



**INTEGRATED HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FOR
CONFLICT AFFECTED PEOPLE IN SOUTH SUDAN
2021 - 2022**

ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE (IRW) SOUTH SUDAN PROGRAM

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A LEARNING PAPER ON GENDER
RESPONSIVE CASH AND LIVELIHOOD
PROGRAMMING IN SOUTH SUDAN

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Abstract

Islamic Relief South Sudan (IRSS) has been implementing a one-year gender-responsive relief assistance and community recovery integrated humanitarian response funded by Swedish International Development Corporation Agency (Sida) in South Sudan. The project's overall objective is to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of crisis-affected communities through creating sustainable livelihoods and improving access to multi-sectorial basic services. This learning paper captures learning outcomes from the response particularly on cash programming and livelihoods, to understand gender mainstreaming, protection and inclusion components using a rights-based approach. The paper, therefore, highlights IRSS interventions and key findings whilst also providing a set of recommendations for improving its interventions in Central Equatoria, Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal States.

About IRSS

IRSS started its operations in South Sudan in 2005 before the country's secession from Sudan. IRSS has mainly been working on strengthening capacities of vulnerable communities to recover from disasters. IRSS prioritises lifesaving integrated response in hard-to-reach areas that keep backsliding into emergency situations given the inter-communal conflicts and devastating floods in some vulnerable parts of the country.

IRSS has implemented a Sida-funded project called "gender-responsive relief assistance and community recovery integrated humanitarian response". It aimed to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of crises-affected communities in South Sudan by creating sustainable livelihoods and improving access to multi-sectorial basic services for a total target of 65,274 individuals. The project exceeded its target, reaching 75,362 people (18,294 men, 30,227 women, 11,255 boys, 15,586 girls, and 11,304 people with disabilities). Project interventions included cash transfers (conditional and unconditional); advocacy; training key stakeholders on peace-building; inclusion and protection sessions; community dialogue; and distributing hygiene kits. The project also worked on strengthening partnership between IRSS, local communities and county authorities to ensure successful multi-sectorial response in cash programming, livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), gender equality, protection and inclusion, and health and nutrition.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The overall purpose of the study is to capture learning outcomes from IRSS cash and livelihood programming, to understand its contribution to improving gender power relations and enhancing the protection of women and girls at risk.

STUDY OBJECTIVES:

- To identify ways in which gender power relations can be improved, to reduce protection risks, and ensure social inclusion is adequately influenced
- To collect and document experiences of cash in livelihood programming
- To assess cash programming approaches in livelihoods and establish appropriate ways of protecting vulnerable groups
- To provide right-based recommendations on the basis of humanitarian standards, to improve gender equality protection and inclusion efforts within IRSS.

METHODOLOGY:

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were used for a total of 259 respondents (176 females, 83 males and five people with disabilities). A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 200 households, while six focus group discussions (FGDs) collected data from 42 participants of women and youth groups. While 18 key informant interviews (KIIs) were held with 18 key informants, such as community leaders, members of the community, IRSS programme staff and humanitarian workers from other partner organisations.

Data analysis was guided by two main frameworks: the Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) evaluation criteria and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines for gender-based violence in emergencies.

LIMITATIONS:

Budget constraints meant face to face interviews with specific key members in Yei were not possible, however, they were conducted through phone calls.

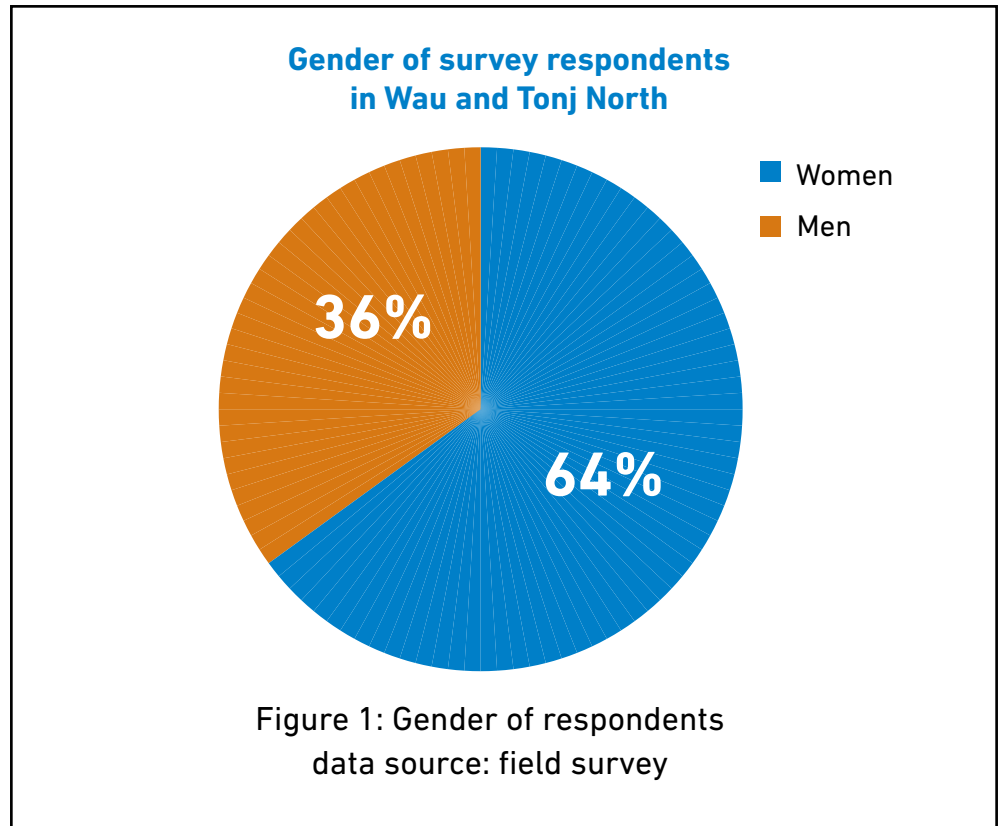
The target group included recipients of cash programming, and it was limited to interviewing adults. Children and older people were not interviewed.

