage in the society due to emergencies, conflicts, and calamities are inclusive of increased occurrence of sexual violence and assault, weakened institutions and lack of economic opportunity (Musinge, 2011). Gender-based violence in its multiple forms increases during emergencies and in humanitarian contexts resulting to early child marriage which is a form of slavery to the victims (Spencer, 2015).

As social upheaval and gender-based violence increase in times of disaster and conflict, families frequently turn to child marriage as a way to protect their girls from the disproportionate burden women and children bear during natural disaster and armed conflict (Gayle, 2014). Previous studies indicate that almost over 30 million children experienced abuse and violence before attaining the legal marriage age of eighteen. The conflicts and emergencies situations have a direct link to education access, denying its victims a chance to go school resulting to an increase in the level of early child marriage and poverty (UNICEF, 2016). According to Gayle (2014), gender inequality practices, especially among the minority communities in the country, are a significant contributor to early child marriage especially to the girl child. The female being occupies a lower status in community based on the social and cultural traditions practices, attitudes, beliefs. The gender inequality practices deny the girl child a chance to be equally treated as the boy child, thus the girls are married off to old men at an early age.

The children marrying at an early age are always unprepared emotionally, physically and psychologically. Engaging in early marriage exposes both parties involved at risk for example the adolescent girls are always at a greater danger of experiencing dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth, becoming infected with HIV/AIDS and suffering domestic violence. Teenage pregnancy due to early child marriage leads to pregnancy and delivery complications among leading causes of death in girls aged 15 to 19 especially within the inferior economic status (Spencer, 2015). The victims of early child marriage live in perpetual poverty the whole of their entire life. The main

reason being the fact that they have to drop out of school to engage in marriage, limiting them a chance of achieving their dreams (Ganira, Inda, Odundo, Akondo & Ngaruiya, 2015). The early child marriage victims thus lack skills and knowledge to help lift their families out of poverty. This practice is contrary to the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at reducing global poverty. The practice of child marriage continues through generations; daughters of young, uneducated mothers are more likely to drop out of school and be married off early, repeating the cycle (UNICEF, 2014). Community mobilization is a major strategy for mitigating child marriages that has been employed in many countries around the world with some level of success. In India and Bangladesh, community mobilization through implementation of community-based programmes that influences members of the community to stop child marriage cultural practices has played a key role in reduction of rate of child marriage (Ngoitiko, 2008).

In Uganda, community-based programme on violence against women and HIV has helped to stop cases of child marriage by raising the voices of Uganda women rights. This has been based on the process of public health behaviour change and personal and collective empowerment of all the members of the community (Celik & Hotchkiss, 2000). In Uganda, the community-based programme on violence against women and HIV demonstrated the value of the intense and long-term community engagement and mobilization and the role of collaborating with academics to ensure robust collection of evidence to make the learning process more effective. This has helped in making long term strategic action to bring the desired change attitude and behavioral change, including tackling social norms and influencing the community to abandon the practice of child marriage. The core areas of community mobilization include; starting building knowledge and attitude, awareness raising, regarding power imbalance, support, building skills for taking action, taking action and changing the behaviour (FORWAD,2013; World Bank, 2012).

In Kenya, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in 2011 conducted a research on community mobilization programme and found out that community-based intervention helps to reduce child marriage (Malhotra, et al., 2011). This is so because community programmes incorporate multifaceted programs that educate families and community members on the dangers of child marriage and provides girls with education and life skills. One such example is among the Samburu Kenya spearheaded by Loise Towon, the founder member of Samburu Child Education Support Programme (SAGEP).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study used descriptive survey to collect primary data that was used to assess the impact of early child marriage among the Maasai community of Kenya. The research design was appropriate for the study because it describes the situation or the phenomenon under study the way it is (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2013). It also allows collection of data without manipulating variables under investigation (Kothari, 2013). Descriptive research survey design allows collection of both quantitative and qualitative data using a mixed method of data collection. Mixed method of research approach according to Creswell (2014) and Kothari (2013) ensures the study collect a rich data both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was obtained from interview schedule while quantitative data was collected using assisted questionnaires. Quantitative research was used to collect data in the numeric form to help address the question how much, and measure the impact of early child marriage and how cultural and religious practices result to this. Primary data was obtained in both quantitative and qualitative forms, in addition to this secondary data, which was of great essence to make valid conclusions about the research findings. Primary data was obtained from the sampled population; this being first-hand information it was more reliable compared to the secondary data. Secondary data was collected from external sources such as documentation, archival records, magazines, and the internet. The advantage of using secondary data in-place of primary data was it saved on time, cost, and labour.

