Draft Report on the Study on Alternative Delivery Models for Primary Schooling and Primary Teacher Training for Karamoja Region

By

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ACRYNOMNS

ABEK  Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
ADRA  Adventist Development Relief Agency
AIDS  Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BPR   Book Pupil Ratio
CBOs  Community Based Organisations
CCT   Center Coordinating Tutors
DHS   Director of Health Services
ECD   Early Childhood Development
EPD   Education Planning Department
FAO   Food and Agricultural Organisation
FAWE  Forum for African Women Educationalists
FENU  Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda
FGM   Female Genital Mutilation
GEM   Girls Education Movement
HIV   Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGA   Income Generating Activities
IRC   International Red Cross
MDG   Millennium Development Goal
MoES  Ministry of Education and Sports
NAADS National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGO   Non Governmental Organizations
PED   Primary Education Department
PTC   Primary Teachers’ Colleges
QEI   Education Quality Enhancement
SCU   Save the Children Uganda
SNE   Special Needs Education
SWAP  Sector - Wide Approach
UNDP  United Nations Development Program
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
WFP   World Food Program
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The cumulative improvements in the educational performance indicators in nearly the rest of Uganda excepting Karamoja sub-region that followed the launch of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in 1997 has renewed interest in the search for a more Karamoja-specific education delivery model. There is heightened awareness that, the peculiarities of Karamoja call for equally unique educational strategies.

This follow-up study was executed on the request of the MoES in partnership with UNICEF, to gauge the performance of both the traditional and relatively newer alternative approaches to the delivery of primary education and teacher development within the context of the social, economic, cultural, ecological, demographic and political limitations of the Karamoja environment. It therefore involved profiling the challenges encountered thus far and using a trans-disciplinary approach to explore opportunities for developing modified, more cost-effective delivery modalities.

The investigation relied on a multi-track data collection strategy involving interviews and discussions with the communities in Karamoja, first-hand multi-stakeholder assessments; critical perusal of related literature, official records, research reports as well as education statistical abstracts to generate trend information which was used as a basis for charting out the way forward for Karamoja’s education sector. The sequence of analysis started with critical perusal of the mass of descriptive statistics/information obtained. This was subsequently followed by use of axial coding techniques to establish relationships, categories and to draw generalizations.

Notwithstanding the modest improvements in ABEK, primary schooling and primary teacher training, the “Karamoja Syndrome” (an euphemism for the ecological, political, social, cultural, economic and demographic barriers to sustainable educational development) is undermining the educational worthiness of these sub-systems. The interface between each of the sub-systems and these barriers is posing diverse challenges. ABEK approach experiences challenges like poor attendance by the children, lack of infrastructure and sanitation facilities, poor quality of facilitators and lack of formal assessment and certification of ABEK completers.

Challenges in formal primary education include; acute shortage of teachers’ housing, inadequate availability of qualified and well motivated teachers associated with restrictive policy for admission to a primary teacher training program, restrictive staff ceilings arrived at after collapsing teacher requirements for both ABEK and primary education, dire shortage of teaching-learning accessories especially for the thematic curriculum, disconnect between the core primary school curriculum content and issues of immediate and long term concern to the Karamojong people, debilitating impact of the “Karamoja Syndrome” self-perpetuating forces of drought, famine, insecurity, environmental degradation and floods on school-based education delivery mode, high school dropout rates, low completion and retention rates, poor learning achievement as
reflected in unsatisfactory PLE results, gross abuse of the rights of children, especially the girl-child and compromised child-friendliness of the school environment.

Key challenges for teacher development include failure by the PTCs to attract Karimojong teacher trainees who are expected to be the subsequent deliverers of the thematic curriculum, prioritization by donors of the in-service rather than pre-service teacher training programs, and problematic and inequitable recruitment and deployment of the teaching workforce across the region and between the rural and urban schools

The emerging lessons point to the fact that the Karimojong have understood and embraced education in general, and realized that offering education to their children is beneficial. However, the hostile environment that prevails makes it difficult for them to make any substantial contributions towards their children’s needs. Massive external support is the only option to ensure continuity and sustainability in children’s participation in basic education.

A mix of community-initiated policy suggestions which could help to streamline the dialogue between ABEK, primary and teacher training within the context of Karamoja include construction of infrastructures in ABEK centers and boarding primary schools, develop “outreach” programs using school facilities designed to meet learning needs of those who are out of school and in the informal sector, increased support in kind and from the key development partners such as UNICEF, SCIU, WFP, IRC, ADRA, and others could be solicited to leverage the local and central government funds earmarked for school construction and rehabilitation work, and prioritize a phased building program for boarding primary schools which should gradually roll out from the most severely underserved areas/populations as in Kotido and Kaabong districts to the more moderately less privileged places.

There is need for government to develop location-specific and needs-based resource allocation formula to bring about greater equity in Karamoja along regional, gender and socio-economic divides. The following “ground-leveling” public funding proposals could be considered. First, create low cost boarding primary schools by introducing a pro-poor public financing modality that would enable all the newly constructed boarding primary schools in Karamoja to become fee-free or fee limited establishments, Second, operate a preferential capitation grant system for existing schools serving disadvantaged communities such as those in the remote Lopelipeli area and which charge a fee below a certain stipulated threshold. Third, increase the number of bursaries tenable only at boarding primary schools in Karamoja. Fourth, introduce financial incentives to promote gender parity in education; for example an enhanced capitation grant could be offered for girls once a school attains or exceeds a recommended minimum level of enrolment, and fifthly, introduce an admissions policy to favor pupils and students from Karamoja; and finally, provide sufficient learning materials and equipment to allow effective learning and attract more learners.

Regarding teacher supply and utilization there is need to address the problem of shortage and develop a comprehensive career advancement opportunities that go beyond INSET
for both ABEK facilitators and primary school teachers. Consider adoption of more decentralized mechanisms for hiring of teachers, by granting individual primary schools the authority to independently recruit and deploy teachers. Review modalities for determining teachers’ salaries with a view to developing criteria that link pay to actual productivity rather than qualification of the teacher. Address the bottlenecks arising from low teacher salaries, high rates of teacher attrition and a flat school organizational structure that offers few alternative channels for within school promotion. Constantly provide training for primary school managers (head teachers, PTA and SMCs executives) to keep them updated about the new effective leadership styles which focus on management for results or goal oriented strategic institutional planning, cost-sensitive decision making; and introduce performance related contractual employment norms for institutional managers (head teachers) to target desired outcomes such as improved examination results, more equitable enrolment and more efficient deployment of teaching staff.

Concerning curriculum improvement, multiple interventions could be undertaken to revamp the quality of ABEK, primary and teacher training and they should comprise of the following: Emphasis should be on shifting away from academically to a more outcomes based, competency orientated curriculum. Permit and encourage the introduction of some practical subjects and prevocational studies in the ABEK and primary school curriculum where there is local demand as well as school and community level support. Consider defining attainment targets for each subject at different levels and using them as benchmarks to reshape examinations, curricula and teaching methods. Undertake curriculum review that goes beyond mere reorganization of the old subject content to include a rigorous realignment of the curriculum to match new learners’ aspirations and capabilities, and the challenges of changing climate, with increasing needs for generic, transferable/portable knowledge, skills and abstract thinking capabilities.

Above all, there is need for a coherent policy approach to address the threats posed by easy access to small arms and light weapons; joint disarmament efforts; cross-border natural resources management and conservation; land use policies; development funding and regional cooperation. A concerted effort is also needed to address the impact of climate change in pastoralist areas which has worsened resource-based conflicts and droughts that have decimated livestock and increased “environmental refugees”.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The dynamics behind the Karamoja education problem have a very broad and complex context that has to be carefully internalized for proper corrective action. This study gives a fairly extensive contextual diagnosis of the Karamoja environment as a basis for understanding the prospects, challenges and constraints faced by its education sector. It also derives a mix of feasible interventions for education provision in the region.

BACKGROUND

The Karamoja region covers more than 27,000 kilometres of arid expanse of savannah, rugged mountains, plains, swamps and river valleys. The region experiences a harsh climate with one rainy season annually, desert winds and hot dry season. Drought has become more frequent and severe. Altogether, the region’s current fast-growing population stands at 1.1 million (Uganda’s is the third-fastest growing population in the world, nationally averaged at 3.2% compared to the sub-saharan average of 2.4%). It is composed of five districts namely Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit. The towns have a slight degree of population density. The pastoral life as well as scanty water/rain keeps the population nomadic.

The region is mostly a semi-arid plain with harsh climate and low annual rainfall averaging 500-700 mm. But in contrast to purely pastoralist areas in the region, like the neighboring Turkana, Karamoja is an agro-pastoralist area. Although the rainy season normally begins in in April and continues until September/October, the natural environment is subject to variations which are scarcely predictable. This year, planting has been significantly delayed and, in many areas, drastically reduced. The extended dryness is placing pressure on water availability in parts of the region, with reported average distance to a water source for livestock at 4 kilometers (Chelimo, 2007).

In general, the vegetation is characterized by thorny bushes, cammiphora woodland, occasional small trees and patches of grassland. There has been widespread environmental destruction in recent times, mainly deforestation and overgrazing.

A chronically food-insecure region, Karamoja has been affected by 3 consecutive years of successive shocks, including a severe drought in 2006, a combination of extended dry spell, late rains and flooding in 2007, and currently another extended dry spell with late arriving rains only in some parts of the region (OPM, 2008).
The demographic context

The region is a multi-tribal habitat with the Karimojong being the majority polity. The Karimojong cluster is part of a large group of African peoples called the Nilo-Hamites or the plains Nilotes who originally came from the North East Ethiopia – probably the Kaffa region. They consist of the Dodoth, Jie, Karimojong (who are themselves sub-divided into the smaller Bokora, Matheniko, Pian e.t.c. clan groupings), Labwor, Tepeth, Pokot, Teso, Turkana, Nyakwai, Nyangatom and Toposa. All these people are now scattered over North East Uganda, North West Kenya and adjacent parts of Sudan. They share with the Karimojong common characteristics, including a common language (Sifuna, 2005).

There are also mountain dwellers within Karamoja who include the Tepeth or So to the south, the Ik or Teuso to the north east and the Nyangeya to the North West. These are remnants of a population pre-dating the incoming Nilo-hamites. These minority tribes are essentially sedentary agriculturalists, with a liking for hunting and fruit-gathering as well as clay and iron working.

The socio-cultural setting

Cattle are, in symbol and in reality, the life of the Karimojong. For the Karimojong therefore, the greatest problem which needs to be solved is to survive on cattle. The customs and aspirations of the Karimojong are shaped by this reality and they identify with their way of life as pastoralists or cattle keepers.

Typical of pastoral people, the Karimojong have immeasurable pride in their traditional way of life and many remain resistant to change. Little is known and much is misunderstood about the Karimojong herdsmen. Their livelihood is essentially cattle keeping, raiding, rustling, protection and small arms trade, which has kept them unstable and less developed. While the men are nomadic warriors the women stay at one central settlement, the manyatta or ere to look after small farms and children. They traditionally have a relatively democratic society based on a patriarchial age – set system led by warriors, the ngigetei, and elders, the ngimoru. Life is communal; families live together or next to each other and participate in every activity.

The Karimojong jealously maintain a distinct cultural identity from the other tribal groups or forces they come into contact with. Such a relationship could be either amicable or even hostile. There are those who can be regarded by the Karimojong polity to be “half brothers” (ngikaipapai); or termed as “foreigners” or “enemies” (ngimoi) and others generally regarded as “government” (ngiserikaali or arien).

Most of the population remains in homesteads protected by heavy circular fences of stakes. A husband and his wife or wives, their sons and their wives or a set of brothers inhabit each homestead. Clans are reckoned by patrilineal descent: wives join their husbands’ clans. Society is structured along an age set system that cuts across kin and residence affiliations (Knaute, 2008).
Traditionally, authority and decision making powers in Karimojong society lay with the council of elders who wield political, spiritual and other powers. Elderhood status is respected almost to the point of reverence. Each age-set has a specifically assigned role. For example elders and warriors have different traditional mandates (OXFAM, 2008).

In the same way, the relevance of Karimojong scheme of social values lies in its emphasis on cattle as the principal good and cattle possession as the most desirable state. Thus, historically, a cattle raiding was motivated by a desire to enhance one’s socio-economic status, gain territorial control of grazing areas, and to increase the size of one’s herd as an assurance against unforeseen calamities such as drought, famine and cattle epidemics. In recent times, however, cattle raids and conflict among pastoralists have taken on a new dimension with the introduction of modern automatic weapons and the commercialization of cattle rustling (Kegan, 2009).

Today, the Karimojong comprise a population fractured by protracted inter-clan conflicts over cattle, pasture and access to resources. It suffers significantly higher levels of small arms violence than any other region of Uganda. With a small arms death rate approaching 60 per 100,000 of the population, Karamoja is one of the world’s most violence-affected regions (Yeung, 2005).

The health status
Karamoja region has such poor health indicators that, up to 100 children younger than 5 (five) die each week of mainly preventable illnesses. The minister of Health Mr. Stephen Malinga remarked during the launch of a child health campaign in the region thus: “Karamoja faces development challenges that put it in a different sphere from the rest of Uganda. The situation is alarming and health indicators are beyond emergency levels. For example, maternal mortality in Karamoja stands at 750 per 100,000 live births – 50% higher than Uganda’s national average” (IRIN, 2008).

