

BORUBORU CAMPAIGN REPORT



BORUBORU-CHILD-LED PROTECTION CAMPAIGN



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1 EVENT DETAILS

- **Event Name:** Child-led community protection and social cohesion campaign
- **Date & Time:** 18/12/2024
- **Location:** Northern Bahr El Ghazal University Ground
- **Organizer(s):** Help a Child

2 Competition Arrangement

2.1 HOW WAS THE COMPETITION STRUCTURED?

The campaign spanned two weeks; however, the mobilization and sensitization efforts commenced in November. Mobilization involved identifying ten schools within the project area to participate in the initiative. Engaging schoolchildren as campaign leaders was a strategic approach to ensure that the skills acquired would be embedded within the schools, enabling students to continue practicing advocacy and nonviolence beyond the project's duration.

Help a Child's social workers identify and select nine schools to participate in the 14-day campaign. Each school nominated 14 girls aged 10 to 18, including Boruboru players, referees, coaches, first aiders, and judges, totaling 140 players per school.

Each team comprised key leadership roles, including a coach, referee, judge, first aider, and captain. These individuals played a crucial role in motivating their teams, ensuring adherence to the rules and schedules, and delivering impactful messages on protection and social cohesion.

The campaign was entirely youth-led, with Help a Child providing training and equipping participants with essential life skills such as leadership, nonviolence and tolerance, time management, public speaking, communication, scriptwriting, advocacy, and team building. The team's materials and for developing speeches, composing poems and songs, creating visual advocacy materials, and selecting the most effective methods for delivering their messages.

The campaign officially launched with the commencement of the games. The ten teams were divided into three groups, with each team playing three matches before progressing to the knockout stage. The tournament advanced through the quarterfinals, semi-finals, and ultimately the final match. Throughout the campaign, children delivered advocacy messages to the audiences gathered to watch the games. The Boruboru tournament served as an engaging and recreational platform to enhance community sensitization and participation.

2.2 FORMAT AND RULES OF THE COMPETITION:

Boruboru is governed by a set of rules and regulations to ensure fair play and discipline. For instance, crossing internal boundary lines results in a deduction of one point from the team's score. Striking an opponent on the head leads to a similar penalty. Additionally, players must not retract their hands when throwing the ball; failure to adhere to this rule results in a score reduction. Participants are also expected to accept defeat gracefully and refrain from retaliatory actions against their opponents.

Before the commencement of the matches, all teams undergo training in essential skills, including leadership, time management, public speaking, teamwork, tolerance, and nonviolence. Team-building exercises enable players to collaborate effectively, reinforcing the importance of unity and collective effort in achieving success. Time management skills help players adhere to schedules, ensuring the games proceed without unnecessary delays. Through adherence to the game's rules, participants gain firsthand experience of the consequences of noncompliance.

The principles of nonviolence and tolerance equip the children to manage emotions, preventing overreactions when facing defeat. Notably, there were no incidents of aggression or hostility toward the winning teams throughout the matches. Public speaking and communication training enhanced players' confidence, enabling them to address audiences that included parents and government officials. Leadership skills played a crucial role, as effective teamwork and strategic guidance from captains, coaches, and judges were essential for achieving favorable results in the tournament.

3 PARTICIPANTS

3.1 WHO PARTICIPATED?

Category 1:

SN	Participants	Players	Officials	Total
1	Sacred Heart of Jesus Primary school-Maper West	12	2	14
2	St Joseph Primary School- Amisego	12	2	14
3	St Charles Primary School- Apada	12	2	14
4	St Daniel Comboni Primary school-Maper	12	2	14
5	Apei Goi Primary school-Hi-Salam	12	2	14
6	Maper East Modern Primary School	12	2	14
7	Yith Aluk Primary School North	12	2	14
8	City of Glory Academy Primary School	12	2	14
9	Lighthouse primary school	12	2	14
10	New Jerusalem family home primary school	12	2	14
	Total:	120	20	140

