

- Experience the cross cutting issues in the IDP camps and learning centers and cause a further intervention that will enhance the quality of education in northern and eastern Uganda.-

Field Report Assessment on the Impact of Conflict on Education



Northern Region Education Forum

July 2005



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**FIELD REPORT ON ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT
ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN NORTHERN AND NORTH
EASTERN REGIONS OF UGANDA**

INTRODUCTION:

During the 5th NREF consultative meeting in Lira October 2004, the forum drifted away from just workshops to action. In Muyenga, a year long activities were drawn and one of them was to have a field trip to share experiences by the select committee members and some identified officials so that when they speak, they do it from an informed position.

Therefore, this field trip was to assess the impact of the conflict on the quality of education in north and northeastern Uganda with the following objectives;

- To create an opportunity for the NREF select committee, line ministries and development partners to team up and share field experiences on issues in IDP camps and learning centers and cause a further intervention that will enhance quality of the education in north and north Eastern Uganda.

- Assess the impact of conflict on quality of education and make recommendations that will feed into the 7th NREF meeting, other ministries review and Education Sector Review.

Members of the team:

Two groups were constituted one to visit Masindi and Kitgum in the north and the other Katakwi and Kaberamaido in the northeast. The team comprised of the following officials;

Northern Team	Eastern Team
1. Ms Margaret Ekwang–ADIS Masindi, NREF Chairperson and Team leader	1. Mr. Ocerro George Walter – DIS Kotido T/L
2 Rev. Ocheng Vincent O – DIS Gulu	2. Mr. Emaru Mackay – P/A OPM
3. Mr. Ejoru Alphonse – MoGLSD	3. Ms. Tamali Edinyu – DIS Lira
4. Mr. Onen Negris – MoES	4. Ms. Apio Ogaba – IS Pader
5. Mr. Deo Lukomwa AAIU Masindi	5. Mr. Ogwal SP – IS Apac
6. Mr. Oluka Julius – BEPS	6. Mr. Okila John Geoffrey – DIS Nebbi
7. Mr. Kirya Edward – DSO Masindi	
8. Mr. Lamakio C O-IS Kitgum	

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COVERAGE:

Four districts were chosen for the visit basing on the following criteria;

- Masindi – to represent host districts
- Kitgum - as a directly affected district
- Katakwi – practicing flexibility of government policies
- Kaberamaido - Having IDPs in Islands of Lake Kyoga

The schools visited include:

Masindi	Kitgum	Katakwi	Kaberamaido
➤ Kakokwo Ps	➤ Pajimo L/centre	Odoot Ps	Anyara Ps
➤ Bweyale Public	➤ Pajimo Army L/C	Amorwongora Ps	Otuboi Ps
➤ Bweyale Ps	➤ Kitgum Demo	Ngariam Ps	
	➤ Pagen Ps	Amuria Ps	
	➤ Ocetoke Ps	Kuju Ps	
		Aakum Ps	

METHODOLOGY:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Review of documents
- Documentations
- Testimonies by Learners (formerly abducted)
- Pre designed Questionnaires

FINDINGS:

Enrolment and staffing:

1. In Katakwi and Kaberamaido the people are slowly returning home from the camps hence schools have gone back to their original sites reducing the number of learning centers increasing accessibility to infrastructures. In some instances however, it was observed that parents and some teachers who have gone back to their homes have left their children in the camps leading to increase in number of child headed families and reducing the number of teachers in the learning centres.
2. Since the teachers who have gone back to their original schools left the children behind, they are redundant.
3. As a host district, Masindi district has integrated all the IDPs in the normal school situation and as a result the number of IDPs has over stretched the existing education resources. For instance, Bweyale Ps has an enrolment of 2, 890 of which 1, 744 are Internally Displaced Children (IDCs) against 29 teachers and 17 classrooms. This gives a teacher pupil ratio of 1: 99 and a classroom pupil ratio of

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1:170. It was observed in the three schools visited in Masindi that P1 – P4 did not have desks and in upper primary a three seater desk was being shared by 4 to 5 pupils.