The then Head of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Uganda Keith Mckenzie, also corroborated this when he said: “only 3.4% of households in Karamoja have two insecticide-treated bed nets and 5.9% have one, yet the regional target is 60% of the households with two net. The region was therefore off-track in meeting health and nutrition-related MDGs…… Karamoja is the worst place to be a child, with highly elevated levels of early childhood mortality and morbidity…..Health indicators are the worst in the country, decidedly worse than in the LRA affected northern districts and the rest of the country” (IRIN, 2008).

The Ugandan and UN officials attributed the poor health indicators to extremely low access and utilization of basic health services – averaging 24%, compared with the national rate of 72%. The situation is compounded by lack of awareness among local communities.

The economy
Karamoja has the worst socio-economic indicators in Uganda. The region has been under constant food aid since the famine of the early eighties, and it has lagged behind in terms
of health, education and infrastructure development. Life expectancy is estimated to be 42 years, whereas it is about 52 years in Uganda (Akabwai, 2007). The reasons for this extreme poverty are multilayered and interconnected.

The main livelihood activity of the Karimojong is herding livestock, which has social and cultural importance. Crop cultivation is a secondary activity undertaken only in areas where it is practicable. Due to arid climate of the region, the Karimojong have always practiced a sort of pastoral “transhumance”, where for 3-4 months in a year, they move their livestock to the neighboring districts in search of water and pasture for their animals (Sifuna, 2005). This seasonal mobility of the Karimojong and their animals impacts on the Karimojong’s interaction with other ethnic groups.

The 2008 National Livestock Census results shows that, out of 11.4 million cattle in Uganda, 2.3 million or 20% are in Karamoja region; 960 of the 1,590 horses or 60% are found in the region; 32,030 out of 32,870 (i.e. 98%) camels in the country are housed in Karamoja; 1.69 million of the 3.4 million or about 50% of the sheep that the country has are in Karamoja; and of the 12.5 million goats in Uganda, approximately 2.3 million or 18.4% are in Karamoja (Kaduuli, 2009).

Most Karimojong can be said to be involved in agro-pastoralist economy. This dual economic system revolves around two locations at the same time; the permanent settlement, (the so-called manyatta), where predominantly agricultural production takes place and some animals are kept; and the mobile cattle camp, (the kraal), for pastoral production (OXFAM, 2008; Knaute, 2008).

In addition, Karamoja is a land richly blessed by God. It is a hub of mineral resources that are yet to be optimally exploited. There are about 50 different minerals and precious stones in the Karamoja region. Moroto district alone has gold, silver, copper, iron, titanium, chrome, rare earth, manganese, niobium, tantalite, and radioactive minerals. Gold is found in Matheniko County. The gold belt stretches from the north to south Karamoja along the Upe region. This gold belt has one of the largest deposits in the world with the highest level of purity (Bevan, 2008). Currently, the mining is done on small scale using traditional methods. The gold is panned and this is mainly during the wet season.

Copper fields are situated in Jie county along the Moroto border. Other mineral deposits in Karamoja include mica, green and red gannets, tin, marble, beryl, cuprites, hematite, limestone, talc graphite, columbite, magnetite and zircon.

Furthermore, Karamoja is a home to several key tourist attractions: the wildlife reserves which are habitat to significant variety of game species; mount Moroto with its scenic hanging cliffs, unique montane vegetation, primates and large numbers of various bird species; the unique culture and way of life of the Karimojong including the design of their homesteads (i.e. the manyattas) ; and the emerging crafts/souvenirs industry.
However, the recent history of the semi-nomadic Karimojong economy is marked by misfortune: epizootic diseases have decimated cattle herds, locust plagues and drought has caused crop failures and famine, and epidemics have been common (Karuhanga, 2006).

Taken together, the situation has eroded peoples coping capacity, leaving them locked in a vicious downward spiral of vulnerability, where shock leads to negative coping response (emigration, asset stripping, early marriage, among others), which in turn increases vulnerability to future shocks (i.e. reduced access to basic commodities such as food, healthcare and investments in livelihoods). The summary presentation (in Table 1 below) of the sample human development indicators for Karamoja as contrasted with the nationwide measures is testimony to this assertion.

### Table 1: Comparative sample of human development indicators for Uganda and Karamoja

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative Development Indicators</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Karamoja</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy (UNDP, 2007)</td>
<td>50.4 Years</td>
<td>47.7 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population living below poverty line (OCHA/OPM, 2008)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births, WHO, 2008)</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births, UNICEF/WHO, 2008)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births, UNICEF/WHO, 2008)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global acute malnutrition rate (UNICEF/WHO, 2008)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to sanitation units (OCHA/OPM, 2008)</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to safe water (UDHS, 2006)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate (UNDP, HDR 2006)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (WHO, 2008)</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OPM, 2008*
**Government policy for Karamoja**

Karamoja has remained largely underdeveloped and marginalized from national development policies both during colonial and post colonial times. Despite the reinstatement of the special status on Karamoja by the NRM government in 1987, the real problems of the region have not been clearly understood. Hence the solutions being offered are inappropriate.

Most development projects that have so far been introduced have had two targets: the transformation of pastoralists into peasants and the modernization of pastoralists into ranchers. While the pastoralists insist on mobility (transhumance) as a basic and sustainable pattern of production, the government and NGOs (who are the major external intervention agents in the area) see permanent settlement symbolized in agriculture as the solution to the Karamoja crisis.

Generally, government policies are technical solutions that often conflict with the local realities. For example, access to nearly one fifth of what was formerly grazing agricultural land was denied to the people of Karamoja through the creation by the state of forest reserves, game parks and other restricted areas (buffer zones). Similarly, the early water development schemes proved disastrous as the concentration of cattle led to overgrazing and soil erosion. And since the 1960’s, formal education has been regarded as a tool for transforming the pastoral society. These efforts too have not yielded the desired results.

The truth however is that, under the current technological development levels, pastoralism is destined to remain the most realistic source of survival for many people in Karamoja for some very long time to come (OXFAM, 2008).

The Government of Uganda is committed towards fulfillment of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is commencing a new Country Programme of Cooperation for the 2010-2014 period to support this initiative of Government. The programme\(^1\) education component aims to work within the SWAp to ensure that national budgets and plans prioritise early childhood development; timely enrolment and retention, completion of primary schooling especially for girls; enhance community mobilization and behaviour change of care givers in support of education; and address bottlenecks to affordable education focusing especially on reducing disparities. This will go a long way in ensuring that vulnerable children in the most disadvantaged communities progressively realise their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. This will particularly contribute towards increasing children participation in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and primary schooling among the Karimojong communities. This will also help Uganda meet the Education for All (EFA) and United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

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\(^1\) Draft Country Programme document, 2010 – 2014; E/ICEF/2009/P/L 27
PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the commendable progress made towards the fulfilment of the national and international obligations, the Karamoja region still lags behind the national averages on key indicators of EFA goals. The continued massive investments in the education activities within the Karamoja by both government and non-government actors have not resulted in commensurate improvement of the situation. The current status of education service delivery in the sub-region is characterized by:

i. Low levels of primary school enrolment, survival and completion and transition, especially girls. For example, while the national Net Enrolment Rate is estimated at 90%, the sub-regional average is about 34%. Similarly, the completion rate is at a low 17.84% (6.41% for girls, and 11.84% for boys). The retention rate in Moroto district is approximately 16% (12% for girls, and 19% for boys). This means that, out of the less than 40% of school-age children who enrol in school, 84% dropout. The Net Intake Rate also currently stands at a dismal 30% (31% for girls, and 29% for boys) vis-à-vis the national figure of 59%. The situation is further compounded by the low attendance rates, estimated at between 50-70%. And 91.7% of the children in Karamoja aged 3-17 have no access to information (i.e. radio, TV, phone, internet) as opposed to the national average of 46% (Kariuki, 2007) overwhelming preference by parents to keep children at home to do housework and look after animals

ii. Teacher attrition is particularly a serious problem in Karamoja. Teacher deployment is not only inadequate but also uneven across the different districts, rural/urban and subject areas. The number of male teachers nearly triples that of female teachers (MoES/UNICEF, 2009). This denies the girl child of the requisite role model image. Women teachers also understand the linkages between the girl-child’s physiological needs and participation in school processes including lesson uptake.

iii. Shortage of teachers who can speak the local language thus making it difficult to teach in the mother tongue. The children cannot easily benefit from the policy of thematic curriculum; and

iv. Moreover, the continuity of the curriculum experiences between ABEK initiative and primary school gets compromised as a pupil progresses from the more informal and integrated learning package offered under ABEK to the rigidly subject-compartmentalized primary school curriculum. Such a disjunction or disconnect encourages early drop out from school.

In light of the scenario articulated above there is justification for continued search for the most suitable type of education for Karamoja. The MoES in collaboration with UNICEF recommended the execution of this study so as to review the current primary schooling delivery models to establish gaps and recommend the most suitable models.
THE RATIONALE
In 1948, education was agreed by the United Nations to be a fundamental human right (UN-DHR, 1948). This is a right that, across the globe, and despite decades of effort, remains unrealized for many people. This global failure provides a continuing stimulus to review past progress and future prospects in making this right a reality for everyone. At present, international attention is closely focused on the pending deadline of achieving the second Millennium Development Goal (UN-MDG, 2001) for education by 2015. As progress is made in attracting children to school, it is becoming increasingly clear that nomadic groups (Karimojong inclusive) challenge the likelihood of success in achieving this goal.

While the MoES in concert with NGOs and other actors in Karamoja’s education have massively invested in the sector, the contribution of its constituent sub-systems (ABEK, primary and teacher training) to equitable access to quality education in the sub-region has hitherto not been independently audited to:

(i) Have an inventory of the impact of each sub-system on the education service delivery thus far;
(ii) Ascertain the prospects for improving their educational worthiness and for rolling out such improvements to all areas within the sub-region and beyond;
(iii) Generate baseline data for projecting future requirements; and
(iv) Sift out its good practices which could be fed into future educational reform programs for the region and upgrade its cost effectiveness by identifying its priority areas as well as better ways of harmonizing and boosting the efficiency of the administrative structures and programme activities.

The findings of this evaluation are therefore meant to close such knowledge deficits and provide a platform for challenging old assumptions, and inspiring the formulation and adoption of a more tailor-made, Karamoja-specific response.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
The logic that drives the essence of this report derives from recognition of the relevance of crafting an education service delivery modality in Karamoja against the backdrop of the so-called “Karamoja Syndrome”. A Syndrome Approach to systems research was developed in 1993 by the German Advisory Council on Global Change. It essentially traces the genesis of the development predicament facing nomadic pastoralists to a network of interwoven and self-perpetuating economic, social, ecological, cultural, demographic and political factors that keep a nomadic pastoralist society, such as the Karimojong, permanently trapped in a vicious circle of deprivation (see Figure 1).

Overall, the basic structural features of the Karamoja Syndrome reveal a complex cycle of unsustainable development whereby ecological degradation (ultimately leading to desertification) on the one hand, and destitution of social institutions – including schools – and aggravation of raids and conflicts on the other hand, reinforce each other via the deterioration of livelihoods and the reinforcement of unsustainable livelihood mixes such as inappropriate agricultural practices, loss of pastoral mobility resulting into overgrazing
and a resort to alternative livelihood modes (such as firewood selling) with devastating environmental consequences. These mutually-reinforcing forces also have serious but differential knock-on effects on the performance various education delivery modalities (See Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1: The interface between the Karamoja Syndrome and the different education delivery modes**

The intertwined nature of the relationship between the different elements of the Karamoja Syndrome implies that, a piecemeal approach to the development problems of a nomadic pastoral community cannot work. The solution to the education problems of Karamoja therefore needs to be located in the context of the more global Karamoja Syndrome perspective.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary thrust of the study was to carry out a problem structuring of the current mode of primary schooling and primary teacher training in the Karamoja region in order to recommend appropriate approaches to fulfilling the right to quality education.

The specific objectives of the work assignment were as follows:

a) To establish the extent of contribution to realizing the right to quality education by the current traditional and alternative delivery modes of education applied in Karamoja;

b) To examine social, economic and cultural barriers to education in the region;

c) To examine teacher availability in each of the Karamoja districts and provide insights on how to increase the number and quality of teachers in these districts considering factors relating to training, recruitment, retention and structural issues. It will also be necessary to ascertain the percentage number of teachers who are Karimojong since this has a direct bearing on teacher-pupil communication/rapport and lesson uptake.

d) Identify strategies for teacher training, recruitment and retention with a gender balance in all schools including those operating in rural and remote areas.

e) Make recommendations for appropriate education delivery models including, where necessary mobile schools, “catch up” or remedial informal education and boarding school delivery.

SAMPLE

The sample design was partly random and partly purposive to target all categories of respondents with a stake in the development of Karamoja and especially the provision of education to all children in the region. Respondents were selected from Kampala and the Karamoja region.

The information tapped focused on issues of policy, regulation, technical support and quality. This, in turn, provided the basis for determining the health linkages between appropriate primary schooling models for Karimojong society and conventionally structured formal education.

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2 Refer to the Terms of Reference in Annex
The Sub Counties that were sampled are indicated in the table below.