Category 2: Participants

S/No	Name	Number
1	Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare	2
2	Ministry of General Education	2
3	Ministry of Health	2
4	Traditional Chiefs	10
5	Churches	15
6	National and International NGOs (NRC)	5
7	Youth Groups (drama group)	20
8	Ministry of Local Government	2
9	Representatives of street children	15

3.2 WHICH GROUP WON?

Results & Celebrations

-  **1st Place:** Light House Primary School
-  **2nd Place:** St. Daniel Comboni Primary School
-  **3rd Place:** New Jerusalem Family Home School

4 Audience Description

4.1 WHO ATTENDED THE EVENT?

Boruboru is an engaging and highly appealing sport, traditionally designed for girls. However, it has gained significant popularity among men and boys as well. In regions where Boruboru has not been part of the traditional sporting culture, such as Northern Bahr El Ghazal unlike Western Bahr el Ghazal and the greater Equatoria regions the sport is perceived as new, generating curiosity and drawing large audiences.

During this two-week campaign, children constituted many participants, with over 60% being girls and 40% boys. Among adult spectators, approximately 20% were women and 80% were men. This demographic distribution differs from Equatoria, where Boruboru originated and where women typically take a more active role, followed by men. These variations can be attributed to cultural differences and the level of freedom women and girls experience in different communities. However, as children continue to engage in the game and eventually become parents, they are likely to promote and sustain its growth, mirroring communities where Boruboru has been played for generations.

The primary objective of integrating Boruboru into this campaign was to create an inclusive platform that brings together influential stakeholders capable of amplifying children's voices.

As a result, the campaign successfully attracted a diverse group of participants, including representatives from state and county governments, humanitarian organizations, religious institutions, traditional leadership, women's groups, youth organizations, schools, and teachers. Additionally, a significant number of vulnerable children living on the streets of Aweil town attended voluntarily, highlighting the campaign's broad reach and impact as a child-led initiative.

4.2 DID THE AUDIENCE INCLUDE STREET CHILDREN?

A significant number of street-connected children attended the event voluntarily, drawn by various factors. Some anticipated the opportunity to access food, while others collected plastic water bottles for resale as a means of earning income. Additionally, many were intrigued by the novelty of Boruboru and attended as spectators.

These children were easily identifiable by their attire, movement in small groups, engagement in substance use, and the carrying of sacks filled with collected plastic bottles. They generally maintained a distance from schoolchildren, opting to stand behind those seated in the tents rather than integrating with the larger audience.

The age range of the street-connected children was approximately 5 to 18 years, with boys comprising the overwhelming majority. This observation suggests that the prevalence of girls living on the streets is lower than initially anticipated.

4.3 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ATTENDEES:

The number of attendants is often counted right from the starting stages of the campaign starting with the group stage. As the campaign progresses through the subsequent stages, the number of audiences also increases till the final stage. It has been estimated that over 4,000 people attended the preliminary stages and at least over 3,000 attended the final campaign event.

5 ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AUDIENCE

5.1 HOW WAS THE AUDIENCE ADDRESSED?

As a child-led advocacy platform, the program is designed to ensure that key invited stakeholders and influential representatives can engage with and respond to messages presented by children. The event typically begins with the guest of honor and other invited dignitaries symbolically opening the games by playing Boruboru for one to two minutes before handing it over to the children.

The children participate in a structured gameplay format, where each match lasts 20 minutes, followed by a five-minute break before the next team enters the field. During these breaks, child representatives take the stage to deliver impactful advocacy messages through speeches,

poetry recitations, songs, artwork displays, drama performances, and creative dances. These presentations center on critical campaign themes such as “End Child Marriage,” “Stop Forced Marriage,” “Promote Peaceful Coexistence,” “We Need Education,” and “Child Protection.”

Throughout a 100-minute match, players take four five-minute breaks, totaling 20 minutes. These breaks provide a dedicated window for children to deliver their messages to leaders, parents, and the public, ensuring sufficient time for effective communication. Additionally, messages are displayed on banners and T-shirts to enhance visibility and outreach.

