



‘From the Ground Up’

A report on the challenges and opportunities for girls’ education in Karamoja region, Uganda

December 2016

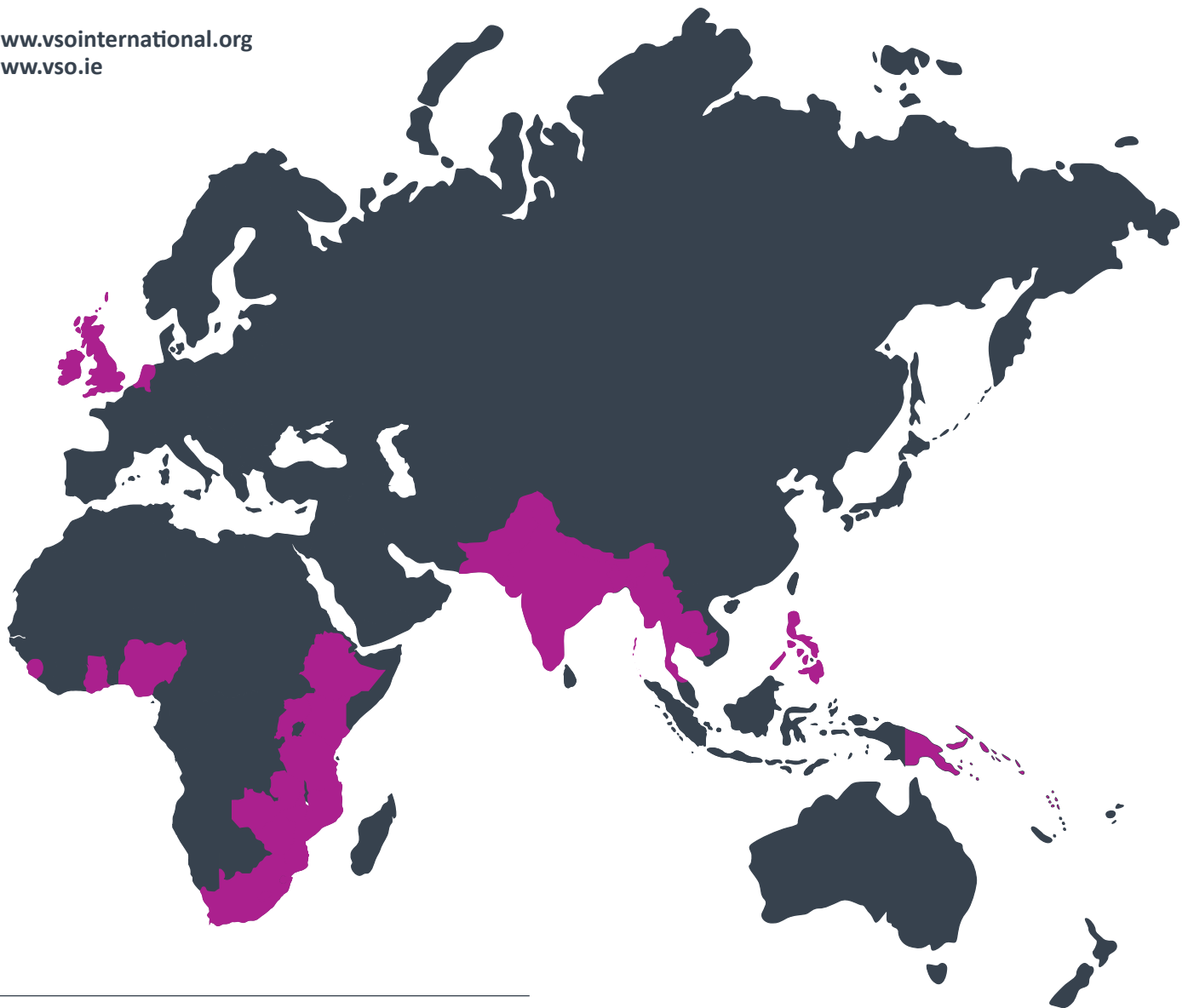


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Foreword

This research was commissioned by leading international development charity VSO in 20 primary schools across Moroto and Kotido in Uganda in October 2015. It was funded by Irish Aid through VSO Ireland to improve the quality of primary education in Moroto and Kotido. Primary school children are at the centre of the work that VSO undertakes in schools. The Directorate of Education Standards (DES) in conjunction with VSO and Link Community Development, produced a set of inspection guides to help teachers improve the learning experience of children. This will only be achieved if key players work closely together. We hope that DES inspectors, local government inspectors, Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs), Head Teachers, foundation/governing bodies and education specialists working in international and non-governmental organizations will use these guides to improve the education institutions with which they work.

VSO's work in Karamoja, complements the Ministry of Education and Sports' Education Sector's Strategic Plan, which emphasises children's literacy and numeracy skills. VSO has extensive experience working with Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports, Teacher training colleges and local education bodies. VSO supports the development of a 'teacher-friendly' inspection approach through a well-researched process which has resulted in these inspection guidelines. During this research, it became apparent that the challenges and risks affecting girls' education were critical and needed intervention by VSO in Karamoja.

