

GENDER POLICY BRIEF

FOR UGANDA'S EDUCATION SECTOR



FORUM FOR WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY



Gender Policy Brief for Uganda's Education Sector

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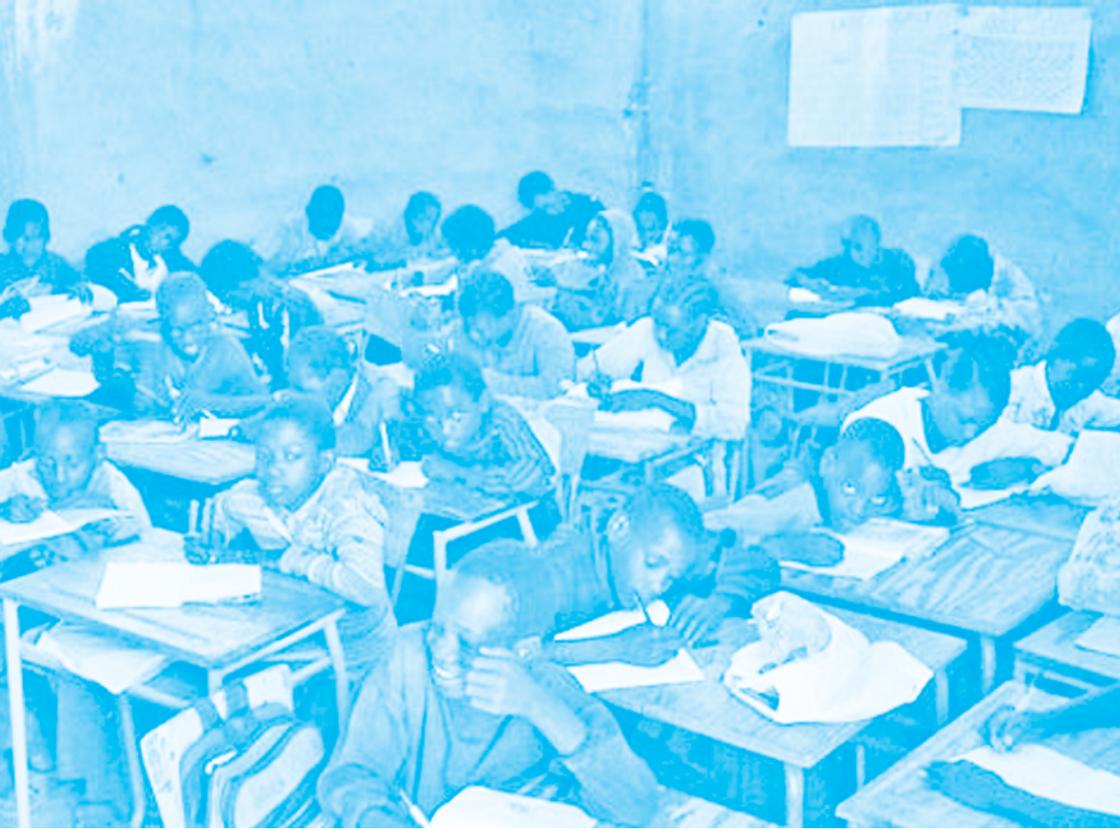
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GENDER POLICY BRIEF FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

Education is a fundamental human right as well as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and human development (World Bank, 1993). Article (30) of The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for education of Ugandan children as a human right. Historically, in Uganda like in many developing countries, girls and women have lagged behind in the education arena as compared to boys and men due to a number of gender and socio cultural factors.