3.2. Research Site

The study was conducted in Kajiado County, specifically in Kajiado Central constituency located in the Southern part of the county. Kajiado County is predominantly inhabited by the Maasai Community. They strictly adhere to their traditions and cultural practices such as; circumcision for men and female genital mutilation for women, as well as early marriage practices among others. The community is yet to be influenced by modern culture to relax their marriage culture and embrace formal education. This site was appropriate for the study since it has had many incidents of child marriage because of the cultural and traditional practices that encourage this evil practice in the current century.

3.3. Target Population

The target population of 252 subjects comprised of parents of children between the age of 14 and 18 years. Other target populations were area chiefs, education officers, security officers, teachers, church leaders, administrators of NGO's and children officers. The security officers targeted were police officers drawn from I'II Bissil Division in Kajiado County. The victims of early marriages were enrolled from the records of two rescue centres located in I'II Bissil Division within the study site.

3.4. Sampling Procedure

The study was conducted in I'II Bissil Division which was purposively selected because of high incidences of early marriage practices. The availability of two (2) boarding primary school which act as rescue centre for victims of early marriages provided an ideal study site. Records from the Kajiado County Police office indicated that there were 20 police

officers in I'II Bissil police station responsible of enforcing criminal laws (Crime and investigation). A complete census was used to sample police officers due to their small population sizes giving a sample size of 20 police officers.

The study targeted the entire population (73) of rescued victims of early marriages enrolled in the two primary schools. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a 10% to 50% of the available population is adequate for a study. Based on this, a 50% of this entire population (73) of the victims was sampled for this study giving a sample size of 36 subjects that were enrolled in this study. A simple random sampling technique using the sampling frame of the list of victims available in respective schools was employed to select the subjects that participated in the study. The names of the 73 victims were assigned codes and placed in a box and using lottery method 36 subjects were picked and participated in the study.

The target population of the victim parents (73) was informed by the records available in rescue centres. A same criterion of sampling victims was used to sample victim parents. Based on the same criteria of 50%, 36 victim parents were sampled. Snowballing method of sampling was used to identify parents of victims of early child marriage practices. This method was preferred because the location or residence of parents of victims was not certain due to nomadic nature of the Maasai and also due to cultural practices and sensitivity of the early marriage subject.

There are only five active Christian denomination churches in I'II Bissil Division. The study therefore purposively sampled two (2) church leaders in every church since their population size was small giving a sample size of 10 subjects. Purposeful sampling which is a non-probabilistic sampling technique was used to sample the key informants due to their small number and due to nature of the interview method (oral interview) used to collect insight information. A total of 126 subjects were sampled and enrolled in the study.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and key interview schedule. Interview schedule was used to collect primary data through oral interviews from chiefs, head teachers, and administrators of Non-Governmental Organizations. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from victims and teachers. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) questionnaires techniques of data collection is a suitable method because it collects a lot of data within a short duration of time and ensures confidentiality of the respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from supervisors and casual workers. The research instrument consisted of open and closed ended items. The open-ended items composed of options or choices to select during interview while open ended questions had spaces to be filled briefly. The questionnaire was divided into two parts A and B; part capturing background information of the respondents while part 'B' captured variables for each specific objective.

Kothari (2014) posits that interview schedule data collection instruments are suitable for collecting qualitative data from small number of respondents mainly from people with wide knowledge (expert) of an area or phenomenon. These instruments were used to collect data from key informants who comprised of the chiefs, head teachers of schools, administrators of NGO's and senior county education officers. The choice of this instrument was informed by the fact it would offer an opportunity to ask questions and make clarification on the responses from the key informants who had experienced or dealt with forced early marriages. In addition, this instrument provided an avenue or advantage of seeking more information by probing further unlike the questionnaires. The interview schedule instruments were structured to guide the interviewer and the interviewee.

Content validity was used to determine the adequacy of instruments to collect data that produced valid results. This was done by consulting supervisors and data collection experts who verified the questionnaires and interview schedules for internal consistency in terms of content. The research instruments were formulated to capture specific information as per the specific objectives thus ensuring content validity. Internal validity was ensured by training the research assistants on the content of the instruments and respondents were assisted to fill the questionnaires. This ensured that the respondents provided only relevant information as per the research design. Oral interviews were conducted by the researcher thus ensuring only relevant and reliable information was collected. These two approaches ensured that internal validity of the instruments was maintained and the analysed data reflected the true reflection of the situation on the ground.