Alok Rath
Country Director VSO Uganda

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

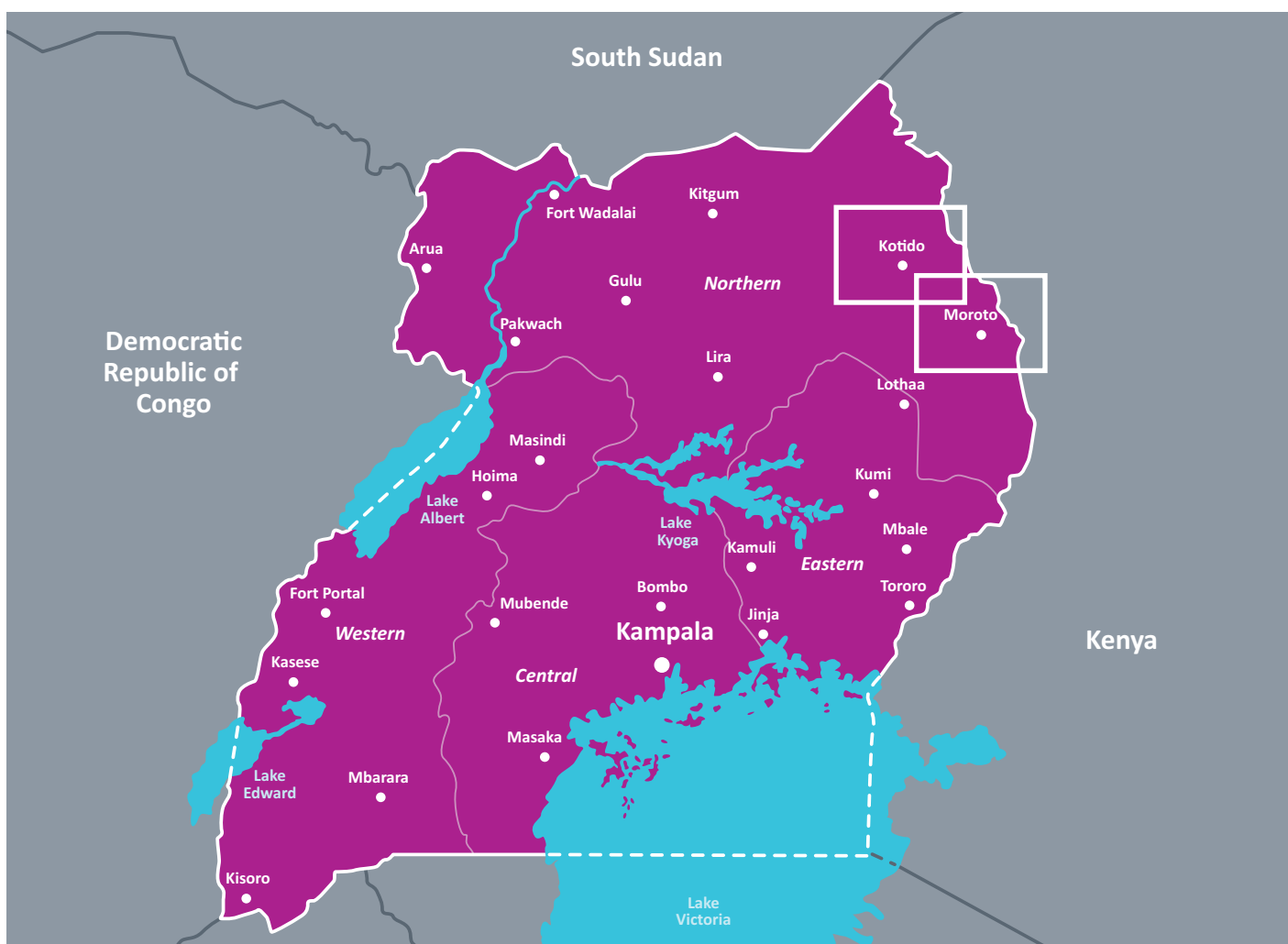
This study focuses on 20 schools where VSO's pilot project EQPE (Evaluating and Improving Quality Primary Education) operating in the two districts of Moroto and Kotido. EQPE has been running since August 2013.

The findings of this report are drawn from a qualitative study of the barriers to the attainment of quality primary school education for girls in Uganda's Karamoja region in 2015. The Karamoja region has the lowest human development index in the country.¹ The 2010 Uganda Education Sector Monitoring Report on Karamoja highlighted how a combination of factors restricted access to education to children, including a semi-nomadic lifestyle, food insecurity and poor income combined with negative attitudes towards education. Additionally, VSO's work in two districts in Karamoja have highlighted the discrepancies between the educational experiences of girls and boys in accessing quality primary education in terms of enrolment, performance, completion or transition into secondary education.

This study provides a clearer picture of some of the challenges that girls face highlighted in the National Strategy for Girls' Education 2015-2019 published by the Ugandan Government in 2014. This study draws directly from the experiences, perspectives and attitudes of those working and receiving an education in Karamoja.