The introduction of UPE has resulted in increased enrolment for boys and girls. As of 2006, net enrollment for girls and boys had reached 90.4 per cent and 93 per cent respectively. Despite high enrollment, completion rates at Primary Seven level are still low overall, and lower for girls. In 2006, 42 per cent of girls as compared to 53 per cent of boys completed primary school. Out of 908 boys and 899 girls who enroll in primary one, 685 boys are likely to join primary seven compared to 307 girls and 6.7 per cent girls drop out and repeat grades more than boys. Fewer girls are still enrolled at secondary level with statistics indicating that just one third of the girls who enrolled in primary are still in school at the age of 18, compared to half of the boys (UDHS, 2006). Girls also lag behind boys in grade promotion and learning achievement; their performance in national examinations such as PLE, UCE and UACE is much lower than that of boys as indicated by the UNEB Primary Leaving Examination results for the past five years (2004-2009). This Policy Brief mainly focuses on primary and secondary education as they are the foundation for education.



2. KEY GENDER ISSUES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Gender issues in the education sector manifest in several ways. In many cultures in Uganda, parents are reluctant to send their children, especially girls to school. This is significantly evident in poor, rural households and those with large families which require children's labour for food production and for care of younger siblings. Despite state subsidies and incentives such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE), many children of school going age are not in school generally due to costs attached to sending children to school that parents often cannot meet. Whilst high costs for education affect both boys' and girls' participation in education, the key causes of drop-out and absenteeism amongst girls are mainly: early pregnancy; sexual harassment; female genital mutilation; and lack of gender sensitive sanitation facilities in schools. (MGLSD, 2008)

The gender issues being discussed here are identified using comparable data from the National Service delivery Survey 2004, and Uganda National House hold survey 2005 /06 and other available literature. The major issues include: access to primary and secondary education; dropout rates in primary and secondary schools; completion of primary education; and performance both at primary and secondary levels.

2.1 Access to Primary and Secondary Education

As indicated by the statistics in section 1, girl's access to education both at primary and secondary level continues to be lower than that of boys especially in rural and remote areas. Girls are more disadvantaged than boys because of gender, socio-cultural and economic issues. It has been noted that in many poor, rural and large families in Uganda, parents are reluctant to send their children especially girls to school as they provide family labour for food production, and care of younger siblings and cultural factors among other reasons.

Notably many poor households are forced to make choices between girls and boys when it comes to accessing education. In fishing, cattle keeping and tea estate communities, the gender dimension shifts and boys are more disadvantaged in accessing both primary and secondary education as these activities have a commercial and masculine element where boys' labour is deemed more paramount and efficient as compared to girls'.

Disability is also another factor stopping children from accessing education especially at primary level, despite the increasing promotion of special needs education. In FY 2009/2010 there was a general decrease in the percentage of children who did not attend school because of disability as compared to FY 2005/2006. The decrease among girls was far lower compared to that of boys. Boys reduced by 3 percentage points while girls decreased by 0.5 percentage points reflecting a gender inequality in accessing school by disability.

Research indicates that over 90 per cent of children living in male headed households have ever attended school and that girls in male headed households are less likely to attend than their male counterparts. Children living in female headed households are less likely to attend school than those in male headed ones.

Gender disparity in accessing education has a number of implications especially for girl children and causes them to lag behind their male counterparts. Early marriages and teenage pregnancies continue to be on the rise and these are associated with high risks of exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The boys involved in child labour as highlighted above are also equally vulnerable. These historical trends in access to education have led to high illiteracy levels especially among adult women in the country. Overall, the adult illiteracy rate in Uganda has stagnated at 30 per cent and almost half of adult women in Uganda are illiterate compared with 23 per cent of adult men (NDP, 2010) . These issues have eventually led to low self esteem, lack of skills and low economic power among the women. Important to note here is the fact that these disparities impact not only on the individual women but on the country at large thus leading to low output and productivity of the population.

2.2 Dropout rates in primary and secondary education

Completion of primary education is target 3 of Millennium Development Goal 2 which aims at ensuring that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

From the statistics presented in section 1 and 2.1, it is clear that the dropout rate for girls both in primary and secondary schools is much higher than that of boys. Generally, the major reasons why children drop out of school are; high school expenses, lack of willingness to attend school, and domestic work (MFPED, 2008).