3. Due to the influx of IDCs some schools in host districts have over lived their grading capacities making school administration impossible. E.g. A grade 3 primary school should by policy have about 300 pupils with only a head teacher and no deputy. Currently Bweyale Ps is a grade 3 school but has over 2,800 pupils.

P1 class at Bweyale Primary studying under a tree

4. It was also observed that host districts like Masindi, have tried to cope with the IDP influx using their own resources without much intervention from other players. As an example, Masindi has established 17 feeder schools to solve high congestion in schools all operating in temporary grass thatched classrooms or under trees.
5. The majority of schools and learning centres did not have qualified teachers to handle special needs education. Some efforts are being made to train special needs education teachers (SNET) in Masindi.

Recommendations:

1. Currently only five districts are considered as Hard to reach and benefit from hardship allowance. Government should consider providing incentives to teachers serving in all districts affected by conflict.
2. Government should urgently consider lifting the ban on the grading of some schools in host districts, which are heavily affected by the IDP influx in north and north eastern Uganda.
3. Government should continue training special Needs Education teachers and Local governments of affected districts to consider even deployment of teachers with special needs education skills to handle traumatized children.

Infrastructure:

1. On average, there were significant interventions by different stakeholders in learning centres in camps, which include latrines and classroom construction, provision of water tanks and boreholes and provision of instruction materials among others. However, in some instances the big

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number of users over stretched these facilities. In Pagen Primary school (Kitgum) for instance, latrines meant for pupils are also being used by, the camp residents, night commuters and the army making management difficult. By the time of the visit all latrines at Pagen were full and overflowing into one of the classrooms with maggots scattered everywhere. The H/teacher reported that they had no more land for latrine construction.



On a general note, there is inadequate furniture in most of the IDP schools in the lower primary classes, P1 – P4 sit on un-cemented floor or sometimes they improvise logs and stones for seats. Odoot Ps in Katakwi is a special case without any desk for any class. Further more it is also important to note that teachers lack adequate

Children sitting on the ground in a learning structure

furniture, in form of chairs, tables and benches. The situation is really dire in Bweyale public and Kakwokwo primary schools, Pagen and Pajimo primary schools.

2. Generally, schools and learning centres in the camps had at least a borehole as a source of water within reach. The situation was not as good in the host districts (Masindi) where schools share a water source with the entire community whether protected or not and in some cases located far away from school.
3. In many cases teachers and children with special needs did not have separate latrine facilities and had to share with the pupils. One teacher appropriately told the team **“when the pupils are using the latrines we have to re- program nature’s calls”**.
4. Where insecurity is still rife (like Kitgum) it was not possible to live in staff houses even if they were available. Teachers like anybody else are required to stay in the camps for security purposes. In Katakwi, Kaberamaido and Masindi, most teachers still commute from a distance to reach the schools. Even the few accommodated at school, live in temporary houses or huts constructed by the communities or teachers themselves.

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Recommendations:

- a. There should be harmonization and implementation of building standards to cater for children with special needs.
- b. Immediate intervention is called for in Pagen primary school because the sanitation situation is very awful.
- c. There is need for flexible use of LGDP and SFG grants to respond to prevailing needs at district level.
- d. Design appropriate latrine technology (e.g. emptiable systems) to cater for the overwhelming number of users.
- e. Whereas we appreciate the move by NUSAF to make their earlier funded school structures functional, NREF recommends that NUSAF should consider completing and furnishing even those classrooms built by other players.

Effectiveness of Teaching:

1. Generally there were efforts made by teachers to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans, deliver lessons, give exercises to pupils and assess pupil's work.
2. On average teachers deliver two to three lessons per day (instead of the recommended 8) due to more time spent on assessing pupils' work. This has resulted to low syllabus coverage.
3. Pupils' exercise books checked showed little topical content given to them for instance topics which should have been covered in first term were still being taught by the time of field visit (from 11th to 15th July 2005) .



4. It was observed that there is a high rate of pupil absenteeism due to hunger, sickness, fear for abduction and lack of writing materials such as exercise books, pens and pencils.

