

**ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLES OF WAR  
CHILD HOLLAND IN PROMOTING CHILD PROTECTION AMONG CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY CONFLICT IN MALAKAL, SOUTH SUDAN**

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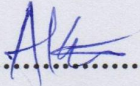


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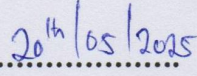
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## DECLARATION

I **AKON PRISCILLA REECH** declare that this dissertation is my original work and that where other works have been quoted, it is indicated. This work has never been submitted to this or any other university for the award of Bachelor's Degree in Social work and social administration.

Sign .....  .....

**AKON PRISCILLA REECH**

Date .....  .....

## APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that this research report presented by **AKON PRISCILLA REECH** with the Topic **Analysis of Stakeholder Perspectives on the Roles of War Child Holland in Promoting Child Protection among Children Affected by Conflict in Malakal, South Sudan** has been under my supervision and is now ready for submission with my approval.

Research supervisor: ..... *Jackline Bwire* .....

Signature: ..... *almen* .....

Date: ..... *5/20/2025* .....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents My father Mr. Ajang Reech and My Mother Mrs. Rebecca Abany for having taught me to believe in myself and for the great love and ability to support me in my education by providing all the necessities that I needed throughout my education career.

It is through your tireless efforts and desire to wish me well, encouragement and support that I have been able to compile this work.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter delves to introduce the study topic, problem statement significance, justification and scope of the study.

### 1.1 Background.

South Sudan's protracted conflict has left millions of children vulnerable to violence, displacement, and deprivation of basic rights. Malakal, one of the regions heavily affected by the ongoing instability, serves as a critical case study for examining child protection interventions. War Child Holland (WCH), an international child rights organization, has implemented various programs to address the plight of children in Malakal. Exploring the perspectives of stakeholders on these efforts offers insights into the challenges and successes of promoting child protection in conflict zones.

Malakal has been a flashpoint of violence since the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in 2013. Thousands of children in the region have suffered from displacement, recruitment into armed groups, family separation, and psychological trauma (UNICEF, 2020). Schools and healthcare systems have been destroyed, leaving children without access to education or essential services. This situation has necessitated urgent child protection interventions, with organizations like WCH stepping in to provide psychosocial support, educational opportunities, and safe spaces.

WCH provides mental health and psychosocial support services to children affected by war in Malakal. This includes trauma counseling, group therapy sessions, and activities that promote emotional resilience. Such initiatives help children cope with the stress and trauma of conflict (War Child Holland, 2023). WCH collaborates with local and international partners to establish temporary learning spaces and rebuild schools in Malakal. The organization trains teachers in conflict-sensitive approaches, ensuring that education is not only accessible but also a tool for promoting peace and social cohesion (Save the Children, 2021).

WCH creates child-friendly spaces where children can learn, play, and feel safe. These spaces also serve as platforms for raising awareness about child rights and empowering children to voice their concerns (War Child Holland, 2023).

Stakeholder Perspectives Local communities in Malakal have generally expressed appreciation for WCH's efforts. Parents and guardians highlight the importance of the safe spaces provided by WCH, which allow children to engage in structured activities while parents focus on rebuilding their lives. However, some community members have noted challenges such as limited outreach and the difficulty of accessing services in remote areas (UNHCR, 2020).

The South Sudanese government recognizes the importance of WCH's role in complementing national child protection efforts. However, governmental representatives have sometimes expressed concerns about the lack of long-term sustainability in externally funded programs. There is also a desire for stronger coordination between NGOs and government institutions to align interventions with national priorities (Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, 2021).

Other humanitarian organizations working in Malakal view WCH as a key partner in addressing child protection needs. Collaborative initiatives, such as joint training programs for child protection workers, are often cited as successful examples of synergy. However, some actors point out that overlapping mandates and competition for resources among NGOs can hinder the overall effectiveness of child protection programs (Humanitarian Response Plan, 2022).

Children participating in WCH programs in Malakal often express gratitude for the safe spaces and educational opportunities provided. They particularly value the psychosocial support, which helps them cope with the trauma of displacement and violence. However, children also voice concerns about their future, particularly regarding the uncertainty of continued access to education and protection in the face of ongoing instability (Save the Children, 2021).

War Child Holland has played a vital role in promoting child protection in Malakal, South Sudan, through psychosocial support, education, and safe spaces. Stakeholder perspectives highlight the organization's positive impact while also pointing to areas that require improvement. Addressing these challenges will require collaborative, well-funded, and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure that children in Malakal have a safe and hopeful future. It's against this background that the researcher intends to carry out the study.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Standard for child protection is anchored in the principles outlined by international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which emphasize every child's right to protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation, especially in conflict zones (UN, 1989). Children affected by war are entitled to access psychosocial support, education, and safe environments to promote their recovery and development.

However over 1000 children in Malakal, South Sudan were displaced, face widespread violations of their rights due to ongoing conflict. Displacement, family separation, recruitment into armed groups, and psychological trauma are pervasive. Basic child protection systems have been severely weakened by the war, leaving children vulnerable and without access to essential services such as education, mental health care, and safe spaces (UNICEF, 2020).

The gap lies in the significant disparity between the international child protection standards and the actual conditions on the ground in Malakal. While organizations like War Child Holland (WCH) strive to bridge this gap through interventions such as psychosocial support, education, and child-friendly spaces, challenges like inadequate funding, insecurity, and cultural barriers hinder the effectiveness and reach of these programs (War Child Holland, 2023). This disconnect underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the study about stakeholder perspectives to evaluate the effectiveness of WCH's initiatives and to identify strategies for improving child protection outcomes in Malakal. By addressing these gaps, it is possible to enhance the alignment between child protection ideals and the lived realities of children in conflict-affected regions.

## **1.3 Specific Objectives.**

To examine stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland's educational activities to child protection

To assess stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection

To analyze stakeholders perception on the protective aspects on War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

How do stakeholders perceive the protective aspects of War child Holland educational activities to protection?

What are the perception of stakeholders on protective aspects of War child Holland psychosocial support services to protection?

What are the stakeholder's perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children?

## **1.5 Justification of the Study.**

This study was justified by the pressing need to address the persistent challenges faced by children affected by armed conflict in Malakal, South Sudan. Armed conflicts have devastating consequences on children's physical, psychological, and social well-being, with effects that can last a lifetime. Understanding the perspectives of various stakeholders on the role of War Child Holland (WCH) in promoting child protection is critical for evaluating the effectiveness of existing interventions and identifying areas for improvement.

First, there was a significant research gap in the context-specific evaluation of child protection interventions in Malakal. While global child protection frameworks provide general guidance, localized studies are essential for tailoring strategies to the unique challenges posed by the South Sudanese conflict, including displacement, recruitment into armed groups, and the breakdown of social systems (UNICEF, 2020).

Second, the study contributed to the broader discourse on improving the alignment between international child protection ideals and the realities on the ground. Examining WCH's initiatives from the perspectives of key stakeholders government agencies, local communities, humanitarian organizations, and children themselves offers a holistic understanding of the gaps and opportunities within the child protection framework.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study.**

The study shed light on the effectiveness of WCH's interventions, including psychosocial support, education, and child-friendly spaces. By evaluating these efforts through the lenses of

various stakeholders children, communities, governments, and humanitarian actors it highlights successes and identifies areas that require improvement. This understanding was crucial for refining current child protection strategies.