The study objectives were broad, and it was extremely difficult to limit this study solely to cash and livelihood programming.

Participants data:

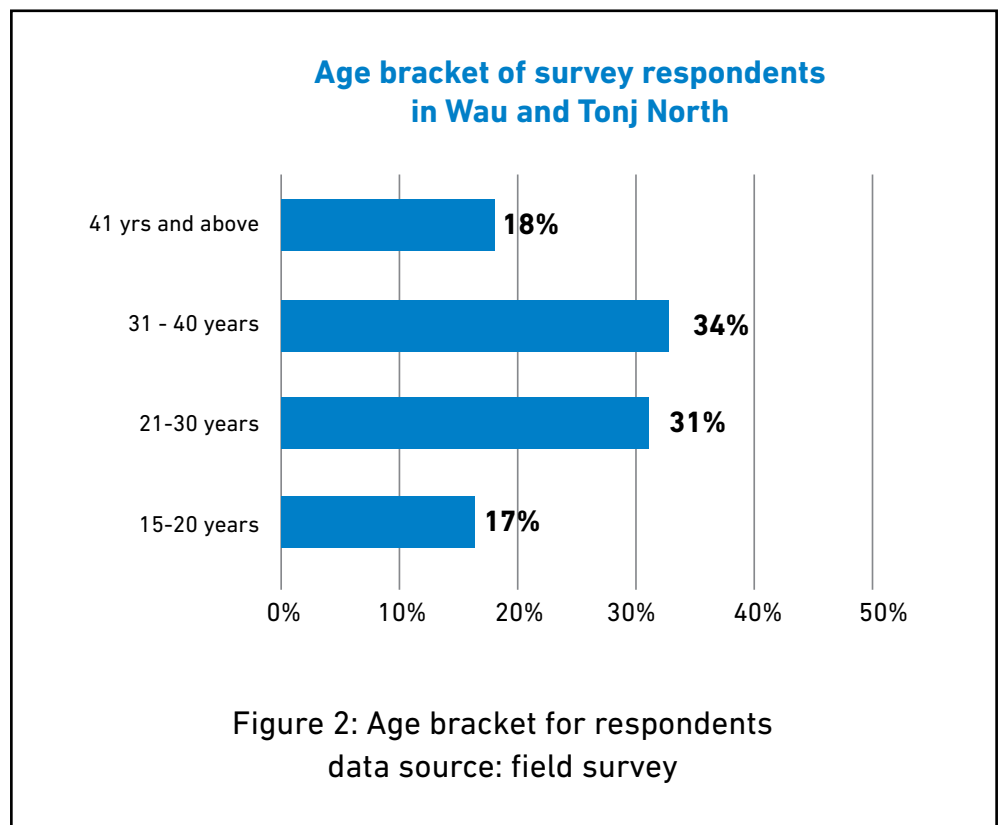
1. Gender

64 per cent of survey respondents were female and 36 per cent were male.