Captured here are the perspectives of Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, Senior Teachers, School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations, District Education Officials, political leaders and NGOs working in two districts. This study also includes first-hand experiences of the girls themselves who talked about their lives both inside and outside of school including girls who have access to education albeit periodically, as well as girls who have dropped out of school.

Figure 1: Map of Uganda showing the location of the two project areas, Kotido and Moroto



¹ Uganda Education Sector Monitoring Report on Karamoja 2010

Challenges

Three distinct themes emerged which negatively affected girls' education in Karamoja:

1. Economic challenges

Widespread poverty, harsh conditions and limited disposable income disadvantaged girls in particular. In this environment, girls are perceived as a vital source of work and wealth (when married).

2. Socio-cultural values and traditions

A male dominated, patriarchal society which perpetuate gender inequality such as traditional practices in relation to early marriage, unfair division of household labour and gender based violence all impact on a girl's ability to receive a quality education. Particularly unique to Karamoja is the perception that a girl's bride price will reduce if she is educated, hence, an additional barrier to girls' education. The absence of role models for girls emerged as a major issue in Karamoja. Many interviewees spoke about the lack of exposure that school girls had to educated people from their own community and the complete absence of positive role models at school and in other occupational areas.

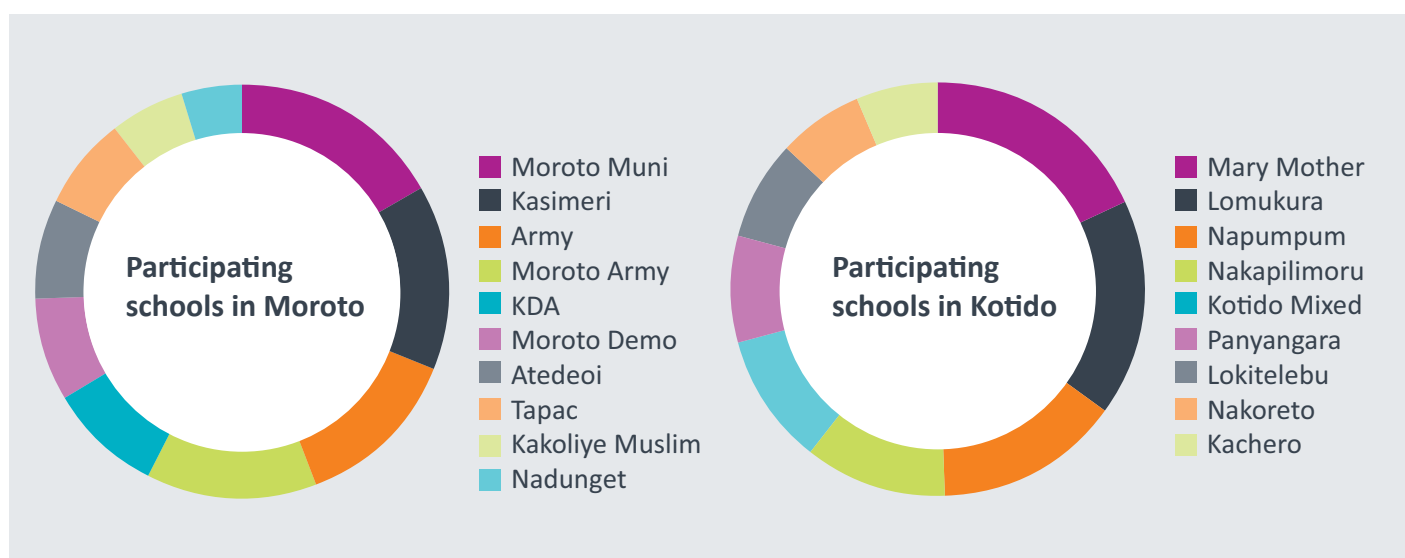
3. Unfriendly school factors

Travelling distance to school, unfriendly school environment, poor teaching, substandard resources, teachers' attitudes, harassment or sexual abuse and low achievement rates.

Opportunities and recommendations²

1. A need for more consistent, bottom up, adequately resourced community and family awareness programmes and follow up.
2. Better enforcement of existing legislation that supports education and human rights of girls. This must include tougher punitive measures for breaches or locally agreed measures.³
3. A more comprehensive and effective boarding system for primary and secondary school girls in order to break the current negative cycle of practice around education as well as completely 'free'⁴ schooling for the user to mitigate disincentives.
4. Increase the provision of food in schools as a critical factor in the attendance and retention of girls and address the 'economic deficit'.
5. Improve the ratio of female teachers and female role models in Karamoja schools. Teachers need to be empowered to use gender responsive pedagogical skills that will increase the participation of girls and improve their learning outcomes. This is only sustainable if the education system is resourced and teacher conditions and morale are also improved.
6. School management communities and parent teacher committees are a vital link with the community in the development and running of schools, but more needs to be done to ensure that these bodies run more effectively. NGOs and district officials can work together to improve this.