Findings from the study provided evidence-based insights that can inform policy formulation and implementation. Policymakers in South Sudan and international organizations can use these insights to design child protection policies that are more responsive to the unique needs of children affected by war. This ensured alignment between international frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and localized interventions (UN, 1989).

The study emphasized the importance of sustainability in child protection programs. By analyzing challenges such as limited funding, insecurity, and cultural barriers, it offers recommendations for developing community-driven, long-term solutions. These insights are particularly valuable for donors, NGOs, and other stakeholders aiming to create lasting impact.

By incorporating the voices of children and community members, the study advocated for a participatory approach to child protection. This empowers affected populations by ensuring their needs and perspectives are central to program design and implementation.

The study added to the academic discourse on child protection in conflict settings, particularly in under-researched areas like Malakal. It bridged the gap between theory and practice by providing empirical evidence on the realities of implementing child protection interventions in a fragile context.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study.**

### **1.7.1 Content Scope**

The research focused on Stakeholder Perspectives on the Roles of War Child Holland in Promoting Child Protection in Malakal, South Sudan.

### **1.7.2 Geographical Study:**

Malakal is a major town in South Sudan, located in the northeastern part of the country. It serves as the capital of Upper Nile State, one of South Sudan's 10 states. Geographically, Malakal lies

along the White Nile River, making it a strategic location for trade and transportation. The town is approximately 650 kilometers (400 miles) north of the national capital, Juba.

### 1.7.3 Time Scope:

The study reviewed literature in the last ten years from 2015 to date and be carried out for a period of 2 months.

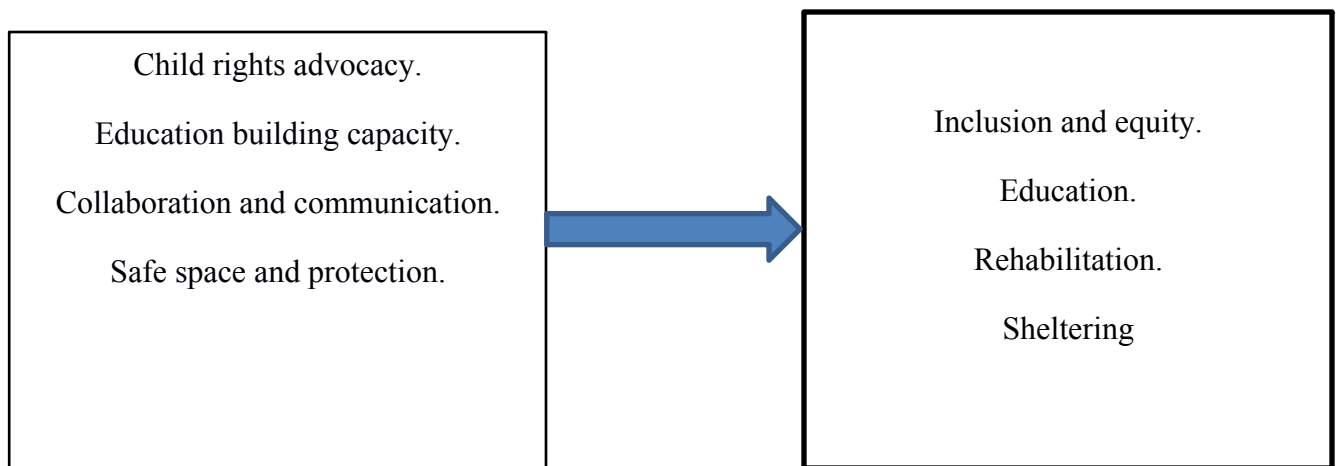
### 1.8 Conceptual Framework.

Independent variables

dependent variable

Stakeholder perception on the role of WCH.

Promoting child protection.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW.

#### **2.0 Introduction.**

Works from other literary works and earlier studies on the subject are covered in this chapter. It is important that similar studies on the stakeholders perspectives on the role of War child Holland in promoting child protection in Malakal. This literature reviewed in order to compare, validate, and identify any disparities. For this reason, the focus of this chapter is to analyze and give insight into various literatures considered relevant for the topic.

#### **2.1 The Theoretical Framework.**

Ecological systems theory

Proposed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979, Ecological system theory focuses on how the interconnectedness of a child's environments provides insight into their development and safeguarding. The following five tiers of interaction as those influencing a child within an

Microsystem: includes close environments like a child experiences within the family, schools, and peer groupings.

Mesosystem: the interaction between different microsystems; an example could be family to school. Exosystem: indirect influences, for example, parents' work places or community resources. Macrosystem: greater societal and cultural norms that shape the attitude towards child protection. Chronosystem: changes over time-the change in conflict on the trajectory of a child's life.

This theory is relevant because it highlights the fact that War Child Holland's interventions need to involve children themselves, as well as families, communities, and broader societal structures, to create a protective environment. For instance, psychosocial support at the microsystem level needs to be complemented by community advocacy at the mesosystem level and national child protection policies at the macro system level.

## **2.2 To examine stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland's educational activities to child protection**

Given this background, educational protective interventions have the potential to offer safe spaces, impart life skills, and enhance resilience among children affected by war. In addition, War Child Holland is a leading organization implementing education programs adapted to meet the specific needs of conflict-affected children. This literature review provides an overview of stakeholders' perspectives on the role of WCH's educational activities within child protection, drawing from theoretical and empirical studies.

### **2.2.1 The Role of Education in Child Protection**

Education is widely recognized as a key mechanism for safeguarding children during and after conflicts. According to the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), education provides structure and normalcy, which are critical for children's psychological recovery (INEE, 2016). Additionally, UNESCO (2019) emphasizes that schools serve as protective environments, shielding children from recruitment into armed groups, child labor, and early marriage.

In Malakal, where war has disrupted traditional schooling, education is seen by parents, teachers, and community leaders as a way to rebuild children's lives. War Child Holland's programs, such as temporary learning spaces and teacher training, align with these priorities by ensuring continued access to quality education.

### **2.2.2 War Child Holland's Educational Activities**

War Child Holland focuses on integrating education into its broader child protection strategy. Key components of its educational interventions include: Temporary Learning Spaces: Establishing makeshift schools in areas where infrastructure has been destroyed (War Child Holland, 2020). Psychosocial Support in Schools: Embedding mental health support into educational programs to address trauma. Life Skills Training: Equipping children with skills to cope with challenges, such as decision-making and conflict resolution. Teacher Training: Building the capacity of educators to deliver inclusive, trauma-informed education.

### **2.2.3 Stakeholders have different perspective on these activities, depending on their positions and interests.**

#### Community Perspectives

Parents and Guardians: Parents in conflict-affected areas often see education as a vital tool to protect their children from abuse and exploitation. According to Betancourt et al. (2013), parents appreciate the educational programs that keep children busy and limit their exposure to risky environments, such as recruitment into armed groups or hazardous labor. In Malakal, parents have expressed appreciation for War Child Holland's establishment of safe learning spaces, which provide their children with stability amidst chaos (War Child Holland, 2021).

Community Leaders: Local leaders, including chiefs and religious figures, see education as essential for rebuilding societal structures. They emphasize the importance of culturally relevant curricula that resonate with local values and traditions (Barakat et al., 2020). War Child Holland's efforts to involve communities in program design have been well-received, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration.

Children's Perspectives: Children are direct beneficiaries of the various educational programs and have unique views of their value. Save the Children (2018) shows that children in these conflict zones consider schools places of safety and normalcy; thus, it is a basis for hope for the future. Similarly, Komproe et al. (2017) found that in WCH's educational programs for children, emotional well-being is improved and a greater perception of security is perceived among the children.