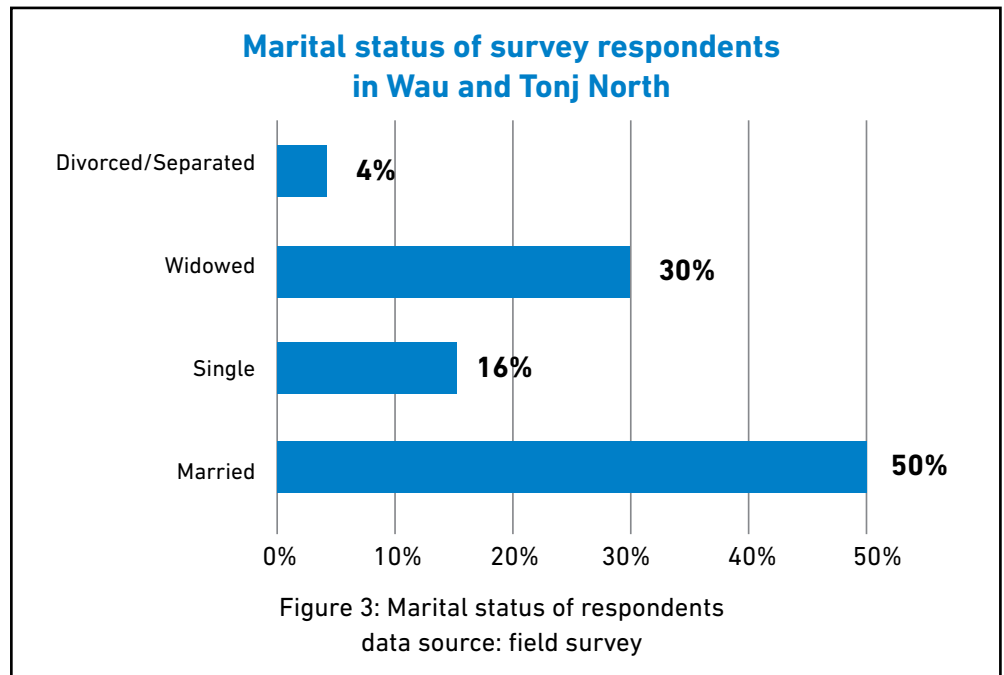
2. Age

Most respondents (34 per cent) were between 31 – 40 years old, 31 per cent were between 21 – 30 years old, 18 per cent were 40 years or older, and 17 per cent were between 15 – 20 years old.



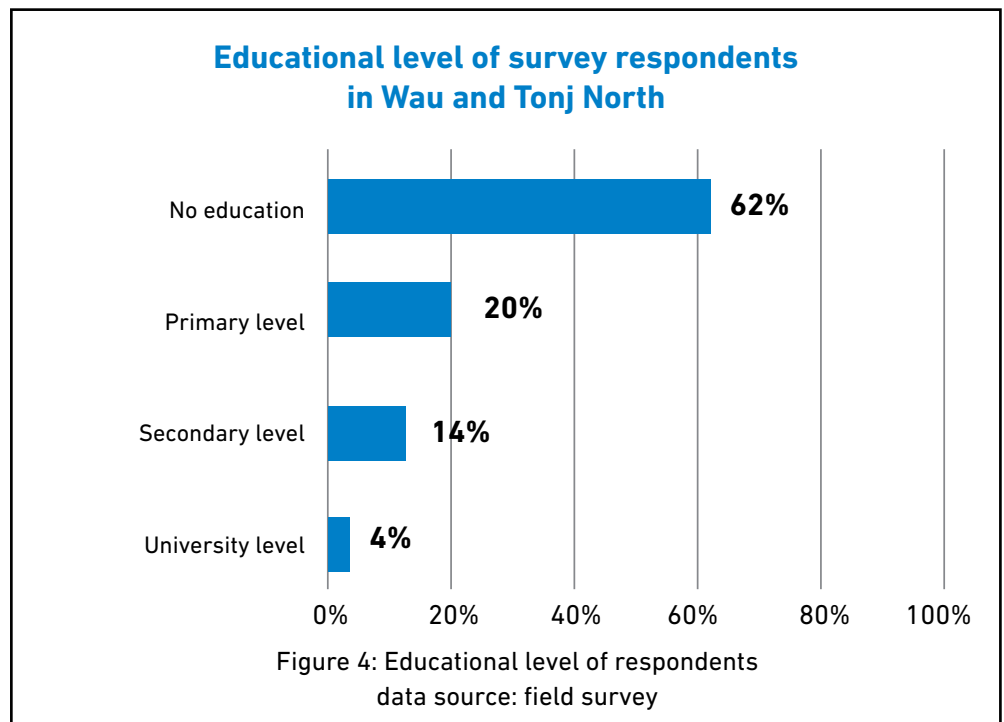
3. Marital status

50 per cent of the total survey respondents were married, 30 per cent were widowed, 16 per cent were single, and four per cent were divorced or separated.