### Table 2: Sample of the participating sub-counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Sub County</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ethnic grouping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abim</td>
<td>Morulem</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>Thur – sedentary, agro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaabong</td>
<td>Kalapata</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>Ik – sedentary, hunters and gatherers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaabong</td>
<td>Peri urban</td>
<td>Dodoth – semi – nomadic, pastoralists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotido</td>
<td>Nakapelimoru</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>Jie – semi nomadic, pastoralists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroto</td>
<td>Ngoleriet</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nadunget</td>
<td>Peri urban</td>
<td>Matheniko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakapirpirit</td>
<td>Lorengdwat</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>Bokora</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: Field-based**

In each sub county;

a) two formal education primary schools and two ABEK centres; one performing well and one poorly in enrolment, retention and completion, to meet teachers and learners.

b) one focus group of the community including elders, political leaders, heads of homesteads, women, youth, children, CBOs, farmers and security teams.

These were the most informative respondents to the study as regards:

i. Status and factors at play in the social economic dynamics like internal insecurity;

ii. Cultural set up and dynamics of the pastoral community;

iii. Pastoral and nomadic livelihoods and their conflicts and negation towards modernity in general and education in particular; and

iv. Suggestions for primary education delivery and curriculum reforms for acceptance and popularity amongst pastoral and nomadic societies.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study was amenable to the application of a survey research design employing a dual data collection approach involving:

a) A focused intensive literature search in the relevant documents especially MoE studies, and resourceful educational internet sites were used to provide secondary data for the study review process; and
b) Direct field-based sourcing of primary data using semi-structured interview schedules for the relevant MoES officials (particularly in EPD, PED and SNE Departments), representatives of EDP, as well as the staff in the planning, works, production, water, community development and education departments of the study districts (Kotido, Kaabong, Abim, Moroto and Nakapiripirit). Semi-structured questionnaires were also administered to some frontline officials including head teachers/principals, teachers, ABEK facilitators and coordinators and members of the School Management Committees (SMCs). Additional information was tapped through focused group discussions in the ABEK/ECD centers, community leaders and elders, parents, women and youth. The list of respondents is in annex ….. Lesson observation was applied to gauge the effectiveness of teaching-learning process in a classroom setting. Non-participant observation was employed for cross-referencing purposes.

DATA ANALYSIS

The information captured was subjected to the content analysis and variable comparative data processing methods, whereby discrete pieces of data was compared using the uni-variant, bi-variant and multi-variant data analysis to generate logical categorical patterns. The main thrust of the data analysis was directed towards appraising the efficacy of ABEK, primary education and primary teacher training in Karamoja in terms of their:

(i) Rights-based focus;
(ii) Gender sensitivity;
(iii) Equality and equity;
(iv) Sustainability;
(v) Responsiveness to popularity, ownership and acceptance;
(vi) Quality and efficiency enhancement; and
(vii)Compatibility of education with the economic, physical, political and socio-cultural realities of Karamoja with other related developmental program actors operating in the sub-region.

This together with the extension of the analysis to include a preliminary audit of the program impacts on resource supplies/availabilities; primary school access/enrolment, attendance, drop outs, repetition, completion, and testing of the quality and efficiency indicators constituted Level One analysis. Level Two analysis focused on the use of the results from level one analysis to chart out a more Karamoja-friendly education delivery modality.

This analytical framework is still being revisited and modified as and when deemed necessary during the data analysis.

Qualitative and quantitative data was appropriately coded, checked and captured using the following packages: MS ACCESS, MS EXCEL and EPIINFO 2000 and the cleaned data was statistically processed using the EPIINFO 2000 software to generate analysed information that was used for presentation and discussion of findings in the Tabular, Pictorial and Graphical information.
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

CURRENT STATUS OF EDUCATION IN KARAMOJA REGION

The data tabulated above depicts Kaabong district as the worst performing district of Karamoja region with the highest PTR, lowest NER. Most Karimojong children do not go to school; instead they live the pastoralist life. But traditions are changing in the sub-region, being seen as Uganda’s wild land. In the 1940’s, elders in the Jie county famously buried a pen to symbolize their disdain for education and modernity. The pen had been used by colonial officers to take down the names of local sons who went to fight for the British army in the Second World War. Schools were seen as agents for this alien life. By the 1990’s, the Jie had realized the folly of this decision as they were being left behind. Local folklore had it that, children who went to school were dying because of the curse of the pen and so a counter decision was made to have a public exhumation as a cleansing gesture (Krättli, 2001; Carr-Hill and Peart, 2005; Dyer, 2006a and 2006b).

Increasingly, children are being taught under trees and at suitable hours of the day by community tutors working for ABEK. The Save the Children International, Uganda (SCIU) scheme makes education relevant to the pastoralist lifestyle: basic animal husbandry, health and sanitation rather than geography, physics and foreign languages. Igune George William, the Inspector of schools, Moroto, commends ABEK for changing community and children’s attitudes to favour formal schooling.
Kalotom primary school in Moroto District

Despite this turn around, primary school attendance is still low across Karamoja – 30% in Moroto and Kotido, and 40% in Nakapiripirit, against 83% nationwide. Those who do go to school tend to start late and leave early. Just 2% of children in Kotido, the northern most district in the region make it to secondary school, compared with a national average of 21% (Dyer, 2006). Girls are largely confined to the manyatta learning to keep house and boys learn to raid cattle. As the saying goes, “educated men have no cows”. And in Karamoja, cows are all. However, Arukol Paul, himself a teacher in Lokodiokodioi Primary school in Ngoleriet sub-county sees education as the key to long-term stability in the region. He said: “the problem with the people here is primitivity. In the evening I walk around my village and speak to the parents about the importance of sending children to school, but they are adamant……..Even the few who choose to send children to school do so because of the food supplied by WFP in schools. The parents make sure their daughters in upper primary attend the bare minimum required to qualify for the take home food package….And when there is no food from WFP, they just do not come to school”.

Kamion primary school in Kaabong district

At the moment, just over 30% of teachers in Karamoja are from the region because local students cannot get the grades necessary to qualify for teacher training college (IRIN, 2006). Lomongin Agnes, the principal of Moroto core PTC wants to see affirmative action allowing Karimojong with lower grades entry to a PTC. Similarly, Losike Florence, a non-formal teacher at Naguleangolol ABEK center D wants subjects relevant to the pastoralists to be examinable and nationally recognized. She also thinks the
solution to the educational predicament in Karamoja lies in making boarding schools compulsory for children in upper primary (P5-P7) “………so that we can catch them before they grow up into cattle raiding or marriage. The head teacher of Kalotom Primary School observed that “one way of boosting education appeal is to ensure there are jobs at the end of it”.

**Cultural, Social, Economic, Demographic and Geographical Barriers to Education in Karamoja**

**In-School factors**

These are the factors that relate to the inadequacies of “education software”. They include the following:

*Predominance of males in the teaching workforce:* In all the schools visited by the research team, the number of male teachers invariably exceeded that of their female counterparts. In several of them, including Moruita primary school in Nakapiripirit district, there was not even a single female teacher. The centrality of female teachers for the effective delivery of the equity and education quality enhancement (QE) agenda is not in doubt. Apart from the role model image that they offer the girl-child, female teachers help to create a more girl-child-friendly school environment through better understanding of the physiological changes and needs of the girl-child, and reduction of the “defiler” image now associated with some male teachers (Kasente, 2003). Although there is a slight narrowing of the gender gap between the number of male and female teachers in Karamoja region, women teachers are still grossly underrepresented. This compromises the role model image which the female teachers offer to the girl-child gets compromised. The low percentage of female teachers is in striking contrast with the near achievement of gender parity in primary school enrolments. For example, the Gender Parity Index (ratio of girls to boys) in Moroto district in 2009 was 0.789, while in Nakapiripirit district the GPI is greater than unity (1.149) meaning that, girls enrolment in primary exceeds that of the boys.

There is the overall difficulty of getting adequate number of qualified Karimojong teachers to handle the thematic curriculum in harsh and remote rural areas. The few well trained teachers often go somewhere else or leave to take up better paying jobs at the earliest opportunity (DIS, Nakapiripirit). When challenged to propose strategies of overcoming the problem of shortage and inequitable distribution of teachers, the following remedial measures were tabled by teachers:

1. Introduce significant salary differentials between the different categories of primary school teachers (Grade III, Grade V, and Graduate teachers) to stem the high rate of teacher turnover in primary and encourage more teachers from Karamoja to pursue higher education and training;
2. Develop comprehensive career advancement opportunities that go beyond INSET for both ABEK facilitators and primary school teachers;
3. Decide on teacher recruitment and deployment modalities for both ABEK facilitators and primary school teachers to meet school-specific demands.
equitably. More decentralized mechanisms for hiring of teachers would be preferable. Granting individual primary schools the authority to independently recruit and deploy teachers could also be considered;

iv. Review modalities for determining teachers’ salaries with a view to developing criteria that link pay to actual productivity rather than qualification of the teacher; and

v. Address the bottlenecks arising from low teacher salaries, high rates of teacher attrition and a flat school organizational structure that offers few alternative channels for within school promotion.

vi. Constantly provide training for primary school managers (head teachers, PTA and SMCs executives) to keep them updated about the new effective leadership styles which focus on management for results or goal oriented strategic institutional planning, cost-sensitive decision making;

vii. Introduce performance related contractual employment norms for primary school head teachers to target desired outcomes such as improved examination results, more equitable enrolment, more efficient deployment of teaching staff, e.t.c;

Shortage of infrastructure facilities: Access to formal schooling can be augmented partly by expanding the physical capacity of the school system. Yet the building and maintenance of school structures in harsh and remote rural areas such as Karamoja is costly (Kariuki, 2007).

Moreover, the sheer increase in enrolment and the number of teachers as an aftermath of the declaration and implementation of UPE program demands for large investments in infrastructure. The lack of an adequate geographical spread of schools close to homes often means that children have to walk long distances to school. DHS EdData for 2001 indicates that the mean walking time to school was approximately 35 minutes in a Karamoja type of setting and 14 minutes in urban areas. About 32% of the children in Karamoja have to walk for more than one hour before they arrive at school (OPM, 2008).

Shortage of classroom space results in overcrowded classes and poor quality teaching and learning methods (Winkler, Donald, 2007). Besides these basic academic facilities, the lack of sanitary facilities particularly affects girls’ participation. Girls are more comfortable in schools where separate toilets are available and suitably located particularly for their privacy during menstruation (Katahoire, 2004).

During the focus group discussions, the head teachers and teachers felt that, given the resource limitations, it is important to:

  a) Agree on effective procurement systems to support school construction drawing on the lessons from the Primary School Facilitation Grant (SFG). Contributions in kind and other resources could be used to leverage the funds earmarked by local and central governments for school construction and rehabilitation work;

  b) Prioritize a phased building program which should gradually roll out from the most severely underserved areas/populations to the more moderately less privileged regions; and
c) Develop a prioritized list of school buildings to be constructed which factors in their contribution to the planned educational outcomes and hence distinguishes between the “core” (classrooms, teachers’ houses, stores) and “non-core” (recreation hall, dining hall) school buildings. Where a choice has to be made because of limited resource envelope, the core take precedence over the non-core.

**Lack of teaching and learning materials:** One of the pre-conditions for the fulfillment of the commitment to strengthening children’s equitable access to quality education is the availability of the core education “software” including qualified and well motivated teachers and textbooks. Despite some improvements, the Book Pupil Ratios (BPRs) for the four main subjects in primary remain at a low 6:1 in Karamoja. This limits the activities a teacher can engage pupils in. The overall effect is the use of teacher-centered methods instead of a child-centered approach (ADEA, 2008). Although learning achievement seems to be slightly improving, the quality of education, as reflected in PLE performance results remains low in Karamoja.

For over a decade now, less than 6% of the total number of PLE candidates in Karamoja ever manage to pass in Division I. And the performance results are heavily skewed against girls. For example, out of the 16 candidates of 2008 who scored Division I in Moroto district, only 2 or 13% are girls.

**Inappropriate school curriculum:** Efforts to enhance the school completion rates and learning achievement among the Karamojong children are rendered ineffectual by a curriculum that appears largely irrelevant to both immediate and future needs of students and society. It is highly theoretical with limited opportunity to conduct hands-on experiments in science; empowering the learners with the life skills to deal with issues in society such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, insecurity and gender concerns. The curriculum underplays the local realities such as agricultural productivity, animal diseases, tropical diseases, clean water supply, et.c. Guidance and counseling are weak aspects of the school curriculum especially in the context of overcrowded schools.

According to the sample opinions of the non-formal education teachers and the primary teachers interviewed (see Annex….), multiple interventions could be undertaken to revamp the quality of ABEK, primary and teacher training and they should comprise of the following:

I. Since evidence from the SACMEQ data and examination results confirms primary school products and new entrants to post primary are deficient in literacy in English (the major medium of instruction), numeracy (Mathematics) and have only rudimentary grasp of scientific and technological skills, it would be prudent for the teacher training curriculum to focus more on the acquisition and mastery of these infrastructure skills. Emphasis should be on shifting away from academically to a more outcomes based, competency orientated curriculum;

II. Permit and encourage the introduction of some practical subjects and prevocational studies in the ABEK and primary school curriculum where there is local demand as well as school and community level support;
III. Consider defining attainment targets for each subject at different levels and using them as benchmarks to reshape examinations, curricula and teaching methods;

IV. Undertake curriculum review that goes beyond mere reorganization of the old subject content to include a rigorous realignment of the curriculum to match new learners’ aspirations and capabilities, and the challenges of changing climate, with increasing needs for generic, transferable/portable knowledge, skills and abstract thinking capabilities;

V. ABEK and Primary curricula ought to be integral parts of a continuum which allows for continuity of learning based on the principle of “incremental learning”. The curricula should therefore be seamless and sufficiently dovetailed to facilitate progression from one educational level to the other; and

VI. Cost the implications of curriculum reform to verify the financial feasibility of the proposed changes and agree on a manageable reform package.