Children have also complained of overcrowding and discrepancy in the quality of instruction, which can easily demoralize them from seeking to learn (War Child Holland, 2022). Their improvement requires ongoing consultation and feedback from stakeholders in optimizing the delivery of program activities.

#### Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers are arguably the most important stakeholders for the delivery of educational programs. Research has identified some salient challenges faced by many educators in conflict settings such as poor training, underpayment, and shortage of resources (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). War Child

Holland's teacher training programs aim to address these gaps by equipping educators with the skills needed to support traumatized children. In Malakal, teachers have expressed appreciation for these initiatives but also stress the need for more consistent support and incentives (War Child Holland, 2021). This underscores the importance of building long-term capacity within local education systems.

### Government Perspectives

The Government of South Sudan considers education a cornerstone for national recovery and development. However, resource constraints and political instability often limit its capacity to deliver services. War Child Holland's efforts to complement government initiatives have been praised, particularly in areas like curriculum development and infrastructure rehabilitation (Ministry of Education, South Sudan, 2019). At the same time, government stakeholders emphasize the need for stronger coordination to align NGO activities with national policies. A study by Nicolai et al. (2015) highlights the importance of partnerships between governments and humanitarian organizations to ensure sustainable impact.

### Perspectives of Other NGOs and International Organizations

War Child Holland works with other humanitarian actors to increase the coverage and effectiveness of its programs. Sister organizations recognize innovative approaches such as WCH's integration of psychosocial support into education, as a model for dealing with complex needs in conflict zones (INEE, 2016). Nevertheless, competition for funding and overlapping mandates can breed tension among stakeholders. According to Obura (2018), effective coordination mechanisms, such as education clusters, are necessary for harmonizing efforts and avoiding duplication.

## **2.3 To assess stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection**

Psychosocial support services have a key role in emotional, social, and psychological support to war-affected children. WCH addresses child protection concerns through the provision of PSS to enable children to cope with conflict trauma and rebuild their resilience. This literature review

investigates how various stakeholders view the effectiveness of the psychosocial interventions of WCH within conflict-affected areas like Malakal in South Sudan.

The effects of armed conflict on children include violence, displacement, loss of family members, and disruption of social structures. According to Betancourt et al. (2013), these experiences often result in trauma, depression, and anxiety that hamper the development of the children and their reintegration into society. Psychosocial support addresses these issues through the fostering of emotional recovery, social cohesion, and resilience.

The United Nations Children's Fund-UNICEF, 2018-asserts that psychosocial support is integral to holistic child protection systems. Families, communities, and governments alike recognize the need for targeted interventions that address the unique mental health needs of children in conflict zones.

### **2.3.1 War Child Holland's Psychosocial Support Services**

War Child Holland provides psychosocial support through a range of activities designed to promote healing, resilience, and social reintegration. These include: Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS): Safe environments where children can engage in structured play and learning activities. Counseling Services: Individual and group therapy sessions led by trained professionals. Life Skills Programs: Activities that teach children coping mechanisms, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills. Community-Based Support: Training caregivers and community members to provide ongoing emotional support.

### **2.3.2 Perspectives of Stakeholders on Psychosocial Support Services**

#### Children's Perspectives

Children are direct beneficiaries of psychosocial interventions and provide valuable insights into their effectiveness. Research by Save the Children (2018) has shown that children who participate in psychosocial programs often feel safer, more connected, and better equipped to handle their emotions. In Malakal, children who accessed WCH's child-friendly spaces reported improvements in mental health and social interactions (War Child Holland, 2021). However, some children expressed a desire for more consistent access to services, particularly in remote areas.

## Parents and Caregivers

Parents and caregivers view psychosocial support as essential for helping their children recover from the trauma of conflict. According to a study by Komproe et al. (2017), caregivers appreciate interventions that reduce children's behavioral issues and enhance their emotional stability. In Malakal, parents have praised War Child Holland's efforts to involve families in the healing process through workshops and training sessions. These activities help parents understand and address their children's emotional needs (War Child Holland, 2022).

## Community Leaders

Community leaders, including traditional and religious leaders, also acknowledge the role of psychosocial support in communal healing and rebuilding social cohesion. Barakat et al. (2020) highlight that the involvement of local leaders in program design promotes cultural relevance and acceptance. War Child Holland has similarly engaged community leaders in Malakal to embed psychosocial activities within traditional storytelling and other cultural practices, with benefits for community ownership and intervention sustainability (War Child Holland, 2021).

## Teachers and School Staff

Teachers are often the first line of support for children in educational settings. Dryden-Peterson (2011) notes that equipping teachers with skills to address students' psychosocial needs is critical in conflict-affected regions. War Child Holland's training programs for teachers in Malakal have been well-received, with educators reporting increased confidence in managing classroom behaviors and supporting traumatized students. However, challenges such as large class sizes and limited resources remain barriers to effective implementation (UNESCO, 2019).

## Government and Policy Makers

The government stakeholders consider psychosocial support important for national recovery and resilience building. According to the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare in South Sudan (2020), addressing mental health needs is a priority for reintegrating displaced and conflict-affected populations. War Child Holland's collaboration with government agencies in South Sudan has focused on capacity building and policy advocacy, ensuring that psychosocial services are incorporated into national child protection strategies. These efforts have been

applauded by stakeholders, but they also stress that more financing and coordination is required (Nicolai et al., 2015).

#### Other NGOs and International Organizations

Peer organizations recognize the psychosocial support model of War Child Holland as a best practice in child protection. INEE (2016) features WCH for its innovative approaches, such as integrating psychosocial activities into education and community programs.

However, some NGOs have mentioned overlapping mandates and competition for resources. Effective coordination mechanisms exist such as child protection clusters that ensure coherence of efforts and leveraging impact. Obura, 2018

### **2.3.3 Effectiveness of War Child Holland's Psychosocial Support Programs**

**Emotional and Social Well-Being:** Empirical studies indicate that children who participate in psychosocial programs experience significant improvements in emotional stability, social skills, and self-esteem (Komproe et al., 2017). In Malakal, children in WCH's programs reported reduced symptoms of trauma and increased feelings of safety and belonging (War Child Holland, 2022).

**Community Resilience:** Psychosocial support services play a role in the restoration of trust and social cohesion in conflict-affected communities. Barakat et al. (2020) report that engaging families and local leaders in such programs enhances collective healing and long-term resilience.

**Integration with Other Services:** The approach of integrating psychosocial support with education, livelihood programs, and advocacy enhances the overall impact of WCH. This holistic model ensures that children receive comprehensive care that covers multiple dimensions of their well-being (UNICEF, 2018).

### **2.4 To analyze stakeholders perception on the protective aspects on War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children**

Food assistance is one of the most important interventions for the protection of children in armed conflicts, whose food access is severely disrupted. Malnutrition and hunger are not only dangerous to the physical health of children but also expose them to further risks such as

exploitation, child labor, and recruitment into armed groups. War Child Holland integrates food assistance in its child protection strategy and promotes resilience in conflict-affected areas, such as in Malakal, South Sudan. This literature review intends to look into the issue of stakeholders' perspectives on the role and impact of food assistance services in child protection provided by WCH. The Role of Food Assistance in Child Protection

Food assistance is central to child protection in conflict settings. According to UNICEF (2018), nutrition is critical for survival, physical growth, and the psychosocial development of children. It also minimizes the risk of high-risk behaviors or exploitation among children. Food assistance programs complement larger child protection strategies, meeting pressing needs while providing an environment within which other services may be sought by children.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP, 2019) underscores that food security contributes to stability by lessening tensions within the communities, promoting social cohesion, and keeping children in school. The stakeholders-families, communities, and governments-also recognize food assistance as a prerequisite in laying the foundation for child protection interventions.