A pilot study is a field activity used to or pre-test data collection instruments to test their reliability prior to a full-scale study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A pilot study is normally carried out before the real field study to test the reliability of the prepared questionnaires and further to familiarize with the study area. A sample of randomly selected respondents representing each group of interest to the study was recruited for a pilot study. This ensured the data collection instruments were sufficient and accurate in capturing all the required information from the field. The pilot study is important in evaluating the time taken to administer the questionnaire so as not to lose the focus of the discussion. To ensure reliability of the questionnaires, piloting of instruments was carried out using split half method in Narok South Constituency which is inhabited by the Maasai. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) 1% to 10% of the instruments based on the sample size are adequate for piloting. This study used 10% of the instrument for each category of the respondents. The pilot test results were subjected to Cronbach's alpha analysis and returned an internal consistency of 7.12 which was an indicator the research questionnaires were reliable.

3.6. Data Processing and Analysis

Primary data collected was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques. Data from questionnaires was cleaned, coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software for analysis. Open ended question responses captured from questionnaires was grouped according to themes and

assigned codes to produce data that was analysed quantitatively. The next analysis focused on each specific objective in an attempt to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics like dispersion, distribution and cross tabulation was generated to describe the variables under study. The analysed quantitative data was presented in tables and charts.

Data collected using interview schedule formed the qualitative information. Qualitative data was analysed in three-stages namely; data reduction, data discussion and drawing conclusions. Data reduction involved mining of data collected through oral interview by transcription to reveal the key issues that will help to separate the relevant from irrelevant issues. Data discussion involved the compilation of the reduced data into an organised and compressed logical content. Finally, interpretation of data and logical explanations was done to describe the relationship of the findings as per the objectives of the study. Qualitative research findings were presented as phrases or key voices, verbatim quotation as per the interviewee responses.

Hypothesis: *Ho-Community mobilizations have not significantly prevented child marriages among the Maasai community in Kajiado County*, was tested using Chi-Square analysis. The analysed data was subjected to interpretation with support of other documented research findings to determine the influence of mitigating strategies on early child marriage. A summary and conclusion of the findings was offered for each specific objective.

3.7. Legal and Ethical Considerations

The supervision and guidance by supervisors ensured the study met the legal and ethical threshold of an academic study. Permission was sought from Nazarene University, National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation, Kajiado County Commissioner and respective institutions where data was collected. A consultation was done with the respondents where consent to interview them was obtained. The respondents voluntarily enrolled and participated in the study willingly without any undue influence. Confidentiality was maintained by ensuring anonymity of the research respondents. This was done by ensuring no form of identification was recorded on the research instruments and in the final research report. In addition, where key voices or verbatim reporting of key informants was captured, pseudo names like Mr. / Mrs. XX were used to ensure their views and opinions were treated with utmost confidentiality.

4. Results

4.1. Influence of Community Mobilisation on Mitigation of Child Marriages

In order to determine the influence of community mobilization on mitigation of child marriages, the study explored the following parameters. Mobilizer of community to mitigate child marriage, specific community mobilizations interventions implemented to mitigate child marriage, effect of specific community mobilizations interventions on mitigating child marriage and suggestions on suitable community mobilization strategies. The findings are discussed in the subsequent sections below.

4.1.1. Mobilizer of Community to Mitigate Child Marriage

The respondents were asked to indicate the mobilizer or the organizer of community forums for mitigating child marriage. The findings are presented in Figure 1.

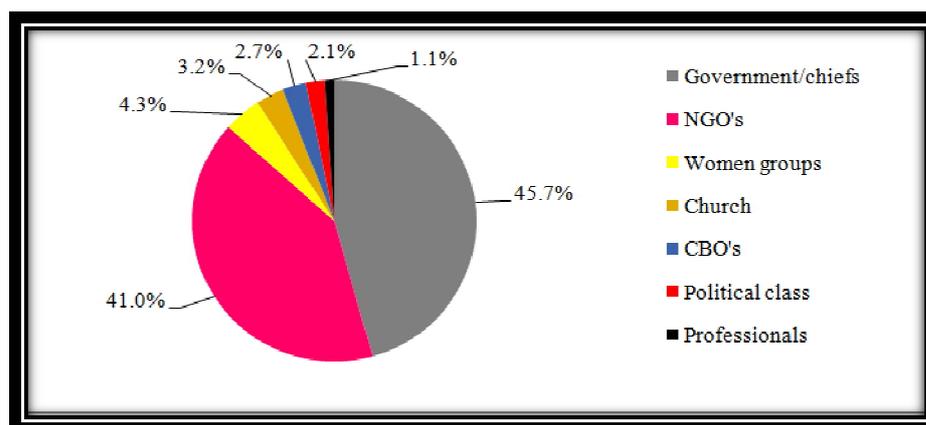


Figure 1: Community Mobilizers

Key: (a) NGO's – Non-Governmental Organisations (b) CBO's – Community Based Organisations

Source: Field data 2016

The results in Figure 1 show that the government (45.7%) and NGO's (41.0%) are the main mobilizers of the community to mitigate child marriage accounting to more than 86 percent as compared to other mobilizers. The professionals (1.1%) were the least involved in mobilizing the communities to mitigate child marriages. The findings above reveal that, the government and NGO's have the largest share of the mobilizers. Their bigger share of government and NGO's in mobilization interventions can be attributed to the strong chieftain who is highly respected among the Maasai Community since it's engrained in their culture and customs and traditions.