**Hostile school climate:** One of the key pillars of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP: 2004-2015) is directed towards the creation of a child friendly school setting. Sexual harassment of girls by boys and male teachers is among the commonest “pollutants” of the school environment. This results in dropout of girls and in some cases pregnancy. In addition, corporal punishment and bullying, although prohibited under the Children’s Act, persists in schools. Corporal punishment causes fear among children and has been identified as a cause of low learning achievement, high rates of dropout and absenteeism in schools.

The Head teacher of Okwapon Primary school in Nakapiripirit revealed that, forceful courtship in which the boy or man is legitimated by tradition to apply his macho to “coerce” the girl into submission is still being practiced. That is why he underlined the urgency of a chain link fence for boarding primary schools.

**Poor school-community relationship:** ESSP philosophy is also premised on the efficacy of partnerships in any development venture. Schools that have good relationships between teachers and parents are able to address issues that affect pupils. Pupils’ performance at school is likely to improve when there is follow up and back-up support from home as well as at school. The synergies that normally result from partnership will be compromised where there is little or no cooperation between teachers, parents, teachers and the local community.

However, the high rates of adult illiteracy (88%) in Karamoja means that children cannot receive help from home as far as formal education is concerned (Kasente, 2003).

**Out-of-School factors**

**Anti-formal education and pastoralism mindset of the public:** difficulties in overcoming a legacy that shuns pastoralism as a nomad’s lifestyle and non-formal education as a viable mechanism for quality learning achievement. The public’s conceptualization of quality education is skewed in favor of school-based education in
total disregard of the threat it poses to pastoral production and livelihood (Locham, Head teacher, Kalotom P/S).

**Mobility:** although key to the production strategy of the nomadic household, mobility poses a serious challenge to a system heavily reliant on school-based education.

**Unpredictable disruptions of service:** on top of routine mobility for production, insecurity and environmental events of great magnitude such as floods and prolonged droughts can significantly disrupt the rigid routine of school-based education (VAC, Kamaturu).

**Children’s domestic work commitments:** children’s involvement and responsibilities within the household’s economy from an early age competes with the requirements of school calendars and timetables.

**Poor translation of policies into action and follow-up mechanisms:** Uganda’s legislative framework includes the Children’s Act and the Children’s Statute of 1996. These laws have not been effectively disseminated and enforced in Karamoja. This is evidenced by the lack of awareness of the content of these pieces of legislation amongst the local communities (ECTA, Head teacher, Lorengdwat primary school). Enforcement of these laws would guarantee children’s education, as they seek to protect the rights of all children to education and to protect especially the girl-child against forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

**Financial constraints:** With multiple challenges facing the education sector in Karamoja region, the required reform initiatives will require large amounts of funds. Donors have hitherto been a significant source of financial support. Reliance on donor funding does not ensure sustainability of a project, predictability of resource inflows that allows for forward planning or external influence-free decision making (JAC, 2009).

**High dependency syndrome of the communities:** Basing on the results of the discussions held with the manyatta communities, the majority of the people expect full sponsorship offers for boarding primary and secondary education once they enroll their children in school. Failure to fulfill these expectations alienates the support and sympathy of a very important constituency – the local community (Pulkol, 1999). The total reliance of the local communities on external support for the education of their children undermines the long term sustainability of the educational investments in Karamoja and disturbs local community ownership.

**Poverty:** At national level, Uganda has made tremendous strides in poverty reduction. In 1992/93, 56 percent of Ugandans lived below the poverty line. In 2005/06 this percentage fell drastically to 31 percent. Poverty levels however between rural (42%) and urban (12%) still show marked differences (UNDP, 2007). The Human Development Index (HDI) for Karamoja region is estimated to be 0.382 compared to 0.549 for central region (UNDP, 2007). Even relatively small school-related costs are perceived as difficult to
meet as pastoral households usually have little liquidity and the economic benefits of schooling are not easily evident.

In cases where any extra expenditure on education has to be made within the confines of a limited household budget, parents are likely to favour boys” (Kyeyune, 2005).

The high opportunity cost of sending a Karamojong child from a traditional household, especially the girl child to school, can negatively affect participation in school. Children in poor traditional households are regarded as a source of labour and/or income and are expected to work in order to supplement family resources (Knaute, 2008). In child-headed households where children have to fend for their siblings, girls are often forced to work or stay at home to look after their siblings or work to earn money. Further danger arises when the income generating activity involves brewing local beers for sale as this exposes girls to sexual harassment, early pregnancy leading to dropout or HIV infection.

_Early marriage, early pregnancy and FGM:_ Partly, due to poverty and widespread insecurity in Karamoja, a girl’s early marriage may be seen as a way out (exit route) of the poverty trap by both the young girl and her parents. One female member of the community in Kamaturu bluntly said:

*What do you expect a girl who voluntarily expresses a desire to get married and has secured a willing partner to do. After all the longer you remain unmarried the more you are perceived by the rest of the community to be a prostitute. And the more schooling a girl receives the lesser the number of cows she brings to the family as bride price (Akol A, Kamaturu).*

_Insecurity:_

Because of rampant insecurity and conflict, parents prefer to keep especially their girls at home for fear that they may be abducted. In some cases, enrolment is delayed until they are “old enough” to protect themselves.

In short, most of the social, economic, ecological, political and demographic realities of Karamoja adversely affect the education of the girl-child in a more disproportionate manner.

**Changes in the socio-politico-economic landscape**

Although the Karimojong still conservatively adhere to their culture, there are some noticeable icebreaking changes. While they still regard a cow as a symbol of wealth and high social status, and use it mainly for marriage purposes and employ all possible means to own as many cows as possible; and although the communities continue to engage in cattle raids to increase numbers of their herds for prestige and not for wealth creation and poverty reduction in the economic sense cattle rustling has declined in intensity and frequency as a result of disarmament (Edongot, Deputy Head teacher). The current raids are sporadic, staged by smaller numbers but still destructive in terms of human life and property. Nomadic communities are gradually transforming to sedentary lifestyle and the
cattle have been confined to kraals in designated areas away from homesteads and are guarded by the army.

The ravages of the global climate change are more pronounced in Karamoja (Okello, 2008). The weather is generally hostile, characterized by prolonged drought, short and unreliable rainfall and severe floods such that it is not favorable for arable farming. However, the western belt of the region is referred to as the green zone because it is fertile and currently productive. This is quite ideal for agro – pastoral communities.

There is also evidence of a growing diversification of economic activities to mitigate the effects of collapse of the cattle economy. Besides being the providers of food for the family, women and girls as well as other youth also engage in activities ranging from hunting and gathering, selling of firewood, charcoal and chicken, crafts, block laying, extraction of stone and brewing to earn some money for buying food. Communities in Abim are increasingly taking to farming.

In view of the decline in rustling, the dwindling herds of cattle and the growing community commitment to a sedentary lifestyle, there is need to support the various groups especially ex-warriors with ox-ploughs and other farm implements to enable their full participation in IGA. The opportunities offered by the numerous Micro-financial institutions and SACCOs should be explored through private sector initiatives. Increased engagement in IGAs will result higher household income levels and greater parental support for children’s school needs. This would not only release children to participate in education (in the long term at least) but it will also help to resolve the endemic problem of food insecurity.

In addition, there is now a better understanding of the dynamics of the Karamoja Syndrome. Both the government as well as local and international development agencies have come to appreciate the need to initiate and execute their development agenda within the context of a pastoralist Karimojong society, rather than seeking to transform them. Accordingly, there is an influx of donor agencies, NGOs and government programs aimed at alleviating food shortages, inadequate access to basic social services (education inclusive) and civil strife. This geographical concentration of the actors in development provides an opportunity, not only for the various players in provision of education to pool resources, but it also improves chances for greater partnership and harmonization of their interventionist activities in the region.

An environmental scan of the current providers of education support in Karamoja is depicted in Table 3 below.
Table 3: Organizations/programs which partner with the MoES in various intervention areas in the Karamoja education sector

<table>
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<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Classrooms</th>
<th>Scholastic materials</th>
<th>Food Security</th>
<th>Water and Sanitation</th>
<th>Girl Child</th>
<th>Post Conflict Trauma etc</th>
<th>Inspection</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>School Feeding</th>
<th>Teachers’ Houses</th>
<th>Training for SMCs, PTAs, etc</th>
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Source: Compiled using field notes

The tallies in the Table above indicate that while the majority of the NGO/bilateral/multi-lateral agencies are have concentrated their efforts in the provision of scholastic materials and classroom construction, they have a scanty presence in the areas of school feeding,
monitoring and inspection, construction of teachers’ houses and teachers’ professional development. This points to the need for greater and selective resource targeting in the future.

**Save the Children International, Uganda (SCIU):**

**United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF):**

**The World Food Program (WFP):** gives a “take home food” ration to girls as an incentive to keep them in school regularly. WFP mainly helps in providing food and cooking utensils to both students and teaching staff. It has also shared construction work costs. WFP is promoting learning through competitions, as in art competition.

**The Lutheran World Federation (LWF):** is promoting sports in the community and schools. It sponsors sports girls and boys who excel in education. It also helps in the provision of water by building water tanks and drilling boreholes. It has also greatly supported agriculture in schools by providing the seeds for vegetables and other school farm crops.

**The Karamoja Agro Forestry Development Program (KAFDP):** does also share the costs in the construction of schools. It is mainly the community which provides the local materials while KAFDP provides the cement and iron sheets. KAFDP is helping to curb insecurity by fencing schools.

**Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA):** is one of the organizations that is helping boost literacy in the region. ADRA realized that, it is through formal and informal appropriate education that sustainable development will be achieved in Karamoja. That is why ADRA set up the Karamoja Integrated Rural Education Program (KITENEP), to improve the socio-economic status of the people in the region, increase accessibility to primary education and enhance Functional Adult Literacy (FAL).

**Gradual change in community attitude towards children’s education**

The organizations listed in Table 4 have been at the forefront of advocacy, mobilization and sensitization campaigns aimed at changing the community mindset with a view to increase sensitivity towards education. Both community - and school - based strategies - such as the Back to school, Go to school, Stay in School – have been employed.

As a result, there is heightened community awareness about the usefulness and benefits in education. The Karimojong are now generally more inclined to send their children to formal primary schools. “We are interested in our children’s participation in formal primary education, both sexes, of all ages and in all classes”, Elders in Kamion village. However, while the parents have responded by sending children to school, they are reluctant to back it up with the required financial support. Nor do the parents participate
in school activities. “Often times parents keep children at home, take them to the kraal and bring them to school when food is available”, Head teacher, Lokerui primary school.

This non-commitment of the parents coupled with the poverty factor has weakened the much needed community-school partnership. This is reflected in parents unwillingness to contribute extra fees even as low as 500/= to 2,000/= per term for buying or providing security. If and when the school administration sends school fees defaulters home for the money owed or for books, the parents “ they are made to work at home and look for money with the mothers”, Youth in Kaabong Sub County.

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Some parents involve children in domestic chores during school days due to poverty and famine. As long as there is famine in the home I will withdraw my child even from boarding school to help in looking for money and buying food for the young ones”, Community members, Molulem Sub County.

Moreover, the parents view children in P4 – P7 as old enough to fend for themselves. Upon being sent home for fees the parents opt to retain them to support the family in activities of food provision. Girls are ultimately encouraged to marry. “Sending children to school is beneficial as they acquire knowledge and lead good life, but we cannot afford the school fees of UGX 10,000 due to poverty. Also it has made our girls become prostitutes”, Women in Kaabong Sub County.

In contrast however, parents are willing to support school gardening activities. It is perhaps a reflection of the nascent transformation of the community psyche towards a sedentary lifestyle. Famine is also inadvertently helping to encourage parents to send their children to school as caring for the children at home is burdensome.

**Contribution of ECD, ABEK, Formal Primary and Teacher Development**

Currently there are three functionally interlinked delivery models for basic education namely, early childhood development, alternative basic education for Karamoja and formal primary schooling.

**Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

The ECD centers which are being introduced as satellite outposts of the ABEK system are also, through the auxiliary support they provide, helping to change the community mind-set away from the “burial of the pen” hangover to embrace education. This is because the “care givers” recruited to bath and prepare porridge for the under five children in the ECD centers are locally respected mothers who carry a role model image. The “demonstration effect” of their voluntarism in providing firewood, saucepans, plates,
cups and regular attendance of the ABEK sessions is noticeable in the changed community outlook towards schooling (Monitoring Assistant based at Lorengdwat, 2009). The number of ECD centers in each district is shown in the Table 4 below.

### Table 4: Breakdown of number of ECD centers by district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Number of ECD centres</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kaabong</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotido</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroto - Nakapirit</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** District reports, 2009

The service reach of ECD centers is still limited given the vast territorial coverage of Karamoja region. Yet there is overwhelming social demand for ECD units because they have been fully embraced by the local communities.

**Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK)**

The ABEK programme in supported by SCU, UNICEF and Action Aid. It targets children of school going age but out of school, from two ears and above. The ABEK instructors, currently recognized by the MoES as NFE teachers, are trained by government. MoES and KYI have designed a syllabus for training the teachers, and KYI will award a Certificate of Teacher Education to non formal teachers equivalent to Grade 111. The NFE policy that is being finalized provides for registration of all centres by KYI. TED and confirmed by the District Education Departments, offering Capitation Grants to all children coded at the learning centres. The government will build learning centres and pit latrines, and assume ownership of the available materials on site. A special division for NFE has been established in the MoES for programme coordination. Minimum requirement for recruitment will be completion of Primary Seven, and meantime limited to school leavers from the locality/community.

**Sedentary and Mobile ABEK**

Sedentary ABEK caters for the children who reside permanently within the homesteads, while mobile ABEK serves the children who are in constant movement with animals in search of water. Sedentary ABEK is more popular and preferred as opposed to mobile ABEK. Mobile ABEK is expensive to maintain and cannot easily be monitored. Women feel that mobile ABEK tends to expose their children to frequent attacks by the warriors. Given the emergent tendency by nomadic communities to gradually adopt more sedentary lifestyle, and with the cows being confined to kraals, the number of boys who will be participating in mobile ABEK is likely to decline.

Overall, the number of ABEK centres in the districts is shown in Table 5 below:
Table 5: Number of ABEK centers by district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Sedentary ABEK centres</th>
<th>No of Mobile ABEK centres</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaabong</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotido</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moroto</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nakapirpirit</td>
<td>56</td>
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Source: District reports, 2009

Positive attributes of ABEK

The positive features of the ABEK initiative were well articulated by the DEOs, Inspectors of Schools, and the beneficiary communities themselves. They include the following qualities:

1. A curriculum content that responds to the socio-cultural needs and expectations of the local community. It is modularized and tailored to the ten karamoja-specific priority issues to do with animal husbandry, environmental management, primary healthcare and food security. The first topic actually focuses on the core aspect of livelihood in a Karamoja setting namely, the tending of a cow and other livestock.

2. The instructional materials (children’s books and the facilitators’ manuals) are user friendly in terms of appropriateness of the content to the level of learners, accuracy and currency of the subject matter, relevance of content, gender sensitivity, presentation and overall typographic as well as graphic layout. The illustrations are relevant and they do provide for variety, quality and adequacy of clarifications. The writers of these books were drawn from among the Karimojong people themselves.

3. The scheduling of ABEK sessions does not interfere with the traditionally sanctioned requirements for child labour. This flexibility is also reflected in the permission given to the male children to take books along as they drive the animals to the grazing fields. The children find time in between their herding responsibility to scan through the relevant sections of the book as directed by the facilitator. In the same way the girl-children with care-giving responsibilities are free to come with the siblings they are looking after to the ABEK centers.

4. Learner-centered instructional approaches are emphasized. Class work assignments are collaboratively reviewed and/or marked, guided self-discovery techniques are employed and locally relevant illustrations are frequently used to enrich the lessons.
5. It imparts the infrastructure skills needed for further learning including reading, writing and numeracy as well as equipping the beneficiaries with life skills and basic information on personal hygiene.

6. ABEK learning centers practice a “to whom it may concern” open door policy which gives freedom to the interested adult members of the client community to participate in the ABEK classes if they so wish. The collaborative participation of parents and their children in a learning activity generates unique synergies and is winning over the previously apathetic parents to begin appreciating the value of education.

7. The ABEK graduates who transit to the formal primary school invariably demonstrate greater commitment to their studies as reflected in the improved retention, progression and completion rates in post-ABEK education. Approximately 75% of the current total enrolment of Nadunget Senior Secondary School is comprised of ABEK completers. In the same way, almost 90% of the total pupil enrolment in Naitakwae Primary School transitioned from ABEK. It is a former ABEK graduate in Kalatom Primary School who topped in last year’s (2008) PLE results in Moroto district after obtaining a total aggregate of 8 with Division 1 in Mathematics. Once again, the girl-child has gained most as manifested in improved retention in upper primary, where girls’ dropout rates were highest. And notwithstanding the fluctuating trends in PLE performance, the percentage number of children passing in Division 1 in Moroto district has risen by more than 2 percentage points from 2% in 2000 to 5.7% in 2008.

8. It is noteworthy that, the greatest beneficiary of ABEK has been the girl-child. This is reflected in the sex composition of the ABEK enrolments. For example, out of a total enrolment of 42 at Naguleangolol B learning center (Ngoleriet sub-county, Moroto district), 26 or approximately 60% are girls. Similarly, girls constituted nearly 60% of the total enrolment of 120 (70 girls, 50 boys) at Lodapalia (Lorengdwat sub-county in Nakapiripirit district) learning center. The only anomalous enrolment was at Nangamit learning center (Ngoleriet, sub-county) where, out of 124 participants, only 44 (35.5%) are girls. There are reported cases of previously married girls and/or child mothers who have now opted to pursue education.

9. Since an area-specific mother tongue (L1) is used as the language of instruction in these centers, ABEK sets a strong foundation for improved uptake of the thematic curriculum when the ABEK graduates eventually transit to primary.
Good practices

One district official observed that “the practice of combining both the adults/parents and children in the same learning environment is yielding good learning outcomes as the older generation struggles to make up for the lost time and the younger ones aspire to challenge the presumed intellectual superiority of their elders”;

Second, by locating the “sedentary” ABEK centers adjacent to the village settlements (“manyattas”) and the “mobile” ABEK units in the protected kraals, the ABEK is directly and cost-effectively succeeding in taking education service delivery to the target grassroots population in their places of abode; and

Third, parallel establishment of ECD centers alongside the ABEK centers is creating powerful complementarities and engagement with the local community. The ECD and ABEK centers are symbiotically linked to the local community through the “care givers” (CGs) and “village advisory committees” (VACs). As the two centers render child growth and development services to the local community, the local community is, for its part, supporting the centers by providing the children, constructing temporal structures, cleaning and maintaining the centers, cooking porridge for and bathing the children in ECDs as well as providing the non-food items such as cups, plates and saucepans. This reciprocal relationship is significantly contributing to the enhancement of school-community partnership in the lead up to greater learning achievement at the ABEK centers.

Challenges in the ABEK approach

i. Poor daily attendance (approximately 30%) of the enrolled child population in the centers. This is because of the so many competing demands for children’s time. The majority of the boys are engaged in hunting and grazing the animals, while the younger girls serve mainly as caregivers, leaving the older girls to contribute to the household economy as fetchers of water, collectors of firewood, besides offering themselves for casual but paid employment. An increasing number of disarmed warriors are also now preferring to look for paid casual employment;

ii. There is severe shortage of the requisite scholastic materials including exercise books, pens, slates. The chalk board at Lodapalia center is already in a bad shape;

iii. There are no basic infrastructure, furniture and sanitation facilities at the centers most especially classroom blocks, stores, kitchens, toilets, forms for children to sit on, e.t.c. Classes get disrupted whenever there is a downpour or strong winds. Longoleyek, in Lorengdwat is the only ABEK center with a permanent building;
iv. The wide dispersal of the ABEK centers that are supposed to be covered by a few monitoring assistants complicates the task of keeping close surveillance over the conduct and activities of the facilitators. There are, for instance, only 5 monitoring assistants (positioned at the sub-counties of Loroo, Lorengdwat, Moruita, Lolacat and Kariita) who are mandated to oversee the activities of the ABEK facilitators within the expansive district of Nakapiripirit;

v. The quality of many ABEK facilitators is quite wanting. One of the facilitators in Lodapalia, came to the center very drunk, dirty and wrote a wrong date on the chalk board (1-12-2008 instead of 25th November 2009)! Nor did he know the enrolment size at his center. A decision authorizing the core PTC of Moroto to mount a formal training program for these facilitators along the curriculum developed by Kyambogo University (as the examining body in charge of quality control) was passed some time back. However, the question of what grade of certificate to award the graduates of this program has hitherto remained unresolved. As a result, the Shs14,000,000/= which was initially allocated for this training exercise is still lying unutilized in Moroto PTC’s account;

vi. The duration of an ABEK cycle is undefined. When one is deemed to be an ABEK completer or graduate who therefore qualifies for entrance to a formal primary school? The lack of clearly defined and measurable progression stages
through the ABEK cycle makes it difficult to have a standardized criterion for transiting from the non-formal ABEK delivery modality to a formal primary education system;

vii. The initial momentum and excitement with which the ABEK program was launched appears to be waning now principally due to irregular and inadequate logistical support for the facilitators and monitoring staff. For example, out of the expected 112 facilitators supposed to man 56 centers in Nakapiripirit district, only 24 of them are on the payroll. Three of the centers are virtually non-functional with no facilitators at all! The rest of the other centers operate just nominally. With regards to Moroto district, only 144 out of the expected 222 facilitators are on the payroll. The majority of the facilitators who have not yet accessed the payroll belong to the ABEK centers that have not yet been coded by the MoES;

viii. The ABEK program is not catered for in the Karamoja Integrated Development and Disarmament Program (KIDDP);

ix. The unpredictability of the security situation disrupts the normal operations of the ABEK centers from time to time. This is compounded by the endemic food shortages in Karamoja; and

tax. The ABEK program appears to be totally disability-blind with no provision made for children with special learning needs.

**Formal Primary Education**

*Positive impacts*

*a) Participation, Retention and Completion*

There has been significant enrolment surge in response to the introduction of tuition-free primary schooling. For example, total primary enrolment in Nakapiripirit district rose from 15,697 (7290 boys, 8,407 girls) in 2000 to 25,826 (12,017 boys, 13,809 girls) in 2009. This translates into nearly 60% increment in enrolment in less than a decade. The Gender Parity Index (GPI/the ratio of girls to boys) has continued to be greater than unity in the district. Conversely, the GPI in Moroto district (with a current total primary school enrolment of 25,136 – 14,055 boys and 11,081 girls) is less than unity, implying an underrepresentation of the girl child in school enrolment.

Despite the high rate of wastage, there is modest improvement in the internal efficiency of the primary education system in Karamoja. For example, out of the total Moroto district enrolment of 10,558 (5,389 boys and 5,169 girls) for the 2002 P1cohort, only
1,071 (691 boys and 380 girls) managed to reach P7 in 2008, representing a completion rate of 11%. For the 2003 cohort however, 1,098 (701 boys and 397 girls) survived up to P7 in 2009, out of an initial total P1 enrolment of 8,687 (4,331 boys and 4,357) – which converts into a relatively higher completion rate of 13%. The current cohort survival rate to P5 stands at 24% (26% for boys and 22% for girls).

b) **Interventions**
As a result of several pro-primary school interventions supported by UNICEF, WFP, SCU, IRC and other actors in development, the school environment is increasingly becoming more child-friendly, particularly for the girl-child. By supporting a variety of school clubs and extra curricula activities including sports, GEM clubs, PIASCY, and the Sanitation and Hygiene club, children’s active participation in school activities has got enhanced. For example, the “take home ratio” initiative which requires girls to first meet the 80% minimum rate of attendance for eligibility has encouraged girls’ presence in school. Similarly CRO’s (Child Restoration Organization) and the Churches’ full sponsorhip offers targeting girls, street children and other vulnerable groups; UNICEF’s supply of scholastic materials to primary schools including the now popular UNICEF white bags; the empowering activities of the UNICEF/SCU-supported GEM clubs and the undertaking of the Sanitation and Hygiene club to ensure a disease-free school environment have all combined to augment primary school children’s learning achievement.

c) **Boarding Facility**
Through improvisation and with the logistical back up extended by mainly UNICEF, SCU and WFP, many primary schools in Karamoja have got converted into “low cost” boarding institutions as a preferred alternative delivery mode. The same physical structures are used as classrooms and dormitories during daytime and at night respectively. Day scholars have also now become *de facto* boarders as they daily trek back to school for a night after getting supper in their homes. Parents are strongly in favor of boarding primary schools (especially for those aged 10 years and above) for security, hunger and educational reasons.

During the discussions held with the head teachers, teachers, the principals and the client community at Naguleangolol, it was retrospectively argued that, several attempts to educate children in Karamoja involved boarding schools. These efforts have had some success, and most of the current generation of educated Karimojong went to a boarding school. The only limitation, according to Lokwam K – a retired civil servant and a resident of Naguleangolol village - is that:
A typical boarding school in Uganda is a hostile place for most Karimojong children. Bullying is common, girls are often abused and degraded, and their curriculum is often alien and irrelevant to the short and long term needs of a Karimojong child with a nomadic pastoralist lifestyle. The worst feature is that a “keijong” culture is roundly despised by both teachers and fellow pupils. Schools are often looked at as instruments for “transforming” or “modernizing” nomadic “keijongs” into more “progressive” non-pastoralist, sedentary individuals. This makes a boarding school a complete turn off for an average Karimojong child.

Yet boarding schools do not have to be like this. In Mongolia, they were until recently, friendly places for nomad children, and school enrolment rates were very high as a result (UNDP, 2003). The main difference from the Ugandan boarding schools is that, in Mongolia, nomad culture was highly esteemed by fellow pupils and teachers (Sifuna, 2005). This made parents and children to feel that their nomadic and pastoralist way of life was important and valued. More importantly, the curricula were adapted to a herding economy, and school timetables were geared to the labour demands of the pastoral year.