#### Food Assistance Services by War Child Holland

Food assistance in War Child Holland's child protection framework involves: School Feeding Programmes: offering school meals as an incentive to come and stay at school, aiming at improving attendance and completion. Supplementary Feeding to Vulnerable Groups: supplementary food to wasted children and families. Food-for-Training: Food for vulnerable families and children participating in life skills and vocational training. Food Aid Community Sensitization Programs: involvement of the communities in the food distribution and follow-up.

These services are not only designed to meet the immediate nutritional needs but also to support children's safety, education, and psychosocial well-being.

#### Perspectives of Stakeholders on Food Assistance Services

##### Parents and Caregivers

Food assistance is perceived as a lifeline in conflict-affected regions. According to Save the Children (2018), food aid reduces economic pressure on families, allowing parents to focus on other priorities like rebuilding livelihoods and offering emotional support to their children.

In Malakal, school feeding programs implemented by War Child Holland have been credited by caregivers for motivating children to return to school and alleviating the burden of providing meals (War Child Holland, 2022). Some parents also mentioned that food supplies were not adequate and consistent, especially in times of high conflict.

### Children

Children are direct beneficiaries of food assistance and often report positive experiences with school feeding programs. According to Nicolai et al. (2015), school meals have been reported by children in conflict zones to help them stay focused in class and maintain a sense of normalcy. In the programs that War Child Holland implements in Malakal, children have identified food distribution as one of the most important aspects in creating safe spaces where they can interact with peers and access other services such as psychosocial support and education (War Child Holland, 2021).

### Community Leaders

Community leaders, including chiefs and religious leaders, believe that food assistance has tremendous potential to address hunger, while at the same time minimizing the vulnerability of children. According to Barakat et al. (2020), participation of the community leaders at the levels of design and implementation makes the food aid more responsive to local needs and thus more culturally appropriate. Local leaders in Malakal have been engaged in equal distribution and in mitigating conflicts that arise from competition for resources. These partnerships have increased community confidence in humanitarian interventions. War Child Holland, 2022

### Teachers and School Staff

Teachers are crucial to the success of school feeding programs. UNESCO research from 2019 indicates that in many cases, teachers view school food as an incentive to encourage children to come regularly and support their educational and emotional well-being. In programs run by War Child Holland in Malakal, it has been reported that educationists have seen increased numbers and participation of students at school who receive school food. They also emphasize resource needs, such as cooking facilities and trained personnel, to expand the program (UNICEF, 2020).

## Government and Policy Makers

The government of South Sudan sees food assistance as an integral part of its national child protection strategy. The Ministry of Education, for example, has collaborated with humanitarian agencies such as War Child Holland to expand school feeding programs in conflict-affected areas (Ministry of Education, South Sudan, 2019).

Government stakeholders have appreciated the efforts made by WCH to align its programs within national policies. However, they strongly feel the need for better coordination and capacity building to sustain the operations beyond the cycles of donor funding. (Nicolai et al., 2015).

## Other NGOs and International Organizations

Peer organizations recognize War Child Holland's innovative integration of food assistance with other child protection services. According to INEE (2016), the combination of food aid with education and psychosocial support adds greater value to humanitarian interventions.

Some NGOs, however, express apprehensions about duplication of effort and competition for resources in areas such as Malakal. Such challenges need to be addressed through effective coordination mechanisms, for instance, inter-agency food security clusters, as indicated by Obura (2018).

## Effectiveness of War Child Holland's Food Assistance Services

### Improved Nutritional and Health Outcomes

Empirical evidence indicates that food assistance lowers the rate of malnutrition and improves the general health of children in conflict areas (Komproe et al., 2017). In Malakal, for instance, the programs implemented by War Child Holland have contributed to lower levels of acute malnutrition and increased physical resistance to diseases among the beneficiary children (War Child Holland, 2022).

### Increased School Attendance

School feeding programs have been particularly effective in encouraging children to return to and stay in school. According to Save the Children (2018), these programs reduce dropout rates and improve educational outcomes, creating long-term benefits for children's development.

## Enhanced Community Resilience

By involving local stakeholders in food distribution and monitoring, War Child Holland's programs foster community ownership and build resilience against future crises. This approach aligns with best practices in sustainable humanitarian aid (Barakat et al., 2020).

These stakeholders' views on the food assistance services provided by War Child Holland bring out the critical role such an organization plays in the protection of children in conflict situations. While the programs are widely appreciated for addressing immediate nutritional needs and promoting safety and education, challenges such as accessibility, sustainability, and cultural sensitivity must be addressed. In this respect, strengthening partnerships with local communities, governments, and other organizations is central to increasing the impact and sustainability of food assistance interventions.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

The study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, where both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected simultaneously but analyzed separately. The purpose of this design was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem, combining statistical and narrative data to present a full picture of the study objectives.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design is the agreement of the condition for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance of research purposes. This study used a mixed method research design. Creswell (2014) emphasized the value of mixed-methods research design, particularly in addressing complex research questions that require both numerical data and rich, descriptive insights from participants. While carrying out the research approaches were in a case study. The quantitative research were used to attain statistical inferences toward study findings.

#### 3.2 Study Area.

The study was carried out in Malakal South Sudan.

Malakal is a major town in South Sudan, located in the northeastern part of the country. It serves as the capital of Upper Nile State, one of South Sudan's 10 states. Geographically, Malakal lies along the White Nile River, making it a strategic location for trade and transportation. The town is approximately 650 kilometers (400 miles) north of the national capital, Juba. This study area was chosen because of the high concentration of children affected by the war.

#### 3.3 Study population and sample size

Population refers to all people or items with the characteristic one wish to understand in the study, this may be real or obscured (tangible or intangible). A population of 50 respondents were used in the study when collecting the data, and it constituted war child Holland officials, government officials, children affected by war, community leaders and teachers.

**Table 1: Population, sample size and sampling method**

<b>Category of respondents</b>	<b>Study Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling method</b>
WarChild Holland officials (child protection manager 1) (case management team 5) Education and project officers 3 Child protection officer 1	10	5	Purposive sampling
Community leaders Peace and security council members 6 Council elders 3 Youth leader 1	10	10	Purposive sampling
Teachers	10	5	Simple random sampling
Government officials County commissioners 4 Legislative representative 1 Security officials 5	10	10	Simple random sampling
Children( war affected children	20	<b>20</b>	Simple random
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>	

### **3.4 Sampling Method**

The researcher used purposive and simple random sampling methods in the study. Purposive sampling method will be used to select stakeholders. The Researchers used this method to seek in-depth insights from a specific group of individuals who have experience or knowledge pertinent to the research question.

### **3.5 Sources of Data**

During the research study, both primary and secondary data was used.

Primary source: Basic data from the field was got through observation interviews guides that were used on picked respondents. Primary data will help the investigator in accumulating information for the specific purposes of the study. The researcher will collect the data, through utilizing interviews.

Secondary source: The researcher also reviewed secondary data from the annual reports written about the prevailing condition of children affected by war.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods and instruments**

The data collection methods and research instruments that were used during the process of data collection included; in-depth interviews and observation guide.

