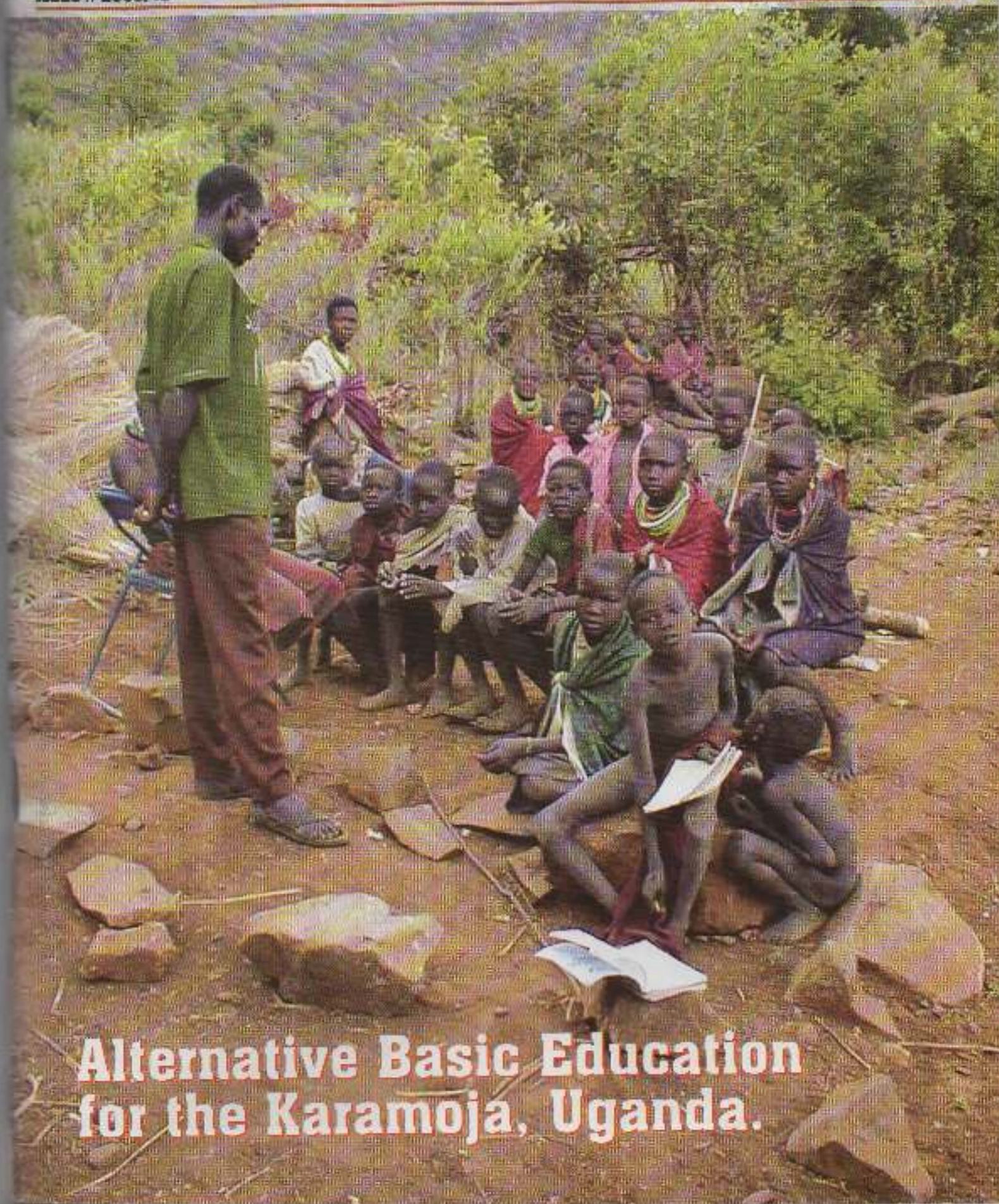




Nomadic News

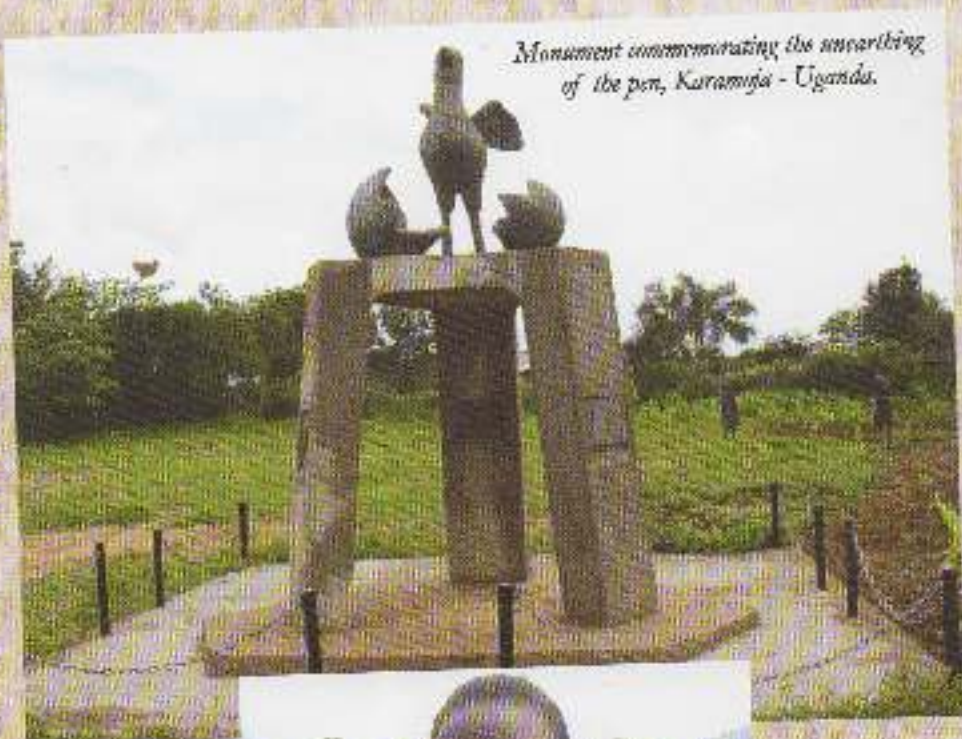
Issue # 2005/10

ISSN 1805-2102

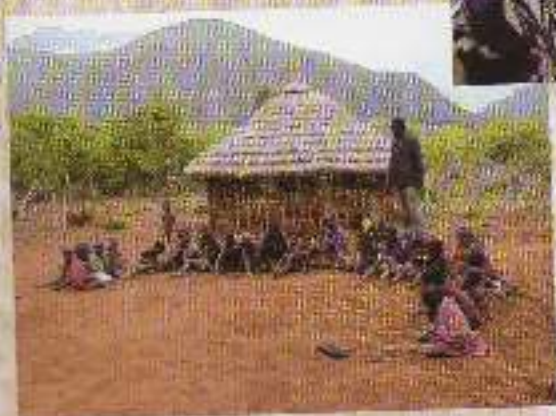


**Alternative Basic Education
for the Karamoja, Uganda.**

Pictorial



*Monument commemorating the unearthing
of the pen, Karamoja - Uganda.*



CHIEF EDITOR

Lucy Mutekwa

EDITORIAL BOARD

Abdullahi Ahmed

Lucy Mutekwa

Aden Hassen

Chak Segun

Mary Kariuki

Ruth Ekanikun

EDITORS

Nathan Chelimo - Save the Children, Uganda

Lucy Mutekwa

GUEST EDITORS

Krista Norland

Christine Sinclair

LAYOUT

Lucy Mutekwa

Nyong'o P. Mwachia

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Nyong'o P. Mwachia

PRINTING & PUBLISHING

Web Print Solutions - 0732 634205

0732 341435

PHOTOS

ICN, Uganda

Save the Children, Uganda

DFGL, Kenya

DISTRIBUTION

Network Members

IN staff

SPONSORED BY

Barnabas Lee Foundation

SUBSCRIPTION

Non-profit News (Issue 10)

(Inclusive of Postage)

Institution/Corporate 115\$20

Individual 101\$54

Students 300\$3

Payable to Indigenous Information

Network

Non-profit News

Galeon House, 3rd Floor

Old Market, Wai

P.O. Box 49908, 00200 City Square

Galeon House, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 254-20-272955

Fax: 254-20-272960

Mobile: 254-722914614

254-735626175

Email: info@in-kn.org

Website: www.in-kn.org

Promote, Protect, Empower and Build
Capacity of Indigenous Peoples

Table of Contents

	Pg
Editorial	2
A community initiative to education of pastoralist in Uganda	4
The voices of the children of Nakapiririt	12
Baseline study on implementation of ABEK in Nakapiririt District	13
Early childhood care and development	24
Nathan Chelimo	28
Strengths, challenges and gaps of education delivery	29
Early childhood development and education of Karamoja programme	33
Flying over the technological divide	40
District Education Officer, Moroto	43
Children of Sudan's cattle camps	45
Untouchable Earth	48
Giving the best possible start	50
Wild Mobile People (WAMIP)	53
Like brother, like sister	56
Education of the Sen of southern africa	58
Insecurity among the Karamoja	65
The fight to write	67
Mama cant buy you a mockingbird	69
Until there is nobody completely	71
Partnership that brought light and joy to our pastoralists girls	73
Batwa People	78
Rising curtain	79
'Voices' seek to preserve languages	80



CHIEF EDITOR
Lucy M. Jorke

It is my greatest privilege to welcome you to take a happy of reading our Nomadic News. In this edition we take a focus on Alternative Education for Karamojong Children in Uganda among other stories, we will also travel to other parts of the world to read similar early childhood education news and finally get back home to Kenya and see how partnership can make a difference for our young girls whose dreams were once shattered after realizing they could not go to the University because of poverty and lack of guidance on how to proceed in life.

Our Journey as an organization to Karamoja (Nakapipiri, Moroto and Kotido) in Uganda was a learning experience. Every time we heard about the Karamojong, it was on the negative side. Negative because of their way of life. They are perceived as worriers, cattle rustlers who carry guns and can kill any time. *When you about to travel there you are advised to be very careful or you may never come back.* Apparently this is not the case. These Pastoralist communities are just like any other we have in Eastern Africa. It is because of being perceived negatively by many and especially the dominant society in their country that they have continued to be defensive and protect themselves and their livestock which is their main economy. Like the rest of their relatives in Eastern Africa, the Karamojong have been marginalized to the wall. In Education and development they still have along way to go.

Our Visit to this region was facilitated by Bernard Van leer foundation and Save the children Uganda, whom we are so grateful as we would have never discovered and learnt so much as we did in the trip there. It touched our hearts of the work being

undertaken by Save the Children Uganda in trying to bring education to the community. Indeed in the motto of informing the Karamojong and other communities that that *Every child had a right to education.* We owe credit and appreciation to the officer in charge Nathan Chelimo for his work, skills in coordination and managing the work effectively in the field. The UN agencies, Government and Community elders and advisors in the field show how much partnership, networking and collaboration is important for a community project to succeed. As a team from Indigenous information Network we had already taken a journey through Kenya and Tanzania looking at early education for our pastoralist and hunter gathers children. We realized that the same challenges in the two countries were very similar to the ones of Uganda. The karamojong were only unique in that the security to reach their communities was a very critical issue to be considered before you move on to do any work. But it is encouraging that it is not limit the NGOs and other Partners who go there. The Community governance was also one other very important aspect we noticed in among the karamojong. You much have an entry point in the community, their cultural and traditional Governance is so strong that there is nothing you can do and succeed as a project without the presence of the elders. The cultures are still very strong and well respected.

My mind reflected on our long journeys we have undertaken this year to reach our Indigenous Peoples in East Africa. Our communities still, after many years of Independence have to struggle to make their life's better, have opportunities and lead a life like other dominant communities in our countries.

It is a pity that as these struggles continues, development is moving without waiting for them. The areas, kind of environment and poor infrastructure our People have to survive with, tells us that we still have a long journey ahead of us as Indigenous Peoples. In education as the other communities embrace and celebrate for free education and for their success in 'archiving the 2nd millennium Goal "Achieve Universal primary education" by ensuring that a boys and girls complete a full course of primary

education, we are still struggle asking our Governments to ensure that school curriculum focuses on Indigenous Children and ensure that children have access to both schools and teachers. The gaps are still there and there is a need for our governments and donors to take a closer look at this them and see how they can fill them in order to achieve the millennium development goals.

Looking at the alternative basic education for karamoja, (ABFK) I see success and if you read through the Magazine you will agree with me that the its success will make a difference in the families and in future the karamojong will be happy to note that the children and their families will be empowered and ready to move on putting poverty and especially the negative cultural practices behind them. Both Save the Children in Uganda and all its partners and the community will be implementing and helping the government achieve more than one of the set 8 millennium goals. Their determination is encouraging and all we can say as their partners is to wish them well and urge them to keep up.

Partnership plays a vital role in all development partners. Our work had shown us that if you do not have any good partnership with your fellow civil society, communities, government and all key players like UN and donor community, your work can never succeed, you cannot work alone. Just like the way indigenous Peoples have been working globally together in partnership, our work a to succeed. Our having a joint project with ALSAFCO the Arid and semi arid land Foundation based both in Taita and Nairobi has made a difference and brought joy to happiness to fourteen (14) Pastoralists girls in Kenya to Join the University to continue their studies. A dream for them has come through. It is encouraging to read their experiences. All have come from hard struggles and we do feel happy that we made a good selection.

Indigenous Information Network will always cherish working with ALSAFCO and especially Professor Agnes Mwangombe who has and is still a good motivator and a mentor of many of the girls she has help build and encouraged to have the sky as

the beginning of their careers. To all the girls *"You have a chance take it and make use of it- Excel"*

We are happy that **Mary Kubo Ilwas** who has worked with us in the organization for two years has had her dream come true by joining the University. **Congratulation** and study hard to achieve your goals.

We have been very fortunate that our partnership has gone beyond Africa and this year we have had three (3) students from McGill University in Canada who worked with us for three months. We would like to thank the university and the students for the hard work especially your work out there with our communities. Christine, Krista, Dominique thank you. All your contributions in IIN have contributed to the success of the organization. We would like to specially thank Christine Sinclair for her contribution in this edition of our magazine. Your interest and commitment in following up education for our pastoralist children for their advancement is motivating. We were very encouraged by the way you decided to take risks with us to reach out to our areas of work and to be a strong supporter when dominant tribes criticized the way of live of our different communities. Your stories in this edition create awareness of some of the struggles of the minority groups in our region.

The Support we have had from Bernanerd Van Leer has had a positive impacted on us and our communities. Both as partners we have understood and appreciated our contribution to the development of our communities. The activities have encouraged some of our networks to start early children hood centers to make a difference. We have developed new friends especially in our neighboring countries of Uganda and Tanzania and enhanced those in Kenya. We have continued networking and including these communities in our different activities which have certainly been overwhelming for us as an organization. To you all thank you. This work would not have been a success if you were not there. We value you all so much. To IIN staffs keep up the wonderful tireless work. ■

Lucy Mulenkei

A community initiative to education of pastoralist in Uganda: The Karamoja Case

By Nathan Chelimo

Who Are The Karamojong?

The people of Karamoja mainly belong to the bigger group of people called the **Plain Nilotes**. The Plain Nilotes originated from the North Eastern region of Africa in the Kaffa area in what is now Ethiopia. They moved south and settled in Kenya and Uganda.

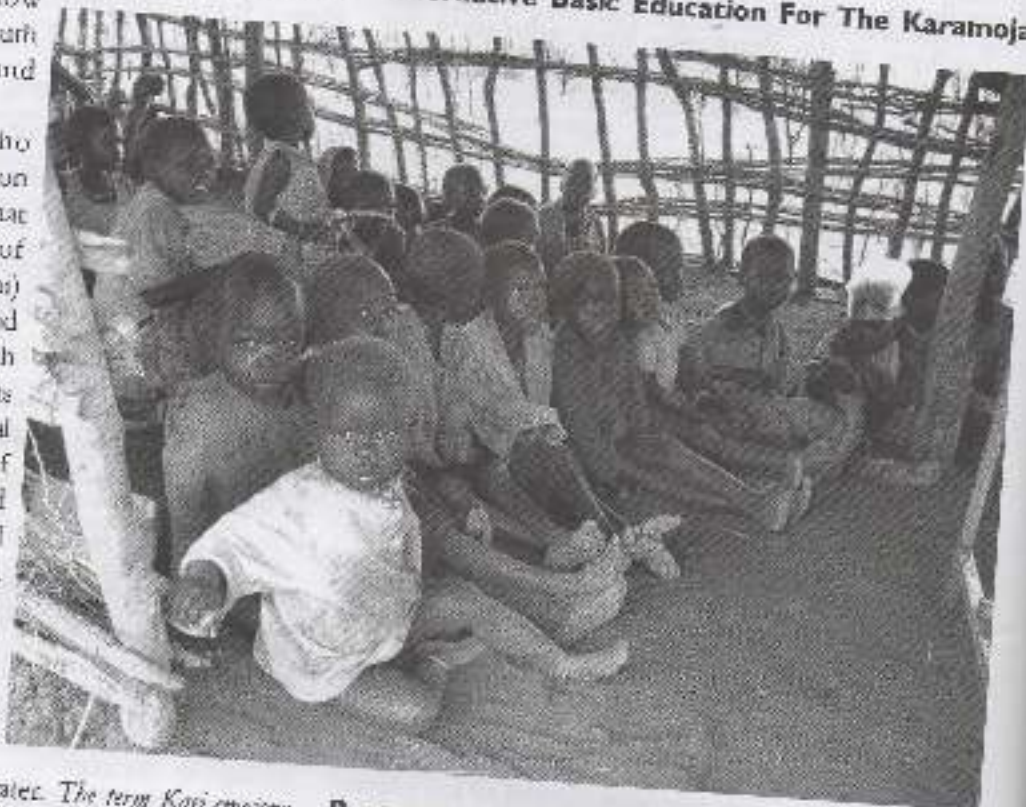
The plain nilotes who settled in the Karamoja region later split into other groups that settled in Teso, (Districts of Katakwi, Soroti and Kumi) Lango (Districts of Lira and Apac) and Kumi (which spreads between the districts of Lira and Soroti). The local influence of other groups of people in those areas modified the original language and customs of the new settlers. Traditional Teso beliefs mention that the groups that remained in Karamoja were mainly elders who were unable to move further south to search for better grazing lands and water. The term *Kari amojong* means elders who were unable to move on.

The plain Nilotes of Karamoja include the Jie and Dodoth of Kotido district, the Bokora and Matheniko of Moroto district and the Plain of Nakapiripirit district. The second main group of people belongs to the larger group of people called the **Highland Nilotes**. The origin of these people was also North East Africa. In Karamoja they are represented by the Pokot of Nakapiripirit and the Tepeth of Moroto district. The third group of people is called the Labwor who belong to the **River-Lake Nilotic** group. These originated from the Bahrel Ghazal region in what is now the Sudan. They are mainly settled in the Labwor hills of Kotido district.

The three groups of people of Karamoja have distinct languages and in some cases translation may be required when one group meets the other. Over many years these different groups have invaded one another for cattle creating deep seated suspicion for one another. Cattle rustling usually accompanied by loss of human lives including children and related suspicion have persisted up to today. The people of Karamoja also share, although in varying degrees, a dry climate, pastoral nomadic way of

life, with limited crop farming, and frequent famines. These issues make life very difficult, especially for children in early childhood.

Alternative Basic Education For The Karamoja



Programme (Abek).

The ABEK programs are non formal education programmes designed for the pastoral community of Karamoja as a response to barriers in basic education experienced by children in semi-nomadic pastoral communities of semi-arid region where they play a central role in house hold livelihoods.

The demanding socio-economic circumstances, coupled with the rigidity in the delivery system, which itself had no appeal since it deprived children's contribution to household livelihood, kept the literacy levels in Karamoja at 11-12% before ABEK started. This contributed significantly keeping the region behind the rest of the country in development.

ABEK is a complementary basic education programme anchored in national education policy, in global principles of Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Convention for the Rights of Children (CRC).

In a semi-nomadic pastoral community children's labour is pivotal to the survival of the household, such that a school system that undermines children's fulfilment of their household obligations disrupts the household micro-

economy. Formal schooling tends to lead to a breakdown of traditional institutions that are strongly engrained in household microeconomics.