With this example in mind, it is premature to dismiss the potential of for boarding schools as a panacea for the education of children in Karamoja, as long as a different school culture – one that values nomadic life and teaches appropriate skills – can be created and maintained.

Previously, however, the government used the difficulty of providing boarding education service to nomadic Karimojong as a reason for encouraging “sedentarization” or permanent settlement. But we should also turn the question around and ask if mobility or nomadic tendency is a sensible, viable and necessary part of a pastoral livelihood strategy. If so, how best can we deliver basic services, like education, to a mobile population? Moreover, mobility is not the only problem to be solved in delivering basic services to nomadic herders. Sparse human population distribution (which in Karamoja can be less than 10 people per sq km) means that, there are usually too few people within the catchment area of a primary school to provide an economic justification for the facility, even if the population may be sedentary (UNDP, 2003). If it is mobile, as is the case with many Karimojong, the justification is even harder. Government, in this case, is left with the difficult choice of using scarce resources to provide educational facilities for a very small number of nomadic pastoralists or a much larger number of sedentary people outside Karamoja.

Quite evidently therefore, the financing of the preferred alternative of boarding schools, though desirable, stands out as the most serious challenge for the stakeholders. For their part, the local communities see this as the responsibility of government in collaboration with the donors. The opinions expressed by some of the technical district staff revolved around the need by the MoES to develop Karamoja-specific and needs-based resource allocation formula to bring about greater equity. The following “ground-leveling” public funding proposals were made:

a) First, create low cost boarding schools by introducing a pro-Karamoja public financing modality (for example, by doubling capitation grants to the region) that
would enable all the newly constructed boarding primary schools in the more disadvantaged areas of Karamoja to become fee-free or fee limited establishments;

b) Second, operate a preferential capitation grant system for the already existing boarding primary schools in Karamoja that charge a fee below a certain stipulated threshold;

c) Third, increase the number of bursaries tenable only at boarding primary schools within the region;

d) Fourth, introduce financial incentives to promote gender parity in boarding primary schools; for example an enhanced capitation grant could be offered for girls once a school attains or exceeds a recommended minimum level of enrolment. However, this needs to be coupled with introduction of broader community-level smart advocacy capable of transforming social attitudes and stereotypes as well as fast tracking the roll out of GEM clubs to the rest of the schools in the region. and

e) Fifth, introduce a preferential admissions policy to well-resourced boarding primary schools to favor pupils from disadvantaged areas such as Lopelipeli.

It is in a bid to find a solution to the twin problem of mobility and low population density in Karamoja that the idea of a “mobile” primary school was also mooted by Locham Richard, the Head teacher of Kalotom Primary School. The same proposal was however strongly contested by the Principal of Moroto Core PTC as a non-functional education delivery mode owing to the difficulty of monitoring and supervising such a “footloose” system.

Fortunately, there are some encouraging examples from which we can draw some lessons. For instance, in Iran, teachers from a nomadic background are trained, equipped with a white tent (in contrast with the black tents of the nomads) and school equipment and join a group of nomad camps. During the winter and summer, when the camps rarely move, the tent schools are open for business. One advantage of tent schools is that there is likely to be equal enrolment of boys and girls, since girls remain under the close supervision of their parents (Knaute, 2008). Families tend to camp near the tent school, meaning there are enough children for a mixed-age class as in the ABEK centers. In spring, when the camps move from lowland winter quarters up into highland summer pastures, and autumn when they move back down, the tent school moves with them. The children who qualify for secondary education can then transit to a standard sedentary formal secondary school in the local town.

A variant of this mobile school idea is already operational in the two-pronged ABEK system. While the “sedentary type” caters for the settled homesteads (the manyattas), the “mobile” modality is designed to meet the learning needs of the children in the protected but mobile “kraals”. However, as admitted by the district education officials, most of the assistance and attention from both government and non-state actors has hitherto been directed to the sedentary ABEK centers. The process of coding learning centers and paying the facilitators has so far remained confined to the sedentary ABEK. This is what
has suffocated the roll out and development of the mobile ABEK system (Head teacher Lorengdwat, Primary School).

Ngorok P, a member of Naguleangolol village, expressed the need to incorporate the formal primary school curriculum into the non-formal curriculum of the both the mobile and sedentary ABEK program so as to make the education their children receive competitive. Indeed attempts have been made elsewhere, to integrate formal curricula into the curriculum content of especially the mobile Quranic schools common among Muslim pastoral groups in Africa. This is when a religious teacher is employed by a group of mobile households to teach both religious education and the other subjects in the formal school curriculum. Research findings however indicate that, although in some cases – where there is a dedicated and well educated teacher – this has proved successful; many Quranic teachers do not have the skills or desire to teach secular subjects (Sifuna, 2005).

Finally, distance education, using radio, was also proposed by the teachers of Lokodiokodioi Primary School as a promising alternative for Karamoja. The argument was that, with the increased affordability of radio sets and the emergence of FM radio stations in Karamoja, distance education via radio has the potential for an excellent cost-saving service reach. In pastoral Australia, radio education for children in the remote outback has a long history. Experiments in the Mongolian Gobi showed that, radio education for both adult women and children can be successful (UNDP, 2003). Students receive initial training and periodic back-up at fixed facilities and combine this with regular radio teaching based around written work done at home. In the future when more pastoral households have television sets, satellite television will have an enormously important role to play in this respect. Perhaps the most imaginative mobile service was the mobile yurt libraries found in the summer pastures in Kyrgyzstan during the socialist period and after.

d) Physical Education and Sports

The key reality about physical education and sports in schools and communities in Karamoja is that children will play unencumbered in any space, at any time with any equipment they can master. Equipment was not adequate in terms of number and size in most schools. Among the PES equipments that needed urgent replacements included balls, nets, music instruments, and traditional costumes.

Findings further indicated that traditional games were popular compared to modern games because of simplicity involved in developing and playing as well as values attached to traditional games, and uniforms which are unaffordable for most of the schools and communities. Both boys and girls (4years and above) prefer volley ball, athletics, short-put, and javelin and other traditional games. However, it was not common to find girls playing with boys at school because girls lack sports wear and fear to be embarrassed in case they fall down.
Communities and schools in hilly and mountainous terrain lack proper PES facilities. The mountainous terrain renders setting up of playing facilities are more difficult. For example, schools around Mt Moroto and Kadama do not have playing facilities due to the mountainous nature of land.

While schools have made efforts to provide facilities when they can, most PES facilities are in poor state showing poor demarcation, preparation and maintenance. Additionally, playing fields and courts are in disrepair conditions whereby gullies created by erosion during rainy season render playing fields unusable. Other facilities were observed to be unsuitable for play due to thorny bushes.

Despite the fact that facilities were in poor state, children utilized them for recreation activities. Due to inadequacy of the facilities in terms of size, children both forego some schedules to access playing facilities. Some pupils move long distances of about 3-15KM to access nearby facilities. Children from the mobile families always play Ekorebe. Children interviewed loved to play games and sports and indicated that they see themselves connecting to their friends mostly with in the school and other schools in the community. Playing games with their friends is believed to be the most fulfilling activity.

**Challenges in the formal primary education**

i. There is severe shortage of teachers’ houses. Teachers are either obliged to suffer the inconvenience of sharing the available housing or renting in the neighboring trading centers;

ii. There is an inadequate supply of qualified teachers. With a total enrolment of 25,826 primary pupils and a teaching workforce of 327, the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Nakapiripirit district is at a high 1:75 as compared to the PTR of 1:70 for Moroto district – both of which are well above the recommended average of 1:54.;

iii. An estimated 80% of the teaching personnel in Karamoja are “aliens” – most commonly, of the Teso or Sebei origin. The Karimojong shun the teaching profession as a poorly paying occupation. And the influx of NGOs and other development agencies to the sub-region offers better employment opportunities for the few educated Karimojong youth. The resultant underrepresentation of the Karimojong in the teaching workforce undermines the prospects for effective implementation of the thematic curriculum within the sub-region;

iv. High and seasonally fluctuating rates of absenteeism among both teachers and pupils. School attendance in Karamoja fluctuates in tandem with the trends in food supply. Attendance is therefore highest in Nakapiripirit district (considered to be the food basket of Karamoja) during the planting/hunger period of January to April (i.e. first school term). At such times, school daily attendance rates can
jump to a high 80%. Availability of food provided by WFP in schools is bait that accounts for minimal rates of absenteeism during such food poor periods. On the other hand, high rates of absenteeism are registered during the bumper harvest season of July to November (i.e. second school term) and school attendance can plummet to a low 30%;

v. Underrepresentation of females in the primary school teaching labor force. This is partly attributed to the conditionality of the policies for admission to PTCs. The insistence on good O’ level pass grades in Mathematics, English and Sciences as a minimum requirement for entrance to a teacher training program bars many female students from accessing a PTC since the majority performs poorly in those subject areas. Yet the number of girls in total primary school enrolments is increasing in percentage terms - implying a greater demand for female teachers to provide the girl child the much needed role model image;

vi. Karamoja has the lowest education performance indicators in the country. Although there has been a marked improvement in education nationally, enrolment and retention at primary school level remain low in Karamoja, especially among girls. The NER for Moroto, Kotido and Nakapiripirit are estimated at 34%, 28% and 36%, respectively, while the national average was estimated at 90% (EMIS, 2004). Moroto district’s retention rate was estimated at 16% (12% for girls, and 19% for boys). That means that, out of less than 40% of the children of school age population who enroll in school, 84% drop out. This raises the issue of learning outcomes for the majority of children.

vii. Some of the often quoted factors that contribute to low enrolment and poor retention include:
   a) Culture and negative attitudes towards education within the community. One of the most unique qualities of the Karimojong culture relates to its “resilience”. The Karamojong culture has an enduring capacity to respond endogenously to external/exogenous shocks without collapsing and to adapt to an ever-changing context while sustaining its identity and autonomy. Unfortunately, most aspects of the Karimojong culture such as early marriage, betrothal, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) among the Pokot, early child bearing and forceful courtship of girls by boys are at odds with the demands of secular education;
   b) Food insecurity and constant movement of the community in search of water and pasture;
   c) Poverty associated with restricted and/or lost economic production owing to insecurity, compounded by unpredictable and prolonged drought and cyclic floods;
d) Internal insecurity, posing problems of movement even for children, especially those who have to walk long distances to school;

e) Competing priorities, with children’s time taken up by family work; either looking after livestock (especially for boys) and household chores such as fetching water and firewood, looking after young children (for girls); and

f) Lack of upward mobility within the school system and employment opportunities at the end of primary and secondary cycles.

i. Inadequate support for formal education from the local communities associated with the lingering inferior valuation of secular education. This can be seen from the rather skewed patterns of household expenditure. The Head teacher of Lokodiokodi Primary School remarked thus “while an average Karamojong male spends an average of Shs. 2,000 /= on alcohol daily, he is unwilling to contribute just Shs. 500/= for purchasing an exercise book for his schooling child”;

ii. Most boarding primary schools in the sub-region lack a chain link fence. In the insecurity-prone context of Karamoja, a strong school fence is an imperative especially for the girl-child; and

iii. There is a relative shortage of books and other important education software. The Pupil Book Ratio (PBR) in Karamoja is currently standing at 6: which compares badly with the national average of 3:1.

Teacher Development
The current status of teacher supply in Karamoja region by district and gender is depicted in Table 6 below.

Table 6: The performance status of the Karamoja education sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABIM</th>
<th>KAABONG</th>
<th>KOTIDO</th>
<th>MOROTO</th>
<th>NAKAPIRIPIRIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Primary Schools</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>483</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Ceiling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers on Pay roll</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Staff Ceiling Quota</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EMIS DATA, MoES, 2008

From the tabulated data, Kaabong stands out as the most disadvantaged district of Karamoja region in terms of teacher availability. Only 346 out of the maximum staff ceiling quota of 507 (nearly 70%) are on the pay roll.
**Positive contribution**

Besides the shouldering the fundamental responsibility of conducting pre-service teacher training programs, the Core PTC’s other brief includes an outreach mandate whereby they, through CCTs, regularly conduct community awareness raising campaigns; organize refresher trainings for teachers; and train PTAs, SMCs and BOGs on better managerial skills.

**Challenges**

- The current PTC admission policy is, within the context of Karamoja, helping to perpetuate the double-faced nature of the problem of teacher shortages in the region, namely: underrepresentation of female teachers in the total teaching workforce in Karamoja, and shortage of the indigenous Karimojong teachers.

- High failure rate (about 50%) among the pre-service teacher trainees. The principal of the college attributed this to the “human resource hemorrhage” which Moroto Core PTC has suffered since the institution of the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS) in 1992 – an improved in-service teacher training modality which allowed every teacher in the country to receive training and access to a local Coordinating Center Tutor (CCTs). These tutors circulate among schools, providing feedback and technical support including in-service training to untrained teachers, refresher courses for all serving primary and management training for head teachers. Moroto Core PTC is serving 125 satellite primary schools. This heavy duty schedule, according to the principal, has diverted the energies of the PTC’s cream staff.

A Tutor in the same college corroborated that viewpoint when he explained that:

“The TDMS model was organized around a Core PTC. Each Core PTC sends outreach staff called CCTs to work with outreach schools, which are organized in clusters. One school per cluster is designated as a Coordinating Center School (CCS) where a resource room is constructed to serve the teachers within a given catchment area. The CCT has an office attached to the CCS”.