#### **3.6.1 Interviews**

The researcher used interviews to accumulate data from the study area. This was broadly due to experience that the respondents have and the frequent need for stimulation to expand or clarify their own answer and more widely, so that a more extensive understanding was surely attained the findings concerning this study. In view of this study, the probing interviewing tactic was used widely to get a deeper clarification of the role of stakeholder's perspective.

#### **3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions**

The researcher also focused group discussions with different care takers of children. This was to ensure that care takers air out their opinions on the topic of study since they are the ones that experience some of these risk factors and since it was a discussion

#### **3.6.3 Questionnaires.**

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from key informants. This ensured that in-depth clarification following the objectives of the study hence achieving the accurate findings from the study. Questionnaires had statement specific to objective and the respondents gave their independent degree of agreement accordingly.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher also acquired an introductory letter from the School of Social Sciences, Social Work department in Uganda Christian University. The researcher will then approach distinct respondents to administer structured interviews guides and focus group discussion guides after seeking permission from war child Holland administration.

### **3.8 Quality and Error Control**

#### **3.9 Validity of the Research Instrument**

The researcher guaranteed the validity of the tools to be used in data collection first by performing pretest of structured interview guides and focus group discussion guides, and the researcher try certainly to be very embroiled in data collection and analysis so as to prevent number of errors in the research. Therefore, validity was calculated by addressing how correct the instruments measure the consequences or how they build up an intervention that it attempts to influence.

Reliability of the research instrument; An instrument was deemed reliable if it measures typical conditions supposed to measure even if other researchers execute it, it should be able to produce the same results to guarantee reliability. And a pilot study will be carried out on some of the few respondents on this research topic before the interview and focus group discussion guides are administered to various respondents. Hence, reliability will be ensured by first conducting a pre-test and then understood by a post-test of the research. Reliability of the practical measurements will be done by using the retest method in which the same test will take few of the people after period of time. The reliability of the test will thus be estimated by examining the consistency of the answers between the two variables/ sets.

#### **3.10 Data Analysis.**

Since the study used a mixed methods design, the final stage of data analysis will involve integrating both the quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic view of the research questions. This is known as data triangulation. The results from the quantitative analysis (e.g. statistical significance in treatment outcome) will be compared with the qualitative insights (e.g. themes from interviews) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of stakeholders perspective and the role of war child Holland in promoting child protection.

Quantitative Descriptive statistics provided a summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants (e.g. age, gender) and the key sustainability indicators. This step will include: Frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. Means and standard deviations for continuous variables. Graphical representations such as bar charts, histograms and box plots to visualize the distribution of the data.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher took into consideration any of ethical issues containing:

Confidentiality of respondents was preserved: Respondents will not require to disclose their names nor their contacts on the questionnaires. Identification numbers will be used instead of names to prevent information likely being tracked to a respondent.

All data gathered was used only for the purpose of this study and nothing different. The research procedures were explained to all the respondents before they engage in the research and their informed consent obtained.

All the sources of literature were acknowledged throughout the whole study through decent citations and referencing.

Personal bias was prevented all along the entire study namely to say during interviews, data analysis and reporting.

### **3.12 Anticipated Limitations and delimitations of the Study**

For the most part, some respondents might not be disposed to provide facts because of being distrustful of where the information will be taken. This was resolved through the precise remarkable reputation in the study context as a learning institution and still acquiring an introductory letter from the university.

The researcher is inclined to be restricted by funds that were needed to facilitate the research to a degree motivating the respondents, printing fees and even daily transport to the organization to collect data. However, the researcher used self-initiative and strategies to organize financial assistance from family.

Ultimately, the use of research assistants can bring about inconsistency in the administration of the questionnaires in terms of time of administration, understanding of the items in the questionnaires and explanations given to the respondents. To minimize this risk, the research assistants will be oriented and instructed on the processes to be done in data collection.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a section where data collected and analyzed was presented. The study topic was: ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLES OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND IN PROMOTING CHILD PROTECTION IN MALAKAL, SOUTH SUDAN. The statistical findings below came from data collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The data was collected from a total of 50 respondents whereby 40 filled questionnaires and 10 were interviewed face to face. The findings were presented in line with the objectives of the study whereby the raw data in form of questionnaires was edited and interpreted which ensured uniformity, legibility and consistency. The data-filled questionnaires were copied and analyzed by tallying and tabling in frequency polygons while identifying how often certain responses occurred and later evaluation was done. The information was then recorded in terms of percentages. Also, interview results were coded on frequency tables which were calculated in terms of percentages and presented in this study as illustrated below.

#### 4.1 Response Rate

The study recorded a 100% response rate as indicated in table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 showing the Response Rate**

Category	Target sample	Percent
MALE	30	60
FEMALE	20	40
TOTAL	50	100

*Source: primary data 2025*

According to the table above, the response rate was very good as it attained 100% results. The findings of the study revealed that 60% of the respondents were male and 40% of the respondents were female.

## 4.2 Demographics of Respondents

This section includes cross cutting characteristics of all respondents involved in the study for instance, age, marital status and more.

### 4.2.1 Age of Respondents

The study respondents were from varying age groups as indicated in table 4.2.1 below.

**Table 4.2 Showing age group of respondent**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>10-14 years</b>	10	20
<b>15 – 18 years</b>	10	20
<b>18-30 years</b>	10	20
<b>30 years and above</b>	20	40
<b>Total</b>	50	100

*Source: primary data2025*

According to findings in the table above, it can be seen that majority of the respondents were in the age group above 30 years with 40%, these were followed by those in the age group of 10-14, 15-18, 18-30 years who all accounted for 20% of the respondents in each section

### 4.2.2 Education Levels of Respondents

Respondents who participated in the study were of different education levels as indicated in table 4.2.3 below.

**Table 4.3 Showing the education level of respondents**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Primary</b>	20	40
<b>Secondary</b>	20	40
<b>Tertiary</b>	10	20
<b>Total</b>	50	100

*Source: primary data 2025*

Given the statistics in the table above, it is evident that the majority of the respondents were of secondary level with a representation of 40% and those of primary level with also a representation of 40%,.the minority of the respondents accrued to tertiary level of education with a representation of 20%

### 4.3 To examine stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland’s educational activities to child protection

The study sought to examine stakeholder’s perspectives on War child Holland’s educational activities to child protection. The statistics in table 4.5 below indicate the findings on this objective. Responses where in form of ticking against statements in regards to the respondent’s degree of acceptance.

**Table 4.4 examining stakeholders’ perspectives on War child Holland’s educational activities to child protection**

Statements	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Education is widely recognized as a key mechanism for safeguarding children during and after conflicts	30	60	20	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parents in conflict-affected areas often see education as a vital tool to protect their children from abuse and exploitation	10	20	20	40	0	0	10	20	10	20
Children are direct beneficiaries of the various educational programs and have unique views of their value	40	80	5	10	0	0	5	10	0	0
Teachers are arguably the most important stakeholders for the delivery of educational programs	20	40	20	40	0	0	10	20	0	0
The Government of South Sudan considers education a cornerstone for national recovery and development	5	10	5	10	0	0	20	40	20	40

**Source: Primary Data 2025**

According to table 4.5 above, the study investigated the stakeholder's perspectives on war child Holland education activities in child protection and the findings are as follows.