Karamoja's semi-arid region has not favoured a lot of economic activities. The people are mainly dependent on extensive livestock farming. men and boys spend much of the day on the grazing grounds tending cattle. Cattle are the centre of livelihood, of great symbolic importance and a source of continuous violence.

Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) is a non-formal basic education programme targeting 6 to 18 year old children in pastoral communities of Karamoja. The programme started in 1998 with the intervention designed as a response to barriers to basic education experienced by semi-nomadic pastoralists of this sub region. the programme is implemented by the district local governments of Kotido, Moroto & Nakapiripit with financial and technical support from Save the Children Norway-Uganda

Origin & Theory

Formal education introduced early in the 19th century was not well received by the people of Karamoja. Opposition to formal education was heightened when reading and writing [the pen] symbolized the registration of people who were conscripted into the colonial British army during the Second World War. Many conscripts died in battle far from their motherland fighting for a cause the people of Karamoja did not understand. The pen together with the formal education that it represented were cursed and rejected. This curse was however lifted upon the launch of ABEK in the sub-region at the end of the 19th century. Other reasons that undermined the proliferation of formal education in Karamoja included its irrelevance to the indigenous semi-nomadic pastoral context.

The fore fathers in Karamoja cursed school education through symbolic "burial" of the pen in *Namajiba* just outside the present town of Kotido. This was done during the colonial times when the British used the pen to enroll soldiers for the 2nd world war in Germany and the "magic pen" had deprived the ethnic communities their men and education in Karamoja was shunned for a very long time. With the launching of ABEK the pen was "unearthed" and the communities have now embraced education.

In watakau the international level organization built a very big school with all boarding facility in the middle of that village (the largest village in east Africa). There were no children in the school since the community saw that the education was not meeting the needs, the situation and interest of the community.

During the inception of the ABEK programme key core questions remained pertinent for an appropriate intervention strategy in Karamoja:

- Would survival priorities have to change or could an education programme adapt to reality and time

constraints of Karimojong children?

- Could education be brought to the Karimojong in the *Muyyitas*, since children did not come to school the Karimojong?
- Could the Karimojong choose education for themselves if an alternative was created specifically for Karamoja?

The answer became alternative basic education for Karamoja (ABEK). "ABEK" in NgaKarimojong is to "touch" and the new home hatched is "ABEKUN". In essence alternative basic education hatched in Karamoja (ABEK programme) with a new home ABEKUN (ABEK learners/children). This is the basis of using ABEKUN as a symbol for ABEK programme in Karamoja.

This newborn alternative hatched in communities with the goal to provide beneficial knowledge for both within and outside the pastoral tradition a goal to provide complementary opportunity for basic education, mobilize and built the capacity of the communities in Karamoja to enroll children in school and explicit objectives;

Strategic objectives

1. To develop relevant education for Karimojong children (positive attitude, appropriate curriculum & teaching)
2. To help Karimojong children find a path to formal school to support Universal Primary Education in Karamoja.

Specific objectives

1. To increase enrolment, inclusiveness, retention & participation of children in pastoral communities enrolled for basic education
2. To improve the profile, competence, performance and motivation of ABEK facilitators
3. To improve quality of learning achievement and establish benchmarks for equivalence of ABEK programme
4. To strengthen institutional capacity of the district core coordinating team to support implementation of expanded ABEK
5. To mainstream programme functions in gazetted technical institutions as well as government policy & investment priorities

Rational & philosophy

Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja is designed to provide education in a framework cognizant of the unique local challenges and aspirations, national policy & global concerns. As a pillar supporting the national policy to realize Education for All (EFA) through Universal Primary Education (UPE), ABEK programme targets and provides an opportunity for schooling to disadvantaged children in Karimojong pastoral communities. ABEK is designed to respond to the unique social, cultural and economic dynamics of the semi-nomadic pastoral

childhood

The programme advances the position of the National Constitution on the right to education and Uganda's commitment to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Education. AHEK is also founded on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - CRC and the OAU Charter on the Rights of the African Child.

ABEK, therefore, is a strategic point of entry for addressing the complex broader development dynamics of the Karamoja sub-region. It is a strategic development investment with invaluable returns for the Karamoja sub-region and for its relations with neighboring communities.

ABEK was designed on the community's aspirations, offering a culturally acceptable curriculum and presented through socially viable approaches. The guiding philosophy, principles and central theme of ABEK were pastoral livelihood.

ABEK is a strategic point of entry to the complex dynamics of the broader development challenges facing the Karamoja sub-region. It is a strategic development investment with invaluable returns for the Karamoja sub-region and for relations with neighbouring communities.

Pillars

1. ABER instruction is based on specialized modules written in the local language "NgaKarimojong". Instruction is presented in ten non-linear instructional manuals integrating literacy and numeracy in both English and the local language. Themes covered have immediate practical relevance to the pastoral lifestyle making it relevant to their needs
 - a. Livestock education (animal care)
 - b. crop production (types of crops grown)
 - c. Environment management (concept of environment)
 - d. Rural Technology (identification of rural technologies)
 - e. Home Management (introduces concept of family)
 - f. Uganda our country: rights and obligations (introduces the child to other parts of the country)
 - g. peace and security (focuses on related issues in the society)

- a. Livestock education (animal care)
- b. crop production (types of crops grown)
- c. Environment management (concept of environment)
- d. Rural Technology (identification of rural technologies)
- e. Home Management (introduces concept of family)
- f. Uganda our country: rights and obligations (introduces the child to other parts of the country)
- g. peace and security (focuses on related issues in the society)

- h. Human Health (primary health)
 - i. Sex education (realization of roles and responsibilities)
 - j. HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (creates awareness)
2. ABKK adapts schooling to the "Framework" of Karamoja's agro-pastoral lifestyle, recognizing the central role of the child in the household economy. Learner's study between 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. to enable the girls and boys fulfill their domestic obligation, which are critical to the functioning

2. ABHK adapts schooling to the "framework" of Karamoja's agro-pastoral lifestyle, recognizing the central role of the child in the household economy. Learner's study between 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. to enable the girls and boys fulfil their domestic obligation, which are critical to the functioning



Karamojong children in a learning centre in Moroto, Uganda

of the households.

3. ABEK teaching and learning are conducted in the vicinity of community settlements (manyatta) thus keeping children within easy reach. Children can be called upon to support the household should need arise. It is also possible for elders to oversee the activities at the learning centres to monitor if, what and how the children are taught.
 4. Indigenous and child centred methods (participatory and functional) are employed to provide indigenous knowledge and basic life skills relevant to pastoral life skills.
 5. Facilitators (paraprofessional) are community based teachers recruited from the local from the immediate vicinity and trained on job.
- ABEK learning package complements formal schooling by encouraging children to join formal schools in the villages. The curriculum focuses on pastoral lifestyles within integrated themes and using the local language as media of instruction. It strengthens the community's involvement in education by encouraging them to place

4. Indigenous and child centred methods (participatory and functional) are employed to provide indigenous knowledge and basic life skills relevant to pastoral life skills
5. Facilitators (paraprofessional) are community based teachers recruited from the local from the immediate vicinity and trained on job

5. Facilitators (paraprofessionals) are community based teachers recruited from the local from the immediate vicinity and trained on job
- ABEK learning package complements formal schooling by encouraging children to join formal schools in the villages. The curriculum focuses on pastoral lifestyles within integrated themes and using the local language as media of instruction. It strengthens the community's involvement in education by encouraging them to place

ABEK learning package complements formal schooling by encouraging children to join formal schools in the villages. The curriculum focuses on pastoral lifestyles within integrated themes and using the local language as media of instruction. It strengthens the community's involvement in education by encouraging them to place

emphasis on educating children including the girl child and planning and monitoring of the programmes

- A non-formal learning program targeting children of pastoral Karamoja Communities.
- Conceptualised to bridge the gap between the rigid formal education delivery arrangement and the semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle where household economies rest substantially on roles fulfilled by children

Abek Achievements

1. ABEK has Generated Enthusiasm for Education and a High Enrolment of Girls.

- Communities are sending children to the learning centres and following the children to see that they actually learn.
- Enrolment of girls (13,637) is much higher compared to that of boys (9,679). Overall ABEK enrolment rose from 5,500 (1997) to 23,262 (2002) and 32,770 pupils in 2004.
- In the catchment areas, ABEK enrolment supersedes that of formal schools

ABEK was conceptualized to target 6 – 18 year old children out of the formal school system. However, it has attracted adults above 18 years of age, as well as under 6 year old children who follow their elder siblings into the learning centres.

2. ABEK as a Strategy for Realising UPE, MDG's, EPA & CRC

ABEK is encouraging schooling and providing an opportunity for Karamojong children to enter the formal school system. Children are increasingly crossing from ABEK to join the formal school system.

District	Girls	Total
Kondo	399	727
Moroto	310	700
Total	709	1,427

In the November 2002 **Mark Loli** a pupil who had crossed from ABEK to the formal school became the first ABEK product to sit the national Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) heralding a new era of success and challenges for the programme. *(He attained division one with 11 aggregate points)*

3. Creating a Positive Attitude towards Education

ABEK instruction is based on specialized modules written in the local language "NgaKaramojong"

Instruction is presented in ten non-linear instructional

manuals integrating literacy and numeracy in both English and the local language. Themes covered have immediate



No matter how we are, we have a right to education

practical relevance to the pastoral lifestyle

Parents and other community elders visit the centres to evaluate what and how their children are learning. This has enabled elders to dispel fears that schooling would alienate children from the Karamojong culture.

4. Awareness of Child Rights

There is increased awareness among the Karamojong communities about the concept of Children's Rights e.g. providing basic education to children as a right.

5. Realising the Community-School Linkage

As a deliberate strategy, the formulation and implementation of ABEK were highly participatory cultivating a sense of ownership of the initiative

1. Management Committees at village, parish, subcounty, district and regional levels ensure continued widespread community participation in decision making and implementation.
2. This has yielded indirect benefits to the community in development of managerial capacity and participation of women in decision making.
3. Within limited means, communities endeavour to ensure a conducive learning environment for children. ABEK presents education as a strong rallying point for discourse on the broader development challenges facing the Karamoja sub-region.

6. Opportunity for Professional Capacity Building

Facilitators, male and female are recruited from school leavers in the community

1. ABEK has therefore provided an opportunity for youths to serve the community as useful citizens.
2. It has offered a window of access to opportunity for self development and professional growth among the youths in the sub-region. The facilitators have been inspired to seek further professional training and higher education. A number have acquired the national school certified and others graduated as professional teachers.

Facilitators [ABEK "teachers"] as immediate and most readily available in the community are looked up to as role models. Today with the few district officers and NGO staff they have created a potent cadre demonstrating to the community the value that schooling offers.

The astounding success ABEK has made in achieving its original goal of popularising education and mobilising pastoral communities to embrace education, has resulted into widespread appeals to have these benefits extended to the entire Karamoja sub-region. This presents new challenges. It necessitated re-examining the ABEK vision, mission, goals and strategies in account of emerging development dynamics in the region, changing aspirations of the community, national policy priorities and global concerns. A five year strategic plan have been developed against this background

ABEK Challenges & proposed intervention

1. Scaling-up ABEK

Many children are still unable to access ABEK or the formal schools. Communities not reached by ABEK or formal education demand that the programme should be scaled-up urgently to reach their children. This is ongoing process.

Scaling up ABEK creates increased demand for both human and financial resources.

- In terms of expansion, the main thrust in 2003 was preparatory activities for extending coverage to the entire region including Nakapiripit district. Two studies were commissioned to assess the implications and to propose optimum modalities of scaling-up ABEK coverage. The programme now covers 6 parishes and the expansion is phased out.
 - Notwithstanding the outcome of the studies, there is need for concerted consultation among stakeholders and key partners on strategies for implementing the scaling-up.
- Previous reviews of ABEK have highlighted various

pertinent issues that need to be redressed.

2. Improving Participation - Enrolment and Attendance



As others play, wonder and listen, the others catch up with their notes.

Attendance is irregular and hardly constitutes 40% of children enrolled at learning centres.

There is need for a systematic strategy to strengthen sensitization and mobilization of the community to ensure that children attend regularly. At the same time, the factors that draw children away from school need to be addressed.

An Early Childhood Care Development & Education programme for Karamoja is to have been conceptualised and implemented

3. Facilitator Performance

At its inception, ABEK placed more emphasis on access. There is now growing concern about the need to improve the quality of learning. This calls for strengthening the performance of the facilitators and supervisors. There is need to recruit more facilitators especially females to handle new learning centres. Currently, 416 facilitators Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR) is 79 compared with the national non formal education target of 54.

Kyambogo University has now developed a course for ABEK facilitators. They will;

- Conduct regular tailor-made Competence-Based Training coupled with recognised certification to enable ABEK facilitators to improve performance capacity and to realise personal growth as well as professional development.
- strengthen quality of instruction in ABEK and equivalence with the formal school system
- Provide basis for facilitators to access national public

services payroll.

4. Infrastructure (Child-friendly Learning Environment/Shelters)

In ABEK there are no classrooms. Learning in the open windy Karamoja climate is torturous for children and is often disrupted by weather extremes.

Children have no better place to sit or place a book to write, than the dusty, sandy or muddy ground. Here they must squat, kneel or lie down to write.

These postures are most difficult for girls to whom tradition imposes stringent public etiquette.

Lack of shelter & infrastructure present a serious setback to the quality of ABEK learning.

A strategy for supporting communities to provide low cost learning shelters, furniture and secure storage by the government of Uganda is being worked out. In response to which, the implementing districts have proposed to pilot a low cost tin-roofed shelter model supported on galvanized pipes, upon securing funding support from the government and other development partners.

5. Curriculum, Equivalence & Certification

In ABEK, an education was envisaged where communities would continuously contribute to curriculum that harmonized and enriched indigenous knowledge, skills and values with modernization. Questions of the **quality, standard and equivalence** of ABEK relative to the formal school system, and ABEK's efficacy in enabling children to compete for national level opportunities are emerging. These issues need to be addressed in the background that ABEK is an entry point and a central component of the equation for addressing the broader question of development in the Karamoja sub-region.

A review of the ABEK curriculum proposed has taken into account issues of content, its structuring, teaching approaches, assessment, equivalency and certification in the context of ABEK as an accelerated versus an alternative education model.

6. Linkages between ABEK, the Formal School System & Community

The growing rate of children who transfer from ABEK to the formal school system is undermined by the increasing rate of children who drop out from the formal

schools upon crossing. This presents a need to explore modalities for ensuring a smooth transition from non-formal to formal programmes and follow up of performance among children who transfer to the formal schools.

Joint curricular activities for children, training of formal school staff and regular consultation across schooling systems have been proposed to strengthen linkages and support to children who cross from ABEK to formal schools.

Joint participation of children in formal schools, ABEK children and children out of school in co-curricular



Carrying make shift blackboards to their open class under a tree, shows their determination to learn for a better future

activities promotes mutual acceptance among children.

Joint participation in co-curricular activities enriches ABEK programmes and has attracted more out of school children to ABEK and to formal schools.

7. Documentation, Monitoring & Evaluation

Previous evaluations have indicated the need to strengthen documentation, monitoring and evaluation as a strategy for improving programme management and efficiency.

The programme has embarked on documentation, monitoring, evaluation and information flow arrangements involving all stakeholders (including children) and partners. It is envisaged that this will lead to and support effective advocacy activities to secure favourable national policies on non-formal education and to attract further support for the programme.

8. Target Group & Inclusiveness

As a pillar of UPE, EFA, MDG's & CRC, ABEK strives to ensure universal and equitable access to quality basic education for all children. However, ABEK has not adequately captured the boys who migrate with cattle in search of water and pasture during the dry season. At the same time, ABEK has not adequately addressed the question of children with special learning needs. An assessment of the needs is ongoing. These pose considerable resource implications for ABEK and the formal school system in terms of providing support, training, materials and physical adjustments to ensure access and meaningful participation in learning activities.

There is need to explore modalities of taking education to the children who migrate seasonally with the kraals, as well as identifying partners to provide for the learning needs of the over 18 year-old adults who disrupt learning at ABEK centres.

9. Children with Disabilities

As a thrust for the project period 2003, children with disabilities in ABEK catchment areas are to be purposefully sought-out and where possible enrolled in ABEK and subsequently into the formal school system. Professional / technical and financial / material support is needed. This constitutes a priority component of facilitators' training needs to be met.

10. ABEK Ownership & Mainstreaming

Since inception, ABEK relies heavily on donor funding. Full ownership of ABEK as a district / government programme seems to be constrained by the weak financial base in the communities, as well as at local government levels, among others. This shortcoming is being redressed substantially if ABEK is fully taken up by the Ministry of Education and Sports as an integral component and strategy for realising UPE in Karamoja, a position agreed to start the FY 2005/06.

There is critically defining the critical partners and stakeholders in ABEK and the roles each of the partners and stakeholders should play in ABEK. Particularly, the roles of communities, the District Local Governments and the Ministry of Education & Sports is being re-evaluated and interpreted in relation to their capacity and obligation to the pastoral child of Karamoja.

An ABEK Advocacy Task Strategy has been proposed and continues to consult with relevant authorities and explore modalities of facilitating smooth integration of ABEK activities in local and central government budget systems. The Strategy is being implemented by an Advocacy Task Force comprising The Minister of State for Karamoja, Karamoja Parliamentarians, and the District Leadership in the Karamoja sub-region.

11. ABEK Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Since the inception of ABEK as an idea in 1995, there

have been drastic changes in the internal social, economic and political dynamics of Karamoja, as well as in its national and global relations.

The emerging internal debate regarding the conceptualisation of ABEK especially in relation to the formal system seems to be a manifestation of changing aspirations. This among others underscores the need to re-examine ABEK in terms of its relevance, Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives and Strategies.

It is critical to ensure that these respond to the changing needs of stakeholders, emerging local aspirations, national policies and goals as well as global concerns in the spirit of ABEK hallmark of participation and consultation.

A study was commissioned and this led to formulation of a Strategic plan for ABEK (short term and medium term). This provides a basis for re-defining ABEK and harmonizing it with the national short-term and medium term development plans.

12. Financing ABEK

Expansion has a direct immediate multiplier implication for the ABEK budget. The local governments' low revenue base presents a substantial obstacle to their capacity to sustain ABEK in its present form, let alone expanded coverage. Dependence on NGO funding to implement ABEK presents a serious risk to ABEK sustainability. This situation is made more precarious by the fact that ABEK is being guaranteed by funding support as an integral central government programme.

The overall returns from investment in ABEK are immense, with favourable implications for both the entire Karamoja region and the neighbouring communities. ABEK will benefit significantly as government recognised it as an element of Universal Primary Education (UPE) responding to the unique implementation dynamics of semi-nomadic pastoral Karamoja. Besides meeting the cost of facilitators' allowances, government is supporting ABEK under the UPE funding framework starting FY 2005/2006. The districts on the other hand need to aggressively explore alternative fundraising strategies to support ABEK.

An ABEK Advocacy Task Force has been established among others to heighten public awareness of ABEK issues and negotiate with relevant authorities for ABEK mainstreaming and inclusion in national as well local government levels regular budget.

ABEK Advocacy Strategy

During the Consultative Meeting on the ABEK Work-plan and Budget for 2003 held on December 17, 2002 at Fairway Hotel, it was resolved among other things to formulate and implement abek advocacy strategy.

Advocacy Strategy Objectives

1. To lobby for integration of ABEK in mainstream government programs & systems through expeditious

formulation of and implementation of favorable policies on ABEK in:-

- Parliament
 - Ministry of Education
 - District
 - Lower councils
2. To raise Karamojong community awareness of the potential of education in fostering development in the region and to encourage communities to enroll and support children in ABEK and other educational opportunities
 3. To strengthen awareness and knowledge of children rights, particularly the right to education, as well as promote behavior and practices that uphold or promote the upholding of children rights in Uganda.
 4. To attract increased funding and other support for ABEK activities in particular, and for education, children rights and development in the Karamoja region in general.

Strategy Target Group.