- Negative public attitude to the teaching profession. A synthesis of the information obtained from the primary school teachers, the DEOs, DISs, Head teachers and PTC tutors favours the implementation of several interventions, including:

  - Introduction of significant salary differentials between the different categories of primary school teachers (Grade IIIs, Grade Vs, and Graduate teachers) to stem the high rate of teacher turnover in primary and encourage more teachers from Karamoja to pursue higher education and training;
  - Development of comprehensive career advancement opportunities that go beyond INSET for both ABEK facilitators and primary school teachers;
  - Deciding on teacher recruitment and deployment modalities for both ABEK facilitators and primary school teachers to meet school-specific demands equitably. More decentralized mechanisms for hiring of teachers would be
preferable. Granting individual primary schools the authority to independently recruit and deploy teachers could also be considered;

- Review of modalities for determining teachers’ salaries with a view to developing criteria that link pay to actual productivity rather than qualification of the teacher;
- Addressing the bottlenecks arising from low teacher salaries, high rates of teacher attrition and a flat school organizational structure that offers few alternative channels for within school promotion; and
- Constantly providing training for primary school managers (head teachers, PTA and SMCs executives) to keep them updated about the new effective leadership styles which focus on human resource management, management for results or goal oriented strategic institutional planning, cost-sensitive decision making;

- Greater amount of donor support directed to in-service rather than pre-service teacher training programs;
- Failure by the district service commissions (DSCs) to recruit and deploy a backlog of newly qualified teachers. For example, there was a prolonged delay in renewing the term for the old Moroto DSC, leading to cumulating numbers of undeployed newly qualified teachers; and
- Failure to define the award to be given to the graduates of the proposed training program for ABEK facilitators. However, basing on the discussion the research team held with the Assistant Commissioner for SNE and SCIU officials, it appears this hurdle has been resolved. The training of ABEK facilitators is due to commence early next year 2010. The graduates of the program will initially serve a two year probationary period before becoming eligible for an additional one year training leading to the award of a Grade III teaching certificate.

KEY EMERGING ISSUES

Pre – primary and Primary Schooling

Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja

ABEK is generally viewed as a good and useful approach for the region, and with its “open door policy” the out of school youth and some interested adults find it suitable for their participation in learning. “Both the sedentary and mobile ABEK help to create awareness and teach how to read and write, and is beneficial to the ex – warriors who have come back from the bush”, Youth, Kalapata Sub County. Once instructors identify some bright learners in the mobile ABEK, they meet their parents and agree to shift them to the formal primary schools. However, the mobile ABEK is still susceptible to frequent raids usually causing the boys to get scattered or disappear and, therefore, is not supported by the mothers. At the same time there are few kraals so not many boys will continue to be available for the mobile ABEK.
There are still mixed feelings regarding the strength of the linkages between formal primary schools and ABEK centres. ABEK Instructors and related literature indicate that ABEK centres are increasingly linking up with formal primary schools in undertaking joint activities like sports. However, the primary schools in the neighbourhood of some ABEK centres around Kaabong (Kalapata), Kotido (Nakapelimoru) and Moroto (Lokodiokodioi) rural communities reported that there were no linkages so far. Primary school staff were not even aware about the objectives and operational modalities of the ABEK centres. The two models are still distanced from each other. Linkages between the centres and formal primary schools had been identified as an effective strategy for interesting the Karimojong children to take up formal primary schooling, and partly address the problem of persistent drop out in formal education system.

There is still no formal procedure to determine eligibility of ABEK learners for particular classes in the formal schools. The ABEK focal teachers in primary schools facilitate in screening ABEK graduates for entry into the formal primary schools. There is still need for developing a placement tool.

MoES has put in place the NFE policy. ABEK Instructors, ranked as NFE teachers, will undergo a three year course and qualify with equivalence of Grade III. The three year course has been developed by MoES and Kyambogo University, and will be conducted by Moroto Core PTC.

Lodapalia learning centre in Moroto district
Formal Primary Schools

Participation in school is erratic and is lowest during planting seasons (May – August) and famine. Characteristic of all rural schools countrywide, children are withdrawn from the schools to work on the gardens and transferred to other regions in search of food respectively. Attendance at school is relatively poorer among the pastoral communities.

Attendance and retention of children at school has been poor in the region, especially for girls. Low retention of girls is attributed to lack of interest to participate in education, pregnancy, lack of school fees, parents’ background and demands to engage in household chores particularly for the ten – year olds. Special initiatives have been put in place to attract and promote girl – child participation. The World Food Programme is supporting the Take – Home Ratio. It is both a reward and an incentive for both parents and the beneficiary girls to participate in formal schooling. It also aims at motivating other parents and girls to enroll and participate in learning for a longer period. This has generally contributed to improvement in attendance and retention of girls in the schools. In some schools like Lokodiokodio P/S GEM is supporting clubs with the aim of promoting girl – child participation. Girls interact with some women from working class, who as role models demonstrate to girls the immediate and tangible benefits of attending and completing school such as gaining entry into the employment market and earning income, better way of life and others.

The MoES and WFP are jointly implementing the Karamoja project for school feeding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WFP synopsis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Meals which includes Wet feeding for all children and Take – Home Ratios for girls in P4 – P7, who attend at least for 70% of the term duration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Saving Stoves to schools and 26 out of 29 schools in Kotido have already benefitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Gardening and Woodlords which supports schools in production of food to supplement WFP supplies such as vegetable and fuel wood for cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with UNICEF in construction of boreholes and latrines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with UNICEF and FAO to address food security and improve water sanitation and education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MoES also provides seeds for school gardening. A pilot project has been done in some selected primary schools that were availed seeds and the results were encouraging. This could be scaled up such that schools with reliable sources of water could tend gardens and supplement their nutrition requirements and WFP feeding programe, and sale the extra produce to generate revenue for purchasing children’s school requirements.
Primary School | Farming activity
--- | ---
Kaiku and Namalu Mixed, Nakapiripirit district | Cassava production and community were availed seedlings from the school
Kanu in Abim district | School orchards for mangoes and guava production
Panyangara in Kotido district | Poultry production at commercial scale
Losakucha in Kotido district | Maize, groundnuts, beans and vegetable production with NAADS support
Primary one produced six bags of groundnuts and sold three to raise money for uniform
Komukuny Girls in Kaabong district | Goat and turkey rearing for sale to buy food and hire labour

MoES – Karamoja Project report, 2009

WFP support strategy of school feeding and IGA to homes partly contributed to strengthening of linkages between homes and schools. The WFP for School Meals still excludes many children who are not participating in formal primary schools such as under ABEK and in the homes. A collaborative effort involving WFP, NAADS, District Production, Water and Education Offices in promoting school gardening is likely to generate positive results in food production and community involvement (provide land and labour), and also contribute to increased children participation in school.

Challenges to the school feeding programme include occasional delays in food delivery by donors leads to drop in attendance, delays to cook food due to lack of water as in some cases children have to collect water before getting food, dire lack of latrines, kitchen and stores.

UNICEF and other players have been supportive in addressing the problem of water shortage in schools across the region. Boreholes have been sunk within or in the neighbourhood of most primary schools. Kotido district is relatively worse off in availing water to the schools as children are more burdened to carry water over long distances.
Okwapon primary school in Nakapiripirit district

UNICEF through FENU and SCU are supporting schools in the region to engage in games and sports to promote and motivate children’s participation in education. Schools have been supplied with balls for football, netball and volleyball. This has registered positive results as children tend to stay longer than previously at school and engage on games. The parents in the neighbouring communities also visit the schools during the time for games to watch their children while playing, and in some cases participate directly. Some schools have performed relatively well in zonal, district and regional tournaments to the amazement of the communities and parents, such that they have started supporting their children in this regard. The region has a comparative advantage in sporting activities like javelin and could excel at national level and even produce international champions if it is well managed.

The prevailing security and environmental uncertainties in the region like cattle rustling, droughts, and floods affected PES. These same factors are also partly responsible for the poor state of most PES facilities like play grounds.

Poverty hinders children participation in co-curricular activities and traditional games especially when parents lack financial ability to buy knickers for girls. One parent withdrew his son who was going to participate in zonal games claiming that games were not in anyway going to contribute to the household survival thus during that period the boy had to take cattle for grazing. Also the head teacher lamented that “the community stole the goal post and was recovered by SMC from one homestead being used as a
fencing pole and has not been replaced due to lack of funds by school”. Also the presence of children in schools depends on the availability of food from world food programme, in case of shortages or delays the attendances of PES activities steadily drops. And in areas where some families cultivate the attendance drops during harvesting seasons.

Though Government policy does not support boarding sections in primary schools, the Local Governments and some communities have opted for it. This is very suitable for the region due to insecurity, and long distances for some children (up to five kms from school). In some cases even the day scholars stay at the boarding sections at night (such as Lokodiokodiol primary school). This initiative has greatly contributed to children’s’ attendance and retention in upper primary sections. We prefer our children to be in boarding schools and will struggle to keep them there but providing beds is still difficult”, Elders in Kamion village.

Kalotom primary schoolin Moroto district

While boarding session have been introduced and highly supported by parents, there are issues to do with infrastructure and equity. Currently some schools use the classrooms as dormitories and some NGOs have offered boarding sections, but it is still the well to do who can afford to maintain their children in boarding sections. Some user fee of 10,000/= to 15,000/= is charged to maintain child in the boarding section. Most parents cannot afford this amount under the current economic hardships, and feel that some external support should be solicited.

The current insecurity, constant threats from warriors and location of schools prevents children from moving to primary schools as many are relatively far away especially in the pastoral areas.
There is persistent high drop-out rate in the P4 – P7 classes, low completion of the primary education cycle and thus relatively few UNEB centres especially in the pastoral areas. Drop outs in schools are highest among the P4 – P7 category of learners. Children in this age bracket are traditionally viewed as being mature enough for the girls to get married and boys to fend for themselves. Parents also stop providing for their school needs. Upon being sent away from school due to non payment of school fees and lack of other requirements like uniform and pens the parents retain them, and eventually they get absorbed in out–of–school activities like cattle keeping, petty business and peer social engagements. The causes of school drop outs were ranked in descending order as, lack of parental support, parental and peer influence and desire to become independent.

The parents concurred that high drop outs occur in the P4 – P7 category for the reasons mentioned above, mainly due to poverty, insecurity, hunger and neglect by parents. Girls are mostly seduced while at school and could be safer if retained in boarding sections and offered a separate wing. “Due to poverty I am able to pay for P1 –P3 not the ones in P4 – P7 since they can find something to do and get on with life. Adults sleep alone and can easily escape and go to disco so why bother myself with those”, Community in Morulem Sub County. The teachers in Nakapelimiru primary school observed that the option of using the army to force children from the manyatta and kraals to go to school was used but proved ineffective. At one time the army forced children to register, and after some 500 had responded they returned home after the army had withdrawn.

Schools are willing to engage in school gardening to contribute to their feeding needs provided except cattle keeping as it attracts rustling.

Kalotom primary school in Moroto district
Teacher Training and Support

The region lacks teachers who are indigenous Karimojong. There are relatively few learners who complete the primary education cycle and the majority hardly attains the minimum requirements for entry into PTCs. “There is still lack of ownership of education. Student attitude and perception is still negative. This has affected student participation. At times we recruit say 80 students and leave 20 for the indigenous but still no response even after making announcements in church at least for the last four years”, Principal, Kotido PTC. Most of the indigenous school leavers who qualify to enroll in PTCs opt for secondary education and other fields of career, which are viewed as more lucrative as opposed to teaching. The minimum entry requirements to PTCs are still not favourable for the aspiring indigenous primary teacher trainees.

The persistent lack of indigenous Karimojong teachers has resulted in recruitment and deployment of teachers from the neighboring regions, especially Teso and Sebei. In some schools there is no indigenous Karimojong teacher, especially among the Jie and Ik communities in Kotido and Kaabong respectively. This has impacted negatively on the teaching of the thematic curriculum as the teachers cannot effectively interact with the learners in the local language/dialect. The Local Governments have made some effort to organize refresher courses for teachers to perfect in the local dialects but in most cases the learners play this role during class.

There has been great effort in recruiting and deploying teachers, with districts like Abim, Kotido and Moroto within target of the staff ceiling, while Kaabong and Nakapiripirit still lag behind but have recently make remarkable progress under QEI. However, teacher retention is still a major problem particularly in the remote areas of Kaabong and Nakapiripirit. The situation is worsened by lack of staff accommodation and insecurity. Some schools have opted to employ licensed teachers and ABEK Instructors who are resident in the neighboring communities, which have contributed to stability in the staff levels.

The recent efforts by MoES to clean the payroll have resulted in reduction of number of teachers not on the payroll in the region. Schools like Kamion in Kaabong district have four out of the nine teachers approved under the staff ceiling. The school is prone to insecurity and thus staff turn over is high. Availability of accommodation and school fencing will go a long way in addressing the problem of staff turn over. The WFP is constructing 18 staff houses in selected schools in the region but still calls for partnership from other players.
The teachers view the current teacher training curriculum as being adequate in content to prepare them for teaching effectively. This is especially in the core subjects like English and Mathematics. However, it does not prepare them for the same purpose in Arts and Crafts, Music and local language skills. The practical sessions during training at college are relatively few, and there are no refresher courses in these disciplines, save for music. Refresher courses need to be tailored to teaching needs in Karmoja region.

