Courtesy of Nonviolent Peaceforce

Developing Local Child Protection Capacity in South Sudan

It is often said that it takes a village to raise a child. In the case of conflict-affected communities, it often takes that same village to ensure that children are protected and provided access to critical services.

In South Sudan, USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) partner Nonviolent Peaceforce is building local child protection capacity in northern Jonglei State.

In Jonglei's Waat and surrounding villages, Nonviolent Peaceforce has facilitated trainings on child protection in emergencies for Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) and Women's Peacekeeping Teams (WPTs). Through these workshops, Nonviolent Peaceforce

teaches community members about child rights and the impact of child labor, conflict, and child soldier recruitment on children's development.

As a result of these trainings, PTA and WPT members are better able to identify and respond to child protection issues within their communities, including referring ill children to medical services, connecting traumatized children with psychosocial support, and promoting equal access to education for boys and girls.

"Many community members in Waat have changed their minds and allowed all their children, both girls and boys, to go to school," said Mary Nyanak Chuol, a Nonviolent Peaceforce-trained WPT member.

Following advocacy from a local PTA and WPT, Sarah,* a teenage girl in Waat whose father had previously denied her access to education, returned to school in 2016. Since resuming her education, Sarah has been selected to lead the school's Social Advocacy Team and now speaks publicly at community events. Sarah's father is currently saving to support her future studies.

"Without Nonviolent Peaceforce's training to the WPT, I would have remained at home with no access to education. I appreciate Nonviolent Peaceforce for transforming my father's view on educating girls," said Sarah.

*Sarah is a pseudonym