At the conclusion of the match, key invited guests are given the opportunity to address the audience before the results are announced. Leaders respond to the concerns and questions raised by the children, often making commitments to improve conditions or create new opportunities. Some officials also reference existing policies and laws that protect children's rights, highlighting associated penalties for violations.

This event serves as a powerful platform not only for advocacy but also for policymakers and law enforcement officials to sensitize the public on existing child protection laws and policies. Given that government resources for widespread dissemination of these policies are often limited, the event provides a crucial opportunity to bridge this gap and raise public awareness.

6 WERE ANY KEY MESSAGES SHARED?

6.1 KEY ADVOCACY MESSAGES FROM GUESTS AND CHILDREN'S REPRESENTATIVES

During the event, both guests and children's representatives shared valuable insights that reinforced fundamental principles for child protection and empowerment.

The **Guest of Honor** began by expressing gratitude to *Help a Child*, recognizing it as the only active child protection organization in Northern Bahr El Ghazal that is making significant contributions to children's well-being. The guest specifically acknowledged this final child-led campaign as a remarkable example of impactful advocacy. Reiterating the messages delivered by the children and earlier speakers, the guest emphasized that this **innovative child protection approach—integrating Boruboru into advocacy—should not be limited to the 10 schools that participated in the campaign**. Instead, *Help a Child*, in collaboration with other partners, including the state government, should work to expand this child-led initiative. The guest proposed that Boruboru be introduced in all schools and communities across the region and formally included as a recognized sport in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Additionally, Boruboru should be mainstreamed into child protection, education, and peacebuilding activities to maximize its impact.

One of the central messages reinforced during the campaign was that **every child deserves protection**. No child should endure abuse, neglect, or discrimination, and it is the responsibility of communities to actively prevent exploitation while upholding the dignity of every child. Ensuring a safe environment for children is a collective duty that requires vigilance and commitment from all sectors of society.

Another key principle highlighted was that **decisions should always prioritize the best interests of children**. Policies, programs, and interventions must be designed with children's safety, education, and overall well-being in mind. When making decisions that impact young lives, stakeholders must ensure that children's needs come first, providing them with opportunities to thrive in a secure and supportive environment.

Speakers also underscored the importance of **recognizing and respecting children's rights**. Every child has the right to access quality education, healthcare, and the freedom to express their thoughts and opinions. Upholding these rights is essential for fostering a generation that is empowered, knowledgeable, and capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

Finally, the event reinforced the idea that **children's voices matter**. Children must be actively included in discussions and decision-making processes on issues that affect them. Their unique perspectives and lived experiences offer invaluable insights that can help shape more effective and inclusive policies. By listening to children and valuing their input, communities, and leaders can create a more just and equitable society.

These key messages served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to protect, nurture, and empower children, ensuring they grow up in environments that respect their rights and support their full potential.

7 ANY NOTABLE REACTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE?

7.1 NOTABLE REACTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

The campaign elicited strong and positive reactions from the audience, highlighting the effectiveness of the child-led advocacy approach.

1. **Emotional Engagement and Support:** Many attendees, including government officials, community leaders, and parents, were deeply moved by the powerful messages shared by the children. Several expressed their admiration for the confidence and eloquence of the young speakers, acknowledging the importance of amplifying children's voices in matters that affect their lives.
2. **Commitment from Leaders:** Some key stakeholders, including representatives from the state government and humanitarian organizations, pledged to explore ways to integrate Boruboru into child protection, education, and peacebuilding activities. They

expressed interest in working with *Help a Child* and other partners to expand the initiative beyond the 10 participating schools.