The ABEK Instructors are recruited from amongst the school leavers within the community. They lack the minimum requirements for direct entry to PTCs. Training is conducted by the SCU, Ministry and District Education Department, while the PTCs do not have any professional involvement in the ABEK programme. The MoES has released funds to Moroto Core PTC for training of ABEK instructors, which demonstrates that the role and importance of the PTCs in professional development of the Instructors has been realized. While the two PTCs are national institutions with the prime mandate to produce teachers for primary education system, they are well placed to play a central role in training and continuous professional development of the ABEK instructors. The PTCs should adopt modalities that support teacher development for the region.

The current staff establishment ceiling combines both ABEK instructors and teachers in formal primary schools which tends to distort the actual teacher requirements situation in primary schools as the criteria for PTR is not the same.

LESSONS LEARNT, CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

The preceding exploration of the contribution of the ABEK, primary and primary teacher training to quality and equitable education service delivery in Karamoja (against the background of the social, economic, political, geographical, cultural and demographic realities of the sub-region) highlights some strategic achievements and limitations of each of the current delivery modalities. It is on the basis of that analysis that some lessons are drawn, conclusions emerge and some policy suggestions for corrective action are made as follows:

Lessons learnt

The Karimojong communities still conform to their cultural and social values. Their lifestyle typifies the same values. External intervention, originally considered with hostility, has penetrated the communities, and is slowly but surely transforming the society. The settlements are mixture of traditionalism and modernity.

In light of community’s opening up to external intervention, the Karimojong have also embraced education, though not purely conventional. The process of introducing education calls for involvement of the communities to ensure that their interests as imbedded in their traditional values become central.
The result of accommodating external modern way of life has made the community to recognize and appreciate the need for engaging in other activities to earn income and meet their day – to – needs. The Akarimojong appreciate the needs for and benefits of formal education, but acknowledge that it comes at a cost. They have to let their children from the homesteads and contribute to their school needs. This calls for the desire to earn income.

The existing primary schooling approaches, especially ABEK and ECD are well rooted among the Karimojong pastoral community. Even the agro - sedentary communities in ABIM are expressing desire to access the approach. Currently the communities have understood and appreciated, and are embracing formal primary schooling as the most ideal for the young boys and girls.

The Karimojong cultural norms required the communities and parents to keep the children within the family till adulthood when both boys and girls would marry and start their own families. This is gradually changing as the Karimojong have not only embraced the practice of education for the children, but also releasing them to stay in boarding sections of primary schools.

The current innovations and interventions in primary schools aimed at promoting children’s presentation and completion such as school feeding, sports for life, GEM, take home ratio, water and sanitation and school gardening, among others have registered commendable success. All players in education provision including district education managers, parents, teachers and learners have not only welcomed them, but also participated actively.

While the role of the teacher is paramount in children’s success in learning, interventions to support teachers in recruitment, training and accommodation have not been programmed in tandem with the peculiar demands of the region. Recruitment policies, staff retention schemes and professional development programmes have not been tailored towards ‘Karamoja – specific’. None involvement of PTCs in ABEK programmes (till recently) and adoption of national level criteria to deploy CCTs in the region, are some of the examples.

**Conclusions**

The Karamoja region still lags behind in achieving the EFA targets. Children’s participation in primary schooling remains wanting. The root causes of this unfortunate trend are clear and diverse, but surmountable. There is growing optimism that things are changing for the better. The change in the community and other stakeholders’ mindset, the gradual collapse of the monoculture “cattle economy” and the improvement in the overall security situation are heralding new opportunities for genuinely effective reform of education service delivery in Karamoja.
Policy suggestions
The analysis of the achievements and challenges faced in the operating ECD, ABEK, Primary education and teacher development delivery approaches in Karamoja allows for the derivation of policy suggestions to be incorporated in future programming as follows:

For enhance the ABEK system

- The local governments should, in collaboration with UNICEF, SCU, IRC, The Churches, ADRA, TPO and FOCREV consider constructing low cost skeletal physical infrastructures at the sedentary ABEK centers – mainly the stores, classrooms, toilets and kitchens.
- Similarly, the idea of a “mobile” school modeled along the lines of Iran’s “tent” schools could be tried for the mobile ABEK centers. Camels could be used to ease periodic relocations of the tent school. This should also include making provision for accessories such as basic furniture items, scholastic materials and water;
- This would, in turn, call for the strengthening of the monitoring/inspectorate arm of the district local governments to render support supervision by providing monitoring assistants with bicycles/motor-cycles to ease their mobility between the widely dispersed learning centers and mobile schools under their jurisdictions; The feeder roads leading to these facilities which become impassable during the rainy season need opening up. The local district governments could earmark part of their LGDP budgets for this purpose;
- Incorporate Special Needs Education (SNE) into ABEK’s program design so as to make it a truly inclusive intervention that it is meant to be;
- Since the value of education is just starting to be appreciated by the Karimojong people, a sustained education awareness and sensitization effort is needed to bring about a complete attitudinal change and a genuine willingness by the community to fully embrace education; and

To enhance primary education delivery

- Given the peculiarities of the Karamoja environment characterized by widespread insecurity and hunger, boarding primary education ought to be embraced as the most cost-effective modality for delivering secular education for at least upper primry (P4-P7);
- A SMART incentive structure similar to the take home food package or cost-free provision of sanitary pads for older girls ought to be developed to boost school attendance and curtail school dropout rates;
- Enforce the regulations on compulsory education.
- Develop remedial or catch-up education programs for primary school drop outs.
- There is need to identify and promote suitable IGA massively across the entire region to mitigate poverty and famine as this will gradually release children to participate in education.
Explore the possibility of seeking NAADS support to school gardens to supplement WFP School feeding programmes and gradually make schools sustain themselves. The WFP could partner with the local communities in the provision of tractors, other farm implements and land to combat endemic food insecurity.

The possibility of adopting a more cost-effective technology (e.g. solar panels) for water provision in schools should be explored to promote irrigation-fed vegetable gardening in schools. The proceeds from such income generating projects can be used to supplement children’s nutritional as well as educational needs.

Novel approaches to community mobilization with a strong public appeal, including the “edutainment” initiative (an approach that combines education with entertainment activities) should be employed. Accordingly, there should be continued support to promote sporting activities in the schools.

Review the infrastructural and facility set up for primary schools in the region to provide for enough staff accommodation, stores, fencing, water source and boarding sections for P5 – P7 learners especially in rural and highly insecure areas. External support from UNICEF, WFP, ADRA, SCU, SFG, IRC, MEDEA, KOPOIN, the Churches, e.t.c ought to be solicited to provide lighting, water and other amenities. For feasibility reasons, it will be important to:

- Agree on effective procurement systems to support school construction drawing on the lessons from the Primary School Facilitation Grant (SFG). Contributions in kind and other resources could be used to leverage the funds earmarked for construction and rehabilitation work;
- Prioritize a phased building program for UPPET which should gradually roll out from the most severely underserved areas/populations to the more moderately less privileged regions; and

To improve teacher availability and performance
In order to alleviate the problem of shortage, inequitable distribution and poor motivation of teachers in Karamoja are the following:

- Address the bottlenecks arising from low teacher salaries, and a flat school organizational structure that offers few alternative channels for promotion within the school ranks – leading to high teacher turnover. Newer modalities for determining teachers’ salaries with a view to developing criteria that link pay to actual productivity rather than qualification of the teacher could be tried;
- Decide on teacher recruitment and deployment approaches for primary education to meet school-specific demands equitably. More decentralized mechanisms for hiring of teachers would be preferable. Granting schools the authority to independently recruit and deploy teachers could also be considered;
- Make the school environment teacher-friendly by constantly providing training for institutional school managers to keep them updated about the new effective leadership styles which focus on management for results or goal oriented strategic institutional planning, cost-sensitive decision making. Introduction of performance-based contractual employment norms for head teachers to target desired outcomes such as improved examination results, more equitable enrolment, more efficient deployment of teaching staff, e.t.c; could help.
Provision of teacher housing is paramount especially in the insecure Karamoja context.

- Consider some variant of affirmative action for the indigenous Karimojong, and especially female applicants with a view to increasing their intake to teacher training programs including relaxing the policy for admission to PTC;
- The definition of staff ceilings should be sub-sector specific. The lumping of ABEK together with formal primary education in the determination of district ceilings and teacher payroll is very restrictive.
- Revisit the decision to phase out licensed teachers (LTs) to allow the continued hiring of capable indigenous Karimojong to handle the thematic curriculum while the non-Karimojong teachers are retained to teach upper primary;
A. Cultural, Social and Economic Aspects

i. The need to identify and promote suitable IGA massively across the entire region to mitigate poverty and famine as this will gradually relieve children to participate in education

ii. Relieve parents of support to learners in P4 – P7 at least for four years to promote retention and completion since it is viewed as burden in view of the chronic poverty and hunger

iii. Since the value of education is just starting to be appreciated by the Karimojong people, a sustained education awareness and sensitization effort is needed to bring about a complete attitudinal change and a genuine willingness by the community to fully embrace education

B. Primary Schooling

iv. The possibility of changing the technology for water provision to schools should be explored. Use of solar panels is feasible to provide adequate water to some schools, particularly the peri urban to engage in vegetable gardening through use of irrigation. This supplements children’s nutrition needs and school income base to provide children’s school needs

v. There should be continued support to promote sporting activities in the schools such that parents get motivated by their children’s participation

vi. Explore the possibility of seeking NAADS support to school gardens to supplement WFP School feeding programmes and gradually make schools sustain themselves. The current initiatives in schools and communities by WFP need to be supported and promoted. Special consideration should be towards focusing on Nakapiripirit and Abim districts with relatively suitable weather conditions, where schools could be provided with tractors directly for cultivation of cassava, sunflower, maize, etc with the community offering land and labour.

vii. Review the infrastructural and facility set up for primary schools in the region to include enough staff accommodation, store, fencing, water source and boarding sections for P5 – P7 learners especially in rural and highly insecure areas to ensure control and retention. This should be accompanied by external support for feeding and lighting. Consolidation of current efforts by UNICEF, WFP, ADRAA, SCU, SFG, MEDEA and KOPOIN in this regard will be central towards achievement of good results.

viii. Girls who get pregnant be allowed to return to school after giving birth if they so wish. Boys found responsible be fined

ix. The regulation of compulsory education for children be reinforced
x. Construct units for ABEK centres among the sedentary communities, including classroom blocks and toilets.

xi. Both sedentary and mobile ABEK should be maintained and sustained. Stronger emphasis should be on sedentary ABEK in light of increasing transformation of nomadic livelihoods to sedentary.

xii. Districts to document emerging issues in compiling data on ABEK approach like centres, number of learners, etc for sharing with ministry and adopting a modest way of verification

xiii. A SMART incentive structure similar to the take home food package or cost-free provision of sanitary pads for older girls ought to be developed to boost school attendance and curtail school dropout rates;

xiv. The local governments should, in collaboration with UNICEF, SCU, IRC, The Churches, ADRA, TPO and FOCREV explore possibilities for constructing low cost physical infrastructures at the ABEK centers – mainly the stores, classrooms, toilets and kitchens. This should also include stepping up the supply of basic furniture items, scholastic materials and water;

xv. There is urgent need to strengthen the monitoring/inspectorate arm of ABEK by providing monitoring assistants (and possibly the facilitators themselves) with bicycles/motor-cycles to ease their mobility between the widely dispersed learning centers under their jurisdictions;

xvi. This in turn calls for the opening up of the access roads to the centers. The local district governments could earmark part of their LGDP budgets for this purpose;

xvii. Incorporate Special Needs Education (SNE) into ABEK’s program design so as to make it a truly inclusive intervention that it is meant to be;

xviii. There is need to come up with a clearly graded ABEK progression structure with a well defined promotional ladder which dovetails with that of the primary education sub-system.

C. Teacher Training and Support

i. Fast track the formulation of a policy to formalize the ABEK teacher training program leading to a recognized professional award;

ii. Consider use of PTCs in professional development of ABEK Instructors starting with establishing a special training unit in the colleges. Develop and adopt an assessment system for ABEK learners to determine the suitable entry classes in the formal schools. Explore the possibility of continuity in ABEK for some youth to meet requirements for sitting PLE equivalent exams.

iii. Provide enough teachers to the formal schools especially in rural areas and recruit the indigenous school leavers for basic training and be recruited as licensed teachers
in lower primary for the thematic curriculum. Retain the non – indigenous teachers for upper classes.

iv. Separate the ABEK instructors from formal primary school teacher payroll

v. Consider alleviating the shortage of ABEK facilitators in the short term by redeploying the recently phased out Licensed Teachers (LTs) to the ABEK centers. These are more trainable as they have already been practicing teachers and have at least the O’level qualification. UNICEF and other like-minded partners could then be requested to provide the necessary bridge-funding for the extra wage bill implications;

vi. Given the peculiarities of the Karamoja environment characterized by widespread insecurity and hunger, boarding primary education ought to be embraced as the most cost-effective modality for delivering secular education;

vii. Consider some variant of affirmative action for the Karimojong and female applicants with a view to increasing their intake to teacher training programs including relaxing the policy for admission to PTC.