P1 pupils writing on the ground due to the lack of exercise books

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5. Due to the looming insecurity and trauma both learners and teachers lack concentration. Pajimo learning centre hosting six schools has no security provision and according to the teachers some children have been abducted while fetching water collecting local brooms just outside the school compound.
6. In the learning centres classes of the same level from different schools were combined in one classroom and taught by one teacher. This leaves the majority of teachers redundant thus engage in unethical activities such as drinking alcohol.
7. Teaching/learning aids were available in the learning centres and schools visited but there was little evidence that they were being used effectively since most of them were found smartly packed/ stored.
8. There was limited supervision of the learning centres and schools by district inspectors due to limited funding to the inspectorate and insecurity.
9. The ongoing modular restructuring that requires fewer staff especially for districts in modules one and two will worsen the effectiveness in school supervision.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen and harmonize the formulation of psychosocial policy framework, which should be rolled out to affected schools and communities.
2. MoES should fulfill their commitment of funding the inspectorate activities of monitoring and supervision from the Centre.
3. There stands a structural issue of inspectors supervising staff earning higher salaries than them rendering them a lower mandate. This also contradicts the government policy on staff appraisal. Government should review and harmonize inspectors' salary structure that will empower them to supervise and appraise the manpower in all education institutions.
4. DEOs and DIS should promote team teaching as a measure of handling big classes and reducing teacher redundancy and encourage individual schools in one learning centre to manage individual school activities and learning to ease accountability.
5. Since education delivery in conflict areas require more staff due to its unique challenges, MoES, MoPS and MoFPED should give special

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consideration by deploying one inspector per county for effective supervision.

Support and Welfare Provided

1. Most of the schools visited had health facilities nearby. However in some cases they are privately owned hence not easily affordable due to the biting poverty of the parents leading them to resort to use of herbs, which sometimes worsen the ailments.
2. Common diseases expressed in most learning centers include malaria, cough, diarrhoea, eye disease (red eyes), stomach pains and scabies. In Teso region they also mentioned epilepsy as another big problem. In Amorwongora Ps, there were five epileptic cases by the time of the visit.



3. **PIASCY** messages are displayed all over the compounds of most schools visited but there was no evidence of AIDS clubs in these schools and some children interviewed about the displayed messages could

not interpret them. Despite these efforts, eight girls in Pajimo Army School in Kitgum and two girls in Ngariam Ps in Katakwi were found pregnant.

4. No school was providing midday meals and none was benefiting from a school-feeding programme. Hunger and acute poverty have led to practices of early marriages and pregnancies e.g. 14 girls from Ngariam Primary school were married between December 2004 and June 2005 and 4 others were waiting for soldiers to get their salaries to be married. The Ngariam camp leader reported that the majority of girls say that **they would rather die of AIDS that kills slowly than dying of hunger, which is immediate.**

Recommendations:

1. School feeding programme to be fully implemented by local governments, MoES, WFP, and parents as a short-term measure.

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2. As a long term strategy, camp communities be provided with agricultural tools and security beefed up around the camps to facilitate large scale food production. Schools should be encouraged to open up school gardens especially where people have gone back to settle.
4. The CAO should strengthen the coordination of programmes within education sector by various development partners to provide better service delivery and OPM should come up and implement a clear policy of coordinating NGO activities in conflict areas.
5. Provide recreational facilities and equipment in the camps to occupy the camp residents.
6. Government to adjust SFG, UPE, LGDP grants for host districts like Masindi to cater for IDCs and consider them for NUSAF

Security:

Some security issues have been highlighted in the findings and the following are some recommendations

1. Strategies for restoration of peace and peace building should be strengthened
2. Strengthen the Military Public relationship through the office of the RDCs
3. Involve women in peace building initiatives
4. Police be instituted in all camps

NREF would like to lastly recommend that all the issues raised by this field report be integrated in the Northern Uganda rehabilitation master plan, the sector reviews for the different ministries and the district local government plans and programmes.