

EDUCATION SECTION  
PROGRAMME DIVISION



# CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

## CASE STUDY: UGANDA

UNICEF 2010

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**UNICEF'S CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS:  
UGANDA CASE STUDY**

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## IV. OUTCOMES ANALYSIS AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

As described in Section II, during 1998–2008, UNICEF provided support to myriad CFS-related activities at the system-wide policy level as well as the district and community levels. Table 2 summarizes some of the outputs of these activities. Because of the large number of district- and community-level activities supported, the middle column of Table 2 is largely illustrative, whereas the system-wide outputs in the far left column are relatively comprehensive.

The far-right column shows that UNICEF has supported the development and circulation of major policies for each dimension of child-friendly schools. Several of these are not yet approved but are expected to be soon. This column also lists the strategies, guidelines and handbooks that were developed, usually in advance of the policies. These materials have enabled some approaches to be implemented while the formal policies that legitimize them are in the years-long approval process. Nationally, gender parity in primary enrolment rates was reached long before the Gender in Education Policy was approved in late 2008; nonetheless, gender inequities persist in primary completion and achievement as well as in secondary enrolment.

### Research and knowledge management

Table 3 shows a few of the dozens of studies carried out to support CFS activities in Uganda, some more analytical than others, several of which are included in the bibliography. The project also benefited from several external formative evaluations of individual components of the programme in the target districts (COPE 2006<sup>4</sup> and BTL 2008). In addition, as noted in Section II, the MoES Education Standards Agency conducted the 'Assessment of the Impact of School Environment on the Quality of Basic Education and Gender Parity in Primary Schools' in 2007.

The findings of these studies are consistent with the findings of several external reviews of the Ugandan education system, demonstrating that many difficulties in the target districts are symptomatic of systemic issues. For example, a draft report on causes of low primary education completion rates conducted by a private firm for the Ministry of Education and Sports identifies high levels of non-compliance with government policies and approaches to reduce drop-out rates and improve completion of the primary cycle (Business Synergies 2007 #1579). The report concludes that this has been a result of the misconception of the policies and of insufficient efforts on the part of the Ministry to financially support the implementation of the policies/interventions, as well as misuse of funds at the district and lower levels.

The report finds that low levels of teacher motivation are related to low teacher salaries, poor or non-existent teachers' housing, and inadequate instructional materials. The supervision necessary to ensure teachers use new materials at hand and implement new initiatives is lacking. The report finds too many pupils in the lower primary classes and too

<sup>4</sup> Not made available for this case study.

little community involvement in most schools, the latter attributed to insufficient mobilization and over-politicization of the universal primary education programme (Business Synergies 2007 #1579). Most importantly, however, there appears to be little input through parents and community participation, probably the nonpareil of this kind of activity.

UNICEF remains committed to implementing most of its CFS activities through the Government of Uganda. As a result, the sustainability of these activities is constrained by the decentralized and limited implementation capacity of the Government, as described in these reports. Moreover, UNICEF's budget does not include the equipment and staff for the district education office to sustain CFS-related activities/practices at the school level.

However, the CFS emphasis on using UNGEI and GEM to mobilize other stakeholders at the school, community and district levels is potentially sustainable. At least some of the groups formed under these two organizations are likely to survive and to agitate for better support from the district education office and to demand more consistent effort from teachers at the school level. Given issues of corruption in the implementation of block grants and school capitation grants (Mushemeza 2005 #1617), watchdog activities by groups like these may help more funds reach more schools without increasing the level of such grants.

More child-centred, effective teaching at the classroom level, the focus of so much CFS effort, will be more difficult to realize. From its own documentation, GBS-like activities and Music, Dance and Drama appear to be some of the more promising ways to raise community awareness of children's rights and how children learn. With such awareness, community groups would be in a better position to demand effective teaching and learning methods.

The printing and distribution of new policies and materials on a focus-district or system-wide basis, the training of stakeholders in the use of these materials, and the continuous restocking of these is necessary to realize UNICEF's investment in these policies and materials. Cost-effective ways to ensure these policies are implemented and the materials used at the school and classroom level have yet to be demonstrated.