3. **Increased Awareness:** Many attendees, particularly parents and teachers, expressed a new understanding of the challenges children face, including child marriage, forced labor, and limited access to education. The campaign served as an eye-opener, encouraging parents and caregivers to take a more active role in safeguarding children's rights.
4. **Engagement of Street-Connected Children:** A significant number of vulnerable children living on the streets attended voluntarily, and their presence sparked discussions among stakeholders about the need for targeted interventions to support these children. Some attendees proposed exploring ways to engage street children in similar sports-based initiatives as a means of social inclusion.
5. **Public Endorsement of Boruboru as a Tool for Advocacy:** Many community members voiced their support for Boruboru as a unique and effective method of conveying important messages. Some suggested formalizing the sport within Northern Bahr el Ghazal's school curriculum and using it as a tool for promoting social cohesion and child protection awareness.

Overall, the audience's reactions reflected a high level of interest and commitment to sustaining and expanding this innovative advocacy approach. The event not only amplified children's voices but also mobilized stakeholders toward concrete actions for policy change and community development.

8 Participant Feedback & Observations

8.1 QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS:

The event left a lasting impact on attendees, with several participants sharing powerful reflections on the significance of the campaign and the innovative use of Boruboru as a child-led advocacy tool.

- **Guest of Honor (Government Official):**
"This campaign is a shining example of how children can lead the conversation on issues that affect them. We must ensure that Boruboru and this child-led approach reach every school and community in Northern Bahr El Ghazal. Children's voices matter, and we, as leaders, must listen and act."
- **Community Elder:**
"I have never seen a sport used in such a meaningful way. Boruboru is not just a game; it is a

powerful tool for change. Our children are teaching us important lessons today, and we must stand with them."

- **Teacher from a Participating School:**
"Seeing my students confidently speak about their rights and concerns gives me hope for the future. This campaign proves that when children are given a platform, they can inspire real change."
- **Young Female Participant (13 years old):**
"We play Boruboru not just for fun, but to send a message. We want every girl to go to school and be protected. We want our leaders to listen and take action."
- **Parent in Attendance:**
"I came to watch a game, but I am leaving with a new understanding of what children go through. As parents, we must do better to protect and support them."
- **Street-Connected Child (16 years old):**
"I came because I was curious, but I have learned something important today. Maybe one day, I can also stand and speak like those children."

These statements reflect the deep impact of the event, showing how it resonated with different stakeholders and inspired a collective commitment to advancing child protection and advocacy efforts.

8.2 OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR ENGAGEMENT, ENTHUSIASM, AND CHALLENGES FACED:

Engagement and Enthusiasm

The campaign was met with high levels of enthusiasm from both participants and attendees. Several key observations highlighted the depth of engagement:

- **Children's Active Participation:** The children displayed remarkable confidence in leading the campaign, delivering speeches, reciting poems, and performing dramas with strong advocacy messages. Their energy and passion were evident as they used Boruboru not just as a game but as a powerful medium for awareness and change.
- **Public Interest and Curiosity:** Given that Boruboru is a relatively new sport in Northern Bahr El Ghazal, many spectators especially men and boys were drawn to the event out of curiosity. Their initial interest in the game quickly transformed into an appreciation for the underlying advocacy messages.

- **Commitment from Stakeholders:** Many local leaders, including government representatives, teachers, and community elders, actively listened to the children's presentations and later engaged in discussions. Several pledged their support to integrate Boruboru into child protection, education, and peacebuilding initiatives.
- **Street-Connected Children's Involvement:** The presence of children living on the streets was notable. While some initially came for food, to collect plastic bottles, or out of curiosity, they gradually engaged with the event, listening attentively to the messages and staying until the end. Their interest suggests a potential avenue for future targeted interventions.