Figure 2: List of participating schools and their student enrolment numbers



² The micro study highlighted some opportunities and actions based on what is already taking place in VSO supported districts- that could be adapted, strengthened and scaled up to other districts

³ Punitive measures against parents for example for taking a girl out of school can have negative effect on the girl afterwards – if the guardian is arrested who will then look after the family. The girl can be blamed for the actions taken on the parent.

⁴ Uganda Introduced universal primary education in 1997, however free education is not exactly free as some parents are still unable to cover hidden costs like paying for scholastic materials, uniform and meals for their children at school.

2. The specific challenges for girls' education in the Karamoja region

Low enrolment rates and high drop out

In Moroto District, only 6.41% of girls complete their primary education compared to 11.84% of boys by 2009⁵. According to the 2014 census, there are 23,154 girls aged between 6 and 12 in Moroto district, but only 4,786 of them are in school⁶.

From January 2014 to April 2015, according to their Head Teachers, 2,294 pupils dropped out of 20 schools. In Moroto, 445 girls and 369 boys dropped out from 10 schools. In Kotido, 752 girls and 728 boys dropped out.

Our research focuses on the causes of girls' low enrolment and dropout. The causes can be broadly grouped into three areas: factors in the home, strong socio-cultural forces and school factors.

Factors in the home – poverty and economic pressures which cause children, especially girls, who are perceived as a source of labour and income

In this region, there is widespread poverty, harsh conditions and limited disposable income, which disadvantages girls. Girls are perceived as a source of work and their wealth is closely associated with their 'bride price'. Additionally, girls - including those at school - contribute to household income in many ways which is essential for struggling families.

"Parents use girls as a source of income by making them take firewood and charcoal to town for them to sell. They also make girls sell local brew in order to earn some money to survive."

(Head Teacher, Moroto)

"Older school girls encounter the same problem when they get home from school. They find there is nothing to eat at home. They feel bad that their younger siblings are hungry so they go to work in town and buy food for their family."

(Chairman PTA, Moroto)

"If I fetch water, they will pay me 500 shillings for a jerry can".

(Female Nakapelimoru pupil)

"If I brew and sell beer, or do some digging or work in the restaurants, I could get 5,000 shilling for the whole month."

(Female Nakapelimoru pupil)

While there was widespread poverty and little disposable income, there was also a distinct unwillingness to spend money on education. Even buying a pen was enough to discourage some parents from sending their daughters to school.

With Universal Primary Education (UPE) in place, there was a

perception that education should be totally free and the school or government should look after children's needs. A different view is held in relation to educating boys where a return on investment could be anticipated.

Strong socio-cultural forces - early and forced marriage, gender based violence, unfair division of labour and negative attitudes towards education

The social construction of gender in Karamojong society disadvantages girls. Unfair division of labour burdens them with most of the domestic chores which absorbs much of their time and attention. At the same time, early marriage and gender based violence directly impacts on a girl's education.

Early marriage is not confined to Karamoja. Approximately 35% of girls drop out of school because of early marriage and 23% do so because of pregnancy. Over 15% of married women aged 20–49 are married by the age of 15 and nearly half (49%) by the age of 18. Teenage pregnancy rates are high (24% at the national level) with regional variations such that 34% of teenage girls from the poorest households and 24% of rural girls become mothers compared with 16% of wealthier households and 21% of urban girls⁷. However, in Karamoja there is the perception that the less educated the girl child, the more valuable she is to the family as a source of wealth. Unlike in other communities in Uganda, there is a distinct inverse relationship between the level of education and the dowry price. Girls who go to school do not fetch a good 'bride price' and the best preparation for a traditional marriage is to be at home. Families are less likely to send their girls to school regardless of household income or need for a care giver for unwell family members.

In these patriarchal societies there is a negative attitude towards schools and how they may 'corrupt' girls. There is a perception amongst teachers, PTA members and even the girls themselves, that girls become 'promiscuous' if they go to school.

"Girls drop out of school mostly because of early marriage. It depends on the parents, but some are even sold into marriage by their own parents. They sell their own fifteen, sixteen, seventeen year old daughters for cows."

(Vice Chairman SMC, Kotido)

"The community attitude is that a girl's education is of no benefit, a waste of resources and a serious reduction of labour in a family."

(Head Teacher, Moroto)

"Our community says that when girls go to school, they adopt bad things like engaging in early sex. They say girls should stay at home so that they can attract the best bride price. Girls who don't go to school are worth a lot more - 50 cows for some."

(Senior Teacher, Moroto)

"Our friends who are not in school say that being in school encourages promiscuity among girls. They believe that if you go to school, you will become pregnant. There is no one to look after you when you're not at home."

(Female Kasimeri pupil)

"If the money is not there, it will always be the boy who goes to school. The girl can always marry, so educating the boy is preferred."