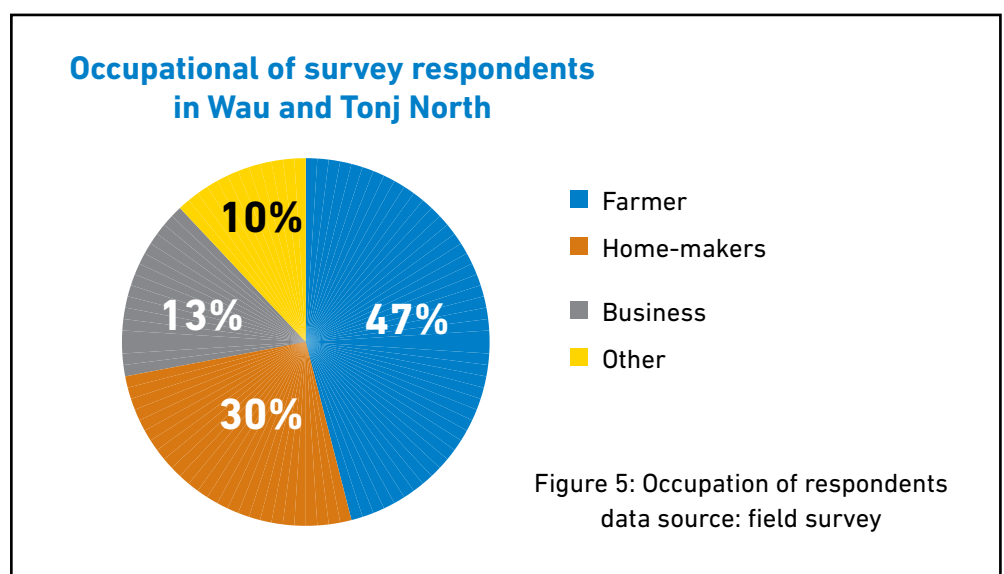
4. Educational level

62 per cent of survey respondents did not go to school, 20 per cent attended primary level, 14 per cent secondary level and only four per cent attended university.



5. Occupation

47 per cent of respondents were farmers, 30 per cent were home-makers, 13 per cent were engaged in business and 10 per cent had other occupations.



Key findings:

A. Gender roles:

There was no significant change in traditional decision-making roles amongst women and men's groups before and after the crises, as indicated below. However, there was an increase in men's role in food preparation, which increased from 0 per cent to 16 per cent, and contributions to family care also increased. Women's participation in socio-economic activities also rose, with those engaged in businesses rising from two per cent to 11 per cent, and farming from two per cent to 27 per cent.

Gender roles	Men (%)		Women (%)		Boys (%)		Girls (%)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Decision-making	24%	30%	0%	8%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Business	28%	26%	2%	11%	45%	36%	6%	6%
Food preparation	0%	16%	54%	33%	9%	18%	39%	33%
Farming	38%	16%	2%	27%	27%	28%	22%	28%
Caring for family	10%	12%	42%	21%	9%	9%	33%	33%
Total (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3: Gender roles before and after the crises

B. Access and control over resources:

There was slight progress in decision-making as well as access and control of resources for women after the crises. Women's community participation increased from 11.8 per cent to 25 per cent and their control over resources and services from 10 per cent to 30 per cent.

Access and control	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Before	After	Before	After
Decision-making	84%	72.5%	16%	27.5%
Community participation	88.2%	75%	11.8%	25%
Information	82.5%	67.5%	17.5%	32.5%
Resources and services	90%	70%	10%	30%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5: Access and control of resources before and after the crises

C) Gender equality

As a relatively recently independent country, South Sudan faces a lot of challenges, including gender inequality, which are exacerbated by uneven access to education, lack of employment opportunities and poor healthcare systems¹. Very few women attain formal education in South Sudan, and there is high mortality rate during child-birth as well as high incidence rate of domestic violence.²

IRSS worked on integrating gender equality awareness amongst community members, as part of its outreach and capacity building programmes. Findings from FGDs and KIIs showed a positive response on the relevance and impact of IRSS

programmes in enhancing women's participation, empowering women and promoting their rights. However, only 10 per cent to 15 per cent of men and women respondents of FGDs and KII indicated change in men's attitude towards women. Although awareness raising and outreach activities contributed in promoting women's and girl's rights, significant change has not been reflected in reality. Respondents also mentioned that there were limited advocacy elements in programmes, with only 10 per cent of adult men indicating that IRSS contributed to advocating for policy and law reforms.

Impact/relevance	Men (%)	Women (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
Promoted women's rights	30%	22%	9%	11%
Empowered women economically	26%	36%	45%	50%
Enhanced women's participation	24%	27%	27%	22%
Relative change in men's attitude	10%	15%	18%	17%
Advocated for policy/law reforms	10%	0%	0%	0%
Total (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1: Showing perceptions of community members on relevance and impact of IRSS' gender equality response

There was huge disparity between women and men's groups on their perceptions of the underlying factors that contributed to gender inequality. Men regarded lower levels of education (52 per cent) and poverty (30 per cent) to be the underlying factors limiting gender equality. In comparison with women's groups, in which only 11 per cent mentioned education levels and four per cent mentioned poverty. The majority of women attributed constrained gender equality to unfair customary laws (39 per cent) and heavy domestic workload (35 per cent).