4.1.2. Specific Community Mobilizations Interventions Implemented to Mitigate Child Marriage

The respondents were asked to indicate the community mobilization interventions implemented in I'II Bissil Division to mitigate child marriage. This was necessary in order to establish the kind of mobilizations interventions available in the study area. The findings are tabulated in Figure 2.

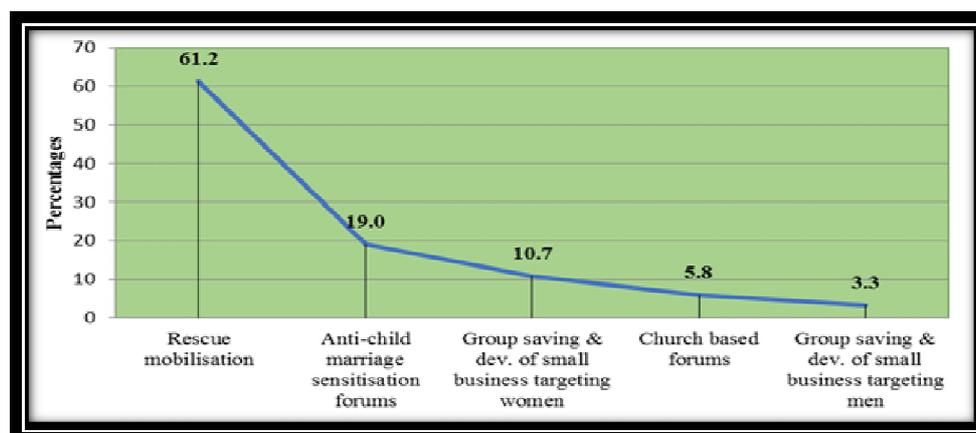


Figure 2: Community Mobilization Interventions Strategies for Mitigating Child Marriages

Key: dev. – Development

Source: Field data 2016

The results presented in Figure 1 shows that majority (61.2%) of the respondents identified rescue as one of the interventions adopted to mitigate child marriage. Others were anti-child marriage sensitization forums and savings in groups and starting of small business targeting women at 19.0% and 10.7% respectively. The research findings in figure 4.3 also found that mobilization interventions targeting men minimal which recorded 3.3% score as compared to 10.7% target for women. The study also established that there was minimal (5.8%) mobilization through churches. This minimal mobilization interventions targeting men can be attributed to the fact most programmes target women.

4.1.3. Effect of Specific Community Mobilizations Interventions on Mitigating Child Marriage

Community mobilisation interventions play a critical role in preventing child marriage. In light of this, this study sought to determine the influence of community mobilisation interventions adopted in I'II Bissil Division. Information to establish the effect of specific community mobilizations interventions was collected using a five (5) Likert scale data instruments. The analysis used mean score as the primary focal point for Likert type data analysis and discussions of the research findings. The findings are as presented in Table 1.

	Community Mobilization Mitigation Strategies	Count	Mean	Std. Deviation
a)	Female parents have been mobilized into saving and small trading business which has improved their livelihood thus stopping child marriage	99	2.79	1.239
b)	Male parents have been mobilized into saving and small trading business which has improved their livelihood thus stopping child marriage	99	2.00	1.370
c)	Churches have formed forums aimed at sensitizing their members on the adverse effects of child marriage and has resulted in halting child marriage	98	2.36	1.142
d)	Chiefs and government law enforcement agencies mobilize community to form anti-child marriage forums that are held regularly and has helped to address child marriage incidences	98	2.28	1.147
e)	Deliberate effort by NGO's and other non-state stakeholders to mobilize victims to rescue centre has greatly helped to reduce child marriage	99	4.02	.915

Table 1: Effects of Specific Community Mobilisation Interventions

Key: 1- Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3- Neutral 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

Source: Field data 2016

The results in Table 1 shows that it's only the strategy of mobilizing victims to rescue centres by NGO's and other stakeholders that have positively influenced curbing child marriage since the score was above 4.0 (Agree). Others mobilization strategies like empowerment through group formation to carry out different activities like saving, starting small scale business targeting both women and men have not influenced the curbing of child marriage since the mean

score was below 2.79 (Disagree). Mobilization of the community through forums fronted by the government (mean=2.28) and churches (mean=2.36) have not either helped to prevent child marriage.

4.1.4. Respondents Suggestions on Suitable Community Mobilisation Strategies

The study found it prudent to seek suggestions from the respondents on community mobilization strategies that can be implemented to assist the practitioners of child marriage to empower them stop this vice. The research findings are presented in Figure 3.