(Female Kasimeri pupil)

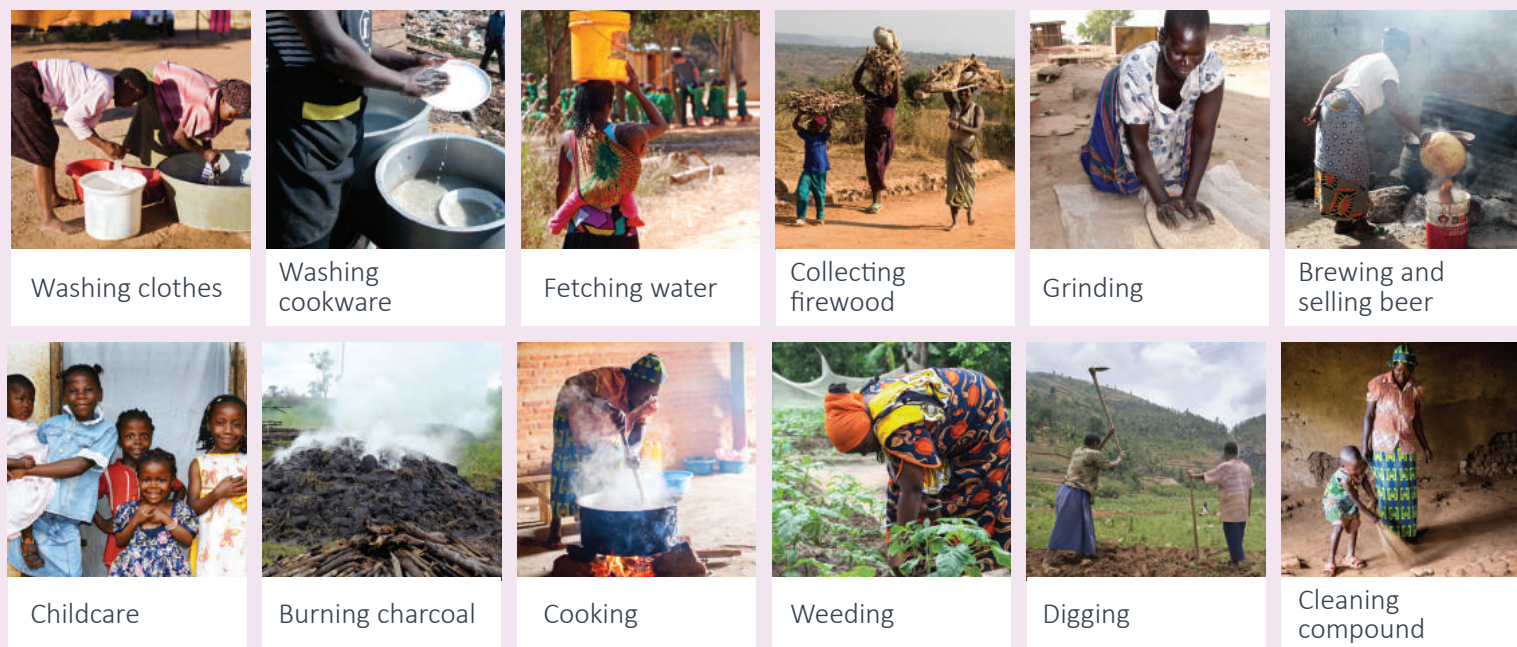


Figure 3: Their work at home as described by the girls

The burden of household chores falling to girls was another obvious barrier to their education.

“Fetching water, collecting firewood, gardening, brewing beer and raising animals - that is how I pay for my school fees. Sometimes I can’t get to school which leads to failure because I don’t understand what is happening in class. This causes us to drop out of school and leads to early marriage.”

(Lia pupil)

School factors – travel distance to school, unfriendly school environment, poor teaching and inadequate materials, teachers’ attitudes, harassment or sexual abuse and low achievement rates

The research revealed challenges in the infrastructure of many schools: poorly secured classrooms, a lack of furniture and widespread shortage of text books and pens etc. In one school there was no perimeter fencing, resulting in trespassing by the public and grazing animals, while another school had no water.

Almost three quarters of the Head Teachers acknowledged that facilities were not adequate for girls at their school including a disregard for privacy, a lack of changing rooms, toilets, wash basins, soap and sanitary products. It is not surprising that the girls would like to see improved facilities at their schools including changing rooms, washing facilities, properly equipped classrooms and dormitories.

“During menstruation, there are a lack of sanitary towels and other accessories for girls at school. They are not safe and don’t have private facilities like doors. Due to poorly constructed schools, changing rooms are not available and this make girls think they are not catered for.” (Head Teacher, Kotido)

“Look at Karamojong girls - you will not see a dropout rate like that in other areas. Problem is with the facilities. The Government may have the intention, but there are no facilities for girls.” (Chairman SMC, Moroto)

The attitudes and treatment from teachers have proven to be a barrier for girls when they do finally make it to school.

“Some teachers use derogatory language with the girls. If they give a wrong answer they say, ‘Ah, you’re ready for marriage.’” (Senior Teacher, Moroto)

“Some teachers are very harsh when they rebuke the child - especially male teachers. They say, ‘Look at your breasts. You are old enough to be married.’ It makes it very hard for girls.” (Deputy Head Teacher, Moroto)

School materials, financial support for fees, scholarships for secondary education and improved teacher/pupil ratios are all high up on girl’s agendas.