For the girl child, there are additional factors that lead to higher dropout rate and these include: early marriage, teenage pregnancy, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, and lack of gender sensitive sanitation facilities at school. Furthermore, girls are forced out of school due to household income constraints as a result of many competing priorities. As a result parents are forced to make a choice between educating a girl and a boy and in most cases the girl is at a disadvantage.

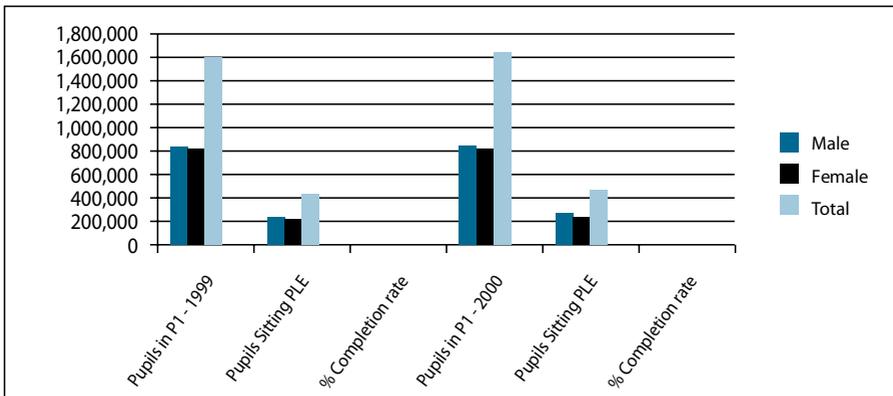
Another gender concern in the sector is that, over the years, the number of qualified female teachers has remained persistently lower than that of their male counterparts. Women constitute 39.8 per cent and 25 per cent of the primary school and secondary school teachers, respectively. Research indicates that there is a significant relationship between the presence of female teachers in school and the retention of the girl child as well as their achievement. A female role model can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies. She can also be there to listen to girls problems and provide guidance when necessary. In schools where girls are in the minority especially, the presence of one or more female teachers may also ensure girls protection from unwanted attention from boys or male teachers and even from sexual abuse and exploitation. At the school policy level, women teachers may act as advocates for girls, representing their perspective and needs, and promoting a more girl friendly learning environment. For example they may advocate for better toilets and in terms of puberty, menstruation, sex and reproductive health, female teachers have an important role to play in providing accurate information about girls bodies and how to look after themselves.

2.3 Completion of primary and secondary education

Low completion rates of primary and secondary education is one of the major issues in the education sector. As already highlighted in section 1, the completion rates at primary level are low for both boys and girls but significantly lower for the girls. Almost half of

the entire children who begin P1 cannot complete P7. The major reasons why pupils do not complete their school cycle include; high education costs, lack of interest, sickness/ calamity, and being orphaned. Despite Universal Primary and Secondary Education, parents/guardians have to pay other costs to cater for lunch and scholastic materials and most of them cannot afford. A 2004 UBOS report indicated that high dropout rates led to low completion rates both among girls and boys as shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Pupils’ Enrolment and completion of seven years of schooling by gender



Source: Uganda Education Statistical Abstracts, 2005, 2006; UBOS 2004

From the above figure, it is evident that generally primary completion rates for both boys and girls are still very low as compared to the enrollment rates. The completion rates for girls are even much lower. This trend has negative impacts on both boys and girls and on the country at large and these include; low literacy levels, low economic empowerment, and low skilled manpower. As a result, the country experiences low productivity levels in the population nationally as well as building a high momentum of a dependent population structure. In the case of girls, the situation is worse as they are forced into early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Overall, this trend if not checked is going to escalate the growth of a non quality population.