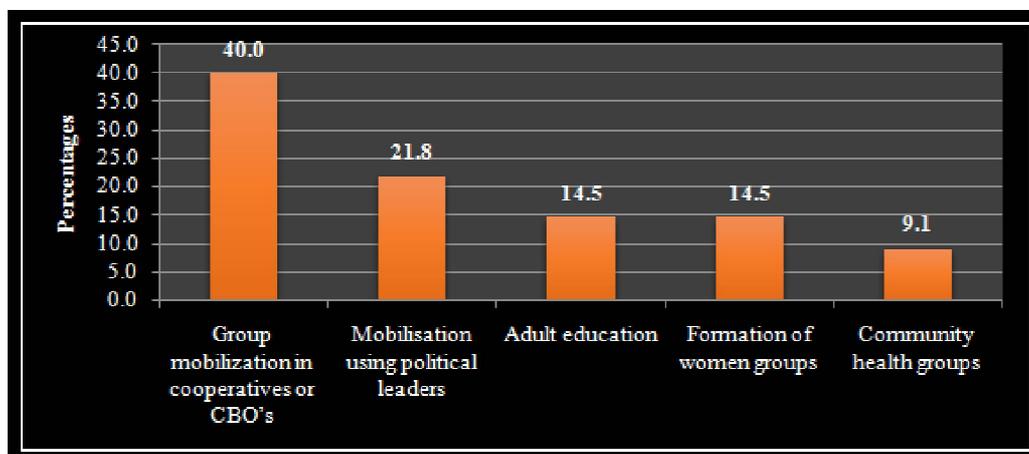


Figure 3: Mobilisation Strategies of Empowering Practitioners of Child Marriages

Source: Field data 2016

In the findings in Figure 4.2, the respondents were of the view that mobilization of the community through groups' formation (40.0%) would be one of the suitable methods of addressing child marriage. The respondents also suggested the use of political leaders (21.8%) to mobilize them. Use of community health groups (9.1%) was the least suggested intervention measures. Political leaders have the duty to represent their communities in legislative platforms though with a political interest.

4.2. Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses the analysis of effects of community mobilization on child marriage mitigation in I'II Bissil Division. Community mobilization is a major strategy for mitigating child marriages that has been employed in many countries around the world with some level of success and failures (ICRW, 2011; Celik and Hotchkiss, 2007 & Ngoitiko, 2008). The study found that majority (61.2%) of the respondents identified rescue as one of the specific mobilization interventions adopted to mitigate child marriage in I'II Bissil Division. These findings agree with those of Asrari, Jones, Saunders and Smith (2015) and Jain & Kurz (2007) who argued that rescue and sensitization mobilizations are some of the widely adopted anti-child marriage strategies.

Rescue in child marriage is one of the popular intervention measures against child marriage since it realizes instant remedy that does not require approval of the perpetrators. In most cases the victims run away from parents and hide in rescue centres where they are assured of their safety, security and education. This confirms why rescue mobilization come first (61.2%) as compared to bringing together communities in groups which takes time to bring cohesion.

An interview with a child officer and law enforcement officer confirms the above findings. The key informants had this to say:

'... rescuing of victims of child marriage has become a viable intervention in I'II Bissil Division since it provides instant results. The girls can rescue themselves by running into the rescue centres. The victims are never denied entry into the rescue centres making them very popular as compared to other child marriage mobilization interventions. This intervention is mostly preferred by NGO's and other non-state organizations'. (Oral Interview [O.I], June 2016)

The above sentiments confirm the reason why rescue mobilization is popular and has done well in mitigating child marriage in I'II Bissil Division. However, this intervention has no role in changing the community attitude and behavioral change. In fact, it may create confrontational incidences.

The study also established that anti-child marriage sensitization forums and saving in groups and starting of small business targeting women at 19.0% and 10.7% respectively was used to curb child marriage. Anti-child marriage intervention focusing on changing the community attitudes and behaviour change is said to be the best strategies of fighting child marriages (Jain & Kurz, 2007). The core function of mobilization is to change the community attitude and behavioral change, including tackling social norms and influencing the community to abandon the practice of child marriage. However, the crusaders of anti-child marriage in I'II Bissil Division seem to focus more on the victim through rescue interventions which portends dangers failing to address the core business of attitude and behavioral change. Rescue alone will not fully address the challenges of child marriage. The overreliance on rescue intervention, though popular and has immediate outcome is not a panacea of remedy to child marriage.