Teachers and district education personnel conclude that boys perform better than girls in school. This was also acknowledged by girls in the focus groups. The most frequently cited reason was that girls attend school inconsistently because they are overburdened with domestic chores.

“Boys are better at performing. They attend school regularly. Girls are absent more because they have to work at home. Girls sometimes miss a full week and miss out on some important teaching. They can’t catch up on the lessons taught to others. There is little reading culture for girls. With so much housework, they have little contact with their books. Girls don’t have time to sit and read, but boys can read later into the evenings. Girls are too busy.” (Deputy Head Teacher, Moroto)

⁵ Study of alternative delivery models for primary schooling and teacher training for Karamoja, UNICEF 2009

⁶ UBOS Census Data 2014

⁷ UBOS and ICF International, 2012 in The situation of Uganda Children 2015 Government of Uganda and UNICEF 2015

3. Factors that would help girls to study and stay in school

This study explored solutions and how effective they would be tackling the problems from the perspective of teachers, students, educational officials and other stakeholders.

Raising awareness in communities and families

Often, the primary response by schools was to tackle low enrolment and retention of girls by mobilising villages and communities. Campaigns such as *Go to School, Back to School, Stay in School* were highlighted by teachers and district education officials as the best method to improve school access for girls. However, while such campaigns resulted in an initial boost, the results were not always sustained. While enrolment rates increased, this did not follow through to retention and completion, partly because they were done in isolation.

“At PTA meetings, we talk with the parents about the advantages of girls coming to school. When we campaign for more girls to come to school, parents are our focus. We use the churches too to talk about our message. Parents initially accept this, but later it starts dropping off. Once, free books were provided and girls came in great numbers – almost 400 in one week, but the week after, no books meant no children.”
(Senior Teacher, Moroto)

Campaigns are inconsistent in their nature and are seen as problematic by some. Some local leaders endorsing one campaign didn't even send their own children to school. There was also a sense of district officials imposing the 'back to school' campaigns on the local community rather than it being locally driven. There was little evidence of any community cohesion regarding school attendance.

The passing, implementation and enforcement of by-laws and educational ordinances have a critical role to play. One such ordinance, which has been submitted to the solicitor general for approval, requires all children of school age to attend school. Parents and the community have been charged with the responsibility of supporting this. New educational ordinances were passed in Moroto in summer 2015. Ordinances are at drafting stage in Kotido. The absence of resources in terms of printing and consultation, which must precede their adoption, will further delay their enactment.

The lack of enforcement of current legislation on education and the protection and rights of girls, is a continuing concern and a barrier to progress.

“Some have money, yet they can't support their children's education continuously. We try sponsorships, bursaries or NGOs, but it's very difficult. Parents should be fined 100,000 shillings if they fail to send their children to school.”
(Chairman, SMC Kotido)

The lack of government action in relation to gender based violence which impacts so negatively on girls' education was raised in several interviews:

“The most dangerous thing here is the defilement of girls. About 6 or 7 girls are defiled here every month. When a girl becomes pregnant she is sent home and does not continue with her education. Girls get pregnant at dances, in the villages or in town. They meet with fellow students who buy them drinks, defile them and then reject them. They're only 14 or 15 - it's not right. They're too young.” (Chairman, SMC Kotido)

Recommendation:

Consistency and community ownership of awareness programmes has been identified as a key factor in their success. This must go hand in hand with better enforcement of legislation and agreements that are already in place to protect girls, but are rarely enforced. An increase in punitive measures or locally accepted measures is needed.

Guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling were identified as playing a positive role in girls' education. The importance of this was highlighted by all stakeholders involved in the study and by the girls themselves. However, there were questions concerning the definition and operation of roles within schools and the level of skills available to fulfil them effectively:

“Counselling is very weak in primary schools. All are supposed to have a counselling room, but they don't even have enough classrooms. If we had a well-trained counsellor, they could use their skills anywhere. Counsellors are not doing their jobs in some cases. Instead of senior female teachers being approachable, they can be arrogant. I don't know how they were appointed - some are just not approachable. Children who come late are punished. Children sleeping in classrooms are threatened. When children perform poorly, no one asks why. Our child population is huge, but we fail to help these children. If they perform badly, no one picks up on it.”
(PTC)

Providing guidance and counselling were perceived as the duty of the senior female teacher and the senior male teacher. The introduction of these new positions was a positive move and certainly increased the ratio of female teachers in some schools. However, guidance and counselling is a task for the whole school and for all teachers, male and female.

The guidance and counselling role for girls is about helping girls to mature and advising them on their health and hygiene, especially helping them to cope with menstruation. Girls experiencing menstruation without proper facilities meant that many were absent or they dropped out of school altogether. There seemed to be a virtual paralysis in some schools about addressing the provision of sustainable sanitary products. Other schools have successfully tackled this and there were a number of training initiatives on reusable pads using local materials.