1. The Parliamentary Committee on Social Services
2. The Ministry of Education & Sports
3. Other relevant ministries:
 - MGLSD, Disaster Preparedness, President's Office, Karamoja, Water
4. The Kotido, Moroto & Nakapiripint district local governments
 - [District and lower local councils]
5. NGO's and support donors like:-
 - WFP, DANIDA, NORAD, UNICEF, DFID, USAID, SIDA,
6. The Karamoja community
 - Karamojong elite (in Karamoja, other urban areas & the Diaspora)
 - Karamojong elders (men & women)
 - Karamojong children & youths (boys & girls)

Strategy Implementation Activities

- Consultations / lobbying
- MOES
- the Parliamentary Social Services Committee
- Ministries with intervention bearing direct / immediate relevance to ABEK (e.g. MGLSD, Water, Disaster)
- Production & dissemination of reading materials derived from ABEK documentation activities.

- Sharing reports with critical audience
- Memos to target audience
- Newspaper articles (Pull-outs, serials and Supplements; Straight/Young Talk)
- Pamphlets and brochures
- Magazines and Bulletins
- **Subliminal information**
- ABEK Posters, calendars, planners and diaries
- ABEK T-shirts, schoolbags, caps, neckties, handbags, etc.
- **Electronic Media**
- Radio and TV (Talk shows, spot-messages, serials)
- Website with strategic links e.g. to MOES, SCN, SC Alliance, UNICEF and to agencies that have funded the programme since inception
- **Community meetings**



Alternative education allows all ages of children to sit together in an ABEK learning centre.

- Training workshops and seminars on ABEK issues
- **Spontaneous & regular community events**
- Religious congregations
- National Day celebrations (UBI themes for relevant national days)
- Weddings, funeral rites
- **Learning Centre / School-community interaction [Performing Arts / Leisure]**
- Theatre by ABEK & formal school children
- **Joint ABEK-Formal participation in joint co-curricula activities such as music festivals, games, sports, Child Rights Clubs.**
- Theatre by adults,
- Video and Films on ABEK and other educational issues
- School open day, school quiz competitions
- **Public lectures / talks**

The voices of the children of Nakpipirit: speaking out on ABEK

On the importance of a flexible opportunity that accommodates domestic obligations alongside education:

"I will sometimes be forced to attend part-time because I am alone in the family."

(Girl 17, orphaned, P1, Sakale Primary School, stays alone).



On spending shorter hours at school:

"If I am given opportunity to choose, I will attend part-time."

(Boys, 8 and 11, Sakale Primary School).

On protecting **BEI** opportunities, with which they would not wish ABEK to interfere:

"Parents will refuse our brothers and sisters to come for full time learning. They want them to help in caring for animals."

(Lorukumo Primary School).

On an opportunity for parents to have the chance to study as well:

"Parents can agree if education is flexible to find our brothers where they are or even after they return with the cattle. Our brothers leave home by 6 am and begin returning at 3.30 p.m."

(Lorukumo Primary School)

"Functional adult literacy for parents is possible."

(Alakas Primary School)

"The parents themselves are eager to learn."

(Lorukumo Primary School)

On negotiation within families over who attends ABEK or formal education:

"Deciding on another form of learning for the children outside school and for the parents needs to be addressed at a meeting with all the parents."

(Boys, Ding Dinga Primary School)

"You learn very well because you will be our eyes tomorrow" (Boy aged 12, in P4, Ding Dinga Primary School).

"Education prepares one for livelihood or

employment or acquisition of wealth in future and helps to improve on lifestyle, including the wisdom of building houses with corrugated iron roofs", "you learn cleanliness and personal hygiene", "you learn how to plant things", and "you learn that when learning is going on no shouting." (young school boy)

Those against non-formal education systems had this to say:

"It is not possible for our brothers at home to attend to the animals and attend learning sessions at school because they always travel very far to find water for the animals".

"It is not possible to take learning to those who look after the cattle because they travel long distances." (Herder boy)

"If I am given a choice I choose full time schooling since I am an orphan I want to learn and go ahead."

(Girl 14, P2, stays with maternal aunt)



The parents and elders shared similar views. At a meeting with men and women at Nakong, there was a general agreement that education made a lot of sense to them. This level of awareness was manifested in the following statements:

"I have suffered because I did not have a chance to go to school. I don't want to see my children suffer like me. If the men try to stop our girls from attending school we will have them arrested ..."

(40-year old mother of 7)

"For me I am a very good customer of education. I have sent all my 13 children to school. Every term I sell 2 cows in Kenya, and pay slowly until all fees is paid. I went up to P.4 and my children must finish for me" (51-year old father)

"Community leaders should "chase the children to school"

(Girl 13 and boy 13, Katabok Primary School).

Other views included:

"It is a bridge between no school at all and formal education" (One woman, 41 years).

Baseline study on implementation of ABEK in Nakapiripirit District (April 2003)

ABEK & The Rationale for the Baseline Study

Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) is a non-formal education approach that was initially introduced in two parishes in each of the original districts of Kondo and Moroto. When the new district of Nakapiripirit was established, none of those parishes were inherited. Education had been shunned and symbolically banned by tribal elders during the colonial rule, but ABEK has been embraced as an alternative strategy that would restore the trust of the Karamoja's communities in the benefits of formal education.

ABEK was designed on the community's aspirations, offering a culturally acceptable curriculum and presented through socially viable approaches. The guiding philosophy, principles and central theme of ABEK was pastoral livelihood.

ABEK adapts schooling to the "framework" of Karamoja's agro-pastoral lifestyle, recognising the central role of the child in the household economy. Learners study between 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. to enable the girls and boys fulfil their domestic obligation which are critical to the functioning of households. However, older boys who move with herds (kraals) in search of pastures and water are not adequately provided for in the present ABEK arrangement.

ABEK teaching and learning are conducted in the vicinity of community settlements (manyatta) thus keeping children within easy reach. Children can be called upon to support the household should need arise. It is also possible for elders to oversee the activities at the learning centres to monitor if, what and how the children are taught. ABEK provides basic functional and survival skills relevant to pastoral life, as well as to enable children to join the formal school system at various levels. There has been demand to scale-up the programme both in geographical coverage and in content.

The implementation of ABEK in Nakapiripirit district should build on lessons learnt in Moroto and Kondo. The major challenges will include establishing good management and transparency at the district administrative. The district team will articulate government policies and the national commitment to realising the global declarations on Education for All. They will consult with, educate and guide indigenous communities to raise their level of knowledge, advance positive attitudes, and influence positive practices towards basic education. The caregivers, children and the wider community will need to be involved at all levels of program design, implementation and evaluation. Therefore, there must be consensus between

all the stakeholders that ABEK is in the best interest of Karamoja's children.

Rationale for Baseline Study

When Nakapiripirit was established as a district, none of the original ABEK learning centres were located within its territory. The study was intended to assess the state of basic education in Nakapiripirit district, examining the existing strengths and gaps of basic education as well as requirements for intervention through a non-formal basic education arrangement. The study was to ultimately provide information that would guide the formulation of strategies for implementing ABEK, enable the establishment of indicators for monitoring implementation, and to form a point of reference upon which the impact of ABEK in Nakapiripirit district would be measured.

The study

1. examines the demographic status of Nakapiripirit district, by age, literacy levels and geographical distributions.
2. assesses the state of basic education in Nakapiripirit district against the background of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, the Education for All Commitment, and the National UPE goals.
3. examines the existing strengths in basic education delivery in Nakapiripirit district.
4. assesses the gaps within the existing basic education delivery in Nakapiripirit district.
5. assesses the requirements for intervention through a non-formal basic education in Nakapiripirit district.
6. assesses the cultural activities and socio-economic state of Nakapiripirit district that may impact on ABEK implementation.
7. assesses the roles, capacity and commitment potential of the various partners to implement ABEK in Nakapiripirit district.
8. identifies potential beneficiaries and resources for implementing ABEK in Nakapiripirit district.
9. assesses resources and strategies that need to be put in place for successful implementation of ABEK in Nakapiripirit district.

The study was conducted through:

Consultations with key stakeholders and partners including potential beneficiaries and implementers (children, parents, local government representatives at all levels, MOES, SONEL, UNICEF and USAID among others).

Review of documents relevant to ABEK and to

Nakapiripint district in general paying particular attention to the demography and the state of basic education in the district. Some of the information derived from available literature review provided the background to the investigations done in the study, as shown below:

Scope

The study covers 11 formal schools in the three counties of Chekwii, Pian, and Upe.

Basic Education

The study considers Basic education as learning arrangements intended to meet minimum learning needs that equip people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to survive and improve the quality of their lives.

The Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA) and The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) are recognised.

Save the child in Uganda coordinated the administrative and logistic support associated with implementation of the study. The field study was conducted between 4th February and 16 February 2003.

Geographical & Political

Nakapiripint County of Moroto District, once known as Chekwii County, attained its district status in 2000. Nakapiripint borders The Republic of Kenya to the East, the districts of Katakwi, Soroti and Kumi to the West, Moroto to the North, and Sironko and Kapchorwa to the South. It is divided into three counties: Chekwii, Pian and Upe. As a district, its administration conforms to the national civic and political leadership structures. Because it is a new district, however, it faces various structural and technical challenges.

Most of the district managers are newly recruited and many lack administrative experience. Many established posts are vacant. Cross-border socio-cultural influences as well as the divergence in national policies and approaches within Uganda and Kenya, make planning for education and delivery of other social services to communities along the border of the Republic of Kenya difficult.

Transport & Communication

The roads linking major trading centres are good, but as you move away from main centres, most feeder roads become increasingly poor. In fact, there is not a single tarmac road. Rivers cannot be crossed during the rainy season, but even during the dry season, the deep sandy overbords hamper vehicle movement. A lack of clearly defined roads and bridges over the rivers makes travelling in most of the parts of the district hard. The regular transport that connects to the rest of the country is concentrated at the district headquarters. There is a 'generous' endowment of rivers, but they are almost entirely seasonal, filling up and flooding when it rains but drying up as soon as the rains stops, with no dams to control the water flow. The poor state of physical

infrastructure slows economic activities and disrupts and diminishes the livelihood of the people.

Health

There are eight inadequately resourced health units in the district; five are in Chekwii sub-county and three are in UPL. Pian, however, has none. All of them have little or no supplies, operate with very limited staff, have no doctors and are hardly accessible to most of the community.

Water

Water sources are mainly seasonal and most are within a radius of 12-15 km; in fact, many of the available boreholes non functional. Some boreholes in Upe, for example, produce acidic or salty water not fit for human or animal consumption. Livestock and people converge and compete at the few water sources. There are no visible valley dams where animals can be conveniently watered.

Schooling

There are 54 formal schools, most of which are below the primary five level, with the majority of schools concentrated in central Chekwii sub-county, near the district headquarters. Total primary school enrolment is 20,206 (10,156 – 50.8% girls) and 371 children in secondary schools, of whom 215 (58%) are boys.

Nakapiripint district's total population is 155,150, up from 77,584 in 1991, which represents a growth rate of 5.9%. About 50.5% of the population are males and 49.5% females. The average district population density is 12 people per km².

The fertility rate (estimated at 5 children) is at a constant level through strict customary practices. First, pregnancy is delayed among the majority of the girls and after delivery, husbands keep away from their wives until the "baby is able to say their first word and fetch drinking water for a visitor" (about 5 years). Modern family planning services centres are absent in the remote areas of the district.

The literacy rate was 12% in 1999 (18% among males and 6% among females), which paints a grim educational picture. The primary school enrolment rate was 27%.

Children play a central role in household socio-economic activities, which makes them vulnerable to abuse. The workload and long hours spent on domestic chores are a violation of child rights. However, the low awareness of children's rights makes it difficult to measure the consciousness of those who violate these rights.

The right to education is highly infringed upon, especially in remote areas. Every child that participated in the Focus Group Discussions had a school-going age sibling currently not in school, or an older sibling who had missed out on schooling in order to tend livestock.

Children with disabilities were visibly absent in all schools we visited; teachers claimed, "those children were very rare in the community". On the contrary, a single family in Arudat had three children with Down's Syndrome.

Many children from the district were found living on

streets in other districts, such as Mhale, Soroti, Iganga and Jinja, though there is hardly any living on the "street" in the trading centres in the district.

Witnessing the death of parents and other members of their families due to **cattle rustling**, as well as displacement from home whenever cattle raids occur, presents serious trauma to the children. There are no statistics on the number of orphans, the causes of death among their parents, or the incidence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Many orphans interviewed indicated cattle rustling, famine or death from other natural causes; HIV was not mentioned among the causes of death of their parents.

Female circumcision is practiced among the Pokot in Upi. This is a customary practice that precedes arranged or forced marriage. The manner in which the operation is performed is likely to cause psychological and physical trauma to the child, while the blunt, unsterilised instruments expose children to HIV/AIDS infection.

The People of Nakapiripirit

Nakapiripirit includes diverse ethnic groups whose differences are reflected in language, culture and customary practices. The majority of district's indigenous population is Karamojong and speak Ng'Karamojong language, with several dialects across the district exhibiting pronounced semantic or syntactic variations towards the borders with other tribes.

The Pokot speak Kalenjin, a language completely different from the mainstream Ng'Karamojong. The Chekwii and Pian nurse traditional hostile tendencies against the Pokot. The Pokot of Upi share borders and unique customs, including the practice of female circumcision, with the Sabiny of Kapchorwa and with other Kalenjin tribesmen of Eastern Kenya. They practice arranged (and sometimes forced) marriages of underage, disadvantaged girls. Parents commonly withdraw girls from school to marry them off for cattle, mainly for prestige or as a resource to enable her brothers acquire wives. 'Traditional girls unarmished by foreign influence' fetch higher price in heads of cattle.

There are, however, many positive cultural and customary practices. The rites of passage for both boys and girls, which include sex education, role identification and initiation into adulthood and/or parenthood, give them a social identity and serve as a source of self-esteem.

Most of the people in Nakapiripirit, especially in central Chekwii, are intensifying agricultural production for economic purposes, as well as working to promote education as an investment for their children. Cattle are becoming an asset for ploughing, a source of food, and a source of income to help meet other needs such as education and health.

The Karamojong are very 'communal'. The individual is seen as part of the collective 'belonging', and decisions

are typically made for the benefit of the community. The traditional administrative structure is strongly hierarchical, with the council of elders at the top.

State of Education

Historically, the people of Karamoja associated education with the conscription of young men to a 'foreign army' to fight wars irrelevant to their concerns, wars in which many perished. Reading and writing was associated with enumeration of people and property to facilitate extortion of taxes by states. The Karamojong therefore resisted conscription into forces and even schools, which were fertile ground for recruitment. The pen and paper, which symbolised conscription and extortion, were cursed and buried to indicate the community's aversion to the ways of the state. Children were therefore discouraged from associating with schools and education.

ABEK symbolises the re-birth of education in the sub-region. It has been found acceptable and is compliant with respectfully inclusive protocols, as it was designed and is implemented in close consultation with the people of Karamoja. Close physical presence of elders to oversee activities at the ABEK learning has helped to dispel suspicions about education.

The district education department is severely understaffed, with an acting education officer doubling as inspector of schools. If ABEK is to be coordinated by the education officer, they must raise staffing levels to meet the new demands.

The Nutrition and Early Childhood Development programme (NUECD) operates in the districts. In most rural communities, this programme seems to have been misconstrued to mean distribution of food and/or feeding centres to the needy families with children below 5 years, with assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP). The physical, cognitive and psychosocial stimulation of the child does not seem to be part of the program.

Primary Education

Total primary school enrolment is 20,206 (with 10,156 or 50.8% girls). With the introduction of UPE, enrolment in Karamoja as whole has increased by a significant increment, but is still below the national average. The 1999 primary school enrolment for Moroto district (including Nakapiripirit) was 11,607 boys and 12,631 girls.

The quality of education low mainly because of the 'poor' pupil-teacher ratio, classroom overcrowding, poor working conditions, shortage of instructional materials and shortage of trained teachers.

Provision of service is hampered by three overriding challenges: inadequate classroom facilities, and poor utilization of those that exist; a shortage of trained teachers, due to an unwillingness to work in rural schools or opting for better paying non-teaching jobs; and insufficient learning and instructional materials.

The curriculum as previously designed became increasingly inapplicable to the realities of life outside school. Among the major concerns is the language of instruction, which was not local to the communities. The government recognises and categorises people with nomadic lifestyles among the most vulnerable groups as far as accessibility to formal basic education is concerned. To address this, they propose an integrated development approach to include access to safe water, food security and flexible learning arrangements that are accessible to both children and adults. There is also a renewed interest in non-formal education.

The *Household Budget Survey (1989-90)*, indicated a national illiteracy rate of 26% for adults, and of 40% among females. Literacy rates were lower among the rural than urban populations.

State of Infrastructure

Pre-primary education (PPE (0-5 years) has received very limited attention in the district. 65.7% of the district managers indicate that there are no PPE services in the district. One district official knew it existed, but believed the feeding programme interfered with it.

Members of the community do not distinguish between PPE and the NLCDP / CHILD project activities. In Upe, Parents Teachers Association members and other members of the community mentioned 25 communities that were selected by the Early Child Nutrition and Development (NLCDP / CHILD) programme, all the preparations were done, but the program never took off. According to descriptions of the centres, they hold playgroups under the supervision of parents, and weigh and feed the children. The 25 communities are remote and do not have a school within a radius of 30 kilometres.

Statistics from the District Education Department indicate a total of 52 primary schools in Nakapiripit district, some of which only include levels below P5. Persistence or survival to P7 is difficult at the end of a given school level as children must find a P7 level school; if it is not in reach, they are forced to drop out of school.

Of the 52 schools, 27 (50%) are in Chekwii, 16 (29%) in Pian, and 12 (22%) in Upe country. The district has 13 schools of P7 level, 23 of P3-P6 level and 17 of P2 level. Children who complete in the P2 and P3-P6 level schools do not have ready access higher-level schools. This increases the likelihood that children will drop out of school without completing the primary cycle. There does not seem to be a clearly laid out mechanism to support their transfer to higher level primary schools.

In the P1-P3 schools, especially schools in which the World Food Programme provides food, girls carry their younger siblings to school and into the classroom, to enable them access food as well. This extension of domestic chores to the classroom disrupts learning, given the mode of instruction and the curriculum demands of the formal primary school arrangement.

Environmental Hygiene

The state of sanitation and hygiene is appalling, and far below the minimum national standards of environmental sanitation in schools.

The specified requirements for latrines in schools prescribed by the government are rarely realised. In Nakapiripit, all the schools visited had latrines but most were not functional; they were either incomplete or had collapsed due to poor workmanship. Table 4 summarizes the availability of latrine structures, but not necessarily "their utilization". Of the P7 schools visited, 75% had latrines, while the 25% that did not have latrines had "alternative disposal" arrangements. 50% of the P6 schools had incomplete latrine structures, while 50% had no structures at all and nor did they have alternative waste disposal arrangements.

A study conducted by UNICEF on school sanitation revealed that 30% of girls drop out of formal education at adolescence due to lack of appropriate sanitation facilities in their schools. Lack of shelters or clean and safe water is a serious inconvenience to adolescent girls, especially during their monthly menstrual periods. The inconvenience is compounded by the absence of separate facilities for boys and girls, or by a lack of shutters to offer privacy, as was the case in Nakapiripit. The state of latrines as far as stances and changing shelters are concerned is highlighted in table 5.

Among P4 level schools, there were either shared stances (33.3%) or none (66.7%). The largest percentage of schools shared with the teachers, with 33.3% for P4

Table 5: Separate stances for Boys & Girls by Level (% within Level)

		Level			Total
		P4	P6	P7	
	Shared Stances	33.3%		75.0%	33.3%
	Not available	66.7%	100.0%	25.0%	44.4%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

level, 50% for P6 level and 75% for the P7 levels. None of the schools visited had anal cleansing materials in their latrines, nor did they have a hand washing facility close to the latrine. A closer look inside the latrines showed that

proper use of the latrine, particularly regarding cleaning procedures, was not practice. The latrines at 33% of P4 level and 25% of P7 schools that had facilities in place were littered with human wastes, contaminating the areas surrounding the latrines. 25% of schools had changing shelters for girls. There was no water at these facilities.

All schools visited had a cooking place, ranging from proper kitchens in for the boarding schools to makeshift shelters or under tree sheds for the majority of day schools. The parents did not provide meals for children, and sent all siblings to benefit from the WFP food distributed to schools. When WFP supplies dry out, the schools close.