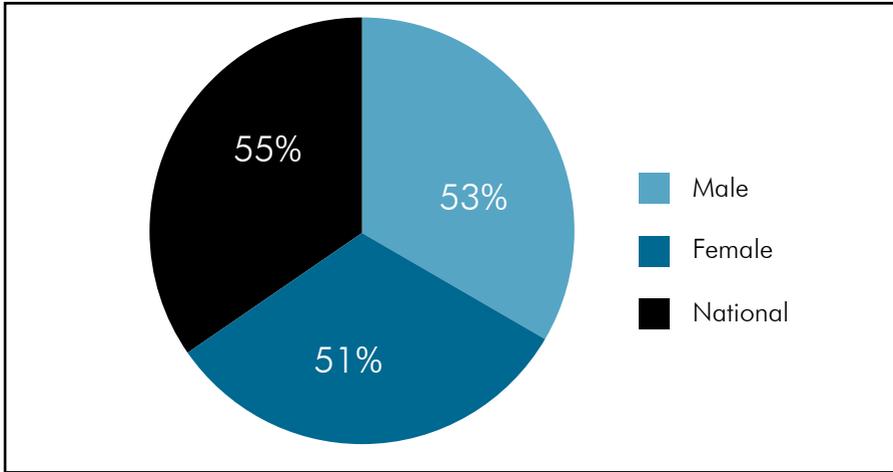
In terms of secondary education, the situation is similar to that of primary. There is a gender disparity in accessing and participating in secondary education. School enrolment trends show that while total enrolment for boys and girls is increasing, that of girls still lag behind the boys. The transition rates from P7 to senior one is only 60 percent for girls and 64 percent for boys, and fewer girls are enrolled at secondary level with one third of them still in school by age 18 compared to boys.

With girls having a high dropout rate in primary school and low grades at Primary Leaving Examination compared to their male counterparts, it becomes obvious that a few of them will be able to attain a secondary education or any other post primary training.

2.4 Performance at primary and secondary

Performance is an important factor in transition to higher levels of education. There are gender differentials in performance with boys generally performing better than girls. In some districts, performance differences between boys and girls are significantly high while in some the difference is minimal. Government in 2007 launched the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) policy as the equitable provision of post primary education and training to all Ugandan students who have successfully completed PLE. The programme commenced with pupils who passed in 2006. A head count exercise carried out in March 2008 by MoES established that a total of 163,758 (92,459 males and 71,299 females) were eligible for USE in senior one. While the policy aims at enhancing equitable provision of primary education, girls are evidently disadvantaged because of poor performance at primary level. For the policy to be successful, factors affecting equitable performance among boys and girls in the different geographical areas at PLE, have to be addressed. Many of these factors have gender, economic, and social-cultural dimensions already highlighted in the previous sections.

Figure 2: Primary Leaving Examination Performance Index, 2009



Source: MFPEd, April, 2011.

Figure 1 above indicates that the performance levels for both boys and girls nationally are generally still very low with national performance standing at only 53 per cent. Girls performance is lower (51%) but the difference from that of boys (55%) is not very significant. The reasons for this performance and disparities have already been highlighted in the previous sections.

The gender differential and equity issues in performance at secondary school follow the same pattern of access and participation. Girls continue to be disadvantaged over the boys and most of the districts with low access and participation indicators equally perform poorly. While on the average 95.6% of the students passed with at least Division 4 in FY 2009/10, there were glaring gender and geographical differentials with some districts having no female student passing in division one at all.

In 2000, four districts of Bundibugyo, Kalangala, Katakwi and Kotido had no female student passing in division one and the number of districts increased to 19 in 2008 (See table 1). With the deteriorating performance of female students, it's important to examine more

critically, the factors affecting their performance in the context of the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) Policy.

Table 1: Uganda Certificate of Education Performance (2008 division 1 scores) by Sex and District

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES PASSING IN DIV ONE.			TOTAL CANDIDATES
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
Adjuman	10	0	10	1327
Apac	40	25	65	1228
Arua	128	39	167	6027
Bugiri	26	0	26	1838
Bundibugyo	8	0	8	460
Busia	53	21	74	2263
Bushenyi	431	343	774	7360
Gulu	87	13	100	2764
Hoima	113	49	162	3005
Iganga	113	156	269	4862
Jinja	479	109	588	5540
Kabale	257	85	342	4608
Kabarole	76	37	113	2557
Kalangala	8	0	8	116
Kampala	1530	1091	2621	19334
Kamuli	64	15	79	3413
Kapchorwa	38	6	44	1464
Kasese	81	14	95	3385
Katakwi	4	0	4	354
Kibaale	65	29	94	2044
Kiboga	13	3	16	1097
Kisoro	26	12	38	1252