The broader remit of counselling was given little attention, eg. psycho-social support for troubled children, supporting

“**The government should take some action. Parents don't know the value of education.**”
(Chairman, SME Kotido)

those experiencing gender based violence, early marriage or those at risk of female genital mutilation.

The training available to teachers so that they could fulfil the guidance and counselling role, appeared non-existent. Neither was it an area given attention within the pre service training in the PTC's. Even within the project, this area was not addressed.

Recommendation:

There is scope for immediate action within EQPE to offer skills development and support to teachers for the counselling and guidance role. Longer term, there is a need to look at counselling skills within the PTC curriculum, as well as PTC's offering outreach and in training teachers in all schools in the district. There is also an opportunity for VSO and other teacher trainers to look at developing and supporting different models of 'all school' counselling and guidance initiatives.

A boarding school environment at primary level

With the exception of two schools, a boarding facility was available to the 20 schools included in this study. This is unusual within Ugandan primary education and is the result of an affirmative action programme which permits such a facility in Karamoja. 37% of the girls who participated in the focus groups were in boarding. Boarding was positively endorsed by all those who took part in the study, including the girls. Most girls said they would like it as an option, even if the dormitory facilities in their schools were poor. Some schools had substantial investment in the construction of dormitories, but in others, the facilities were minimal. Some were not sealed from the elements and grazing animals, others had no lighting or changing rooms for older girls, toilets were absent and many washing facilities, beds and mattresses were simply inadequate.

The environment for girls in Karamoja is very unsafe. They are at risk of sexual abuse and violence (including early marriage and early sexual engagement), which increases the risk of unwanted, teenage pregnancy. Boarding schools offered some semblance of security and safety. In the focus groups, girls unequivocally claimed that they felt safer in school than at home. This applied not only to those in boarding, but to all girls. Young women in the VSO Youth Development Programme agreed as they reflected on their time in school. The major reasons for feeling safer were identified by the girls as follows:

- Reduces exposure to early and forced marriage.
- Reduces the probability of being 'carried away' by warriors.
- Reduces time spent on household chores and associated dangers in fetching water and collecting firewood.
- Help in handling their maturity.
- Advice on sexual behaviour and preventing the spread of sexual diseases.
- Moral authority of school in deterring forced marriage and FGM.
- Physical safety offered by the school compound prevents harassment, abuse and enticement by males.
- Less exposure to influential peers who do not attend school.

While girls expressed the desire to continue their formal education beyond primary level, there was also acknowledgement by the vast majority that this was very unlikely. Fees, cost of uniforms and school materials were seen as insurmountable obstacles.

Recommendations:

In areas where accessing education is so high, an effective boarding system should form part of a girl's education. One senior politician called for such facilities to be kept in place for 15 years in order to break the current cycle and to develop systems that actually work in the local community context. It was suggested this should be combined with completely 'free' schooling so that there would not be any disincentives from keeping girls away from primary school. The fact that UPE has not attracted all children shows that much more effort is required to address the gender gap in access, retention and achievement at primary level.



A female student at Kasimeri Primary School in Moroto.

Continuing feeding programmes in schools

Feeding children is a big challenge in school. Nothing has a greater impact on attendance and retention than the provision of food in school. One NGO working with girls in several schools in Kotido claimed that if there is food the girls will be there.

Food is now becoming a critical problem with the disengagement of the World Food Programme (WFP) from supplying schools. Over ten years ago, a gender specific initiative was introduced by the WFP in Karamoja to address gender inequity in school enrolment. It provided an incentive of 'Girls Take Home Rations' and was linked to regular attendance at school by girls. It helped to compensate parents for the loss of the girl's labour while she was at school. It ran until 2010 and focused on classes from P4 upwards. It was acknowledged by teachers, district officials and politicians as successful. However, it ended when the WFP experienced a reduction in its funding from donors. When this programme finished, daily attendances dropped in all schools.

"WFP provides food, but not like the past. Before we had beans, posho and vegetables, but now only maize. We have introduced school gardens so schools can become self-reliant. We have a garden, but we're waiting for seeds."
(Vice Chairman SMC, Kotido)

"It's very difficult to send a girl to school if there is no food from the WFP. With no food in school, you can't remain in school. WFP is only giving a little food now and other food is provided for the boarders and paid for by the parents."
(PTA member, Kotido)

Both the quantity and quality of such support has been reduced and there is talk of school gardens, however, the drought of the past few years has not helped. Despite the reduction in support and further disengagement by the WFP, there is little action being taken by schools.

Recommendations:

The provision of food in school is critical and directly impacts attendance and retention rates of girls.

There is a need to address the 'economic deficit' at household level that prevents sending girls to school. It may be more realistic to create income generation activities linked to schools rather than communities. The production of food within the school could help enrolment and retention rates of girls.