The findings of the study revealed that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that Education is widely recognized as a key mechanism for safeguarding children during and after conflicts while 40% of the respondents agreed to the same statement as well. This was indicative of the strong positive correlation between education and child protection in war torn areas of south Sudan.

The findings of the study further revealed that 20 % of the respondents strongly agreed that Parents in conflict-affected areas often see education as a vital tool to protect their children from abuse and exploitation.40% of the respondents also agreed to the statement according to the findings of the study. However the study further found out that 20 % of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed to this statement respectively.

The findings of the study showed that Parents are often the most affected by the challenges that come with raising children in conflict zones. Their insights into how War Child Holland's educational programs benefit their children's protection and well-being are vital.one of the key informant had this to say

*"Since War Child Holland started providing education here, I have noticed my children are happier and more secure. Before, they would always be fearful, but now they have a routine and something to look forward to. I feel better knowing they are learning in a safe environment. It's not just about education it's about protecting them from the trauma of the conflict around us."*

The findings of the study further portrayed that 80% of the respondents revealed that Children are direct beneficiaries of the various educational programs and have unique views of their value. This finding asserted the role of education programs in child protection in south Sudan, this was evident of education programs providing food and security to children amidst atrocities of war.

The findings of the study hence went on to portray that Teachers are arguably the most important stakeholders for the delivery of educational programs. This was revealed whereby 40% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement while another 40 % agreed as well. The findings still showed that Teachers working with War Child Holland's educational initiatives are often on the front lines of providing both education and child protection. They offer a unique perspective

on how these programs are implemented and how children benefit from them. one of the respondents informed us that:

*"The children who come to our classes have experienced things no child should. The programs we teach are designed to help them not just with academics, but to rebuild their trust in the world around them. We provide a safe space where they can talk about their fears, and we give them the skills they need to cope with trauma. It's not easy, but seeing a child smile again makes it worthwhile."*

Lastly in contrast the findings of the study revealed that The Government of South Sudan did not considers education a cornerstone for national recovery and development. This was portrayed whereby 80% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed as well

**4.4 To assess stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection**

The study sought to investigate the respondents' stakeholders' perspectives on War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection. the statistics in table 4.6 below indicate the findings on this objective.

Responses where in form of ticking against statements in regards to the respondent's degree of acceptance.

**Table 4.5 stakeholder's perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection**

Statements	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
children who accessed WCH's child-friendly spaces reported improvements in mental health and social interactions	30	60	10	20	0	0	10	20	0	0
parents have praised War Child Holland's efforts to involve families in the healing process	20	40	15	30	0	0	10	20	5	10

through workshops and training sessions										
children who participate in psychosocial programs experience significant improvements in emotional stability, social skills, and self-esteem	30	60	20	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peer organizations recognize the psychosocial support model of War Child Holland as a best practice in child protection	5	10	7	14	0	0	20	40	18	36
Psychosocial support services play a role in the restoration of trust and social cohesion in conflict-affected communities	40	80	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Source: Primary Data 2025**

According to table 4.6 above. The findings on stakeholder’s perspectives on War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection were as follows:

The findings of the study revealed that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that children who accessed WCH's child-friendly spaces reported improvements in mental health and social interactions. The findings of the study further showed that 20% of the respondents agreed to the same statement. The findings showed that Parents often view these services as vital in protecting their children from further harm and helping them heal from the scars of war. one of the respondents informed us that:

*"After my child began attending War Child's program, I saw a change in her. She was no longer afraid to speak about what she had seen during the war. The counselors helped her express her feelings through drawing and talking. As a parent, this made me feel more at ease, knowing she wasn't bottling up her emotions. I trust the program because I see the improvement in her every day"*

Secondly the findings of the study revealed that 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that parents have praised War Child Holland's efforts to involve families in the healing process through workshops and training sessions while 30% of the respondents agreed as well. The study also found out that 20% of the respondents disagreed to the same statement. Their role involves creating a supportive environment that allows children to share their experiences, feel heard, and regain a sense of normalcy. Teachers who work with War Child Holland's programs are uniquely positioned to provide feedback on the effectiveness of these services to parents. One of the respondents said that:

*"I have seen children come to school who are completely withdrawn, struggling with fear and anxiety. With the psychosocial support programs provided by War Child, we encourage them to engage with each other, share their stories, and use creative outlets like art to express their feelings. It's amazing to see them slowly return to their usual selves, finding joy in learning again. It's not just about teaching those academics; it's about helping them heal."*

Thirdly the study revealed that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that children who participate in psychosocial programs experience significant improvements in emotional stability, social skills, and self-esteem. Further the remaining 40% agreed to the exact statement. This was indicative of the cognitive reinforcement provided to children in child protection program in war torn areas of south Sudan

Qualitative findings from the study showed that Community leaders, local NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in child protection efforts recognize the crucial role that psychosocial support plays in ensuring the safety and well-being of children affected by conflict. These stakeholders often work in collaboration with War Child Holland to provide comprehensive care that addresses both physical and emotional harm. Another key informant said that:

*"Psychosocial support is not just about talking or counseling; it's about creating an environment where children feel valued, heard, and supported. War Child's programs address these needs by providing safe spaces and trained professionals who understand the unique challenges of children affected by war in south Sudan. In our community, these services have made a significant impact, reducing isolation and building resilience among children."*

The findings of the study further showed that 40% and 36% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that Peer organizations recognized the psychosocial support model of War Child Holland as a best practice in child protection.

Lastly the findings of the study revealed that 80% of the respondents strongly agreed that psychosocial support services play a role in the restoration of trust and social cohesion in conflict-affected communities. This was of importance according to the findings of the researcher in the vitality of psycho social support

#### **4.5 To analyze stakeholders perception on the protective aspects on War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children**

The study sought to investigate the respondents’ rankings on stakeholder’s perspectives on War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children. The statistics in table 4.6 below indicate the findings on this objective.

Responses where in form of ticking against statements in regards to the respondent’s degree of acceptance.

**Table 4.6. To analyze stakeholders perception on the protective aspects on War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children**

Statements	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Food assistance is one of the most important interventions for the protection of children in armed conflicts, whose food access is severely disrupted	30	60	20	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
It also minimizes the risk of high-risk behaviors or exploitation among children	40	80	5	10		0	5	10	0	0
Community leaders, including chiefs and religious leaders,	25	50	25	50	0	0	0	0	0	0

believe that food assistance has tremendous potential to address hunger, while at the same time minimizing the vulnerability of children										
Children are direct beneficiaries of food assistance and often report positive experiences with school feeding programs	20	40	20	40	0	0	10	20	0	0
teachers view school food as an incentive to encourage children to come regularly and support their educational and emotional well-being	33	66	7	14	0	0	7	14	3	6

**Source: Primary Data 2025.**

The findings of the study revealed that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that Food assistance is one of the most important interventions for the protection of children in armed conflicts, whose food access is severely disrupted. The findings of the study further revealed that 40% of the respondents agreed to the statement .these findings were in alignment with the food insecurity that faces the war torn south Sudan.

The findings of the study further revealed that 80% of the respondents strongly agreed that food assistance minimizes the risk of high-risk behaviors or exploitation among children. And 10% of the respondents agreed to the same statement.

The findings of the study further revealed that Community leaders, including chiefs and religious leaders, believe that food assistance has tremendous potential to address hunger, while at the same time minimizing the vulnerability of children. This finding was ascertained whereby 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 50% of the respondents agreed as well.