For UNICEF, moving teachers and school systems towards actions that respect the rights of some of the most disadvantaged children in Uganda is more than sufficient to justify its investment in child-friendly schools to date. Donors with the funds to scale up pilot CFS activities, and the Government of Uganda with its limited education funds, however, are likely to demand evidence of cost-effectiveness in terms of learning and school completion, i.e., indicators of desired outcomes (pass rate on the Primary Leaving Exam) rather than simply achieved outputs (such as X number of teachers were trained).

Few pilot activities can generate such evidence, given their short time frame and, in the case of CFBEL and TRACE, the transient nature of much of the population in their target districts. UNICEF's 2007 country office annual report, however, provided many more contextualized indicators of quantitative outputs, for example: GEM membership in 2007 was 356, 701 (75 per cent girls) spread over 903 school-based GEM clubs, covering 22 per cent of children enrolled in 31 per cent of the primary schools in the 23 districts,

overseen by 17 district-level chapters and guided by a national GEM executive committee. GEM has also been extended to other districts by other organizations, such as FAWE Uganda, bringing the total number of GEM clubs in Uganda to around 1,000 by the end of 2008.

In the medium term, continuing to collect and fine-tune contextualized indicators of improved participation in school and improved well-being for children – in terms of attendance, learning, and physical and psychological status – should speak to potential donors and those considering expanding the programme beyond the target schools and districts.

## **V. FUTURE DIRECTION**

The 2007 GBS roll-out required an unprecedented degree of partnership with other organizations at all levels of the education system that together implemented almost 100 activities in seven districts. The GBS work plan for 2008 included continued engagement with these partnerships to accomplish six priority actions – including keeping existing partnerships active and rolling out GBS in post-conflict districts of western Uganda, with a focus on child protection, while at the same time advocating for the establishment of ECD centres near primary schools.

In areas where internally displaced persons are returning, rehabilitating primary schools according to Government of Uganda guidelines, particularly gender- and disability-friendly facilities and access to safe water and sanitation, will be most welcome. Supporting GEM and UNGEI to help reduce disparities and empower children should be imperative. In hard-to-reach areas of Karamoja, child-to-child approaches and community monitoring mechanisms, among other activities, will be used to sustain results.

Strategic support to the development of rights-based policy and legislation – including enforcement regulations for compulsory education; finalization of the School Health and Gender in Education Policies; development of guidelines for safe and healthy schools; and advocacy for early childhood development in line with the Government's Education Sector Strategic Plan policy and guidelines – should be reviewed periodically. Future national development planning, particularly for disadvantaged children, will be informed by support for the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop a mechanism for tracking children from P1–P7; establishing and enforcing guidelines for the certification of safe and healthy schools and Primary Teachers Colleges, including standards of violence-free learning environments; and a simulation model that will be used to estimate the cost per child of delivering child-friendly education.

Overall, the priority actions for TRACE in 2008 incorporated support for an aggressive campaign to enrol all 6-year-olds in P1. As a strategy for P1 enrolment, the campaign should be provided with technical support for policy initiatives in ECD centres established and led by the community. Education quality should be improved through support for teachers' preparation and provision of quality learning materials. Equally, to increase retention and completion, the quality of the learning environment should be promoted, and sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools improved, through high-standard

rehabilitation of school facilities, especially in areas of IDP return. Furthermore, the quality of the learning environment for teachers should be improved, and the quality of accommodations for teachers in hard-to-reach areas should be examined, in an effort to improve teacher retention and reduce absenteeism (UNICEF Uganda 2008 #1573).

In general, UNICEF appears to be ready to continue moving ahead on all dimensions of the CFS concept, even when not using CFS terminology. To date, UNICEF staff say that the public and the Ministry of Education and Sports have shown most appreciation for the health and sanitation dimension. They hope that work during coming years might foster more appreciation for the effective learning and rights-based education dimensions.

In the medium term, Uganda's education system will be strained by continued rapid growth in the school-age population, HIV/AIDS prevalence rates hovering around 7 per cent, and the need to resettle millions of internally displaced people and rebuild villages in conflict-affected areas.