Kitgum	27	3	30	1444
Kotido	15	0	15	174
Kumi	49	7	56	1756
Lira	113	20	133	3872
Luwero	405	201	606	4964
Masaka	433	178	611	7296
Masindi	123	14	137	2702
Mbale	115	46	161	4741
Mbarara	459	209	668	4620
Mpigi	355	203	558	5519
Moroto	13	6	19	337
Moyo	24	1	25	1097
Mubende	54	20	74	1987
Mukono	904	569	1473	11908
Nakasongola	25	4	29	1056
Nebbi	14	0	14	1918
Ntungamo	141	27	168	2884
Pallisa	44	4	48	2237
Rakai	81	69	150	2349
Rukungiri	69	150	219	2848
Soroti	144	15	159	3832
Ssembabule	17	2	19	722
Tororo	145	163	308	3068
Kaberamaido	4	0	4	406
Kamwenge	29	8	37	919
Kanungu	40	7	47	1414
Kayunga	127	55	182	2533
Kyenjojo	21	0	21	1400
Mayuge	21	1	22	1250

Nakapiripirit	2	0	2	106
Pader	16	0	16	690
Sironko	21	0	21	1093
Wakiso	1787	1391	3178	21418
Yumbe	13	0	13	847
Amolatar	5	0	5	233
Amuria	5	1	6	475
Bukwo	5	1	6	423
Butaleja	20	1	21	790
Ibanda	61	17	78	1650
Isingiro	18	22	40	1046
Kaabong	3	0	3	134
Kaliro	30	10	40	906
Kiruhura	13	0	13	812
Koboko	28	0	28	1699
Manafwa	18	9	27	1680
Mityana	146	72	218	3342
Nakaseke	27	16	43	956
Abim	0	3	3	178
Amuru	12	0	12	635
Budaka	44	26	70	1078
Bududa	3	2	5	241
Bukedea	16	1	17	521
Buliisa	11	0	11	255
Dokolo	12	1	13	456
Lyantonde	12	3	15	255
Namutumba	5	3	8	407
Oyam	12	2	14	648
TOTAL	10,006	5,610	15,616	200,525



3. ATTEMPTS TO ADDRESS GENDER ISSUES IN THE EDUCATION

The Government of Uganda recognizes the problem of gender disparities in education and has thus taken positive steps to bridge the gender gap. In fact there is evidence that the education gender gap has been narrowing steadily overtime.

3.1 Universal Primary Education (UPE)

UPE was launched in 1997 following recommendations of the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC, 1989), the subsequent relevant stipulations of the Government White Paper (1992) and the development of the Children’ Statute. This policy has led to increased enrolment for both boys and girls in education and has greatly contributed to bridging the gender gap in enrolment.

3.2 The Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre (UNCDC)

UNCDC has been revising the primary curriculum since 1992 to make it more gender sensitive as part of the primary education reform.

3.3 Affirmative Action Policy

In 1990 government through the Ministry of education put in place affirmative action measures to increase girl's participation in education. Since then, a bonus point of 1.5 has been awarded to female students qualifying to enter public universities. This has increased enrolment of females at the university level from 23% in 1989 to 35% in 1999 and 41% in 2002 (Makerere University Academic Registrar's Records). The number of women graduates has since then significantly increased.

3.4 The National Strategy for Girls Education (NSGE)

This strategy was launched to foster gender parity in education. It acts as a master plan for use by all stakeholders in girls' education.

3.5 The Promotion of Girls Education (PGE) Scheme

This Scheme aims at improving girl's retention and performance at school. More than 1000 primary schools in 15 districts of Uganda have so far benefited from this scheme. The fund provides for the construction of latrines, classrooms, houses for senior women teachers and play grounds.

