

# YOUTH PROTECTION TEAMS PREVENTING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN RAJA TOWN



In 2020 Nonviolent Peace force returned to Raja, Western Bahr el Ghazal, in a multi-sectoral response for the most vulnerable population in a consortium with ALIMA, who's been present in Raja town since 2017, to attend to health and nutrition needs. NP's previous violence prevention programming in Raja included the formation and operationalization of a Youth Protection Team (YPT) in 2018 as a strategy to engage with local youth, to address their concerns and create opportunities for them to be agents of positive change. A series of protection concerns in the region have been associated to idle youth abusing the use of substances, involved into fighting and in gender-based violence (GBV).

The formation and operationalization of YPTs included training sessions on different topics such as, Unarmed Civilian Protection, which includes GBV prevention and response, Conflict Management, Early Warning Early Response. With NP's return to Raja, and resuming the

work with YPT brought new energy to Raja and the youth.

The NP team, in collaboration with ALIMA, has conducted comprehensive GBV trainings with the local YPT, where NP discuss the protection components on prevention and response, complemented by ALIMA's expertise in conducting Psychological First Aid (PFA) sessions in addition to highlighting the GBV services they offer. Such collaboration is of vital importance, as the PFA sessions are meant to assist the community members and local peace and protection infrastructure such as the YPT, on how to offer psychological assistance to the survivors in the case where the psycho-social support services are beyond the reach of the community. Additionally, with this training, they will be better equipped to be multipliers of knowledge by further awareness raising in their community.

By conducting those joint activities in the spectrum of the existing consortium, NP and ALIMA, both get to benefit from the expertise and experiences of both organisations. This helps in ensuring safe and effective service delivery to the community. Having the expertise in protection from NP's side combined with the health perspective when addressing GBV cases, enables both organisations to meet the needs of affected people in a more holistic manner and to ensure safe and dignified access to adequate subsequent services needed during referrals.

After constant engagement, various trainings such on GBV and PFA and coaching, 24 youth members of the YPT in Hai Langba community are confident and aware on how to assist GBV survivors and are motivated to take charge and contribute to enhance protection in their own communities. The YPT members believe that they have the responsibility to care about each other and to guide survivors to appropriate professional care services, including ALIMA, Healthnet, the local leadership and the Ministry of Health.

Working with youth through the establishment of YPT is of high relevance since members act as role models in their communities, influencing positive change among fellow youth in the community and enhancing a conducive environment to prevent and respond to violence within the community.

NP will continue this combination of training sessions, integrating ALIMA's health perspective into protection work to ensure that the YPTs and other local peace infrastructure in the community are able to strengthen their knowledge and to raise awareness in their own communities and continue to be role models for their peers, thereby influencing positive behaviours change especially amongst the youth.

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