The findings of the study revealed that In South Sudan, where food insecurity is a prevalent issue due to the ongoing conflict, many parents face difficulties in providing adequate nourishment for

their children. War Child Holland's food assistance programs help alleviate some of these challenges, enabling parents to better meet their children's needs, while also protecting children from the risks associated with hunger and malnutrition. Another key informant said that:

*"Before War Child came to our community, we struggled to feed our children. They often went to bed hungry, which made them weak and unable to focus on anything, including school. Since War Child started providing food, I've noticed that my children are stronger, happier, and able to attend school regularly. I feel that this assistance is not just about food it's about protecting their future."*

The researcher understood from the findings that this statement underscores how War Child Holland's food assistance does more than just alleviate hunger. It contributes to the overall well-being of children, ensuring that they have the energy and health needed to participate in daily activities, such as school. For parents, the provision of food assistance is seen as an essential protective measure, helping to reduce child vulnerability to malnutrition and the potential long-term consequences of hunger.

The findings of the study lastly revealed that stakeholders, such as community leaders, NGOs, and government officials, also contribute to the understanding of War Child Holland's food assistance program's impact. Their insights reflect the broader societal benefits of food assistance, which extend beyond individual families and classrooms to enhance community resilience and child protection. one of the key stakeholder informed us that:

*"In our community, many children go without food due to the ongoing conflict and displacement. War Child's food assistance program is vital for ensuring children's health and safety. When children have enough to eat, they are less vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and other risks. Food assistance is not just about meeting immediate needs; it's about creating a foundation for their protection and future well-being."*

From the researcher point of view, this community leader's perspective highlights the broader protective role of food assistance. By addressing immediate nutritional needs, War Child Holland's program helps reduce the risks of child exploitation and violence, contributing to long-term child protection.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and description of findings derived from the study. The chapter also provides discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for policy as well as recommendations for further research.

#### 5.1 Discussion of the findings

##### 5.1.1. To examine stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland's educational activities to child protection

Parents, teachers, and other stakeholders emphasized that War Child Holland's educational programs were crucial for child protection in South Sudan. According to the findings of the study Parents viewed education as a means of providing children with a sense of normalcy and hope for the future. Teachers noted that the educational activities provided safe spaces for children to learn and engage in structured activities, which also served as a protective buffer against the risks of exploitation. Community stakeholders highlighted that education provided children with skills that would reduce their vulnerability to recruitment into armed groups or child labor.

These findings are supported by a wealth of literature on education and child protection in conflict zones. Research by UNICEF (2015) and Save the Children (2016) has shown that education is one of the most effective ways to protect children in emergencies, as it helps to prevent exploitation and provides a sense of stability. Education programs in conflict zones, like those provided by War Child Holland south Sudan, offer children protection by giving them the tools to build a future, this finding was in alignment with the study by Dryden-Peterson (2016), who highlights the role of education in preventing children from joining armed groups and mitigating the risk of child labor.

Furthermore, the role of education in restoring a sense of normalcy and hope for the future, as highlighted by the parents, resonates with the findings of Novelli et al. (2017). Their study on

education in conflict-affected areas emphasizes that access to education provides children with opportunities for future employment and helps rebuild a sense of community and purpose.

### **5.1.2 To assess stakeholders perception on the protective aspects of War child Holland psychosocial support services to child protection**

Stakeholder's perspectives emphasized the positive impact of War Child Holland's psychosocial support programs. They reported that these services helped their children process trauma from the conflict, giving them the emotional strength to engage in daily activities. Teachers noted that the psychosocial support programs allowed children to express their emotions, leading to better school participation and improved behavior. Community leaders and NGO workers highlighted that these programs reduced the risk of children developing long-term mental health issues, which could affect their future prospects and overall safety.

The findings regarding the importance of psychosocial support align with significant research on child protection in conflict settings. Studies by Betancourt et al. (2013) and Miller & Rasmussen (2010) have consistently demonstrated that children exposed to conflict trauma are at high risk of developing long-term psychological issues, such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety. War Child Holland's focus on psychosocial support aligns with recommendations from these scholars, who stress the importance of providing safe spaces and therapeutic interventions to help children heal from trauma.

### **5.1. To analyze stakeholders perception on the protective aspects on War child Holland food assistance services for protection of children.**

Stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community leaders, overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of food assistance programs for child protection in South Sudan. Parents noted that War Child Holland's food assistance alleviated the burden of hunger, enabling children to focus on school and participate in community activities. Teachers highlighted the positive impact of regular meals on school attendance and children's ability to engage in learning. Local community leaders and NGOs acknowledged that food assistance reduced children's vulnerability to exploitation and violence, providing stability in an otherwise unstable environment.

These findings align with several studies on food security and child protection in conflict zones. Scholars such as Devereux (2009) and Maxwell et al. (2013) have shown that food insecurity in conflict settings is a major driver of child vulnerability, leading to increased risks of child labor,

sexual exploitation, and trafficking. War Child Holland's food assistance program directly addresses these risks by ensuring children are adequately nourished, which allows them to attend school and engage in protective community activities.

Additionally, the finding that food assistance helps improve educational outcomes is consistent with the work of Bastagli (2014), who found that food programs in post-conflict areas were associated with better school attendance and academic performance. The connection between food security and educational outcomes is vital for child protection, as Alderman et al. (2006) also argue that food insecurity disrupts children's ability to learn and increases their risk of being exploited.

## **5.2 Conclusion.**

In conclusion, the findings from War Child Holland's initiatives in South Sudan are consistent with the broader body of scholarly work on child protection in conflict zones. Food assistance, psychosocial support, and education each play a vital role in ensuring children's safety and well-being. By addressing immediate needs, such as hunger, and providing long-term support through emotional care and education, War Child Holland's integrated approach helps protect children from the multifaceted risks of conflict. These findings align with previous research that emphasizes the importance of holistic, coordinated interventions in protecting children in humanitarian crises. The comprehensive approach used by War Child Holland serves as a model for addressing the complex needs of children in conflict zones, ensuring they are provided with the protection and opportunities they need to thrive.

## **5.3 Recommendation**

Based on the findings regarding War Child Holland's interventions in South Sudan, this section will provide recommendations for improving existing programs and highlight areas for further research. These suggestions aim to strengthen the impact of food assistance, psychosocial support, and educational activities in child protection, as well as provide insights into potential gaps in knowledge that need to be explored to enhance future interventions.

### Enhancing the Integration of Services

It is crucial to further integrate food assistance, psychosocial support, and educational services to ensure a more holistic and sustainable child protection framework. The findings from this study demonstrate that the combination of these services plays a critical role in improving children's well-being and resilience. Ensuring that these services are more systematically integrated will

improve the continuity and effectiveness of interventions. War Child Holland and other organizations should continue to foster partnerships between food distribution teams, educational staff, and psychosocial counselors to design and implement programs that address children's needs across multiple dimensions. For instance, schools can be used as hubs for integrated services, where children receive food, emotional support, and education in one location. Focusing on

### Sustainable Food Security Solutions

Move beyond short-term food assistance by incorporating longer-term solutions that promote sustainable food security for families. While food aid is essential in crisis settings, long-term food insecurity remains a significant challenge in conflict zones like South Sudan. By empowering local communities through agricultural training and promoting food security initiatives, War Child Holland could help reduce dependency on external food aid. Implement community-based agriculture programs, such as teaching local families sustainable farming practices, supporting small-scale food production, or establishing community gardens. Involving children in these activities could provide both nutritional and educational benefits, while also building community resilience.