¹ Soken-Huberty, E (n.d) *10 Causes of Gender Inequality* [Online] Available at <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/causes-gender-inequality/?nowprocket=1> [Accessed 6th May 2022]

² Awak Deng Bior (2013) *Gender Equality in South Sudan: A Review of Customs and Constitution* [Online] Available at <https://suddinstitute.org/publications/show/gender-equality-in-south-sudan-a-review-of-customs-and-constitution> [Accessed 6th May 2022]

Limiting factor	Men (%)	Women (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
Unfair customary laws/policies	4%	39%	0%	33%
Heavy domestic workload	10%	35%	9%	39%
Unhealthy cultural practices	4%	11%	9%	11%
Low levels of education	52%	11%	37%	11%
Poverty	30%	4%	45%	6%
Total (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2: Showing factors limiting gender equality mentioned by women, men boys and girls

D. Protection risks

Both men and women's groups indicated an increase in poverty and displacement as major protection risks, however only women's groups mentioned early and forced marriage as well as gender-based violence as a major protection risk concern. In terms of protection, women (47 per cent) prioritised access to basic needs such as food and cash assistance while men (67 per cent) prioritised employment and business opportunities.

Protection risks	Men (%)	Women (%)
Increased poverty	39%	39%
Attacks/displacements	11%	18%
Hunger and diseases	46%	16%
Forced/early marriages	0%	12%
Gender-based violence/ Sexual and gender-based violence	0%	7.5%
Floods	4%	7.5%
Total (%)	100%	100%

Table 7: Comparison of protection risks of men Vs women

Protection needs and priorities	Men (%)	Women (%)
Food security/cash assistance	14%	47%
Employment/business opportunities	67%	13%
Participation and inclusion	0%	6%
Access to healthcare services	11%	12%
Policy/law reforms	0%	6%
Access to justice	0%	4%
Access to education or empowerment	8%	8%
Access to clean water	0%	4%
Total (%)	100%	100%

Table 8: Gender protection needs and priorities

CASH PROGRAMMING AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN EMERGENCIES

Cash programming included both conditional and unconditional cash transfers in Yei (Central Equatoria State), Wau (Western Bahr El Ghazal State) and Tonj North (Warrap State). IRSS FSL officers specified that a vulnerability assessment was the basis for the selection criteria. Conditional cash was offered to households headed by a vulnerable person (such as older people, people with disabilities, and individuals who were ill) with able-bodied dependents who can qualify for cash for work. The most vulnerable members of the community automatically qualify for unconditional cash.

Yei, Central Equatoria State:

The response in Yei gave conditional and unconditional cash transfers to 231 people. Conditional cash targeted 132 people (78 male and 54 females) to repair a minor road for a payment of US\$80 per month for two months. Some 13.2 kilometers of road were repaired. The unconditional cash gave US\$80 to 99 people (42 male and 57 female) from vulnerable groups – mainly people who were ill or living with disabilities, and female-headed households. In Kajo-Keji it was difficult to access markets due to insecurity and massive displacement as a result of the conflict. Cash transfers only benefit areas where there are functional markets, so, as an alternative, food was distributed to the most affected vulnerable groups.

Banifasio's story



Banifasio, a visually impaired 92 year-old Muslim man, lives in Lomuku II area of Yei Town. Banifasio, who has three children from his late two wives, has lived in Yei for the last seven years, since conflict forced him to flee his home in Tore Payam.

Banifasio's life in Yei is hard. His age and vulnerability prevent him from earning a living. He stated that he does not have the strength needed to dig and that his eyesight is failing. His children (two sons and a daughter) live with him and Banifasio struggles to cultivate enough crops to feed his family.

They only cultivate land around their homestead because it's unsafe for them to go to the farms at the outskirts of the town. As a result, the crop produced is just to feed the family – there is no surplus that could be sold to earn a living.

Without money to pay for school fees, the children dropped out of school. Banifasio spent many sleepless nights worrying about his children's future. However, early this year, he qualified for Islamic Relief's unconditional cash transfer and received 63,250 SSP (US\$160), saying:

"I spent half of the money to send my children back to school. I paid for the entire year, and I used the remaining money to buy a secondhand bicycle from a neighbour to help my children carry me to the mosque. Eating will not be a big problem as we shall rely on the crops harvested from the home garden."

He concluded that he now sleeps more peacefully since his children have returned to their secondary and primary schools, and he can now attend prayer services without much difficulty.

Katrina's story



Katrina, 40, is a widow living with her daughter at St. Theresa in Yei town. In 2015, she fled her home in Ozio, near Mapoko, after losing five children to the conflict. Her two sons went with their uncle to Uganda, where they are living in a refugee camp. Katrina could not afford to pay for transport for the entire family, so she and her daughter stayed in Yei. Her daughter married in 2017 but was widowed a year later. They currently live together and Katrina described the household's struggle to survive. The pair would look for all sorts of odd jobs every day, just to be able to afford to eat. Sometimes, they earned some money, sometimes they did not. Katrina thought of setting up a small business but lacked the capital needed to start even a tea-selling venture.