There is a discrepancy between enrolment in the P1 and completion at subsequent levels. Government targets of net enrolment into P1 of 95% of all 6 year olds, a survival rate of 60% by P5 and a completion rate at P7 of 50% have not been realized. There is no vocational training opportunity for children who are unable to complete the primary cycle or join secondary schools. There is no register of all children of school-going age in the district to facilitate computation of gross enrolment ratios, and survival and dropout rates for each level. There are more girls than boys enrolled between P3 and P5, but numbers fall below 50% for boys and 30% for girls by P7, with survival rates far below national targets.

Among girls, enrolment is high for P1 and P2, probably because they carry younger siblings to benefit from the lunch rations provided by the World Food Programme. However, girls drop out faster than boys at all levels and many girls never reach P7. More women attend FAL classes than men. Nakapiripirit district has not achieved the required number of teachers to match the number of children in schools [see table]. All schools visited especially the rural schools had some untrained staff because qualified teachers to work in the harsh environment were not available.

Some schools in the district have two teachers for a 5 class level school and in one incident in Upc, the head

teacher carried out all the administrative work as well as teaching 90% of the lessons because the second teacher attended irregularly.

The quality of teaching and learning is compromised as the teacher has to stay at school longer hours to prepare and correct their pupils' work. Most teachers have to walk long distances, as a lack of accommodation forces them to live far from schools. In one Focus Group Discussion, children noted that,

"We have only one teacher and when she goes away for a meeting or she falls sick then we cannot study. We have to wait until she comes back." Student.

Recommendations for Improving ABEK in Nakapiripirit District

For ABEK work better in Nakapiripirit, the district managers had a series of recommendations, including:

1. Follow UPE curriculum: some participants were not conversant with the ABEK curriculum and did not seem believe it would produce desirable results or lead towards a more modern Karamoja.
2. Provide proper professional training for facilitators: the kind of training that the facilitators received was questionable. There was nothing to show as to what qualifications they attained and what to expect from them as they conducted their classes with children.
3. Ensure prompt and good pay for facilitators: no one knew who who paid the facilitators and how much they earned. All the members of the community seemed to know, however, that low morale led to the same poor motivation experienced with UPE and BEK.
4. Provide permanent infrastructure: ABEK operates in makeshift classrooms under trees. This, they said, would be de motivating to the children. They suggested that permanent structures should be set up.

The community members suggested ways of improving ABEK's service delivery through reviewing the curriculum content and delivery, in the following ways:

1. Design a more integrated curriculum, not necessarily focusing on the cattle as the central theme.
2. Provide post-ABEK practical skills training like carpentry, brick laying /building and tailoring
3. Incorporate basic foundational instruction for professionalism.

Relevance & Potential for an Alternative Education Model

Basic education, as envisaged in the National UPE goals, has gaps in its implementation in Nakapiripirit district that can

Number of pupils and teachers in visited schools

School Level	Total No of Teachers	Total Enrolment	Ratio of pupils per teacher
P2	2	1114	557
P5	2	990	500
P5	2	587	294
P5	8	599	75
P5	8	453	57
P7	14	893	64
P7	12	587	49
P7	16	766	48
P7	14	463	33
P7	15	365	24

be addressed through an informal arrangement.

The distribution of schools, as reported earlier, is so poor that some areas will be unable to access UPE in the next over 20 years, especially given the slow pace of development of new schools and upgrading of existing ones. The total number of 54 schools is low and the distribution criteria are unknown. Within these 54 schools, only thirteen (24%) are P7 level. Out of the remaining 43, 22 (10.7%) are P3- P6, and 21 (25.9%) are community schools, which are approximately equivalent to 'kindergarten'. The limited access of the majority of children to P7 level in basic education puts them at a disadvantage, regardless of their geographical location and gender. If the issue were that most parents would prefer their children to go to schools nearer their homes, it would justify the ABK option.

This, however, has several implications:

- i. The government must act with urgency to upgrade all schools to P7 level to ensure increased persistence rates for both sexes.
- ii. While the arrangement to upgrade schools is in progress, a complementary option should be designed to capture those who drop out formal education. Such an arrangement would include vocational training for survival skills.
- iii. Given the poor distribution of schools, ABK is the best emergency option in areas where no school system has existed previously.

There are no records of the school going age population to determine the magnitude of the need to guide effective planning, prioritising, and implementation of basic education in the district. Such records would give a clear picture of which areas can be immediately addressed through formal education and which ones may be possible through a non-formal system, as the only short-term option.

The influx of below school age children into lower primary school levels is problematic and indicates the need for some sort of pre primary provision in the villages. If there is no arrangement made to ease the girl child (at least temporarily) from extending the domestic chores into the classroom, chances are that very poor quality UPE graduates will be produced. Alternatively, the school may become less appealing, resulting in the loss of interest reported by some class teachers. This problem may, to some extent, be addressed through a non-formal education system, but also requires the establishment of pre-primary child care centres relevant to the needs of the community. Hence, the district might have to devise a multi-sectoral approach to basic education, and not rigidly and exclusively adhere either ABK or UPE. They might need a middle option to allow shorter hours of formal education for those who prefer the formal option, and ABK for those who find it may fit their interests better. As the children in the FGD said,

"If I am given opportunity to choose, I will attend part-time."
(Boys, 8 and 11, Sakale Primary School).

Some older children had other fears:

"Parents will refuse our brothers and sisters to come for full time learning. They want them to help in saving for animals."
(Lorukotto Primary School)

These children were convinced their parents would have no problem with formal education if it were made flexible. It was not clear, however, whether they were ready to sacrifice formal education for ABK, as can be seen from their statements concerning the type of education they would prefer.

The P1 and P2 group indicated they preferred full-time schooling for everyone, but four out of the seven groups indicated that the choice would lie with parents. Other responses expressed arguments for or against an informal education system. One boy thought that having some children from a single family go to formal and others to non-formal education would likely be challenging.

While some thought that their parents were already convinced about the strength of formal education that they maintained that their parents "will not agree to non-formal system of learning for all children". In fact, some of the children were outright selfish. They did not wish their remaining siblings to join them in the formal school.

The children's views on ABK did not necessarily suggest that the people of Karamoja are opposed to formal education, but rather that their school attendance has been constrained by difficult circumstances. Some of their statements to support their views are captured below.

These arguments from the children illustrate the kind of dilemma faced by their parents and caregivers. They need to make decisions that promote education without being deprived of their children's contribution at the household level.

The issue of staffing was crucial to the quality of ABK service delivery. The staff-caring phenomenon leaves a lot to be desired, and obviously the teacher to student ratio falls far below the proposed national ration of 1:25.

This study also illustrated the low levels of appreciation for education that remains in some communities. For example, in one school, the majority of the children who benefit from UPE are Kenyan. They cross over to benefit from an arrangement to which they do not contribute anything at all. The children who are supposed to be beneficiaries shun education, preferring to remain home or to move with the locals. In this scenario, a negative attitude and not opportunity is what prevents school attendance.

Issues surrounding children with disabilities are a factor in the reasons why some school-going age groups still stay at home. These sentiments were summed up very well in the response from one of the FGDs. This group of children seems to have been left out by the formal

education system, despite the government's HARS programme. ABEK can reach such children with the co-operation of their primary caregivers, as well as a modification of some aspects of the approach to accommodate such children.

The District Managers, a group of technocrats, thought that the UPE curriculum should be followed and, therefore, that facilitators should be professionally trained. Permanent infrastructure should be put in place and not have children study under trees. They also wanted the facilitators' remuneration to be attractive and paid in a timely manner.

Members of the community suggested ways of improving ABEK's service delivery through reviewing the curriculum content and delivery. They wanted to have a more integrated curriculum designed for their district, one that does not necessarily focus on cattle as its central theme. Another major aspect of ABEK was to ensure students have access to post-ABEK practical skills training such as carpentry, brick laying/building and tailoring. They also wanted to see their facilitators' training incorporate foundational basics of instruction to ensure professionalism and the credibility of ABEK.

From the views expressed by the two groups of stakeholders, it is evident that the kind of ABEK they want will have to be modified to suit their own needs, needs that are not identical to those of their counterpart districts of Moroto and Kotido.

The Local Council V officials even recommended ABEK's name be changed to connote a community-based approach to education in order to reduce the stigma already attached to Karamoja as a backward and primitive society. To make their education "alternative" makes Karamoja appear like deserve localised instead of universal basic education. They argued was that government planners do not accept ABEK as a form of basic education that must benefit from the UPE funding and infrastructure development. In other words, they wished to have ABEK included in the national UPE budget and distribution of resources.

By implementing ABEK in Nakapiripirit, stakeholders and planners expected certain achievements. For district managers, these included all children in the district having access to basic education, resulting in a general rise in literacy levels. They also expected to have an improved education system, one capable of bridging the gap between education and culture, increasing awareness about the benefits of education in general and promoting a better attitude towards formal education. Ultimately, moreover, they wanted evidence of changes in lifestyles in the community. The district managers seem to visualize ABEK as an integral part of a well-coordinated education system, and not a system operating in isolation. This integration should be synergistic and not undermine to the formal education service delivery; neither should it produce half-

baked "graduates incapable of functioning within and beyond their district". The kind of training their ABEK facilitators receive should be nationally recognized and capable of replication with a specific facilitators' training curriculum.

Different people held views about the kind of ABEK best for Nakapiripirit district. Children and elders believe ABEK as initially designed suits their needs. However, they suggest some modifications, including a definite syllabus, adequate learning materials for each child and an arrangement whereby teachers are trained, certified and officially deployed as in formal education. Furthermore, they argued ABEK should have permanent shelters and promotion from one level to another.

School children proposed that everybody, including parents, need basic education. For this to happen without disrupting the normal running of households, learning should cater to some children during the day and others during the night. Provision of a holiday break should allow those who have been attending to relieve their siblings from their chores, as well. Their break from books should allow them practice what they have learned and parents should attend the adult literacy classes.

The third ABEK model suggested was a static arrangement, in it, communities should have a school that is relatively static, as well as a mobile school for the boys who keep the kraals for a long season away from home. The people of Upe believed this would address illiteracy faster. Facilitators could migrate with the kraal boys, live with them and provide learning. Accommodation and food for facilitators would be provided or supplemented from the kraal produced.

The resources required for implementation of ABEK in Nakapiripirit did not seem as complicated as the ABEK district managers wished to indicate. They cited human resources, adequate funding, transport, fuel, instructional materials, water and security as possible obstacles.

The district council committed to sensitise the communities, integrate issues of security in the routine ABEK activities, contribute their time to monitor the facilitators and the children at the learning centre (including taking inventory of the centre resources and materials, and mobilising parents to take their children to school). They pledged to fundraise through advocacy with the participation of their members of parliament, and to lobby government and donor support for ABEK. The water department agreed to provide sources of safe drinking water to the ABEK communities.

The community pledged to participate by providing time and locally available resources for setting up shelters at the learning centres, identifying and recommending potential facilitators to be trained, mobilising (sacrificing) children to attend, and providing scholastic materials and food. They also pledged to provide accommodation and food for facilitators. District managers' contribution

included moral support and personnel.

The Local Council officials did not wish to inherit anything that did not work in Moroto and Kotido, and decided to use the lesson learned from the ABEK pilot projects. They are not willing to waste resources by putting an ABEK centre in a community for the sake of it. Every community selected should be justified. To ensure this, they wish to tour and consult with the most disadvantaged communities in the district.

To ensure that lessons learnt from the piloting of ABEK in Moroto and Kotido are used they suggested:

1. Preparatory and learning visits to Moroto and Kotido.
2. A Tour of the most disadvantaged communities in Nakapiripirit district to involve the communities in planning, implementation and evaluation of ABEK.
3. Developing a timeframe for phasing in ABEK, and putting mechanisms in place to ensure quality. *"It is better to spend more time planning than rushing to replicate without considering issues of modification or strengthening certain aspects of ABEK,"* said one member of the council.
4. The community members recommended organisation of household roles to include education in routines.
5. Fathers would unilaterally decide which children should go to school and who should keep the flock or do household chores.
6. Fathers would decide who goes to formal school system and those to attend ABEK.
7. The majority of the parents would attend LAL.
8. To ensure that all family members attend learning activities every day, the family would determine learning shifts/schedules best suited for each member of the family.

Consultant's Brief Comment on the above views

This study indicates that the state of basic education in Nakapiripirit district lags far behind the expectations of the National projections (1995-2000) and the stipulated actions on basic education by the UN and other International conventions and declarations. The gaps identified within the basic education system outweigh its strengths portraying the district as very disadvantaged where a special intervention is needed alongside ABEK.

The alternative basic education for Karamoja (ABEK) is viable for Nakapiripirit district, albeit with modifications to adequately respond to the needs of the district. The districts in the Karamoja region are not homogenous in needs and/or approach to basic education, and ABEK in particular. Some unique cultural practices (for example, female circumcision) are specific to ethnic groups, making the society different from the rest. Such peculiarity necessitates a review of the curriculum to include strategies to help the children and communities deal with the negative aspects of the practice.

Most District Managers and Local Council leaders are not conversant with ABEK. Before ABEK is replicated

in the new district, a very well laid out sensitisation programme should be put in place. ABEK is perceived as a transitional approach that should stimulate the community to appreciate and change their attitude towards basic education. It is seen as a bridge between illiteracy and formal education, until Karamoja catches up with the rest of the country. A clear outline of the roles and position of ABEK in the education system must be delimited and clearly explained to all stakeholders to produce synergy and not competition between the different approaches to basic education in the district.

There is need to review the curriculum in terms of the thematic emphasis and the various dialects of the distinct groups in the district. Elders and other custodians of culture and language have to be involved to agree on the syntax and semantics to be used in the curriculum.

ABEK should change their lifestyles to improve housing, sanitation, agricultural practices and civic compliance. ABEK should not create a rift between UPE and ABEK graduates.

The people of Nakapiripirit know what they want and are willing to make suggestions and commitments. All the models suggested have the desire to have every child access basic education from whatever arrangement as the strength.

Proposals For Implementing Abek In Nakapiripirit

Whereas enrolment is low, absenteeism and dropout/pull/push out are common in many schools due to seasonal activities, for children being a major source of household labour, which competes for time with formal schooling. A tired body and a tired mind limit children's readiness to learn.

Herding livestock and tending babies are the main domestic chores contributing, with poor infrastructure and institutional factors, to poor attendance of school. The long distance travelled to school, lack of classrooms and the requirement to stay at school from morning to evening also contribute to the problem.

Due to poverty, children are sent to the market to earn income for the household and girls are encouraged to get married in order to bring cows to their families.

Capacity for implementing ABEK

- The resources needed for successful implementation of ABEK, as seen by the District Managers, include human resources, funding, transport/vehicles and instructional materials.
- The local council indicates that some of the major resources required are human resources, as well as the provision of water and the need to guarantee security.
- The Local Council officials mention various ways they plan to participate in the ABEK program in Nakapiripirit. Among these are sensitising communities

about the role of ABEK in district development, and providing security, so that people may appreciate the benefits of ABEK and its success as crucial. They are committed to integrating ABEK into district council budgets, and to monitoring the facilitators and children at the learning centre.

- The district pledged to establish an inventory of centre resources and materials, and to mobilise parents to send their children to school. To improve provision of water sources, the district will ensure better planning through proper surveys to guide the water projects for ABEK. The district will raise funds by lobbying government through their members of parliament.
- Community members pledged to contribute personnel and provide various locally available resources. Each community was prepared to identify and recommend potential facilitators to be trained, construct shelters in which children can learn, mobilise (provide, sacrifice) children to the learning centres, provide books, pens and food as well as provide accommodation for the facilitators, including sharing with them food if necessary.

Recommendations For Implementing Abek In Nakapiripirit District

ABEK must have clearly laid out goals, and performance objectives to guide the development of a strategic framework that will ensure a sustained increase in access to culturally sensitive and acceptable basic education, taking into account the limited resources available.

The district must establish planning and administration infrastructure spanning down to the village and household units, as well as bilateral involvement of donor agencies and NGOs. Guidelines and protocols should be put in place to ensure effective governance and transparency, and accountability to the child and to the funding authorities.

Guiding Principles, Vision, Mission and Goals

Stakeholders at all levels should participate in strategic planning processes to agree upon procedures that should be documented and followed.

A work plan with clearly defined activities, requirements and resources, as well as individual and collective roles and responsibilities, has to be developed, and documenting benchmarks must be used in assessing progress and impact of ABEK. A community data-base and tracking mechanism to guide implementation is recommended.

ABEK facilitators should be provided with recognised training and certification through an accreditation arrangement with existing PTCs to develop credibility and reduce the stigma associated with ABEK. Locally acceptable shelters to shield children against harsh weather conditions should be considered. Essential facilities like

latrines, and water could be brought nearer the learning centres. An advocacy strategy to lobby support and raise resources for effective implementation of ABEK should be formulated.

Goals of ABEK

- a. To raise awareness of all adults in the district about the benefits of education to the development of the district
- b. To develop a district Education information management system (EIMS) to guide research oriented action planning and impact assessment
- c. To increase accessibility of education to all school-going children through a multi-dimensional approach of formal and non-formal education arrangements
- d. To develop a multi-sectoral communication strategy where education is popularised through other support departments like health, water and sanitation, community development, and veterinary care, which have direct relevance to the quality of life of the people at the grassroots
- e. To secure trained teachers and facilitators as well as inspectors and supervisors for quality assurance in schools and learning centres.

Number & distribution of ABEK learning centres by parish

There are discrepancies in the distribution of formal primary schools by number and level, with a high concentration in some parishes and none in others. Upc has the lowest concentration of schools, followed by Pian and Chekwii. The lowest distribution of schools (5.5%) is found in the two sub-counties of **Loroo** and **Karita**, in Upc County, Lorengadwat in Pian, and Moruuta in Chekwii. Both the distribution and the levels of schools within these sub-counties are very low. In Loroo, two of the schools are P2 level, while the third is P4.

A similar scenario exists in Karita, where two schools are P2 and one is P5 level, while all three schools in Lorengadwat, Pian county are at P1 level. Their only government-aided school (P7 level) has a very high dropout rate. An enrolment of 284 boys and 321 girls in P1 yielded completion rates of 12 boys and 1 girl in P7 (4.2% for boys and 0.31% for girls, respectively) in 2002, far below the Government projection of 50% rate. These numbers make Chekwii, Moruuta subcounty seems less advantaged with one P2 level school and two P4 level schools.

A common feature in all these sub-counties is the lack of an opportunity for children to complete the primary cycle. Opportunities for post primary training and vocational education are completely out of reach in the three sub-counties. Children who endeavour to complete the available levels of P1, P2, P3 or P4 ultimately drop out by default.

In phasing for ABEK, several criteria have to be

established to identify priority intervention parishes in order to bridge the gap where there are no schools at all. The following are recommended as some of the major

considerations for selection of priority intervention parishes and sites for ABEK:

1. Complete absence of schools in the neighbourhood
2. Distance exceeding 4km from the nearest school
3. Socio-economic and cultural activities of the community

The phasing of interventions should therefore begin with extreme north and southern parts of Upe in the parishes of Karita and Loroio sub-counties. This should run concurrently with interventions in the equally disadvantaged parishes found in Lorengedwat and Moruita sub-counties, and in Pian and Chokwii counties respectively.

The absence of statistical sources enumerating school going age children and enrolment records for the district make recommendations and precise indication of parishes difficult. The district should carry out a rapid assessment of the parishes to establish the actual situation on the ground. Statistics from the UNICEF activities provide detailed information on three sub-counties of Karita, Lorengedwat and Moruita.

Population of school age children in 4 sub-counties.

The baseline study indicates Upe County as the most deprived and therefore the highest priority for ABEK intervention, despite the seemingly high enrolment in lower classes of formal primary education. Karita sub-county in Upe County has a higher population (4,315) of 7-18 year old children than Lorengedwat in Pian County, which has 1,013 children, and Moruita in Chokwii County, which has 1,414 children of the same age. Of those children, the estimated number enrolled into formal primary schools was 782, for Karita, 760 for Loroio, and 929 for Moruita. The table below illustrates the recommended establishment and phasing of ABEK according to population and deprivation:

Table 12: Estimated distribution of ABEK centres by school going population

These figures assuming about 5% of the population of children is below 7 years and therefore not eligible for ABEK enrolment and estimate enrolment for each ABEK centre at 40 learners; this excludes children already enrolled in formal primary schools, but allows for a small number of preferential transfers from schools to ABEK.