### Strengthening Psychosocial Support in Schools

Expand the availability of psychosocial support programs in schools to ensure that more children benefit from mental health care. Teachers and parents consistently emphasized the importance of psychosocial support in helping children cope with trauma and remain engaged in learning. However, there remains a need for more trained professionals and resources to meet the growing demand for these services. Increase the number of trained counselors and mental health professionals in schools, particularly in areas with high levels of displacement. Additionally, incorporating basic mental health education into the school curriculum can equip teachers with the skills to identify and address early signs of trauma in children.

### Increasing Community Engagement and Awareness

Involve communities more deeply in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of child protection programs. Community leaders and local stakeholders are critical to the success of

humanitarian programs, as they can help identify needs and provide culturally relevant solutions. Increased community engagement leads to more sustainable programs and strengthens local ownership. Establish community-based committees that include parents, teachers, community leaders, and local NGOs to ensure that programs are tailored to the specific needs of the population. Furthermore, community workshops and awareness campaigns should be conducted to ensure that parents and caregivers understand the importance of integrated child protection programs.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation of Program Impact

Enhance the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes to assess the long-term impact of War Child Holland's programs. While the current programs have had positive immediate effects, it is crucial to assess the long-term outcomes, particularly with respect to the children's psychosocial well-being, educational progress, and vulnerability to future risks. War Child Holland should develop comprehensive M&E frameworks that track the impact of their interventions on child

### **5.4 Areas for further research**

#### Impact of Food Assistance on Child Protection in the Long-Term

While food assistance has been shown to alleviate immediate hunger and improve educational outcomes, its long-term impact on child protection remains under-explored. Future research should investigate the long-term benefits of food assistance on children's overall protection and well-being, particularly in post-conflict recovery contexts. Studies could focus on how food security influences children's vulnerability to exploitation, labor, and recruitment into armed groups over the long term.

#### Effectiveness of Integrated Child Protection Programs

While the integration of food assistance, psychosocial support, and education has shown promise, more research is needed to understand the most effective ways to combine these services in conflict settings. Studies could explore how integrated approaches to child protection are implemented in various contexts, comparing their effectiveness in different conflict-affected

regions. Research should assess how the combined delivery of services influences children's resilience, educational attainment, and protection from harm, as well as how this model can be adapted in diverse humanitarian settings.

#### Psychosocial Support in Conflict-Driven Displacement

The impact of displacement on children's mental health and their need for psychosocial support is a significant gap in current research. Further research should examine how displacement—especially in South Sudan affects children's mental health and what specific psychosocial interventions are most effective in these contexts. This could include research into community-based models of psychosocial care and how they compare to facility-based services.

#### Role of Technology in Enhancing Child Protection in Conflict Zones

With the rise of digital tools in humanitarian aid, there is potential to explore how technology can be used to enhance child protection efforts. Research could explore the potential for digital platforms to provide psychosocial support, track child protection needs, or deliver educational content in conflict settings. Studies could also examine how mobile technologies can be used to provide food aid and monitor nutrition, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear sir/madam,

I am **AKON REECH** a student at Uganda Christian University conducting research on **ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLES OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND IN PROMOTING CHILD PROTECTION AMONG CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT IN MALAKAL, SOUTH SUDAN.** Will ensure total confidentiality of the information given to me during this research. This research will contribute to the award of my bachelor's degree in Social Work and Social Administration so I humbly ask you for your cooperation. Thank you very much.

Section A: Bio Data

Please tick the most appropriate answer

1. Gender?

a) Male                       b) Female

2. Age?

a) 10-14 years                       b) 15-18 years

c) 18-30 years                       c) above 30

3. What is your level of education?

a) Primary                       b) Secondary

c) Tertiary                       d) others specify.....

**SECTION B: TO EXAMINE STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION ON THE PROTECTIVE ASPECTS OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND’S EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO CHILD PROTECTION**

Rate your degree of agreement of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

s. no	statement	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Education is widely recognized as a key mechanism for safeguarding children during and after conflicts					
2	Parents in conflict-affected areas often see education as a vital tool to protect their children from abuse and exploitation					
3	Children are direct beneficiaries of the various educational programs and have unique views of their value					
4	Teachers are arguably the most important stakeholders for the delivery of educational programs.					
5	The Government of South Sudan considers education a cornerstone for national recovery and development					

**SECTION C: TO ASSESS STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION ON THE PROTECTIVE ASPECTS OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO CHILD PROTECTION**

Rate your degree of agreement using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

s. no	Statement	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Children who accessed WCH's child-friendly spaces reported improvements in mental health and social interactions					
2	Parents have praised War Child Holland's efforts to involve families in the healing process through workshops and training sessions					
3	Children who participate in psychosocial programs experience significant improvements in emotional stability, social skills, and self-esteem					
4	Peer organizations recognize the psychosocial support model of War Child Holland as a best practice in child protection					
5	Psychosocial support services play a role in the restoration of trust and social cohesion in conflict-affected communities.					

**SECTION D: TO ANALYZE STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION ON THE PROTECTIVE ASPECTS ON WAR CHILD HOLLAND FOOD ASSISTANCE SERVICES FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN.**

Rate your degree of agreement using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

s. no	Statement	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Food assistance is one of the most important interventions for the protection of children in armed conflicts, whose food access is severely disrupted					
2	It also minimizes the risk of high-risk behaviors or exploitation among children.					
3	Community leaders, including chiefs and religious leaders, believe that food assistance has tremendous potential to address hunger, while at the same time minimizing the vulnerability of children					
4	Children are direct beneficiaries of food assistance and often report positive experiences with school feeding programs					
5	teachers view school food as an incentive to encourage children to come regularly and support their educational and emotional well-being					

**INTERVIEW GUIDE.**

I am **AKON REECH** a student at Uganda Christian University conducting research on **ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLES OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND IN PROMOTING CHILD PROTECTION AMONG CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT IN MALAKAL, SOUTH SUDAN** Will ensure total confidentiality of the information given to me during this research. This research will contribute to the award of my bachelor’s degree in Social Work and Social Administration so I humbly ask you for your cooperation. Thank you very much.

**TO EXAMINE STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION ON THE PROTECTIVE ASPECTS OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND’S EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO CHILD PROTECTION**

Is Education key mechanism for safeguarding children during and after conflicts?

.....

Parents in conflict-affected areas often see education as a vital tool to protect their children from abuse and exploitation. Please identify their contribution.

.....

Teachers are arguably the most important stakeholders for the delivery of educational programs .please outline their roles towards child protection.

.....

The Government of South Sudan considers education a cornerstone for national recovery and development. How have they been able to support the cause?.

.....

**TO ASSESS STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION ON THE PROTECTIVE ASPECTS OF WAR CHILD HOLLAND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO CHILD PROTECTION**

Children who accessed WCH's child-friendly spaces reported improvements in mental health and social interactions. How does this come about?

.....

Parents have praised War Child Holland's efforts to involve families in the healing process through workshops and training sessions. What roles have the organisations strongly fronted.

.....

**TO ANALYZE STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION ON THE PROTECTIVE ASPECTS ON WAR CHILD HOLLAND FOOD ASSISTANCE SERVICES FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN.**

Food assistance is one of the most important interventions for the protection of children in armed conflicts, whose food access is severely disrupted. What are some of the benefits of provision of food?

.....

How food assistance does minimizes the risk of high-risk behaviors or exploitation among children.

.....