8.3 CHALLENGES FACED

Despite the overall success of the campaign, several challenges were observed:

- **Gender Disparity in Participation:** While the campaign aimed to be inclusive, the majority of street-connected children in attendance were boys, highlighting the limited visibility and participation of girls in similar spaces. This suggests a need for targeted efforts to engage and empower girls, especially those in vulnerable situations.
- **Reluctance of Street-Connected Children to Mix with Others:** Many street children kept to themselves, standing at the back rather than sitting with schoolchildren under the tents. Their distinct dress, small group formations, and reluctance to interact with others indicated a sense of social exclusion. Addressing this requires more inclusive community engagement strategies.
- **Cultural Barriers to Women's Participation:** While Boruboru is traditionally a female-dominated sport in Equatoria, women's participation in Northern Bahr el Ghazal was lower than expected. Cultural differences and varying levels of freedom for women and girls in different regions may have influenced this. More efforts are needed to encourage women's involvement in advocacy through sports.
- **Limited Resources for Expansion:** While many stakeholders expressed interest in scaling up the campaign, the lack of adequate resources for expanding Boruboru beyond the 10 participating schools remains a challenge. Sustainable partnerships and funding will be necessary to reach more communities.

Despite these challenges, the campaign successfully created a dynamic and engaging platform that fostered meaningful discussions, inspired commitments from key stakeholders, and demonstrated the potential of Boruboru as an innovative tool for child-led advocacy.

9 EVENT IMPACT & CONCLUSION

9.1 KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EVENT

The Boruboru child-led advocacy campaign successfully reinforced key messages on child rights, education, and protection while demonstrating the effectiveness of sports-based advocacy. The following key insights emerged:

- **Children's Voices Can Drive Change:** The event proved that children, when given the right platform, can confidently express their concerns and influence decision-makers. Their speeches, poems, performances, and participation in the game effectively conveyed advocacy messages.
- **Boruboru Is an Innovative Tool for Advocacy:** The use of Boruboru as an advocacy platform attracted diverse audiences, making complex issues more engaging and accessible. It provided a safe and interactive space for dialogue between children and key stakeholders.
- **Commitment to Scaling Up:** Government representatives, community leaders, and humanitarian organizations pledged to expand this child-led advocacy approach. There was widespread agreement that Boruboru should be integrated into school programs and child protection initiatives.
- **Awareness Raised on Child Protection Issues:** The event helped educate parents, teachers, and community members about key child rights issues, including child marriage, forced labor, and access to education. Many attendees expressed a renewed commitment to protecting and supporting children.
- **Challenges in Inclusion Noted:** While the campaign engaged various stakeholders, gender disparities were observed. The low participation of girls among street-connected children and cultural barriers limiting women's involvement highlights the need for more inclusive outreach strategies.
- **Community-Led Solutions Are Effective:** The active involvement of local leaders, teachers, and parents demonstrated the importance of grassroots solutions in addressing child protection challenges. Their engagement will be crucial in sustaining the impact of the initiative.

9.2 WHAT WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH THIS EVENT?

- **Amplified Children's Voices:** The event provided a platform for children to express their views, concerns, and aspirations in front of decision-makers and their communities.

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Commitment:** Government officials, community leaders, and humanitarian actors actively participated, pledged support, and explored ways to institutionalize Boruboru as a tool for child advocacy.
- **Raised Awareness on Key Issues:** The campaign successfully educated the public on critical child protection concerns, including the need to end child marriage, promote education, and ensure children's safety and well-being.
- **Encouraged Social Inclusion:** The participation of street-connected children, though limited in integration, was a step toward creating more inclusive spaces where marginalized groups can be engaged and supported.
- **Strengthened Community Collaboration:** The event fostered stronger relationships between children, schools, parents, and local leaders, encouraging a collective effort to uphold children's rights and well-being.
- **Demonstrated the Potential for Expansion:** The campaign's success showcased Boruboru as a scalable advocacy model, generating momentum for its potential adoption in more schools and communities.

9.3 FINAL THOUGHTS

The Boruboru child-led advocacy campaign was more than just an event—it was a powerful movement that united children, leaders, and community members in a shared commitment to protecting and empowering children.