Better teaching in schools

Teaching methods and teacher ratios will also improve the situation. The ratio of female to male teachers has an impact on girl's participation according to most Head Teachers. All except two claimed it made a difference, while a further three said that the actual number did not matter so much as having a 'good' senior female teacher. Girls are more open with female teachers who understood girls' problems, were more 'maternal' and could give guidance on menstruation. Others pointed towards their importance as role models. However, the retention of female teachers in remote areas was raised:

"There was a time when schools did not have any female teachers at all, let alone senior female teachers. So who do the girls turn to – a male teacher? Apart from recruiting female teachers, there is also the issue of retention. How many female teachers will go and stay in Tapac? Only one is there at present. There are plans to have three. How will you attract them and retain them? Female teachers are also worried about security and safety." (UNICEF)

Having more female teachers doesn't necessarily equal better teaching outcomes for girls. Some criticised female teachers, their approach to their work and their interaction with the girls.

Deputy Head Teachers and senior female and senior male teachers regularly highlighted the importance of teaching methods. A number of teachers in the study had benefited from VSO programmes with its focus on co-operative learning, enhancing teacher capacity and improved teaching materials.

Teachers clearly play a vital role in developing positive learning environments and in providing learning activities which engage children. Teachers spoke of their efforts to incorporate these approaches:

"I use teaching methods that encourage girls to perform like group discussion between girls and boys. When learners are given tasks, it encourages responsibility. Teachers should cater for individual differences. Female teachers have skills to handle girls in class." (Deputy Head Teacher, Kotido)

"Teachers should use interactive methods of teaching to motivate both girls and boys. In group work, we mix the groups. We have fewer girls than boys - in my class there are 19 girls and 40 boys!" (Deputy Head Teacher, Moroto)

"Be gender sensitive when giving out responsibilities. Not all responsibilities eg, time keeping, should be given to the boys. Girls are less inclined to come forward - they are shy."
(Senior Teacher, Moroto)

Recommendation

There is scope for further work to address gender equality through teaching methods. This could entail developing tools for gender sensitivity in the classroom through to raising awareness in the local community. This will empower teachers to use gender responsive pedagogical skills that will increase the girls' participation and improve their learning outcomes.

All schools operate in an education system which is greatly under-resourced and where teaching conditions and morale are poor. The following were particularly evident:

“**There was a time when schools did not have any female teachers at all, let alone senior female teachers. So who do the girls turn to - a male teacher?**”

(UNICEF)

- Weaknesses of school inspection system- an absence of vehicles and fuel.
- Low motivation and enthusiasm among some teachers.
- Teacher absenteeism.
- Problems with teacher accommodation.
- Remoteness of some schools and issues of safety for female teachers .
- High teacher/pupil ratios and overcrowded classrooms.
- Low levels of teacher qualifications.
- Poor remuneration.
- Scarcity of text books and school materials.
- Poor school infrastructure.

Cultural and ethnic factors also played a role in perceptions. The vast majority of teachers were not from Karamoja.

Strengthening community links and engagement

Three quarters of Head Teachers described community attitudes towards educating girls as negative. One senior teacher in a rural school suggested that different ethnicities was a factor in the relationship between the community and the school:

“The relationship between the school and the community is generally passive. Some of the community are ready to participate in school activities, but others have no interest. Most of them are not supportive because the school staff are from different ethnic groups. They see them as alien, as strangers.” (Senior Teachers, Kotido)

While Head Teachers reported good community relationships, this was mediated largely by the SMCs and PTAs. Despite the wide variety of work undertaken by these bodies, including mobilising parents and raising awareness, the study raised questions about their effectiveness. These particularly pertained to the SMCs which are the statutory bodies for management of the school. There are very poor levels of literacy in some SMCs and doubts were raised about their ability to oversee school activities, to understand reports and contribute to the development and monitoring of school improvement plans. Some committees have members who are not active and others have members who have no children in the school.

Recommendations:

It is clear that these committees are vital not only in relation to school functioning but in terms of community cohesion, links with the wider community and holding local leaders to account regarding children’s education.

It is important to develop more management tools and practices to address the effectiveness of these statutory bodies. This should help the bodies to understand their roles and responsibilities in the community and education system and how best to meet them in practice. There are NGOs and community based organisations working in the two districts who are engaged in capacity building with SMC’s (School Management Committee). There is scope for more coordination and learning from different key players which will strengthen community engagement and increase collaboration.

“**Teachers should use interactive methods of teaching to motivate both girls and boys.**”

(Deputy Head Teacher, Moroto)

4. Conclusion

The research has highlighted the challenges affecting girl's education and has provided recommendations which can directly improve access to quality education in Karamoja. The availability of well-constructed boarding facilities already offers security for girls to stay longer in school, but the need to address the daily risks affecting girls' education in Karamoja, will require the engagement of boys and men. Despite the challenges, the resilience of the girls has helped them to access education and this needs to be recognised and strengthened. The presence of domestic and community conflict in Karamoja has also impacted girls' education. This research has provided new intervention areas that education practitioners and civil society groups in Karamoja can use in order to create access to quality education for girls.⁸

⁸ This is a summary of a comprehensive report. The research methodology, statistics and detailed analysis is available at VSO on request.

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