							No. of ABEK centres/parish		
	Karita	3	4,315	227	1,439	782	40	36	30
	Loroio	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	40	20	NA
Pian	Lorengedwat	3	1,013	51	338	760	40	9	7
Chokwii	Moruita	2	1,414	71	707	929	40	18	12

Karita sub-county in Upe County would require 30 ABEK centres per parish to cater to the 1,439 learners if the already enrolled children were excluded, and 36 ABEK centres if they were included.

For the 4 sub-counties of Lorengedwat, Moruita, Loroio and Karita the following phasing is proposed:

1. Karita: Has a population of children out of school six times that of Lorengedwat and three times that of Moruita.
2. Loroio: Lacks statistics on children's population, but discussions with elders and the PTA held at Kalas illuminated their concern about the fact that their region is one of the most affected areas, with the nearest schools being as far as 35km.

Suggested Phasing of ABEK Centres Over Three Years

Establish 50% of estimated centres per parish in the first year, and the remaining 50% over two years of at 25% coverage each year (see table 13 based on statistics in UNICEF reports).

In three years, the district could establish 83 ABEK centres in the 4 sub-counties, with 32 (50%) in the first year. The subsequent years 15 and 16 ABEK centres could be established respectively. Adequate planning is necessary to enable systematic and effective implementation of the ABEK program. Activities to consider include the following:

1. A planning meeting with stakeholders at district level to share findings from baseline survey and inform all actors. This should strengthen ownership of the study and appreciation of the suggestions and priorities made for establishment of the program in the district. The resources required for establishment of ABEK will be mobilised locally as well as from external donors, and agreed-upon budget estimates and plans ensuring transparency and accountability at all levels will be produced. Each player should pledge their contributions, and outline their roles, responsibilities and commitment to the effective establishment of ABEK.

2. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be signed to solidify specified commitments and contributions from partners (District, NGOs and the donor agencies). These commitments should be integrated in the

Table 13: Suggested phasing of ABEK centres by parish

			Est. no of ABEK centres/parish		Phase 1 of ABEK centres/parish (50%)		Phase 2 of ABEK centres/parish (25%)		Phase 3 of ABEK centres/parish (25%)	
			Including P/S popn.	Less P/S popn.	Including P/S popn.	Less P/S popn.	Including P/S popn.	Less P/S popn.	Including P/S popn.	Less P/S popn.
	Karita	3	36	30	18	15	9	8	9	7
	Longo	2	20	16	10	8	5	4	5	4
Pea	Turungelwat	3	9	7	4	3	3	2	2	2
Chelwa	Moruta	2	18	12	9	6	5	3	4	3
	Total	10	83	65	41	32	22	15	20	16

District Plan of Action for Establishing ABEK

3. Planning with stakeholders at community levels should involve communities in sharing findings from the baseline survey and act as basis for the sensitisation of community members about the need for and benefits of ABEK. The communities should be involved in deciding location of centres and the criteria for selection of facilitators. Training of the ABEK facilitators should then commence, as other planning activities continue.

4. Infrastructure: The district should work with partners to ensure that management structures are in place for the implementation of ABEK before the program starts. This should be clearly laid out at all levels with roles and responsibilities specified.

District level:

The district should put in place a technical team of curriculum reviewers including resource persons from Moroto and Kotido. The panel of reviewers should be made up of representatives from the district to the family level. Their responsibility will include reviewing curriculum and other related materials, pre testing facilitators, producing materials for use when the facilitators qualify and start work, and setting up a district ABEK co-ordinating mechanism and information system on coordinating all committees from district to household levels.

Local Council III level

The districts should engage LC III leaders to ensure cohesion and ownership of the program at the lower local councils and at the grassroots. Activities may include establishing local management and coordination structures; deciding roles and commitments in terms of resource contributions, including budgets; deciding on roles and responsibilities in ABEK implementation by local council committees; setting up a district task force /steering committee to ensure local council committees fulfil their commitment and drawing action plans.

Parish level:

Responsibilities and activities include discussing the budget and other resource commitments, implementing the roles and responsibilities in ABEK through parish administrative structures, setting up a task force /steering committee and drawing action plans.

The traditional administrative hierarchy will be invaluable in creating awareness about ABEK, strengthening ownership and mobilising communities. Planners and stakeholders should agree upon the roles and responsibilities of tribal elders and household decision makers.

Strategies For Implementing Abek In Nakapiripit District

The study was intended to identify potential beneficiaries, resources and suggested strategies that could be put in place for successful implementation of ABEK in the district. This section discusses the results of the study as well as the conclusions and recommendations in relation to the objectives of the study.

Structural

1. Set guidelines and protocols that will guide the ABEK establishment and ensure community support of formal schools and ABEK learning centres.
2. Strengthen institutional/district capacity towards effective planning and establish administrative infrastructure at all levels of basic education service delivery for guaranteeing quality.
3. Identify sites where the learning centres could most effectively meet the needs of the children
4. Map out responsibilities where communities will identify and provide locally available resources, while the donors support with provision of materials not readily available.

Human Resources

1. Set criteria to help communities identify and recommend people to train as facilitators
2. Advocate for the streamlining of the training curriculum for ABEK facilitators to build confidence in the service delivery through proper course provisions, provisions that are accredited, continuous and integrated into mainstream teachers training or subject to special certification under separate arrangement

3. Facilitate community participation in the review and development of ABEK curriculum for learners
4. Establish a mechanism to facilitate prompt payment of the ABEK facilitators as well as timely supplementation from the community contributions
5. Ensure requirements for attendance are in place including a water source, scholastic materials, food, and latrines

Resource Requirements And Sources

Identify resource contributions at all levels not necessarily financial, to be mobilised from all players.

Household level

Sensitise communities on how they can contribute e.g. through time, skills and energy, which can be estimated in hours/days depending on the socio-economic demands. Families can adjust daily activities to allow time for ABEK. People with skills that may be needed to put up structures or skills to mobilise and lead others for a good cause should be co-opted. Families can participate in learning or mobilisation activities to ensure improvement of knowledge, attitudes and practices among members of their villages. According to the children's views, all family members need to have education; they must participate and support each other to achieve this. Adult support is required for the development of ABEK facilities, like shelters, and for the maintenance of water resources and latrines.

Community level

Karamoja's communities retain strong traditional

administrative arrangements, in addition to falling under the jurisdiction of national political and civic as well as local council arrangements. District administrative and management organs need to capitalise on these structures.

The ultimate results will include:

1. Participation in community development activities like the ABEK management committee, planning, fundraising and supervision of education services and other related social services like water sources
2. The traditional administrative hierarchy taking centre stage and working with the local council structures towards community mobilisation through a parents/elders/facilitators' association. A strong cadre of leadership would ensure coherent and timely action on issues facing ABEK.
3. Selecting community members to act as focal persons in their villages for ABEK affairs.

Government, NGOs and Donors

The enormous demands of establishing the ABEK program will need financial backing and technical assistance from government, NGOs, and donors. The contributions at this level may involve:

1. Mobilising and availing funds for increasing number of trained personnel. Training should be comprehensive and continuous.
2. Facilitate planning and strengthen capacity for attaining targets and accountability.
3. Participate in continuous assessment of performance to motivate learners. ■

Early childhood care and development

Child-to-Child Education/Schooling

The distinguishing character of child to child is the direct involvement of children in the process of health, education and promotion and the nature of their involvement.

From the beginning of child to child, protagonists of the approach worldwide have been keenly aware that older children are an untapped resource in promoting and maintaining the health and development of younger ones.

In early childhood education development, child to child active learning methods blend easily in the learning of science, language and other subjects. Older children participate in many activities with young children and learn how to stimulate and play with them.

It is through the interventions with the children of today that the attitude and disposition of the children of tomorrow are shaped. Child to child interventions pay off in the next generation.

An older child who prevents infection, feeds a younger



An older girl child feeds her brother in an early childhood centre in Ingoloyo of Marakwet, Kenya

child often, understands feelings and comforts younger ones who are unhappy contributes to their mental as well as physical development.

Also children of the same age help each other develop and that this can start at a very young age.

Peer relationships are improved through child to child activities, children show more empathy for each other.

The core objective of child to child was to enable children to identify issues and implement actions for promoting awareness and practice related to health, nutrition of children and women in the community.

The child to child program too moors on the facilitation of adult, however, change in adults attitude has been slow especially because decision making and therefore find it difficult to accept a facilitative versus directive role.

Clearly the facilitation of the support teacher is critical for children's participation in the child to child program. Involving boys in the child to child program has been a challenge but where support teachers are female the response has been better.

The active participation of child to child groups provides a live and visible example of what children are able to do and the role of ECCD in that process.

Child to child has brought about improvement in attendance in the schools, children and parents are eager to use the facilities provided.

The benefits of child to child approach are clearly evident in the children, families and communities but there are requirements for in-depth training and strategic focus on children's empowerment as active partners in the change process.

Shared activities have created bonding between older and younger children. Younger children have learned a lot of social skills, they learn through imitation.

They watch older ones brushing teeth, cleaning hands with a soap and water, combing their hair and they want to do the same.

Both younger and older children feel they are part of an extended family and a sense of kinship develop similar to the one they have in the village.

Mothers have been nudged to pay attention to the psychosocial needs of their little ones. They have learned to appreciate what the children learn.

Child to child programs benefit enormously if parents and the wider community can be brought on board. Their support help to promote programs viability and allow message to reach the children not connected with the school or centres running the program.

Without knowing their experiences, child to child would be impoverished. We would therefore strongly encourage all those using child to child to fully document their programs.

It is more accurate and beneficial to view child to child activities as component that may be integrated with broader health education programs that are either at the planning stage or already in operation.

The most effective programs are those that involve children decision making rather than using them as

communicators of adult message.

Whenever child to child activities take place, they stress the potential of children to promote better health and education to younger children, to children of the same age and to their families and communities.

Experience show that a health action approach recommended by the child to child to child trust is often a useful way in which children and adults can work with child to child ideas.

PLAY

Play is very important in the developing process of a child as well as the learning process in a child's milestones.

Play is universal and open to every child, regardless of ability. In play a child can be anybody he/she chooses to be.

Play is considering one of the most important activities during childhood. They have found that it has a strong role in stimulating the growth and development of younger and older children. Children who receive plenty of stimulation in early childhood including through play are likely to undergo faster and more profound development. They have also noted its role in maintaining a child physical and mental health. Play and its role in stimulating children's conceptual development. Likewise play involving physical activity helps to control anxiety, at the same time producing pleasure and happiness.

The concept of children active participation is truly empowering children. Where 'active learning' is promoted without any real engagement or learning by children. Children participate but because they are not actively involved in what they are doing they are not able to carry new knowledge and skills forward with them, to be further build their in the future. The potential for transformational experiences are thereby denied to them.

Through play, both older and younger children are able to develop in variety of ways e.g. physically and cognitively.

The migration process and the strong influence of values that are foreign to our culture have changed people's behaviors. They have destroyed the solidarity of the community. They have split many families and produced alienation in our children growth and development (emotion, mental, physical and spiritual) the norms for recreation and tradition games are changing very quickly. The norms for recreation and tradition games are changing very quickly. Our children are spending more and more hours in front of a television as a result, physical activity and learning are being severely stunted.

Children learn very complex concepts through play, through play they exhibit skill and confidence, precision and persistence, creativity and mastery. And when we observe children closely, it enables us to:

1. Identify children's interest.

2. Offer children real opportunities to explore
3. Ask meaningful questions
4. Give positive descriptive feedback
5. Scaffold their learning

The aims of playing:

1. To identify the attitude, skills and behaviors of parents, their children, teachers and elderly in relation to the traditional games associated with their social and cultural background.
2. To investigate and describe our most important traditional and low cost games.
3. To promote the health of our children through encouraging and stimulating and practice of using traditional and low cost games.
4. To study and determine the relationship between the practice of some traditional low cost games and child development.
5. To research the possible influence of practicing some traditional low-cost games.

Play has been used to promote physical and mental health, as well as to promote teaching and learning. Intensive creative communication methods have been used such as puppets, drama, dancing, songs and musical groups.

It is important to note that:

1. Playing is essential in a child's life. It is the most important foundation for a child's health, development and their interactions with adults. If boys and girls are allowed to play, they will enjoy their adult life.
2. Playing provides a great opportunity for children to develop skills, to convert passive experience into action, to participate and to increase their self-esteem, autonomy, creative and knowledge.
3. Playing is one way in which children can develop and satisfy their curiosity for learning. It also encourages child growth and integrated development.
4. Playing is an important activity which helps to maintain a child's physical and mental health. It helps to control anxiety through physical activity and at the same time produces pleasure and happiness.

The success of any child upbringing depends on:

1. The attitude, knowledge and behavior of the teachers and parents.
2. The conviction of the teachers involvement in the Programme (the result of the prior participation in planning, training and evaluation activities)
3. The support of the parents and the community for their children's activities and participation.

4. The child's communication skills.
5. The quality of the materials produced.

Tentative Title/Theme:

1. A clean and safe environment to grow
2. Physical development safety.
3. Communication and self-expression.
4. Feeling, self-esteem, human values.
5. Learning skills band stimulation.
6. Development phases, nutrition.

Giving Children The Opportunity To Show What They Have Learned.

Providing opportunity for children to show other children, parents and community members what they have



After play, it is important that they feed to get the energy back, Togologo - Marsabit

learned motivates the participating children act in the future, encourages non participatory children to participate and also stimulates the interest and participation of parents and members of the wider community.

Children participate but because they are not actively involved in what they are doing, it is less likely that they will carry new knowledge and skills forward with them.

Unequal participation amongst children is another relevant issue to the program. It can be a challenge to ensure that all children are able to participate meaningfully.

The children demonstrate different ways of learning some are gung ho and straight into activity and experimenting, others consider each move and are extremely logical, others do a lot of looking and listening. All learning involves the whole child and is part of the whole child's identity. What they say, do and feel is part of a complex web of activity that impact on the individual, the society and the world around us.

Children should be active learners rather than stores of knowledge, they value, identify and affirm learning outcomes such as well-being and urgency, a sense of

belonging and participation and an enthusiasm to explore and make sense of the world through reflective action. And they demonstrate the role of the adult in as facilitator, guide and motivator.

Building a strong identity, strong self-esteem, a sense of 'I can do' forms the basis of all learning in early childhood.

When children demonstrate participation, interest, confidence, security, motivation, persistence, collaboration, we know that we are part of a successful learning process. More than anything else, this is what the childcare worker wants to achieve. They want to nurture the child's innate desire to learn and be the best that he/she can be.

Young children learn best when they work at their own pace and follow their own interest. Warm relationship and predictable and familiar surrounding allow them to become open, happy learners.

Self-expression and communication are a central part of the early childhood curriculum. Loris Malaguzzi (Edwards, Gandini and Forman 1993) tells us that children have many ways of expressing themselves, of representing their experiences and ideas e.g. through drama, painting, sculpture and movement.

1. Parents are their children's first educators.
2. It is only when parents are and early years educators share their knowledge about an individual child's development that we can provide rich and challenging provision in the early years setting and in the home.
3. Dialogue between and early years educators have to be equal, active and respectful.

Building on these principles, parents and staff work together to build children self-esteem, sense of competency and openness to learning.

Children learn by observing, interpreting what they see and experimenting with the knowledge and skills in the new situations. This is what Roggott (1992) calls 'guided participation' - both guidance and participation is culturally valued activities are essential to children apprenticeship in thinking. This is how we develop shared understanding.

Most programs are using child to child in the context of their early childhood programs and consequently their aim in involving the children in active learning. An example of one is the ABLK form of education which is practiced by the karamoja that will be discussed in this issue.

For many children in our society, early childhood care services are the first opportunity to engage with the larger world outside the home. It is the interface where children from different backgrounds discover commonalities and differences and become excited by both.

Barbara Rogot (1996) suggest that learners are apprentices involved in communities of practice, in these



Children from Birm - Pokos, Sebenna Sudan in a learning centre

cases the communities of practice of homemakers, builders, hospital workers, shopkeepers, super humans and royalty, trying out how it feels to be a host of different people, animals and other entities. They don't just copy these models they become them. This is how they learn the art of living in the society. This is how they learn who they are. These children are proactive learners interacting with people, places and things.

Knowledge is something that lives in the head to the view that there is an interactive and reciprocal relationship between the learner, learning and the environment. Learning is cultural. We are motivated to learn certain things because they have a social and cultural purpose.

Children are innately driven to pursue their own learning, but the bottom line is that we don't need to force children to learn; they want to learn for themselves. Indeed sometimes when we teach children learn the wrong things.

On the other hand when children experience the interest, satisfaction, competence, involvement they learn that learning is interesting, they learn the feel of satisfaction, challenge and achievement and that goes with it.

Children learn what is in their environment to be learned, that is language, behavior, relationships, what things means and how things work.

According to Vygotsky's theory, learning is a process of interaction between the child and the environment, mediated by culture. Here two things become clear.

Firstly, the children are working within a cultural sphere of knowledge. Vygotsky tells us that knowledge is culturally constructed and then internalized by the individual.

Secondly, thinking is socially initiated and developed in collaboration with others. One idea sparks another. There is an ongoing interaction between individual, environment and activity. The children demonstrate this theory in the way they use the culturally available resources to build on their cultural experiences.

Nathan Chelimo - Education Coordinator, Save the Children, Uganda

Nateya is 8 years old and enjoys learning. Even though her classroom is a make-shift shelter in the middle of a dry truck of land, she wakes up every morning at 6 AM to go to the learning centre that is the symbol of school. She learns about droughts that has dried up their well and enjoys learning to read, write and add sums. She hopes to spend five years here before going to government primary school that is 8 Km away from her home in the manyatta along Moroto-Kutido road.

Basic education refers to educational opportunities designed to meet the basic learning needs... to improve the quality of their lives to make informed decisions and to continue learning¹. The Save the Children in Uganda's basic education programmes is designed -

1. to secure opportunity for children living in difficult circumstances to access and participate meaningfully in education
2. to engage duty bearers in exploring, demonstrating and mainstreaming into government policy and investment priority interventions that guarantee quality education



Nathan Chelimo with his many children in one of the ABEK centres in Karamoja.

Alternative Basic Education (Karamoja & Nakasongola Early Childhood Development and Education, Quality Education project, promotion of Child participation - monitoring Educational programmes and Education for children in Armed conflict. The strategic goal of the sector

is to provide opportunity for vulnerable children to realise their right to quality education

Areas of work include:

- Expanding opportunity for children in pastoral and fishing communities to access and participate in meaningfully in education through the non-formal education approach
- Exploring strategies for strengthening the quality of teaching-learning interaction through targeted classroom based professional support and supervision of teachers
- Supporting school communities in hand to teach accas to establish child friendly learning practices and environments; including participation of children in the organization and management of learning
- Providing infrastructure, instructional materials, scholastic materials and psychosocial support for children affected by conflict in northern Uganda
- Working with and supporting the education civil society to lobby for formulation and implementation of legislation supportive to educationally disadvantaged children
- Strengthen the capacity to implement the programme.

The basic education sector has five major components;

Working principles

- Partnership with central and local government (strengthening institutional and structural capacity)
- Child participation
- Child rights programming
- Networking and collaboration (with brief, (district local governments etc)

Save the children in Uganda and the district local government of Moroto, Kutido and Nakapipiat together with the ministry of education implement a non-formal education called alternative basic education for Karamoja (ABEK) and the early childhood development and Education programme among the communities in Karamoja

Security in Karamoja has been a challenge in the implementation of the programmes in this region including raiding, inter raids and revenge conflict which hinder monitoring of activities. The positive commitment of the district local government and that of the central government is towards mainstreaming the programmes is highly commendable. ■

Strengths, challenges & gaps of education delivery.

