



# WEARABLE SOLAR LIGHTS FOR DISPLACED WOMEN IN SOUTH SUDAN

## Lighting, sanitation and the risk of gender-based violence

Case study 8: South Sudan, Panyijar

### What type of lighting was installed, when, where and why?

In 2015, Oxfam distributed 'Little Sun' wearable solar lights to women IDPs living in informal settlements in Gap Mayom, Nyal and Ganyiel in Panyijar county, who were fleeing the conflict in Unity State. The settlements consisted of makeshift tents made out of refuse and tarps. They were not managed by any agencies and there were no formal structures, not even temporary latrines. IDPs living in the informal settlements were mostly women, children and the elderly. They expressed concern for their safety in relation to GBV and other risks, such as being bitten by snakes as a result of having to walk long distances in the dark to defecate in unsafe locations or collect water. They also said it was likely that they would be displaced again.

Rape and sexual assault of women and girls was a major risk voiced by the community in Nyal and Ganyiel. Women raised particular concerns about having to walk to the swamps during menstruation, and having to walk long distances at night time to defecate. IDPs and members of households in the area feared armed men hiding in the swamps and in the grasslands surrounding the informal settlements.

### Did the distribution/installation of lighting affect perceptions of safety, particularly in relation to GBV?

In Gap Mayom, Nyal and Ganyiel, people who received solar lights reported feeling much safer after dark, although GBV was not mentioned explicitly in post-distribution monitoring reports. GBV is under-reported globally due to issues of stigma and risks of secondary harm to survivors, and lack of mention of GBV is not an indication that it is not happening. Also, discussions with communities on GBV issues are usually only carried out by specially trained staff. Women did, however, report feeling safer when they had to go outside after dark, as a result of having the lights. People said that they found the solar lights very useful for



Little Sun torches distributed to female IDPs in Nyal, South Sudan, 2015. Photo: Kerry Akers/Oxfam.

being able to see and avoid snakes, and also for childbirth at night, which previously had often taken place in darkness.

## **Any other observations related to WASH, GBV or lighting**

Solar lights were the preferred option of the community because they could not afford battery torches, whereas the solar lights did not cost anything to run. Markets in the Nyal area are quite far apart, isolated, and often get cut off from Juba or regional markets due to flooding and conflict, so the cost of batteries can vary significantly at different times of the month or year. The design of the 'Little Sun' lights was particularly useful for people who were likely to undergo further displacement as they could be worn around the neck, so could be easily transported and allowed the user to keep their hands free.

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