

HOLY TRINITY PEACE VILLAGE KURON

BASE LINE SURVEY CONDUCTED IN 7 VILLAGES IN AND AROUND KURON, KAUTO PAYAM, KAPOETA EAST.

The comprehensive survey on issues surrounding how women and men are treated in all aspects of lives in Toposa communities was conducted exclusively by the health team together with the program manager.



The team was primarily interested in The photo of the team who conducted the survey.

understanding the Toposa traditional/cultural understanding of the basic human rights, the understanding and practices surrounding marriage institution and finally the traditional understanding of the Toposa people on the cultural defined roles and responsibilities of the women and men in their society.

The team's one week's field movement into these different villages was a very interesting one since it gave an exposure into understanding and learning more of Toposa culture which definitely leaves women and girl children very disadvantaged.

The members of the seven villages when talked to about their understanding of the basic human rights and dignity, however, they did not know what that is, but the men in one way expressed that its them the men who are the owners of the world, society, women, cattle, goats and everything at

home, so its only and only them who have the right to choose what to do with all the mentioned and women must and should not in any event object what the men have decided.



Talking to the community members of Gumari village in Kuron boma

When we took initiative to dig out the understanding and traditional practices of the Toposa people on issues surrounding marriages, we were told from all the seven villages that marriages are only and only allowed when the man is able to pay cattle for the identified girl/woman. That many herds of cattle are the only medium for exchange for a girl/woman.



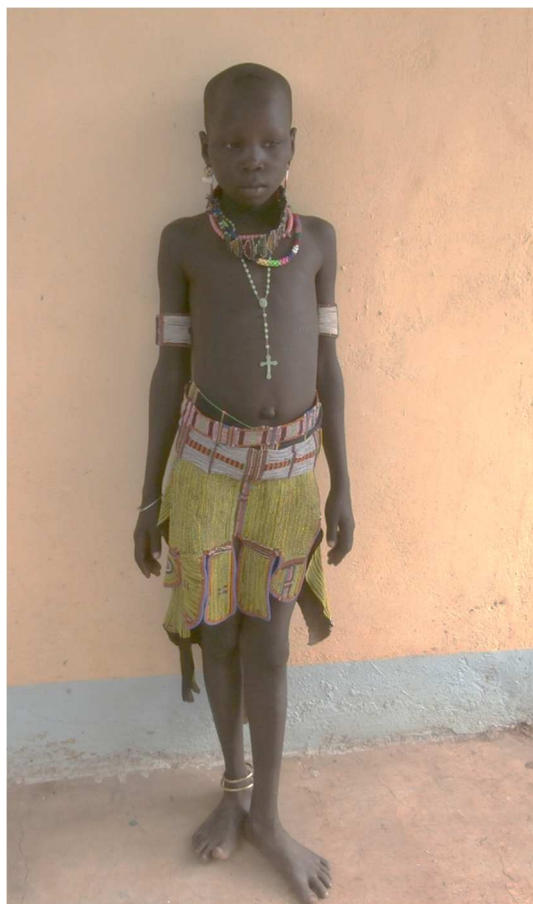
The girl standing near her mother plus her two other sisters seated down at the health facility.

We discovered that in Toposa, the girls/women get their marriage partners under these arrangements. First and foremost is that, girls are booked by grown up men at any age for example, we came across a girl who was book by a man of about approximately 38 years of age. The young girl was booked at 3 months and she is now about 9 years of age when we visited the home. When we asked the parents whether the girl's future husband has already paid some

herds of cattle for her, they said he paid a few but not yet all, the parents also added that their daughter now knows her husband since the man makes frequent visits to their home to find out how the girl is doing.



This is the 9 year old girl who was booked by a man at 3 months. This picture was taken at the health facility for HTPVK when we invited her and her parents for a chat.



The same girl receiving some medications, the wrapped cloth and sanitary materials at the health facility.



The booked girl in her newly provided piece of cloth at the health facility

From the seven villages visited, we also discovered that its majorly the fathers of the girls who look for some able men within their communities who can pay a good number of cows to the family regardless of their ages, physical fitness and health status and ones they receive the number of cows they want, they give out their girls to such men. A good example on this is the sub chief of Kuron payam who recently gave out his youngest daughter to an old man.



Talking to the community members of murwazwe village

Some mothers supported the idea of their husbands giving out their daughters to men who can pay cattle, but however, some said it's a very bad practice because there are some incidences where some young girls refuse the choice of their fathers, and as a result they are tied on a tree, beaten, tortured for many days until they accept to go with father's choice. In some cases, the mothers of such girls commit suicide because they find it very

painful to continue seeing their daughters being tortured on a tree like an animal.



We also discovered that to a limited extend, the Toposa girls/women choose their own men for marriage and they are accepted by their parents on condition that such men are able to pay the required number of cattle by the parents of the girl/woman

In Toposa, the young boys or grown up men who come from poor homes without cattle are not allowed to marry culturally, this is

because they cannot afford to pay for the girls/women. What happens is that they have to wait until their fathers/brothers die and then they inherit their wives. Also, women whose husbands die are not allowed to make decisions to choose new husbands for themselves outside the clan, but they

are inherited by the sons of their co wives or by the brothers of their late husbands or some people from the clan.

The Toposa community is again on one side characterised by ill-treatment offered to the female counter parts, in that they are in some incidences raped as they go to fetch water/fire wood. The Toposa people have the informal community structures under the leadership of Sultans/Chiefs but they do not handle such cases, the victims of such sexual harassments still have to report to their family heads which in some cases lead to divorce by their husbands for the case of the married women. The community of Karukocum told us this.



Karukocum community members

The Toposa women when asked as to where they give birth from and why, they said, they prefer to give birth from their homes, this is because they fear being attacked by the enemies and wild animals on the way as they make efforts to reach the clinic. As the result of wanting to deliver from home, they always encounter some complications which they fail to handle from home which always lead to the loose of the kids/mothers

or both. They said the Toposa culture requires that a pregnant woman avoids eating goat's meat until birth and that shortly after delivery; a woman is not to eat any food until the next day which leaves them very weak. They added that a witch doctor is brought to help in times of complications which according to them such witch doctors always fail to help those with complications to deliver safely.

In Toposa culture, when a married woman fails to conceive and produce any kid, she is left to remain in marriage, but her husband marries other women to produce many kids and some are given to her. In scenarios where her husband is not willing to Mary another woman, he buys a baby boy from another family with many children at the cost of 30 cows and this boy is kept as that woman's real child forever, he grows up and marries and produces for the whole family.



After visiting the community members of Namuton village.

In a nutshell, the issues which are alarming among the Toposa communities are, Women do not decide on anything not even on issues that affect them, girls/women to a greater extent do not decide on their marriage partners, women are tortured by their husbands for any mistakes they commit, women/girls are raped, boys/men from poor families without cattle are not allowed to marry, sometimes girls who refuse the choice of their parents are shot dead by their fathers.

Kuron, June 2014