By Nathan Chelimo - Save the Children in Uganda

District managers believe that UPE has contributed to meeting the needs of the children in the district through raising knowledge on health and child rights, and increasing access to education by changing parents' attitudes towards education. Schooling in the region, however, still faces a series of challenges, including poor participation among parents in PTA and other school management activities due to lack of awareness on education policies; community preference for boarding schools under UPE to guarantee security and continuity of schooling for children if families migrate during the dry season, or because of cattle raids; lack of corresponding incremental increases in facilities such as classroom blocks and furniture to match increases in enrolment; limited staff positions in schools leading to high pupil-to-teacher ratios; the high proportion (50%) of inadequately trained or untrained teachers; lack of accommodation for teachers; inability to attract qualified teachers; unrealistically small government grant levels of 500/child and 900/child in lower and upper primary respectively; and fluctuation of attendance with seasons, insecurity and migrations in search of water and pastures.

Challenges to ABEK.

Traditional cultural values and practices are strong in Karamoja. Our lifestyle is unique, and our people still rely on a strong system of elders within the community.

Hunger is one of the critical issues facing our people, since rain in Karamoja is sporadic and failures in rainfall occur seasonally, threatening the community and leading to high levels of malnutrition among children and students.

The formal school in Karamoja is still poor because the system is rigid. As a result, there is still more work to be done. Problematically, ABEK graduates often drop out of the formal school system, and the number of drop outs only increases

and neglect. We also have HIV/AIDS related programs. We are now integrating all these programs to provide crosscutting support and to benefit the community and its children. We emphasize core principles like child participation, and



Poor health for children coming to ABEK learning centres can be a big challenge to leaders

as they progress through formal schooling. The government, in conjunction with other organizations, should examine this phenomenon to see how best we can help the learners make the transition from ABEK to formal education. The program has changed the community perspectives towards education and is now embraced by everybody in Karamoja. We must team up with stakeholders to ensure that this attitude persists, and that the project achieves its goals and targets.

As Save the Children in Uganda, we confront other programs that may not relate to education. We work towards the protection of children in armed conflict, particularly through our programs in the north of Uganda, and have programs related to abuse

community participation to enable ownership of any development work that takes place. When we initiate a program, we work in conjunction with community members to identify their needs, and take the community through the planning process, initiating a number of community action plans. The result is a community that owns the programs running in its area. Child rights and participation and related cultural practices are also central; we work to ensure children benefit from our programs and that their rights to education, protection etc. are protected. We derive our method of work from the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, a series of global and national principles against which we design our programs and

try to reach the target children in this country.

Save the Children Uganda also links with informal programs in the country, especially within disadvantaged communities. We have started to develop linkages with communities in Nakasongola, the fishing community in the Lake Victoria area, and part of Kasese. We have also begun some mapping and an emergency education program in the northern part of Uganda. We work in an informal manner in order to accommodate the unique conditions facing the North, for incursions of the Lord's Resistance Army have led to a gap in the delivery of formal education. We have positioned ourselves to help support basic education, and to help meet the basic needs of disadvantaged communities in Uganda. To succeed, however, we need support from other partners, and to network with other groups and stakeholders within Uganda, within the East African region as a whole, and even globally (as we have already done). These are challenges we will be able to take on in the near future.

Potential for ABEK

Local people have limited knowledge and varying views about the ABEK program. Most local council officials acknowledge they have very little knowledge of the nature and functions of ABEK and agree collective sensitisation about ABEK, including study visits to Moroto and Korido, is necessary. ABEK is perceived to complement FAL and is often confused with the early childhood programs in the area.

The head teachers have not heard of ABEK, as it is meant to be. According to our research, 40% believe ABEK is Functional Adult Literacy (FAL), 40% do not know what it is, and 20% are unable/unwilling to give a response.

District managers describe ABEK as informal, practical, integrated and culturally sensitive. The teachers of UPE are better facilitated and LPE

has national curriculum with age restrictions.

District Managers agree that strengths within the ABEK approach include its tendency to promoting exposure, its flexibility and accommodation, its unique ability to reach the otherwise unreachable school-going age, the relevance of its curriculum to nomadic, pastoral lifestyles, its mobile nature, and its adequate facilitation of district officers for co-ordination/supervision for the ABEK centers, none of which are present in the UPE program.

The majority of adult respondents perceived ABEK to be primarily an adult literacy programme established to help rural and nomadic people to access mobile education. To school going children, ABEK meant an alternative way, reorganising or sometimes disorganising the way they can access formal education. ABEK is seen as a potential interference with the normal school life they already enjoy.

Members of the community identified the following opportunities that would aid the successful implementation of ABEK.

- 1 The Nutrition and Early Childhood Development Programme can provide a good ground for recruitment into ABEK or the formal primary school. It can work as pre-primary level of education.
- 2 NECDP centers in 25 selected sites would ensure more permanent communities, which can benefit from ABEK Centres if they are located nearby.
- 3 NECDP can also provide opportunity to mobilise parents to get involved in the learning of their children, in addition to their involvement in play groups and the feeding programme.
- 4 Strengthening NECDP will reduce the disruption to school-going children who play a dual role of caretaker and pupil, for where tend to convert schools into feeding centres as a result of the

WFP provision.

- 5 The minimum requirements for Local Government (LG) candidature led parents to appreciate the importance of education.

Views On Education In Nakapiripit District

There is considerable awareness among communities about the benefits of education in general, as was evident in remarks made by children and elders during focus group discussions.

Children show a desire to complete education and achieve self-sustenance. Out of the 49 children, 71.5% aspired for white-collar occupations such as teachers, doctors, administrators, and leaders. Nine of the respondents drawn from P1 and P2 did not respond (18.4%). The oldest respondent, a woman aged 35 years, wanted to be a preacher. Children identified five broad categories of benefits, including acquisition of wisdom or knowledge and the ability to understand issues around them.

The children who participated in the FGDs showed that they were familiar with two systems, namely the formal education system and Functional Adult Literacy.

Teachers' views

Out of the 21 schools selected, only 10 head teachers participated. Their ideas about the strength of formal education were varied. Four out of the head teachers said that formal education was a better approach because it motivates both children and parents to appreciate learning. Three thought that one of the strengths was the subsidised funding and infrastructure, which made formal education worthwhile. Two were of the view that the access to training by their teachers was a major strength.

The class teachers acknowledged that there are a lot of strengths to be reckoned with as far as formal basic

education is concerned. Two strengths were salient: the existence of infrastructure (38.5%), and the creation of jobs to become self-sustaining (38.5%). Other strengths identified were the existence of specific levels (15.4%) that stimulate the pupils to pass before they could be promoted to another level, and motivation of parents to bring their children to school (7.7%). This, they argue, gives direction and morale to the teachers.

1. Existence of infrastructure
2. Creates jobs/self-sustenance
3. Have specific levels
4. Motivates parents to send their children to school

Head teachers from all counties agreed that what makes UPE relevant to the needs of the children is the facilitation they receive in terms of instructional or learning materials. Piani and Upe appreciated improved school enrolment and reduction in costs of education. PTA members from these two counties indicated that parents were not willing to contribute towards their children's education. Chekwii appreciated the opportunity to engage children in co-curricular activities as well. Playgrounds were covered with green vegetation, unlike most of Upe and Piani, whose fields are dry most of the year and whose cattle graze all sprouting vegetation during the rainy season.

The community at Katabok believed that UPE would be incomplete without Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) to make adults more supportive to their children's education.

Out of school children were not available for consultation, as they had moved in search of pasture and water for the animals. The parents of school-going children should be encouraged to take their children to school.

Local Councils should impose a fine on every school going age child who they find not attending school. Leaders could recruit chaperons to encourage girls to study.

Building good schools, supervising and monitoring the schools, as well as establishing a trading centre near the school so that teachers can reside near the school" were also identified as roles of the community leadership.

Head teachers should provide uniforms, and also discourage absenteeism among teachers and pupils. They should erect more classrooms, provide adequate furniture, and also provide for games such as football and put up teachers' accommodation so that teachers do not sleep in town.

The schools should provide medical services and give enough food because parents do not have food at home. In addition, the school should provide plates and mugs.

The district leaders should build good schools and provide enough teachers. This particular school had one teacher and when he went for a meeting, pupils were left unattended. They further required the district leadership to provide female teachers.

Apart from inspection, monitoring or supervision of schools, the district leaders should organise donors to donate uniforms, instructional materials, plates and cups.

The role of leadership at national level was seen as two-fold: building of good schools and providing boreholes.

Aspirations and fears

If ABEK were to be implemented in Nakapiripiti, the district managers expected the following as a result:

1. Achievement of basic education for all
2. Raised literacy levels
3. Improved education system
4. Bridged gap between education and culture
5. Raised awareness about the benefits of education in general or better attitude towards formal education
6. Change in lifestyles in community

Despite the acknowledged strength of ABEK, district managers expressed some

fears:

1. Undermining of formal education system
2. Production of half baked 'graduates', who are more dangerous than the illiterate
3. Insecurity might hamper the ABEK efforts
4. Poorly facilitated and poorly trained facilitators

Sixty-six per cent of district officers view the long-term prospective of ABEK as a transitional arrangement whose two major functions were identified as promoting positive attitude towards formal education and providing a bridge to formal education.

The major weaknesses of ABEK were lack of infrastructure, its uncompetitive nature, and lack of achievement tests. The absence of follow up on its learners, as well as the non-professional facilitators who manage ABEK, were other weaknesses cited. Some managers, however, said bluntly that they did not know anything about ABEK and so could not comment on its weaknesses.

The local council team agreed that ABEK was more flexible than UPE; for example, if a child has missed a number of lessons or had been caught up by domestic chores, and arrived at a formal primary school at, for instance, 2.00pm, they would be turned away. ABEK is open to the elders and parents so that they can be part of the learning of their children as it happens. The formal school calendar does not suit the seasons and socio-economic activities of the community, but ABEK conforms to the needs of the people. ABEK benefits the girl child who would otherwise be disadvantaged. It would also ensure security in the villages because herd boys will utilize the evenings better as they attend ABEK centers, and this will avail them with better stories to share within their kraals instead of dwelling on cattle rustling and the resulting killings. The "community basedness"

of ABEK makes it more readily acceptable than formal education.

The community members highlighted what they consider the strengths of ABEK as follows:

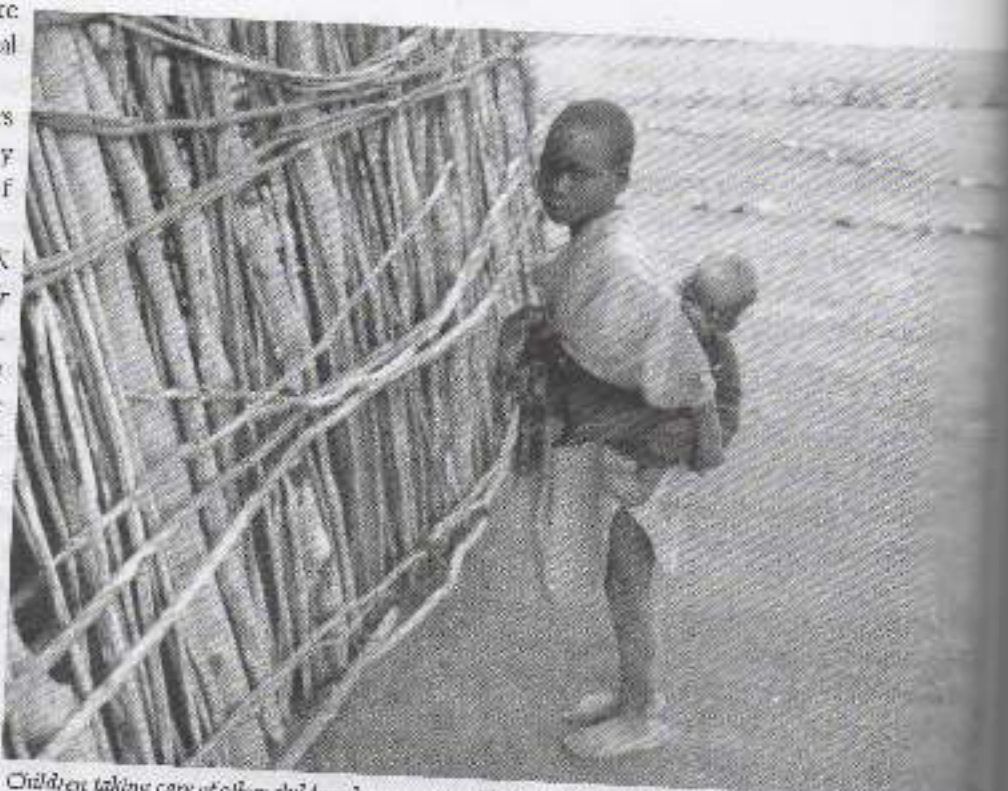
"The flexibility of ABEK allows all children to attend at their own convenient time", they said. One elder said that the community owns the programme in three major ways: the learning centres are closer to home; the community identifies the facilitators and also monitors the activities as they happen at the centre everyday.

Other views included:

"It is a bridge between no school at all and formal education" (One woman, 41 years). Some of the members said that education was a source of empowerment to manage daily life's challenges; for example, ABEK learners are able to read instructions on medication and explain to others, specifically parents. It also improves the child's awareness about personal and environmental hygiene. *"A child who has gone through school is cleaner and of a higher status."* It was also viewed as a channel of mobilising people to appreciate education and its outcomes. The participatory approach to learning was also mentioned as a major strength. It uses the familiar surroundings and experiences and benefits both children and the community at large.

Stakeholders' and Partners' Views on Implementing ABEK in Nakapiripirit

If ABEK were to be implemented in the district, different players would need to come in, and their roles and responsibilities specified. The coordinating officers of the various aspects of ABEK have to have a mindset that is conducive to success. They also have to understand how ABEK and UPE relate. This section includes views about the two



Children taking care of other children becomes a problem when the younger ones are not well.

approaches to education, UPE and ABEK, to enhance the reasons for and extent of participation of stakeholders at the various district levels.

i) Ranking by priority the phasing of ABEK among the counties

When asked to rank the counties from priority 1 to 3, from the most in need of ABEK to the one least in need, the local leaders all agreed that Upe should be given the first priority (66.7%). The second choice was not as clear, but was eventually decided the 2nd choice ranking as Pian, with Chekwai as third priority.

ii) Justification for UPE as 1st Choice

When asked to justify their priority, 33.3% strongly believed that because the "Pokot way of life is nomadic" they were more eligible. The remaining district managers agreed that Upe "has least number of educated people, the fewest schools, lowest gross enrolment and their language is quite distinct from the mainstream Nakarimojong". Pian was chosen as second priority over Chekwai, and the reasons advanced centered around the fact that, while Chekwai is the most

populated of all, the community understands the value of education. The third priority was Chekwai, with 83.3% consent rate.

The Local Council officials, on the other hand, thought that the phasing should begin with the villages on the extreme West, towards Teso. These were the hard-to-reach places like Naritac parish in Lalachat sub-county as well as Lakala parish in Nabulana sub-county. Other parishes to be considered first would be Kamurui in Lorengedwat sub-county, as well as Lorengae in Namalu sub-county. In terms of phasing of ABEK implementation process, they went to the view that all of UPE (Pokot) must be targeted first.

The community members on the other side made contributions about the phasing of ABEK by identifying 6 communities that are fairly static but did not have any basic education centres/schools. These areas were Nabukoetom, Akarikeya, Natrac, Narone, Morupus, Morony and Kaptawoi. There were 2 more communities of Acorichor, and Kakadam, whose mobile nature helped them rank as the first to benefit from ABEK.

Early Childhood Development and Education for Karamoja Programme

By Nathan Chelimo

A study was conducted in the Karamoja sub-region during July - August 2003 to assess the state of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE). This was to generate an overview of ECDE undertakings that had taken place before and during the time of the study to provide information that would guide the design of appropriate approaches to support ECDE in the sub-region.

There were a number of ECDE initiatives taking place in Uganda, some of which covered the three districts of Karamoja. Prominent in Karamoja was the five year NECD project managed by the Ministry of Health. Its impact on children in Karamoja was difficult to assess. Small-scale projects such as the one managed by the Missionaries of Charity were found to be reaching out to children in especially difficult circumstances in Karamoja more effectively.

Direct observation revealed that many children in communities were malnourished, unkempt, lived in dirty surroundings, suffered respiratory tract and skin ailments and were hungry for most of the time.

School age children bear the responsibility / duty to care for and carry younger children on their backs even if this meant carrying them into classrooms in both formal primary school and the learning centres under the Alternative Basic Education, Karamoja (ABEK). ABEK facilitators reported that this disruptive tendency undermined older children's concentration during sessions and consequently their learning achievement.

The situation in which the children of Karamoja live is a chronic emergency and requires an emergency response approach to improve child survival, development, protection and participation. In line with other successful ECDE programmes and in view of the very needy situation in Karamoja, the study commissioned in 2004 recommended a community based holistic and multi sectoral approach to delivery of ECDE services in the sub-region. The baseline survey report noted that pastoral communities in Karamoja need and appreciate help, and they should be allowed to participate in planning and implementation of development initiatives affecting their lives.

Overview of Education History in Karamoja Sub-region

Formal education introduced early in the 19th century was not well received by the people of Karamoja. Opposition to formal education was heightened when reading and writing [the pen] symbolized the registration of people who were conscripted into the colonial British army during the Second World War. Many conscripts died

in battle far from their motherland fighting for a cause the people of Karamoja did not understand. The pen together with the formal education that it represented were cursed and rejected. This curse was however lifted upon the launch of ABEK in the sub region at the end of the 19th century. Other reasons that undermined the proliferation of formal education in Karamoja included its irrelevance to the indigenous semi-nomadic pastoral context.

In a semi-nomadic pastoral community children's labour is pivotal to the survival of the household, such that a school system that undermines children's fulfillment of their household obligations disrupts the household micro-economy. Formal schooling tends to lead to a breakdown of traditional institutions that are strongly engrained in household microeconomics.

Karamoja semi arid region has not favoured a lot of economic activities. The people are mainly dependent on extensive livestock farming. Men and boys spend much of the day on the grazing grounds tending cattle. Cattle are the centre of livelihood, of great symbolic importance and a source of continuous violence.

High rates of illiteracy, lack of exposure to modern scientific ideas regarding health and economic development have not enabled modern Early Childhood Development and Education practices to flourish.

In 1995, Save the Children Norway (formerly Redd Barna) facilitated the initiation of a programme for promoting children's right to education. Communities proposed modalities of an education delivery responsive to the indigenous context, resulting into a curriculum that came to be known as the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK). ABEK was launched in 1998 as a complementary basic education initiative attracting rapid enrolment of learners ranging between 5 to 18 years of age and beyond.

This innovation which succeeded in mobilizing children into the formal education system faces a number of challenges. Under age children (below the age of six years) tended at the ABEK learning centres by ABEK learners disrupt learning. ABEK centres are not equipped with facilities to handle under age children. Attendance rates are persistently low, on average 49%. Persistent shortages of food caused by prolonged droughts present a serious challenge to delivery of education among communities.

The Need for an ECDE Intervention

Early childhood experiences form the foundation for later human development. The quality of early childhood care influences the quality of the entire life of the individual. Children in pastoral communities in Karamoja

are intricately embedded in the household productivity at an early age. As early as five years of age boys are involved in herding livestock while the girls are submerged in domestic chores particularly child rearing roles. The hostile climate with scarce water, very low and unreliable rainfall, frequent famines, prevalence of diseases and proliferation of small arms related insecurity associated with cattle rustling amidst a very poor social service delivery infrastructure compound the hardship children face in balancing the fulfilment of their household obligations on one hand against enjoying a childhood which includes schooling on the other. The general quality of life for the children of Karamoja is characterized by poverty, poor sanitation, poor hygiene, low school enrolment and high drop out rates in primary school.

It was upon this context that Save the Children in Uganda in collaboration with Bernard Van Leer Foundation commissioned a study:

- (i) To assess the state of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) in the Karamoja sub-region within the broad framework of the rights of the child;
- (ii) To identify and provide an overview of previous and current ECDE undertakings in the region and other similar regions elsewhere;
- (iii) To propose an ECDE delivery model(s) founded on the strength of traditional approaches and previous and current experiences within the framework of the UN convention on the rights of the child.