However, due to lack of sustainable mobilization programmes in affected communities, these intervention strategies have not done well to mitigate child marriages. This observation is in agreement with findings of report by Ganira, *et al.*, (2015) who established that the lack of specific community mobilization sensitization interventions is the main cause of failure to change community attitudes towards abandoning child marriages. Specifically, a report by Malhotra, *et al.* (2011) found a rigorous behaviour change mobilization intervention contribute to over 50% effective success rates in reducing child marriage practices.

Mobilization interventions targeting men recorded a partly 3.3% as compared to 10.7% target for women. This minimal mobilization interventions targeting men were attributed to the fact most programmes target women (World Bank, 2012). Most of the group mobilizations interventions target formation of women groups as the entry point in economic interventions. For instance, in Kenya, Women enterprise fund was started by the government of Kenya to specifically address women empowerment. In addition, Uwezo fund an economic empowerment intervention to poverty alleviation also specifically target women and youths leaving men above 35 years. The lack of deliberate intervention of mobilizing men into groups would mean that the major perpetrators of child marriage may not be reached. These findings concur with the views of Jain and Kurz, (2007) who argued that there is need to involve men in all programmes especially those that are meant to change their attitudes. The more men are discriminated against whether deliberately or by omission during mobilization interventions, the more such programmes are bound to fail. This therefore calls for aggressive promotion of other mobilization strategies like bringing men in groups which is not given much emphasis in the study area.

The study also established that there was minimal (5.8%) mobilization through churches. The Scottish Presbyterian Church and the Kikuyu community played a big role in stopping FGM in Kikuyu communities in central Kenya since 1929 (Joshua, 2009). The church was able to fight FGM through sensitization of the community by introduction of formal education, religious teachings and provision of girls' boarding schools which acted as rescue centres. Presently the churches in Kenya have little influence in changing the attitudes and behaviour of communities to stop female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage since they have no specific interventions programmes (Waritay & Wilson, 2013).

The religious organisations are concentrating mostly in increasing their membership through evangelizing the gospel with little involvement in socio-economic development projects. The lack of involvement of the churches in the socio-economic empowerment of their members explains why their role in mobilizing the community to stop child marriage is minimal as compared to the government and NGO's. Therefore, there is need for the government to bring on board religious organisations during the planning and implementation of anti-child marriage mobilization programmes which will be in line with religious teachings and that are acceptable by the communities.

The study sought to identify the key mobilizers of the community to mitigate child marriages in I'II Bissil Division. The study revealed that the government (45.7%) and NGO's (41.0%) were the main mobilizers of the community to mitigate child marriage accounting to more than 86 percent as compared to other mobilizers. The findings above reveal that, the government and NGO's have the largest share of mobilizers. Their bigger share of government and NGO's in mobilization interventions would mean that other actors are not fully involved which in turn may not augur well in ensuring participation of all stakeholders in addressing child marriage issues. The above revelations in regard to the major role played by the chiefs as key agents for mobilization of the community were confirmed by the sentiments of one NGO administrator and government key informants who confided the following:

'.. the Maasai community still has a high regard of their traditions where elders are given the duty of making decision for the community. They also respect the chieftain system. The government, the NGO's and other stakeholders prefers to use the chiefs to mobilize the community. The use of chiefs has made it easier to reach the community'. (O.I, June 2016)

The chief system is very strong and highly respected among the Maasai Community since it's ingrained in their culture, customs and traditions (Tarayia, 2004). This confirms why the government through chiefs has a major share in the mobilization interventions. The NGO's normally work outside the government structure and normally have funded programmes which make them good mobilizers. NGO's are not controlled by red tape or bureaucratic processes common in public institutions hence their flexibility and ability to mobilize communities easily. This explains why they are among the major mobilizers.

Lack of involvement of every relevant stakeholder would lead to low coverage. Overreliance on a few mobilizers may portend danger or lack of innovations and rejection if issues of confidence arose. This can lead to low mobilization or rejection. Worth noting is the poor performance of the church and professionals who are supposed to be in the forefront of such initiatives since they represent the civil society which have no vested interest unlike the political class.

Specific community mobilizations interventions were explored in this study. The study findings established that the rescue of child marriage victims to centres by NGO's and other stakeholders have positively influenced curbing child marriages. The mobilization of communities to fight child marriage have faced many challenges especially resentment, lack of funds, and suspicion among others. Mobilizing the victims of child marriage by taking them to rescue centre seem to be an easy and immediate option of preventing child marriage according to NGO's and other non-state actors. Rescue mobilization intervention has helped in preventing child marriages; however, this intervention is not sustainable in the long run since it interferes with the family setup.

This intervention approach is not preferred by government since it does not change the community attitudes and behaviour critical for long term or sustainable child marriage mitigation. On the other hand, this intervention has benefits

of removing the victims from the society reducing the likelihood of being subjected to this vice and at the same time gives the victims chances of continuing with their education or to learn vocational skills.