Katrina also said that during the rainy season, at least, they could rest because they grew food on the land around their house. The dry season was always a period of hunger, as some nights they would go to bed having not eaten that day. She prayed for money to start a business that would end their suffering.

Her prayers were answered this year when she was introduced to Islamic Relief by the area chief. She was interviewed by staff. At first, she thought, it was as it always was: organisations come and talk to them and then disappear for good. But this time, it was different. After a short time, she received assistance from Islamic Relief: 63,250 SSP (US\$160). She bought 10 plastic chairs, five small plastic tables, a stove and a bag of charcoal, as well as 10 kgs of sugar and tea spices. She started selling tea every evening in the open air. After two weeks, she raised 20,000 SSP, enabling her to construct a shade for her kiosk. Katrina proudly said:

"Since I started the business, I now supply tea to most business owners and their clients in the neighbourhood. My customers increase in numbers day by day. I have joined a local savings group to raise money to support my two children studying in the refugee camp in Uganda, and my life has meaningfully improved."

Augustino's story



Twice a widower, 81-year-old Augustino is a father of 10 who has always lived in Yei town. A hardworking farmer, Augustino used to be able to meet the needs of his large family by selling his products. All 10 children were able to go to school.

Then his farm was caught up in the frontlines of the conflict which began in 2015, cutting off Augustino from his livelihood. Being unable to work in the years since, he said, has sapped his strength and his health deteriorated to the point that he could no longer do anything for himself. His children also struggled with him, but nowadays four of them are married and have established their own homes. They are over-stretched with their respective family responsibilities and could no longer support their father.

Augustino was left with the younger children. He pushed the children to cultivate the land in the compound, and that has been feeding them. "Every evening I go to meet with my friends and we could pray for peace so that our lives could improve once more." Then, Augustino had a surprise:

"One morning, my friends and I were talking under a mango tree, and some people approached us and asked us questions. They said they came from Islamic Relief and the chief had directed them to us. They asked our ages, and two of us were selected. My name and contact details were taken. One morning, I was called, given a voucher and told to go to an agent in Yei town to get paid. I went with my friend and we received 63,250 SSP (US160) each. It was like peace has come."

He took the money home, and spent three days planning what to do with it. Finally, he came up with a plan to multiply the money and improve his life. He thought of setting up a business selling charcoal, since he has health issues and selling charcoal did not require movement. He ordered bags of charcoal and sold them. His boys help him in measuring the charcoal. Now, his friends come to his place every evening and he buys them tea. Augustino is also able to pay the school fees for his children.

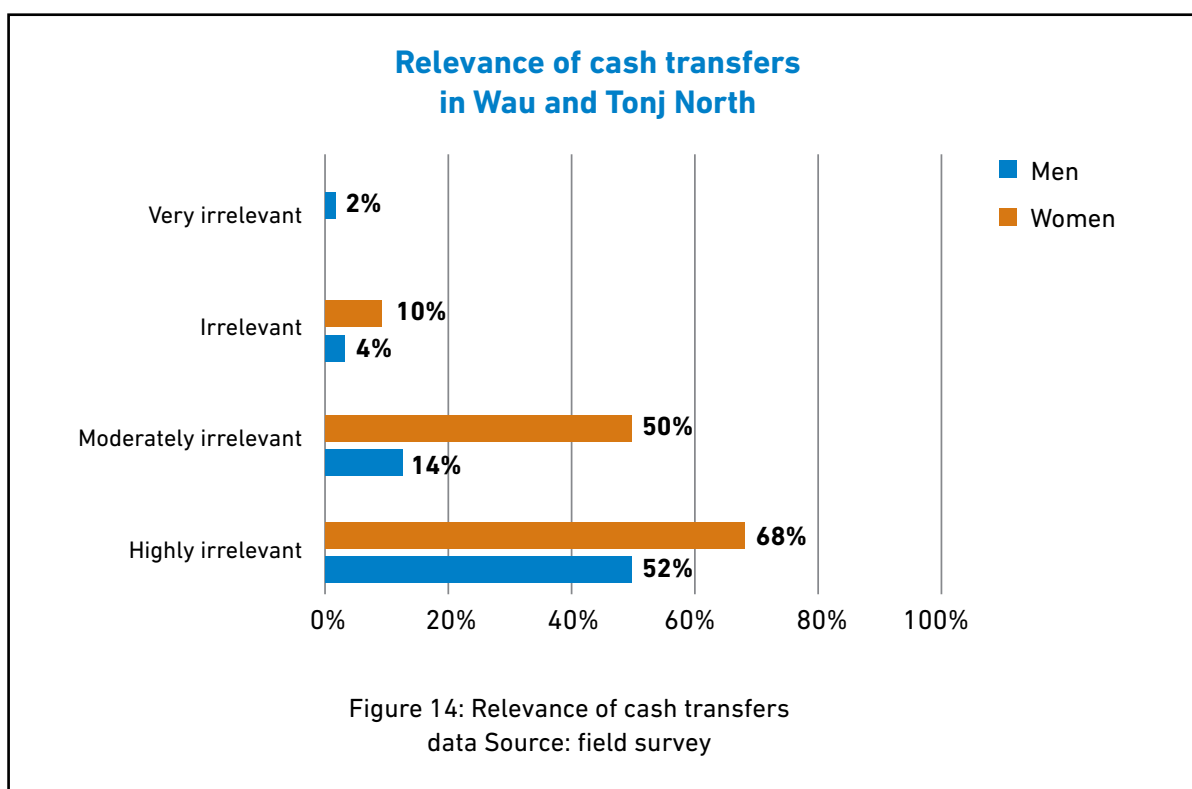
Western Bahr El Ghazal State:

IRSS's conditional cash transfer in western Behr El Ghazal planned to target 180 community members over six months for road repair projects. However security threats emerged after one month of implementation: community members were worried that a repaired route would make it easier for attackers to access their community, and as a result the project stopped. Beda, the area chief for Gettan, said;

"If the road to the main road is cleared, the armed groups will have quick access to our communities. At the moment, they cannot reach us because the road is bad – their cars and trucks will never pass."

Cash for work programmes linked to a specific project require extensive consultation prior to project implementation. There is a clear gap in consultation with, and the participation of, community members that requires immediate action from IRSS.

Relevance of cash transfers



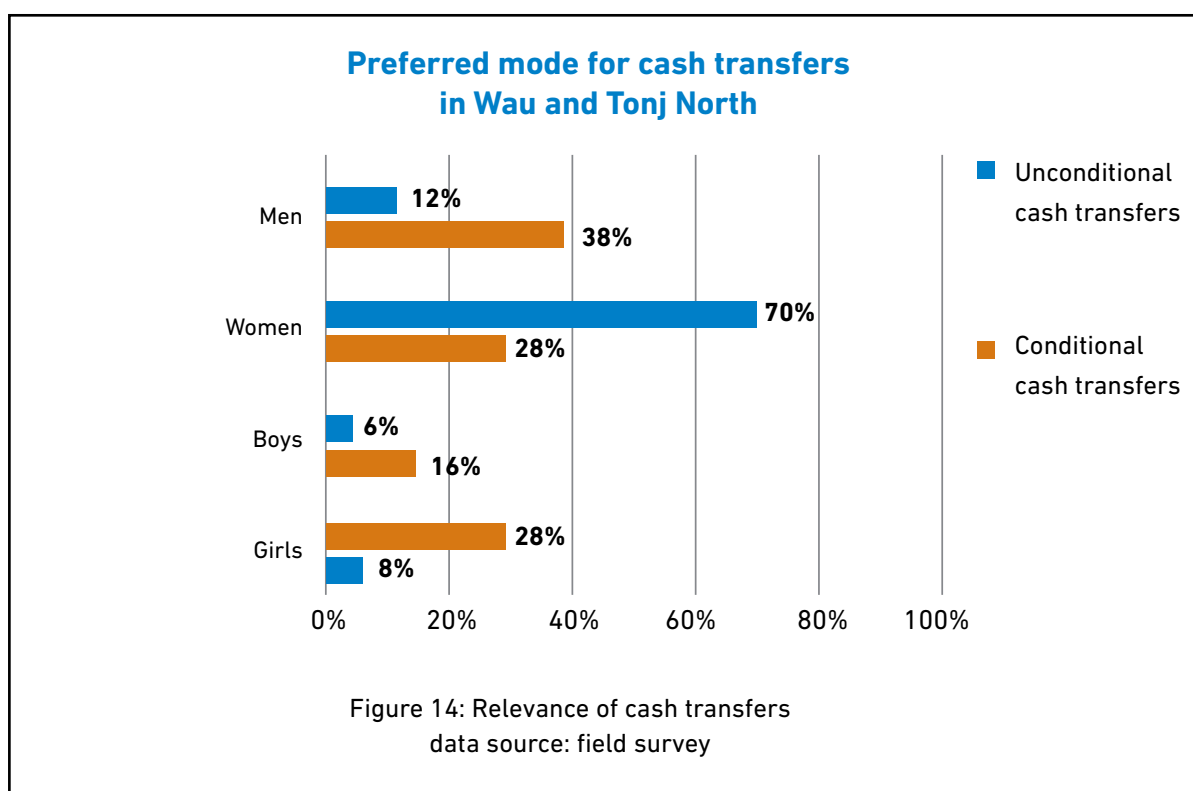
Many research studies have shown that cash transfers are much-needed post crises. Cash transfers can support access to food, help rebuild or protect livelihoods, help to meet people's need for shelter and survival items, support refugees and facilitate return and reintegration processes³. Data from our research has also shown that cash transfers are relevant and highly needed. More than 72 per cent of male participants who took part in the household surveys said that cash transfers are highly relevant, while 52 per cent of female respondents believed them highly relevant.