Specifically, the study focused on understanding prevailing traditional beliefs and practices relating to expectant mothers both before and after delivery as well as child rearing in relation to children's welfare; aspirations of parents towards their children; the preferred ECDE support approaches for the improvement of the children's welfare; the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS and the attitude of the community towards persons living with HIV/AIDS; possible institutional collaborators already operating in the sub region and to share their experiences in ECDE support services; the strengths and weaknesses of the existing ECDE support services; existing administrative services which support early childhood development and education from the time of conception until the child is about nine years old; as well as possible roles that different stakeholders in ECDE could play in community initiatives for purposes of improving child welfare.

Key Findings of the Study

Legal Framework on ECDE

The concept of Early Childhood Development and Education is generally used to refer to services supporting different aspects of child development. Depending on the service delivery thrust the interventions have been referred to as Early Childhood Education (ECE); Early Childhood Development (ECD); Early Childhood Care

(ECC); Early Childhood Care for Development (ECCD); Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Early Childhood Development and Care (ECDC); and Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE).

A common thread running through all is caring for and educating children, focusing on the fact that children do not live and grow up in a vacuum but need an environment that would facilitate positive nurturing. The children targeted range from birth to 6, or even up to 7 years of age.

The concept of holistic approach to Early Childhood Development emerged following the World Summit on Children that endorsed the Convention of the rights of the child. Later the world conference on Education for All (EFA) [Jomtien 1990], declared Early Childhood Education an integral part of basic education and precondition for achieving EFA. The World Summit on Children [1990] secured commitment of party states including Uganda to accord priority to the survival, protection, development and participation rights of children. Early Childhood Care and Education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children received prominence during the Dakar [April 2002] conference on EFA, being declared one of the goals. In Uganda, the importance of ECD is enshrined in Constitution and the Children Statute of 1996.

Approaches to ECDE Delivery

Approaches to ECDE service delivery are varied and include

- i. Formal centres usually privately owned and established for a profit making; either as independent units or attachments to primary schools, flourishing in places where formal education is valued highly and households are able to pay for the service.
- ii. Home based care approach where parents through mutual agreement on how their children will be fed and protected may take care of children on a rotational basis constituting what is described
- iii. Home-community based approach where communities agree to construct structures in a volunteer's compound.
- iv. Community based approach where the centre is constructed on communal land, or owned by a religious organization and communities select their own caregivers who are trained on basic skills employed in looking after the children.

Government policy on ECDE

In Uganda, Government mandates Districts Local Governments to coordinate implementation of ECDE activities. The Ministry of Health provides immunization and general health care for children. The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) develops the early childhood Curriculum and related educational

materials. Kyambogo University prepares the curriculum for teacher education for ECE. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) discourages establishment and operation of pre-primary boarding schools for children who have homes.

The MOES established a department of pre-primary education in 2000 to promote and co-ordinate activities related to ECE in collaboration with stakeholders. As policy, MOES is however not involved in establishing and managing ECDE programmes as this responsibility is relegated to the private sector, Local communities, NGOs and religious bodies. Government role is to provide the framework in which the stakeholder should operate and ensure quality.

Ongoing ECDE Initiatives

A national survey carried out in 1995 showed that 38% of children in Uganda under 6 years of age were stunted with few children from rural areas benefiting from optimum ECD services. Government then undertook to empower local communities to play an active role in improving ECDE delivery and with support from the World Bank launched the Nutrition & Early Childhood Development Project [NECDP] targeting 4,250 communities in about 100 sub-counties spread over 34 districts including Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit.

The NECDP designed running from 1998-2003 was to raise awareness among families and communities of child health, nutrition and psychosocial development; raise capacity of women and communities to mobilise savings and resources for better care for their children; reduce moderate and severe malnutrition among children younger than six years of age; and increase community resources and abilities to manage and provide good-quality ECD services.

The NECDP Integrated Community based Child development Package was to facilitate awareness raising, production of training materials and capacity-building among the project stakeholders to carry out communication activities to realize a 20% reduction in infant mortality rate and a reduction in levels of prevalence of underweight children by a third (less than 2 SD weight for age); Increased awareness of the needs and rights of children aged 0-6; Increased access to ECD facilities including home based semi formal or formal care services and improved quality of care and services for children.

In the 2001-2005 Government of Uganda under the UNICEF Child Friendly Basic Education and Learning Program country program employing the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, supported Rights to health and Nutrition, HIV/AIDS and the Rights to Self-Protection, Child Friendly Basic Education and Learning, School and Community, Sanitation, Hygiene and Water and Rights of children in areas of armed conflict with direct links to Early Childhood Development. The project was to

enhance the capacities of the duty bearers to ensure at least 60% of all 0-8 year old children in selected districts access family/community based ECD care systems by 2005.

The Christian Children's Fund (CCF) supports children and families in order to promote holistic, innovative, community-based and sustainable ECD in twenty-three countries of the world in responding to children's multidimensional and interdependent development needs; programmes are innovative and seek mechanisms that improve traditional rearing practices and enhance existing individual and institutional roles in support of the child's best interests; community-based programmes empower community "duty bearers", such as parent's health workers and teachers, in ways that promote their ownership of ECD decisions, processes and resources; programmes use cost-effective methods of encouraging local resources but are complemented with essential external support that builds people's capacity to maximize the available.

CCF supports two programmes in ECD specifically for ages 0-3, and 4-6 year. The 0-3 year olds programme activities include pre-natal classes for mothers on Safe motherhood practices, nutritional values, the importance of taking vitamin supplements, health habits and getting tetanus vaccination to protect the mother and the baby from infection; conducting home visits, visitors (volunteers) who support the parents, grandparents and older siblings do benefit from such visits; Encouraging birth registration which are important for health care, social assistance and school enrolment, protection from infanticide and in later years, protection from early marriage, sex trade or being forced to become a child soldier.

Whichever model is preferred, elements found to determine the success the intervention include training of early childhood personnel and caregivers; developing a curriculum or learning framework for the children and the caregivers; community involvement, capacity building, and mobilization, at all stages of programme development to ensure that all the stakeholders understand and own the programme; proper monitoring and evaluation of the intervention; a management structure for day to day running of the programme; a holistic approach catering for the basic needs of children; Planning of ECDE Programmes based on known government policies; use of a multi sectoral approach where different line departments participate in planning the programme; and rearing the child but entering through families and communities for purposes of sustainability of the initiative.

ECDE Service Delivery in Karamoja

In all three districts, Local Government Budget funds are allocated to sector departments such as health, education, or agriculture and it is expected that children benefit from services provided by these departments as members of the communities. There are no funds

specifically allocated for ECDF programmes. However, districts are committed to paying counterpart funds to some donor-funded projects, which target children such as the NFCDP.

Decentralization of provision of services has taken root in all the three districts and has attracted skilled labour back into the districts. Lack of capacity among some staff to conceptualize and plan for children, particularly elected personnel is of concern. This shortcoming together with "cattle rustling culture" which perpetuates insecurity present a threat to successful implementation of a community-based ECDF programme.

Population of Children

In terms of population Kotido district has the highest population [605,003] in the sub-region. Nakapiripit has 153,862 and Moroti 178, 010 people yielding a total of 926,381 for Karimoja sub-region. Within Kotido district Doduth County has the highest population (390,416), much higher than either Moroti or Nakapiripit district.

In Kotido the population of children five years of age and below is 137, 932; [22.8%] and between six and thirteen years of age were 146, 634 [24.2%]. The number of children between 0 to 9 years of age is 221,778 [36.6% of the district total population]. The number boys constitute 115,172 while girls are 106, 606.

Statistics for Moroti and Nakapiripit were not available. However, by extrapolation using the Kotido population and age structure in the three districts, the total population of pre-school children (0-5 years age) in Karimoja sub-region would be estimated at 211,215 and the number of children between 0 and 9 years would be 339,055. This constitutes the estimated ECDF target population for the entire Karimoja sub-region including non-pastoral communities.

Health Services

Kotido district has 51 health units a doctor patient ratio of 1:62,800, a nurse - patient ratio of 1:4,267 and average distance coverage of 8 kilometers to the nearest health unit. Nakapiripit district with 15 health units has a doctor patient ratio of 1:55,000. Moroti district has 16 health units.

Mortality rates in the sub-region are high compared to the national average.

Immunization is greatly valued among communities with

attainment levels 90% for tetanus 80% for BCG; 95% for DPT and 75% for measles in Kotido district. The most prevalent diseases are Acute respiratory infections, Diarrhoea, Malaria, Skin disease, Malnutrition (caused by lack of protein), Measles, Trusma (especially in areas of armed conflict), Eye infections, Yellow fever and Polio. Disease remains largely attributed supernatural causes and methods of disease prevention are largely spiritual such as offerings and sacrifices or libation. The majority of the population (80%) refer patients to the hospital and health clinics though as a last resort.

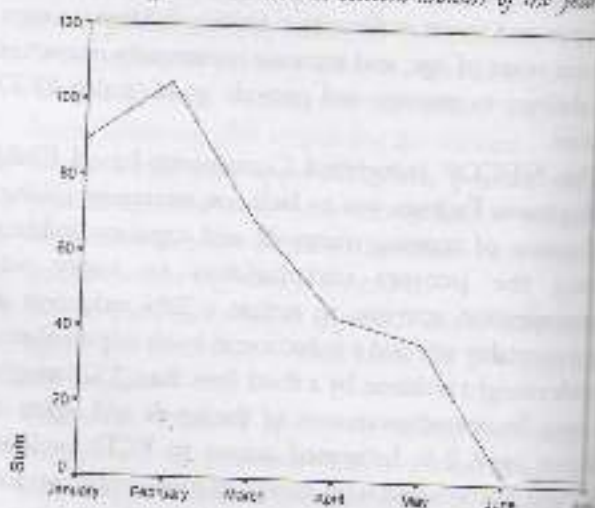
In all the three districts early childhood health care services provided in the health units include antenatal care, Immunization, Health education such as hygiene and sanitation, Nutrition - education and De-worming. Latrine coverage in the area is very low.

Food Security & Nutrition

Food security and nutrition levels are very low in the Karimoja sub-region. With one brief planting rain season, the region is highly prone to severe famine because of frequent failures of rainfall.

Famine is most severe between February - May. The food, which is "plenty" after harvest in October, is lavishly used between October and December on cultural festivals. The variation in the levels of famine and related malnutrition is illustrated by information from Moroti health department as follows;

Rates of Malnutrition in selected months of the year



	Infant mortality per 1,000	Maternal mortality per 100,000
Kotido	145	600
Moroti	157	800
Nakapiripit	147	500
National	88	496

Food crops grown include sorghum as main staple, as well as maize, millet, beans, peas, sunflower, groundnuts and a variety of vegetables. *Matoke* (bananas), beans, maize flour, millet, groundnuts, cassava flour, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, rice, cooking oil

and a variety of vegetables are largely imported in the

The region enjoys food from livestock products and livestock including cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys, rabbits, chicken, ducks, turkeys, and pigeons. Cattle provide both milk and blood during their lifetime.

People cope with chronic food shortages by having one meal a day, allowing only children and expectant mothers to have morning light meals and receiving food aid from donors such as the World Food Programme.

Education Services

Pre-primary school education is scanty and confined to towns. There are four nursery schools in Kotido, one in Nakapiripirit district most of which are in army barracks or in towns. The total enrolment in the sub-region is 869 children attended to by 16 teachers. All the nursery schools are privately owned and parents sponsor the children.

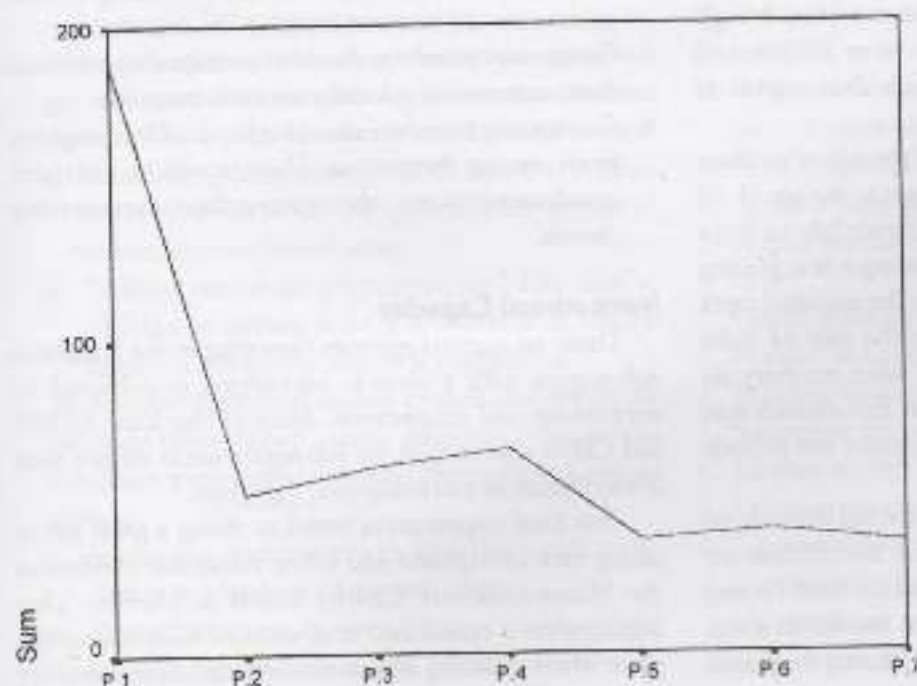
Total enrolments in primary schools in the districts of Nakapiripirit and Moroto for the year 2002 are 27,023 and 20,622 respectively while Kotido has 67,005 pupils in the year 2003. Enrolment is high in Primary One (P1) but shrinks drastically in Primary Two (P2); from 11,942 to 6,392 pupils in Nakapiripirit; 3,247 to 10,687 in Moroto in

Class	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
Enrolment	188	51	60	65	36	39	35	471

the year 2002; and in Kotido from 29,842 to 12,879 in the year 2003. The number of primary school teachers is 898 in Kotido, 274 in Nakapiripirit, and 57 in Moroto.

Survival in primary schools can be illustrated by Kalas Girl's boarding primary school in Polkot County in August 2003:

Enrolments at Primary school class in 2003



Graph showing enrolment by classes in Kalas primary school (August 2003)

The decline coincides with the age at which children enter the family labour force. Girls become active members in domestic work especially child rearing, while boys join the kral to begin herding cattle. Children of primary two age are strong enough to join the migration of the cattle herders. The long dry season migrations take children away from home for many months making it hard for them to stay in school.

There are eight secondary schools in Kotido two in Nakapiripirit, and four in Moroto.

Droughts & Water Shortages

Karamoja being a semi arid region has very few and scattered natural water sources which comprise mainly boreholes, water ponds, valley dams, and springs. Majority of these dry up during the dry season. Rivers swell rapidly during rain downpours and dry up soon after the rains which begin in April and end in August / September.

Children therefore must traverse long distances to water sources especially during the dry season, there is overcrowding around water points, communities lack funds to maintain boreholes, pool and dam waters are shared with livestock and wild game; water is often contaminated by people bathing, urinating, and defecation in them. 57% of the people in Kotido district have

access to safe water.

Security

Insecurity associated with cattle raids, high way robbery and rebel incursions from the neighboring Acholi sub region presents a major problem in the sub region. Cattle are very central to pastoral life. They are a major source of livelihood and determinants of wealth, social status and social security. Cattle rustling create a never-ending cycle of violence of raids, revenge and counter revenge. In the process, human life in essence is sacrificed for animals.

HIV/AIDS

Community attitude towards people infected with HIV is negative. Individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS are considered to be dangerous and therefore avoided or isolated. They are viewed as promiscuous and waiting to die. Orphans' feeding, clothing and school fees needs are taken care of by relatives and charitable organisations. Communities regard

children with disability with sympathy, as disability is believed to be God given.

Indigenous Maternal & Child Health Care Practices

During early stages of pregnancy mothers do not receive special care. Towards delivery, they receive increasing attention, which culminates into a ceremony a few days after delivery. Old women in the community take care of expectant mothers. The five major care practices accorded to expectant mothers are massaging, feeding reduction in workload and provision of herbs and other medication. A number of beliefs are associated with pregnancy many of which vary from community to community. Common to communities is the prohibition of expectant mothers to eat certain types of food. With the exception of Labwor county most mothers deliver at home with the help of old women and traditional birth attendants.

Child Growth Monitoring

The methods used in measuring children's growth include feeding behaviour, frequency of sickness, play behaviour, use of beads and bangles tied around children's arms, legs and waist to monitor change in size, monitoring progression through stages of development such as sitting, crawling, standing, and walking and ability of children to carry out domestic chores.

There are many traditional play activities that children engage in. Most are initiated and supported by the children themselves with little parental involvement. The benefits include stretching muscles, training for athletics, acquiring cultural norms, developing talents, improving physical growth, body building, become hard working, training in responsibility, learning how to communicate, learning to interact with others, testing understanding, sharpening reasoning ability, and acquiring cultural norms. Most parents appreciate the value of children's play, though they seem not to be aware of the value of parental involvement in children's plays which they regard as childish.

Socialization of children is primarily the role of mothers and grandmothers but as the children get to the age (4-6 years) of participating actively in the family labour force the father and grand father play an increasing role in guiding children, especially boys in developing the required work skills. School going age siblings play the role of baby sitter taking care of the younger ones when mothers are busy with other household chores. This role extends into later years, as older siblings socialise, protect and provide for the young ones.

The number of times that children are fed depends on the season. During the period of plenty the children are typically fed several times as they demand for food. During the lean periods children receive one to two meals a day. The rest family receives three meals a day during the season

of plenty, but this reduces to two meals or even none at all during the lean season. Children basically eat the same food as adults though at it may be prepared differently.

Generally, child rearing is better now than in the older days. Certain factors, in the environment such as modern health care services, literacy rate, hygiene and schooling have changed attitudes to child care.

Practices in the community that members would like to see preserved are varied and include enforcing discipline, encouraging children to look after animals and become hard working, allowing children to socialise through playing with other children, inculcating good morals through singing, dancing and story telling, circumcision and providing medical care and clothing.

Practices that community members wish to abandon include Beating, discriminating, and abusing children, marrying off young girls, carrying heavy loads by children, sacrificing children and taking them to witch doctors for treatment, teaching children to fight, steal, rustle animals and take alcohol, removal of false teeth and female circumcision.

Preferred ECDE Interventions for preschool children

For every preschool child there is either an older sibling to act as baby sitter or a child of a relative, or a child employed as a baby sitter commonly referred to as a "yau". In Labwor county where school attendance for school going children is almost the norm the practice of employing baby sitter is widespread. In places where ABEK is operating older siblings carry their younger ones to the centres.

The strategies proposed were as follows:

1. In places where ABEK was operating ECDEs centres should be constructed next to ABEK centres
2. In places where ABEK was not operating ECDE centres should be constructed in the community
3. Community members should be mobilised to construct these centres using locally available materials
4. Community members should select ECDE caregivers from among themselves. These could be energetic grandparents or any other persons the community may choose.

Institutional Capacity

There are various agencies operating in the Karamoja sub region with a view to identifying possibilities of networking and cooperation. Most of the local NGOs and CBOs operating in the sub region are in infancy with limited financial and manpower capacities.

One local organization noted as doing a great job in taking care of orphans and other vulnerable children is the Missionaries of Charity based in Moroto. The organization is mentioned in all areas of Karamoja as the place where children whose mothers die during delivery

are taken. Further discussion on how it can be supported should be done.

With the exception of WFP most of the international NGOs maintain a thin staff on the ground. WFP remains the potential organization for cooperation. It possesses the experience, capacity, resources and goodwill for such a venture. WFP furthermore has several initiatives that can build on in developing an ECDF intervention. These include the food for assets and the community feeding centres for preschool children.

In view of the above, Save the children Uganda undertakes to implement an ECDF project for pastoral communities of the Karamoja sub-region which together with the ABEK project will constitute the Karamoja programme with an aim to improve child survival and development rights.

Goal of the ECDE project

The goal of the ECDE project is to strengthen capacity of duty bearers to sustainably improve early childhood care, development & education of children in pastoral communities in Karamoja.