The study also found that other mobilization strategies like empowerment through group formation to carry out different activities like savings, starting small scale businesses targeting both women and men have not influenced to curb child marriage. Bringing communities in groups have been used by the government agencies in sectors like agriculture, enterprise development gender mainstreaming with an objective of empowering them financially. One key informant administrator in the government confided that group formation as a method of mobilizing Maasai communities focuses on formation of groups that addresses socio-economic empowerment with no correlation to addressing child marriage. The sentiments confirm why group mobilization strategies to mitigate child marriages have not done very well.

Mobilization of the community through forums fronted by the government and churches has not also helped to prevent child marriage. The role of the church as change agents on issues affecting the community has continued to diminish with time affecting the mainstream and upcoming ones (Du-Toit & Nkomo, 2014). These revelations mean that church forums have challenges of bringing communities together because their focus is more of spiritual nourishment with no socio-economic considerations. This explains why the church is not doing well as agent of change in mobilizing Maasai in the study area.

By and large, community mobilization as a strategy of intervening in mitigating child marriage has not been doing well due to different reasons. One informant, the Rescue Centre Administrator, expressed the following:

'... community mobilization has in a long time been viewed with suspicion by the Maasai community since most of the non-state actors are seen as exploiters using the child marriage issues to get donor funding. Government initiatives are seen with the lens of politics however good the intention. The problem of not having cohesive groups due to suspicion of exploitation by group leaders has aggravated the problem of mobilizing the community into CBO's, self-help groups or cooperatives. The culture of doing business like trading in small businesses is not common among the Maasai community due to their nomadic life and cattle rearing activities has not made it easy to mobilize them together'. (O.I, June 2016)

The above sentiments confirm the reasons why community mobilization interventions adopted in I'II Bissil Division have not assisted in preventing child marriage. In order to address dismal contribution of mobilization interventions the stakeholders need to incorporate holistically all possible strategies with public/community involvements. The study sought to identify the suitable community mobilization strategies in I'II Bissil Division. The study established that 40.0% of the respondents were of the view that mobilization of the community through group formation would be the one of the suitable methods of addressing child marriages. Bringing together communities into groups is a good way of making them have a voice. It's easy to address community issues when they are in a group since their wants can be collectively addressed. These views concur with observation by AU (2015) which noted that group formation plays a big role to address sensitization, advocacy and socio-economic interventions for mitigating child marriages. Group mobilization especially in cooperatives and other communal groups are suitable ways of bringing together community as a way of empowering them. It has worked well in central Kenya where it was instrumental in developing coffee, tea, dairy and other sectors.

The respondents also suggested the use of political leader (21.8%) to mobilize them. Political leaders have the duty to represent their communities in legislative platforms though with a political interest. They can be of great help in mobilizing the community since they have resources and legal platforms like parliament and county assemblies. They have the ability to make laws that can be used to mobilize their communities to fight child marriages. However, politicians only focus on areas where they can gain political mileage which does not augur well for sustainable mitigation measures for addressing child marriages.

Hypothesis findings on community mobilization strategies using Chi-Square statistic returned $p=.228241$ ($p>0.05$) indicated that there was no significance difference on the mobilization strategies adopted to mitigate child marriage. Based on this result ($p>0.05$) the null hypothesis was accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected. The implication of this result confirms that the community mobilization interventions adopted to prevent child marriage in I'II Bissil Division have not greatly influenced child marriage mitigation. These findings explain why despite the sustained effort to mobilize community to prevent child marriage the vice continues unabated.

5. Conclusion

The study also sought to establish the influence of community mobilization on mitigation of child marriages among the Maasai community in Kajiado County. The study concludes that the community mobilization adopted have not positively influenced mitigation of child marriage in the study area.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends development of child marriage prevention coordination policy to ensure that community mobilization strategies on mitigation of child marriage are harmonized. The study also recommends the involvement of the Maasai professionals and media. This will create local support necessary for effective community interventions. Finally, the stakeholders especially the Maasai need to be trained on paralegal. This is key for them to understand what the law requires of them.