³Harvey, P. & Bailey, S. (2011) Cash transfer programming in emergencies [Online] Available at <https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/publications/cash-transfer-programming-emergencies> [Accessed 6th May 2022]

Women	Scores (%)	Men	Scores (%)
Highly relevant	52%	Highly relevant	72%
Moderately relevant	39%	Moderately relevant	19%
Irrelevant	9%	Irrelevant	6%
Very irrelevant	0%	Very irrelevant	3%

Table 9: Showing gender-related relevance of cash transfers

There is a clear difference between men and women’s groups in acknowledging the relevance of cash transfers. This indicates the need for increased economic awareness among women, along with studying women’s control over financial assets in comparison to in-kind support, which perhaps could be the reason for their perception of cash relevance to aid.



The findings shown in figure 15 also indicate that the majority of women’s groups (70 per cent) prefer unconditional cash, which probably stems from imbalanced power relations. Women seem to assume that men would dominate conditional cash and therefore opt for unconditional cash transfer.

Findings regarding the benefits and impact of cash transfers also show that the majority of women associate the benefits of cash transfers

with meeting basic needs such as improved feeding (55 per cent) and improved healthcare (22 per cent). The majority of men saw the benefits in less essential aspects, such as enhanced social status (40 per cent) and increased income (30 per cent). However, younger groups of boys and girls associated increased cash with improved access to education.

Benefit	Men (%)	Women (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
Improved feeding	20%	55%	36%	33%
Improved access to education	8%	15%	45%	50%
Improved income	30%	5%	19%	17%
Enhanced social status	40%	3%	0%	0%
Improved access to healthcare	2%	22%	0%	0%
Total (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 11: Showing benefits of cash transfers disaggregated by gender and age

KEY LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Cash programming

1. Both conditional and unconditional cash transfers have proven to be relevant and beneficial to improving the livelihood and welfare of internally displaced people.
2. Some community members managed to establish businesses with the two months cash assistance provided in Yei.
3. In Wau and Yei the majority of rights-holders were male (55%), likely due to social roles and control over cash within households.
4. Some vulnerable families did not have a family member eligible to participate in a cash for work programme.
5. Consultation with community members is essential for a project's success, as shown in Getan and Tabani, where road repairs posed potential security risks.
6. Integrating soft skills training and business development in forthcoming cash programming should be considered for productive businesses and sustainable sources of income.
7. The duration of cash transfers could be extended beyond three months, based on high need and demand, and to allow community members to establish businesses.

B. Gender equality

1. In communities with imbalanced gender power relations, women prefer unconditional cash transfers due to men dominating conditional cash transfers. Offering both options should be considered.
2. Following-up on gender empowerment and inclusion activities such as training and outreach sessions is necessary. Some respondents could not recall content from the training/outreach sessions. Participants could be assigned monthly tasks to encourage practical application of knowledge and skills. Refresher training could also be considered for future interventions.
3. Mentorship programmes for grassroots women's organisations, and engaging men and boys as champions for change within the community could improve gender equality.

C. Protection and inclusion

1. Protection risks for women and men are different. This requires a gender-sensitive approach.
2. Staff should conceptualise core protection principles and provide safe complaint response, to ensure protection and safeguarding concerns are addressed.
3. Identification and assessment of risks should be done in consultation with women's and girls' groups and should cover gender-based violence case management and monitoring.
4. Integrated gender-based violence risk mitigation and response should include access to healthcare, education, training and income generation, which links national and international development plans.

ANNEX: SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION

S/ No.	Data collection tool	Total no. of tools and respondents	Category of respondent and site	Disaggregated data - gender	Inclusion of persons with disability (PWD)
	Key informant interviews (KIIs)	18 KIIs (18 respondents)	9 KIIs with rights-holders; - 5 from Yei - 2 from Tonj North - 6 from Wau (Birinji 1, Geddi 2, Baggari 1 and Getan 1)	- 10 female - 7 male	-
			4 KIIs with IRSS staff; - 2 staff in Wau office. - 1 staff in Yei - 1 staff in Tonj North	- 1 female - 3 male	-
			5 KIIs with actors/partners; - 2 in Tonj North - 3 in Wau	- 2 female - 3 male	
	Focus group discussions (FGDs)	6 FGDs (42 respondents)	6 FGDs facilitated; - 2 for girls (Birinji and Tonj North) - 3 for older women (Birinji, Tonj North and Yei) - 1 for IRSS volunteers/CPA	- 35 female (14 girls) - 7 male (youth)	5 PWDs (3 in Tonj North, 1 Birinji and 1 in Yei)
	Households surveys (HHS)	200 HHS (200 respondents)	200 HHS; - 100 HHS – Wau - 100 HHS – Tonj North	- 128 female - 72 male (Figure 1)	
	TOTAL			259 respondents - 176 females - 83 male	5 PWDs



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