The population of school-age children, 6–18 years old, is generally increasing over the projection period. The primary-school-age population, 6–12 years old, is expected to increase from an estimated 6.3 million in 2007 to approximately 8.9 million in 2017. And the size of the secondary-school-age population, 13–19 years old, will increase from an estimated 4.7 million in 2007 to approximately 6.6 million in 2017 (Republic of Uganda, Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2007). This population growth will put extreme strain on the education system and calls for more attention to budgeting for and implementing the CFS-related policies reflected in the national policies listed in Table 2.

**Table 1: Illustrative CFS Activities in Uganda, 2003–2007**

Country programme focus: Acholi and Lango sub-regions; Karamoja, Teso and western regions

| Child-Friendly Basic Education and Learning Programme (CFBEL), 2001–2005; 15 districts   |   |   | The Right of All Children to Basic Education (TRACE), 2006–2010; 23 districts  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| 2003   | 2004  | 2005  | 2006   | 2007  |
| <b>Primary school gross enrolment (% girls)</b>  |   |   |  |   |
| 1.8 million (47.3%)  |   | 1.8 million (47.8%)   |  | 1.9 million (48.3%)   |
| <p><b>Inclusive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operationalized strategies and actions that support a 'costed' framework for disadvantaged girls and boys.</li> </ul> <p><b>Effective for learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) in two languages, Runyankore/ Rukiga and Runyoro/ Rutooro, in three districts.</li> <li>Developed and provided a 'child-friendly space package' and materials for psychosocial development for districts in conflict and post-conflict situations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender sensitive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported training GEM members in clubs and chapters in micro-planning, school mapping, clubs and young people's participation as well as empowering development activities.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Effective for learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scaling up BTL methodology in 340 schools (162 in the central region; 158 in the west; and 20 in the north, Nebbi District only) to increase proficiency in reading and writing among learners.</li> <li>Development of 'Teachers' Resource Book' for integrated psychosocial life skills education, targeting teachers in conflict- and disaster-affected areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender sensitive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of understanding of the special needs of girls through training to head teachers, senior women and men teachers; a total of 536 male and 456 female teachers and senior staff were trained.</li> <li>Skills building among GEM members for acceleration of the gender parity goal in education, and provision of required monitoring support for this</li> </ul> | <p><b>Early childhood development (ECD)</b></p> <p><b>Effective for learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum support materials for ECD produced for printing.</li> <li>Selection and training of ECD caregivers and multi-sectoral facilitators supported.</li> </ul> <p><b>Participatory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilization and sensitization of stakeholders in selected districts supported.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supportive policy environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Framework for ECD finalized and approved by relevant government institution and process of translation into local languages initiated.</li> <li>ECD policy development process to include buy-in from relevant line ministries supported.</li> <li>National ECD Guidelines finalized and adapted to conflict</li> </ul> | <p><b>Early learning and stimulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure development: well-ventilated, permanent buildings, tanks to harvest rainwater, hand-washing facilities, playgrounds, latrines</li> <li>Curriculum and materials development in 16 local languages.</li> <li>Caregivers and facilitators trained.</li> <li>ECD multi-sectoral teams established at district level and school management committees covering 46% of ECD centres.</li> </ul> <p><b>Primary education</b></p> <p><b>Quality and completion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CFS infrastructure improvement included construction or rehabilitation and furnishing of classrooms, latrines and safe water facilities.</li> <li>BTL in all conflict-affected districts and Karamoja mainstreamed</li> </ul> | <p><b>Early learning and stimulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of 7 community-based ECD centres by Northern Uganda Social Action Fund.</li> <li>Resource materials in local languages distributed.</li> <li>Caregivers and facilitators trained.</li> <li>Support for training and community mobilization, including materials and equipment, monitoring, supervision and data management.</li> <li>National ECD policy approved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Primary education</b></p> <p><b>Quality and completion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GBS campaign launched and promoted with sports, games and the arts as retention strategies.</li> <li>3,966 teachers trained in child-centred methods, including BTL.</li> <li>20 teachers' houses constructed to reduce</li> </ul> |