7. References

- i. Akuma, J. M. (2015). Socio-cultural and family change in Africa: Implications for adolescent socialization in Kisii County, South Western, Kenya. *Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est*, 50(2015), 80-98.
- ii. Alemu, B. (2007). Early marriage in Ethiopia: causes and health consequences. Exchange on HIV and AIDS, Sexuality and Gender. Adis Ababa: Gender Technical Advisor, Pathfinder International, Ethiopia.
- iii. Asrari, L., Jones, H., Saunders, H., & Smith, K. (2015). Preventing Child Marriage in the Commonwealth: The Role of Education. London: Royal Commonwealth Society.
- iv. AU. (2012). Campaign of to End Child Marriage in Africa. Adis Ababa: African Union.
- v. AU. (2015). The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development. A review of research, reports and tool kits from Africa. Adis Ababa: African Union.
- vi. Birech, J. (2013). Child marriage: A cultural health phenomenon. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(17), 97-103.
- vii. Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). *Business Research Methods* (4th ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
- viii. Celik, Y., & Hotchkiss, D. R. (2000). The socio-economic determinants of maternal health care utilization in Turkey. *Social science & medicine*, 50(12), 1797-1806.
- ix. Clifton, D., & Frost, A. (2011). World's women and Girls Data sheet. Washington: DC population Reference Bureau.
- x. Coast, E. (2006). Maasai Marriage: A comparative study of Kenya and Tanzania. *Journal of Comparative family studies*, 37(3), 399-419.
- xi. Cohoon, J. M. (2010). *The Path to Full Participation, Understanding, Intervening and Assessing*. Colorado, United States: National Center for Women & Information Technology.
- xii. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- xiii. Du-Toit, N. F., & Nkomo, G. (2014). The ongoing challenge of restorative justice in South Africa: How and why wealthy suburban congregations are responding to poverty and inequality. *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 70(2).
- xiv. FORWARD. (2013). *Working Together to End Child Marriage*. East Africa Regional Conference on Child Marriage. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development.
- xv. Gail, M. S. (2011). A primer on the validity of assessment instruments. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 3(2), 119-120.
- xvi. Ganira, K. L., Inda, A. N., Odundo, P., Akondo, J., & Ngaruiya, B. (2015). Early and Forced Child Marriage on Girls' Education, in Migori County, Kenya: Constraints, Prospects and Policy. *World Journal of Education*, 5(4), 72-80.
- xvii. Gayle, T. L. (2014). *Fragile States, Fragile Lives: Child Marriage Amid Disaster and Conflict*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations® Inc.
- xviii. Hodgkinson, K. (2016). *Understanding and Addressing Child Marriage*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research of the University of Amsterdam.
- xix. Jain, S., & Kurz, K. (2007). *New insights on preventing child marriage: A global analysis of factors and programs*. Washington, D.C: International Center for Research on Women.
- xx. Joshua, S. (2009). The Church and the 1929 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) contestation in Kenya, with special reference to the Scottish Presbyterian Church and the Kikuyu community. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 35(1), 15-30.
- xxi. Kombo, D. K., & Tromp, D. L. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing: An introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- xxii. Kothari, C. R. (2013). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International.
- xxiii. Malhotra, A., Warner, A., McGonagle, A., & Lee-Rif, S. (2011). *Solutions to End Child Marriage*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women.
- xxiv. Mengistu, M. M. (2015). Early Marriage in Ethiopia: So Little Done but So Much to Do. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 6(4), 1-5.
- xxv. Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, A. (2013). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: ACTS Press.
- xxvi. Munge, P. (n.d.). *Community Empowerment*. Journal of community Development.
- xxvii. Musinge, P. (2011). Effect of Free Primary Education on Community Development. *Journal of Community Development*, 26, 117-133.
- xxviii. Ngoitiko, M. (2008). *Pastoral Women's Council: Empowerment for Tanzania Maasai*. London: International Institute for Environmental Development.
- xxix. Parsons, J., Edmeades, J., Kes, A., Petroni, S., & Wodon, Q. (2015). Economic impacts of child marriage: a review of the literature. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 3, 12-22.
- xxx. Plan International. (2012). *End Early and Forced Marriage: Because I Am a Girl*. Nairobi, Kenya: Plan International.
- xxxi. Sawamura, N., & Sifuna, D. N. (2008). Universalizing primary education in Kenya: Is it beneficial and sustainable. *Journal of international cooperation in Education*, 11(3), 103-118.

- xxxii. Spencer, D. (2015, June 25). It's time to focus on child marriage in emergencies. Retrieved June 25, 2016, from www.insights.careinternational.org.uk: <https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/development-blog/it-s-time-to-focus-on-child-marriage-in-emergencies>
- xxxiii. UNICEF. (2007). Protection Against Abuse, Exploitations and Violence. Retrieved June 16, 2016, from www.unicef.org: https://www.unicef.org/progressforchildren/2007n6/index_41848.htm
- xxxiv. UNICEF. (2014). Ending Child Marriage Progress and prospects. Geneva: UNICEF.
- xxxv. UNICEF. (2016). The State of the World's Children 2016: A Fair Chance for Every Child. Geneva: UNICEF.
- xxxvi. Waritay, J., & Wilson, A. M. (2013). Working to End Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting in Tanzania. The Role and Response of the Church. London: TEARFUND.
- xxxvii. World Bank. (2012). World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development. Washington DC: World Bank.