-  **Awareness Raised:** The campaign successfully highlighted the challenges children face and inspired conversations about child rights and protection. Many attendees left with a deeper understanding of the issues and their role in creating change.
-  **Friendships and Community Bonds Strengthened:** The event fostered unity among children from different schools and backgrounds. Many formed new friendships, strengthening social connections across diverse groups.
-  **Confidence Instilled in Children:** The campaign empowered children to express their views with courage and clarity. Their participation in speeches, performances, and Boruboru matches helped build their confidence and self-esteem.
-  **A Call for Continued Action:** The enthusiasm and commitments made during the event underscored the need for sustained efforts. Ensuring that Boruboru and

child-led advocacy become permanent tools for change requires ongoing collaboration between children, communities, and stakeholders.

This campaign was a testament to the power of child-led advocacy, proving that when children are heard, positive change follows.

108. RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

10.1 IMPROVEMENTS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

◆ Enhance Inclusivity:

- **Increase female participation:** Future events should focus on increasing the participation of girls, particularly street-connected girls, to ensure gender balance. This can be achieved by creating targeted outreach programs and providing safe spaces for girls to engage.
- **Engage more street-connected children:** Special outreach programs for street-connected children should be designed to ensure they feel more included in the activities and are encouraged to participate more actively.

◆ Expand Community Engagement:

- **Involve more community leaders:** Greater involvement from local religious, traditional, and community leaders would further amplify the messages, particularly in rural areas where awareness of child protection issues may be lower.
- **Engage more parents:** More proactive involvement of parents and guardians in the event will help create a stronger support system for the children. This could include workshops or informational sessions on child rights during the campaign.

◆ Logistical Improvements:

- **Better venue arrangements:** For larger crowds, future events can benefit from more spacious venues that accommodate diverse groups. This includes providing designated areas for children, parents, and guests to ensure comfort and accessibility.
- **Improved resources for participation:** Ensure all participants, especially children from marginalized communities, have adequate materials (such as t-shirts, banners, or speakers) to actively participate in the campaign.

◆ Expand Advocacy Tools:

- **Interactive workshops and training:** Introducing workshops on child rights and protection during the event would provide practical tools and knowledge to attendees, making the event more educational in addition to being a platform for advocacy.

- **Digital engagement:** Leveraging social media or live-streaming platforms can expand the event's reach beyond the physical space, allowing more people to learn about and engage with the messages presented by children.

10.2 FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS NEEDED

◆ Sustainability Planning for Boruboru:

- **Formalize the integration of Boruboru:** Work with local education authorities and the government to incorporate Boruboru into the official curriculum and child protection programs in schools across Northern Bahr el Ghazal.
- **Secure funding for expansion:** Seek additional funding from local and international donors to expand Boruboru to more schools and communities. Collaborating with partners such as *Help a Child* and other NGOs could provide the necessary resources.

◆ Strengthen Stakeholder Commitment:

- **Monitor commitments from stakeholders:** Establish a follow-up mechanism to track the promises made by government officials and community leaders. Regular check-ins will help ensure the implementation of commitments made during the event.
- **Build partnerships:** Continue to build relationships with other child-focused organizations, local government bodies, and community groups to support the long-term impact of the event and sustain momentum for the Boruboru campaign.

◆ Evaluation and Feedback Collection:

- **Conduct a post-event survey:** Collect feedback from participants, including children, parents, teachers, and community leaders, to assess the event's impact and gather insights for improvement. This data can guide future initiatives and ensure that the advocacy approach remains effective.
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the messages:** Evaluate how well the messages presented by children and other stakeholders were understood and what actions have been taken in response. This will help refine the messaging for future campaigns.

◆ Follow-up on Policy and Legislative Actions:

- **Encourage local governments to enact or enforce child protection policies:** Collaborate with local governments to ensure the implementation and enforcement of policies that protect children's rights, including those raised during the campaign, such as ending child marriage and ensuring access to education.

- **Launch community-wide child protection initiatives:** Following the event, engage local governments and organizations in the creation of community-driven programs that ensure the continued protection and support of children.

By implementing these recommendations and following up on the outlined actions, the next campaign will be even more impactful, inclusive, and sustainable in advancing children's rights in Northern Bahr el Ghazal.