3.6. The Equity in the Classroom (EIC) Programme

This programme aims at facilitating equal participation of girls and boys in the classroom. It is a USAID funded program that provides technical assistance and training workshops whose great target is to increase girls 'classroom participation.

3.7 The Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (COPE) and the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK)

These are initiatives aimed at increasing the access of disadvantaged children who are not able to attend formal school, many of whom are girls.

3.8. The Classroom Construction Grant (CCG)

This grant facilitates the construction of classrooms and pit latrines for schools while specifically separating girl's pit latrines from those of boys to ensure privacy.

3.9. The Gender desk

A gender desk in the Ministry of Education and Sports was established to promote activities and programmes aimed at correcting gender imbalances in education. The gender desk aims at achieving equitable access to basic education, increased girls retention in schools, increased girls performance especially in science and mathematics, protection of girls against child abuse and other forms of molestation, reforming the curricular to make it gender sensitive, training and retraining teachers particularly senior women/men teachers and formulating a gender policy for the Ministry.

3.10 The Girls Education Movement in Africa (GEM)

This movement was launched in Uganda in August 2001. It aims to promote gender parity in education through enabling girls to realize and concertize their participation in education.

3.11 Child Friendly Schools programme

This is yet another intervention facilitated by UNICEF and Government of Uganda

3.12 Girls and Focusing Resources for Effective School Health (FRESH)

This focuses on provision of safe water and sanitation to schools, provision of washrooms for girls, urinals for boys and latrines with priority for girls and special emphasis on separation from boys' facilities. About 642 child (girl) friendly primary schools, including promotion of interactive methodologies have benefitted approximately 145,500 girls and 259,000 boys.



4. CONSTRAINTS TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING (GM) IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

4.1 Lack of gender analysis to inform the policy formulation, planning and budgeting processes in the education sector

It has been revealed from various reviews of the education sector plans and budgets that there is no conscious effort by sector planners and policy analysts to carry out a gender analysis before formulation of policies, strategic plans, programmes and associated budgets. Lack of gender analysis limits gender sensitivity of priorities and budget allocations in the sector. The education sector budget is more concerned with provision of scholastic materials, infrastructure, and teachers' salaries and not concerned about critical budget items

such as gender and socio-cultural barriers to education ie provision of sanitation facilities such as pads, employing more female teachers, financing the development of gender sensitive curricular, and sensitization of parents and communities on the importance of education.

4.2 High cost of education

Although Government has subsidized the cost of education through Universal primary and secondary education, the cost of education still remains high mainly for rural, poor households and those with large numbers of children. Despite UPE and USE, parents continue to pay some money to schools such as lunch fees, building fund, uniform fees, and transport among others. Aware of the increasing household income constraints arising from many competing priorities, parents are forced to make choices between educating a girl and boy and in most cases the girl child is disadvantaged.

4.3 Limited prioritization and funding of the Gender desk in the education Sector

Although the Gender desk was established to promote activities and programmes aimed at addressing gender imbalances in education. It is not allocated sufficient resources to facilitate the implementation of the activities therein. The few activities that are financed are on a very small scale, leaving out a big proportion of the population. The gender desk has also not been decentralized thus making it difficult for the few officers to cover the whole country.

4.4 Lack of a multi-sectoral mechanism

The Education sector does not have a clear multi-sectoral approach to support the implementation of the many good gender sensitive initiatives; many of them require strong collaboration and partnerships with other sectors and agencies.



5. KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) *Specific focus on providing education to girls and boys from remote and rural areas*

Past experience has demonstrated that one single set of educational strategies is not enough to achieve education for all goals. This policy brief thus calls for adoption of multiple, context-specific educational strategies that cater for the needs of those who cannot be served through conventional education methods and strategies. In this regard, experience shows that boarding schools can play an instrumental role in promoting access to education for children from remote or rural areas, particularly girls. Available research also suggests that apart from promoting children's access to schooling, the boarding school approach can be used to achieve

gender equality in enrolment, retention, and achievement; enhance the academic performance of children, especially girls; give security and protection to girls; protect children who are at the risk of emergencies; meet nutritional needs of children; promote the socialization and mainstreaming of children; reduce the cost of schooling; and provide an improved learning environment to children. A distinction should be made here between privately established, financed and managed boarding schools that cater for the children of more affluent families and those that are established, financed and managed through public means to serve underserved groups and children living under difficult circumstances.

ii) Address the high Population growth question and large families

Evidence suggests that there is a significant relationship between access, provision of quality education and the number of children in a household. In this regard, Government needs to come up with a strong population policy to reduce on the number of children families produce as this has a significant impact on access, participation and quality of education delivered both at primary and secondary levels. A strong birth control and family planning programme is required. The Ministry of Education must pick interest in this and collaborate with the lead agencies to address this in order to improve Education outcomes.

iii) Eliminate Child labour to increase enrolment, reduce dropout and increase completion

There exists a child labour policy which must be strongly enforced to protect children from child labour especially children in fishing, cattle keeping, quarrying and farming communities as well as child domestic workers. The MoES, the MGLSD and the MoLG should collaborate on this.

iv) Gender sensitive educational budgets

The education sector budget is more concerned with provision of scholastic materials, infrastructure, and teachers' salaries and not concerned about critical budget items such as gender and socio-cultural barriers to education. These software activities if allocated resources would improve the education outcomes. The sector is thus called upon to allocate and increase specific budgets for gender desks and also decentralize their operation to cover a large scope of the country.

v) Education sector Social Audit

To comprehensively address all the above concerns, the education sector should commission a Social Audit of its service delivery system and its impact on education outcomes. This will provide more evidence on the gender, socio-cultural and economic constraints and other issues affecting education achievements. This Audit will answer questions such as: why completion rates are very low at all levels despite high enrolment, dropout rates are high and performance is generally poor and the quality of education is deteriorating despite UPE and USE among many other questions.

6. CONCLUSION

A lot is happening at the sector level in terms of designing policies and interventions to address the gender and equity issues. However the key question is to what extent these initiatives effectively respond to the specific gender issues in the sector to result into the desired outcomes?

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FOWODE'S GENDER BUDGET PROGRAM

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is a women's non-governmental organization in Uganda. Since 1999, FOWODE has been implementing a Gender Budget Programme whose goal is to advocate for gender balanced budgets that address the needs of women and men, girls and boys equitably.

The Programme implements its activities through the following strategies:

- Capacity development
- Advocacy
- Mass mobilization
- Research and publication

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- The advocacy efforts for Gender Responsive Budgeting in Uganda resulted in the government of Uganda through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in 2006 initiating the Budget Call Circular directive on gender, directing spending agencies to indicate how they plan to address gender inequalities in their sector work plans and budgets.
- Developing capacities of over 3000 government technocrats, politicians and Civil Society Organisations to independently analyse and interrogate budgets from a gender perspective.
- Conducting research to assess how women and men benefit from national development programmes.
- Annually engaging in the budgeting process to influence government allocation of resources with the aim of improving service delivery especially for the poor people.
- Collaborating with civil society organisations through the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) to produce alternative budgets that provide alternative policy recommendations to government.
- Providing technical assistance to government at national and local level. In the past FOWODE in partnership with Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, produced a facilitators' manual on gender and equity budgeting for sector ministries and local governments. At the local level, FOWODE supported districts to develop Gender Policies and Gender Aware Budgets and Plans which provide a framework for the integration of gender in district plans and budgets
- Creating a critical mass of activists at the community level through the establishment of Village Budget Clubs at the grass root level to demand for improved and equitable service delivery.

This Policy Brief mainly focuses on primary and secondary education as they are the foundation for education. The gender issues being discussed here are identified using comparable data from the National Service delivery Survey 2004, and Uganda National House hold survey 2005 /06 and other available literature.

Our Vision

A just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making processes.

Our Mission

To promote gender equality in all areas of decision making through advocacy, training and research and publication.



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