Objectives of the ECDE project:

The objectives of the ECDE project are:

1. *To support existing institutions & structures to sustainably reduce infant & child mortality with improved child health & nutrition status among children in pastoral communities in Karamoja through;*
 - i. Establishing & implementing provision for immunization, de-worming, growth monitoring & other child & maternal health care including HIV/AIDS services at ECDE corner
 - ii. Establishing provision for supplementary feeding among ECDE project communities
2. *To strengthen systems that encourage school entry at appropriate ages with increased enrolment, retention & learning achievement among children in pastoral communities in Karamoja through;*
 - i. Establishing & operating ECDE facility at ABEK centres & in selected primary in pastoral community catchment areas
 - ii. Training, encouraging & supporting PTAs, SMCs, ABEK committees & LCs to mobilize & ensure children's school enrolment & completion
3. *To strengthen institutional capacity & local arrangements for sustainably improving early cognitive stimulation & psychosocial development among children in pastoral communities in Karamoja through;*
 - i. Supporting communities to identify, recruit, train, deploy & supervise child care givers
 - ii. Strengthening cross-sectoral linkages among child focused departments at local government level

iii. Strengthening collaboration & networking among child focused agencies

4. *To improve household livelihood among pastoral communities in Karamoja through;*
 - i. Training & encouraging households to adopt diversified livelihood strategies to improve income & food security
 - ii. Training, encouraging & supporting households to improve household incomes through basic processing & marketing of livestock products

The project strives to realize the following outputs:

1. provision for immunization, de-worming, vitamin A supplementation, ante/postnatal maternal & child health care established & operational among ECDE communities
2. provision for malaria, HIV/AIDS, & other disease prevention & treatment services established & operational among ECDE communities
3. provisions for improvement of sanitation & hygiene established & utilized among ECDE communities
4. provision for supplementary feeding & growth monitoring established & operational among ECDE communities
5. proportion of children entering formal schools & ABEK at 6 to 7 years of age increased
6. Number of school age children enrolled in formal schools and ABEK increased
7. Number of children dropping out of formal school & ABEK reduced
8. Performance of learners in literacy, numeracy and life-skills in schools and ABEK improved
9. ECDE centers mapped, established & functional
10. Caregivers identified, recruited, trained, deployed and facilitated to operate ECDE centres
12. Children 0-5 years enrolled and regularly participating in ECDE center activities
13. Household management of available food stock across the year improved
14. Food crops cultivated among households diversified
15. Artifacts from livestock by products & other materials in local environment produced & sold

Overall Strategy for implementation of the project

1. Holistic integrated service delivery
2. Building on good traditional practices
3. Strengthening existing institutions
4. Linkage to ABEK learning centres
5. Community involvement & ownership
6. Linkage with national policy & institutional structures
7. Linkage with ongoing ECDE initiatives in other pastoral communities. ■

Flying over the technological divide

By Christine Sinclair

Standard Five Takes Leaps And Bounds For The Future Of Education

Nestled on the shores of Lake Victoria, Mbita is a town like many others in rural Kenya. It has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the country and is inhabited mostly by fishermen who live off the fruits of the lake. It is not necessarily the most technologically advanced place, as, for example, it was only connected to the power grid last year. As in other centers around Kenya, primary education is free. Because of that, like many other rural schools, the quality of education has suffered, as when the hylaw was passed, the existing infrastructure was not prepared to cope with what was a threefold increase in enrollment. However, Mbita Primary School is a little different from every other primary school in the country, public or private. What is different about Mbita Primary School is that when the eleven and twelve year olds go to class in the morning, they do not pick up textbooks, but instead, they pick up

an eSlate, or rather a small handheld computer that has been outfitted specifically for the needs of the classroom. For rural Kenya this is something quite spectacular.

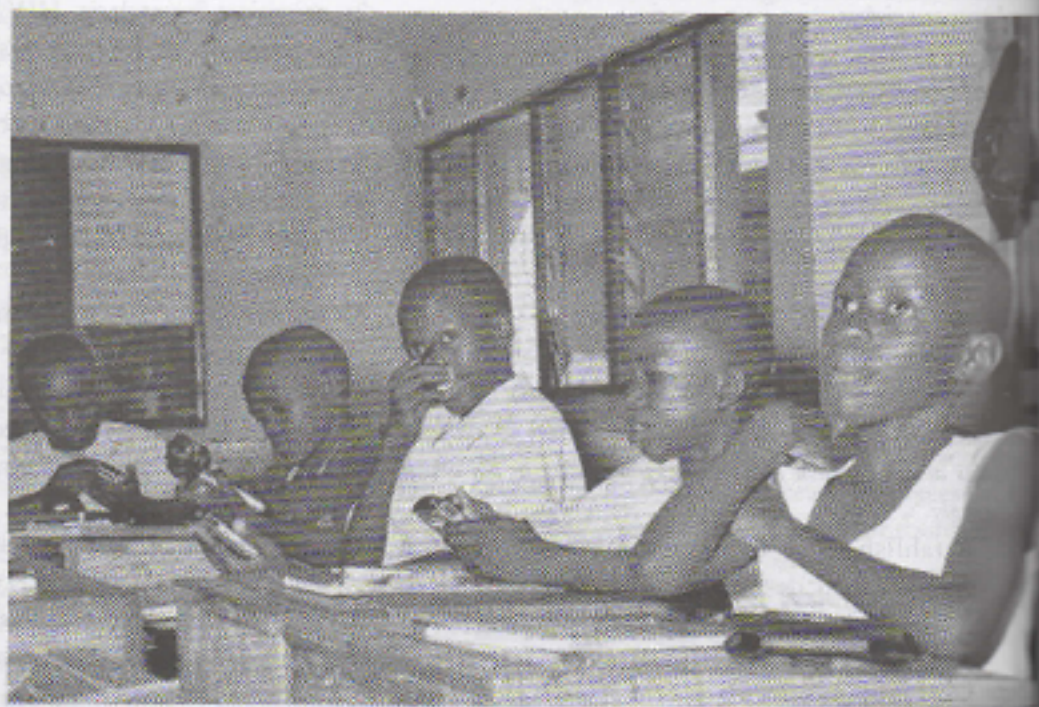
The project is called Eduvision and at the beginning of this year, it started introducing new technology into the classroom. The idea is that every student and teacher has his or her own eSlate. The slates are connected to world space radio and thus can download information from anywhere in the world. The information is stored and read on these slates. Different types of media can be transmitted and therefore the students can receive audio and video files as well.

The Technology

There are three main branches of technology that were developed for the needs of the project: Network Operations Center, the BaseStation and the eSlate. All this is connected to World Space satellite radio that covers

all of Africa, and indeed the rest of the world. Large amounts of information can be transmitted rapidly anywhere with a receiver. Clearly, this can have useful implications for pastoralists, mobile schools and distance education, let alone the formal schools in which the pilot project now functions.

The Network Operations Center, or NOC, is what allows information from the internet to be encoded in



Give them a chance, they will show you their skills.

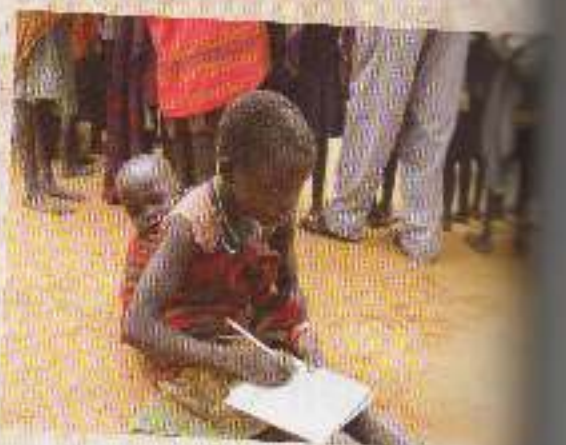
such a way that it is transmittable through digital satellite and, thus can be distributed anywhere, as opposed to being limited to servers, networks and phone lines, which very often can be unreliable, expensive, slow or completely lacking in many parts of developing nations. The BaseStation is what receives the information from the satellite. A small satellite is placed on the roof of the school and unlike satellite dishes, does not need to be aligned. It is also the BaseStation that transmits information to the eSlates. Finally, the eSlate is what both teachers and students use. It is a hand held tablet designed specifically for computer novices. Information can be input through a touch-screen using a stylus. There is even an anti-theft mechanism, which binds every eSlate to its initial BaseStation. If the eSlate does need to legitimately change owner or location, a limited number of teachers are trained to unlock the eSlate. If this happens, it will be recorded by the NOC where suspicious

Umoja Early Childhood Development Centre



**Umoja children with different faces
in their classroom - Achers Post, Samburu.**

Collection of different child



activities in Karamoja, Uganda.



Family diversity in Karamoja



Value the friends and family members who've supported and carried you, and be there for them as well.



cases will be noticed; however, because of the nature and design of the slate, it cannot really be used for anything else besides its original purpose and therefore may not have a huge black-market appeal.

The Project

The idea came from the birds-eye view from an airplane over a village. All footpaths lead to the small school in this village and it is in that school where the generation that is soon to take charge of their country receives the preparation and education to do so. If anything is to change, starting within the school walls will likely have more far reaching and effective results. Young people may be more receptive to new ideas and more energetic about changing old ways. As the physical centrality of the school showed, it is an area of life that the elder members of society, the parents and government, all agree is of central concern and so to introduce a new programme there would mean a large interest and participation from the community, which in itself would boost ownership from the community and accountability of the project.

Obviously, this technology did not just land in the lap of this school, ready to start changing the lives of students immediately and as this is only a pilot project, the capacity of this technology has not been fully harnessed. The small Eduvision team, headed by Matt Herren with three other in-office staff, converted the textbooks into digital format and even included some traditional Luo stories. Currently however, the students do still use notebooks. This school, administration, infrastructure and facilities were selected as they were ideal for a trial project; they were outfitted for the technology and the board agreed how and with whom to use it. The standard five was chosen because they were old enough to be able to grasp the technology, yet not too close to their exams so that in the event of any disruption to their education, results would not be too askew. In fact, the children took to the slates immediately and it was the teachers who had a harder time adjusting. They started the year with sixty eSlates and ended with fifty-nine, with the only broken one having perished in the hands of the project director. The teachers had to be trained how to use the slates themselves, and then how to teach using them. Although cautious at first, the teachers began to rely and appreciate the eSlates almost to a fault, especially after they were allowed to take the slates home with them and learned on their own time the diverse uses of the handheld computers. Their compact size and durable hardware allows for easy transport and therefore, eventually, as the students are ready for it, they should be able to take them home too. The results of this entire project will be presented in Tunis in November 2005 for the World Summit on the Information Society.

It turns out that it is cheaper for a student to own one of these slates for their entire education than for the cumulative cost of texts, notebooks and with stationary.

As it stands the texts are in poor shape anyway and it is not uncommon for there to be up to 5 students sharing each book. As the project progresses, the Eduvision team plans to enhance the design the eSlates to be sturdy enough for the wear and tear of a student's life. The overall cost is lowered even factoring in some loss or damage. This saves the money of the families and the government, money that can then be used to improve the standard of living in a country that suffers greatly in its marginal areas.

There are many more advantages of this system. It is not only cheaper, but the capacity of the eSlates is infinite. There is no limit to the amount of information that can be conveyed through this system and students in rural and marginalized areas would be able to access information from all over the world. Entire libraries can be sent out to schools where roads would not permit the transport of thousands, or even millions of books. Since the information is not printed, it would be possible to adapt curriculums to a greater extent and to accommodate the individual, local educational demands. Curriculums in local language would be central to the project. The use of paper is cut down, as is the constant demand for notebooks and pens, and the pressure on the family to continually supply them. Since the students would no longer have to share textbooks, different abilities and learning rates of individual students can be catered to.

Violah, the top student of standard five, was constantly teased for being poor, living in a house with no electricity and being the daughter of a lowly fisherman. Her response to her bullies pointed out how she would simply get the best results in exams. Perhaps with quality education, social class and stigma can be diminished, and every child can compete on equal ground. This improvement in the quality of education means that every student can progress at his or her own rate, the teacher can cater more to individual needs, and scarce funds are redirected from buying textbooks into buying more teaching materials, improving educational facilities or even hiring more teachers.

Importantly, this project is bringing modern technology to a generation that is at present far behind the rest of the world technologically. Usually the technological capabilities of developing nations are restricted to large cities. Rural children, armed with the technological skills they acquire through this eSlate system, are more likely to be able to work and compete with developing countries,



or even with urban centers, and can earn themselves an overdue public voice, improve the state of their own lives and the fate of their country.

As information can be downloaded at any time, unlike with a pre-printed textbook, the content is constantly up-to-date and relevant. This improves the quality and quantity of knowledge conveyed to students. Along with the black and white text they are used to, come songs and voices and dances and colour pictures, which in themselves can more easily convey a great spectrum of ideas and possibilities. There is no limit to the form or amount of knowledge that can be brought into the classroom with these slates. As this project grows, there would develop a corner of the internet tailored specifically to the needs of the classroom in developing countries and lessons learned in every African classroom from Khartoum to Kajiado can be shared and benefited from at the click of a stylus. The knowledge interface would be modeled on a system like 'wikipedia', which is a community created and monitored handling of information. Included in the available information would be a framework for developing the system further and contributing to it, thus opening up the doors to more members of the community to contribute, and of course, to direct, monitor, approve or disapprove of what goes into their educational experience.

With the improved quality of education, the increased quantity of knowledge and the decreased cost of education, more children will be able to attend school, as it will become more affordable for parents. With the decreased cost to the government, they should be able to hire more teachers and the school's capacity for students would increase. With this increased capacity of schools and the ability of parents, the already existing gender disparity would slowly disappear as it no longer becomes such a waste, or a burden, in the eyes of parents, to send girls to school.

Funded by the BioVision Foundation, Eduvision is coming close to the end of its pilot year. It had been running on half the budget they had originally planned and they are still looking for support, and are continually in search of donors, companies and partners that share their vision. The nature of the patent requires that the information be open sourced, so as that anyone is free to use and ameliorate the technology, as long as these changes and improvements are open sourced as well. Although the project will not be continuing in Mbira, next year brings plans to expand into schools in other African countries. These students, although disappointed at the loss of their new found technology, certainly appreciate the inspiration these eSlates gave them, to appreciate innovation, and to realize the possibility technology can offer them, no matter who they are or their place in the world. As Maureen Nyaga, one of the project support staff, explains, even as the project comes to an end, unlike most jobs where your tasks are set, the working environment is always stimulating

because its very essence requires developing new technology all the time, creating maps for un-charted territory on a daily basis, if you will. This is true of both the office and the classroom, and clearly, this stimulation was felt by all involved.

For future implementation, in areas where there is no electricity it would be possible to attach a winding mechanism, somewhat akin to certain flashlights, and the eSlates would be able to function after a short hour of manual winding. Herren, project director, plans to turn this NGO into a not-for-profit, socially responsible company that can be hired-out at cost to render his vision of "development powered by education". Having developed the project from scratch, Herren believes that "real development pays for itself" and that the future of Eduvision lies in the private sector. Effective change has to be self-sustaining, and dependence on donors and fundraising is not reliable or practical in the long run on a large scale, and Herren and his staff plan to take the vision in precisely these two directions.

The result was a school that scored top in the district. Although the Eduvision team could not conduct tests the year around as they were still developing the technology, they managed to make enough of an impression on the international community to be invited by the ministry of education in Eritrea to develop further in selected schools there. The project is still young and a lot of work remains to be done. For example, as it stands, the project uses slates that come straight off the market; however, eventually, with more support, they plan to design a model with a larger screen that caters more to the needs of the classroom, a keyboard at the base of the slate and more features that would allow for handwriting recognition and the completion of assignments on the slates, thus eliminating notebooks and stationery almost entirely.

Although this is only one school, in one town, in just one country in the world, this project clearly has the potential to be ground breaking in the field of development technology and education. The ever-increasing rate of technological advance in developed countries does not have to equal an ever-increasing gap between developed and developing countries. This project, if nothing else, proves that the usefulness of discoveries in technology need not be restricted to areas already technologically advanced. Evidently, if this town began using light bulbs only a year ago and now their standard fire use something akin to palm pilots, the distance Africa has to come to reach 'development' may not be so great. Herren claims that the hardest part was getting donors and other development workers to take this twenty-two-year old seriously with this 'crazy' idea of introducing eSlates into Kenyan classrooms. After the success of this year, the seriousness of the infinite capacity of this idea is certainly not in doubt. Eduvision is not bridging the technological gap, they are building the ship to fly over it. ■

District Education Officer, Moroto

- Abul Paul Siloi Shares his thoughts on ABEK

ABEK, or Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja, is an informal, complementary approach to basic education began in 1995. An initiative of the Ministry of Karamoja Affairs, in conjunction with Kotido Lopolong Government and Save the Children Norway, the program focuses in providing basic education to children in Karamoja between the ages of six and eighteen who are unable to join the formal school system for a variety of reasons.

Children in Karamoja are a source of labour: they work the fields, weeding, digging, and scaring birds. Boys also go herding animals. This leaves little time to attend a full-day formal school with classes from 8am to 5 or 6pm, a timetable impossible for children who are also wanted at home to attend to domestic work. The implementation of formal schooling, then, was problematic because its structure was not favourable to our people and culture. We needed an alternative to this system, an alternative that would allow children to work the fields and attend classes in the villages.

In 1995, we carried out a survey and identified two parishes, Watakw and Lupya, where no educational system was in place. In Watakw, the International Labour Organization built a large school with boarding facilities in the middle of the village (which was, interestingly, the largest village in East Africa). Despite the investment, no children attended the school. It did not meet their needs, situation or the interests of their community.

Programs like the school in Watakw only serve to foster a low opinion of education, a low opinion that began with a myth surrounding the colonial government. In the Second World War, the British took able men from East Africa to fight with them, leaving old men to protect the villages. These old men saw the British using pens and books, and observed the high death rates evident during the war; from this, they inferred the pen was causing the pain and death associated with battle. They slaughtered a bull and buried the pen, hoping to eliminate the evil plaguing their community.

Time went on, and people began attending school, but only on a very limited scale. In 1992, the educated few approached their elders to discuss the myth, explaining that unless their children went to school, the community would never progress. They managed to convince the elders. In 1996, the old men held a ceremony to dig up the pen, and launch the ABEK program, enabling the community to bring their children to learning centers.

ABEK was born out of numerous meetings and consultations with community members, who said they were willing to let their children attend the classes, but wanted to know what their children would be taught to



ensure they did not lose their traditions and culture through this new education. Reasonably, they wanted to see the curriculum that was to be implemented in their schools.

We took our planned curriculum and the packages we were to teach the children to their parents, seeking approval. We tried to make it as relevant as possible to the culture and region. Indeed, it is commonly said that if you want to succeed in Karamoja, you must use the cow, the primary source of their livelihood. As a result, the first educational package we proposed dealt with livestock education. From there, we developed a fuller curriculum of packages, which included:

- Livestock education: Because the Karamoja are animal keepers, we wanted to teach them livestock rearing skills and techniques for better production.
- Reproduction education.
- Environmental management.
- Rural technology: We wanted raise awareness in the region about the global community. We wanted the people of Karamoja to understand that the world is organized into states and countries, and to understand they are an important part of Uganda.
- Peace and security: For a long time, the Karamoja have been subjected to tribal wars; now, we want to train them in peace building to achieve peace in the region, both for its own sake and to make them a more productive people.
- Human health education.
- Sex education.
- HIV/AIDS education, to address a disease facing our people.

We took this curriculum to the village and explained it to them in detail. They accepted our plans and gave us the go ahead; the program took off in 1998. When we began, however, we told the community that the program belonged to them, and its success would depend on them.

They had to select facilitators and teachers from among their community to train their children, educators whose welfare they would be responsible for. The parents agreed. Now we have ABFK committees within each learning center, formed and selected by the community who are responsible for the well being of the students and the school, and for monitoring/disciplining the facilitators.

Save the Children Uganda helps us run the program, and is instrumental in terms of logistical issues. Local governments budget for local activities and revenues, while the Ministry of Education supports the payment of facilitators, and provides allowances and some of the instructional materials. UNICEF has also offered its support, initiating ABFK in Moroto and Naxos parishes, which are now funded by Save the Children. Finally, UPUC and other partners also support our program.

Although we began with Moroto and Kotido parishes as our pilot projects, we have since expanded our activities to include four parishes: Lopywa, the 25th learning center, Wandak, the 17th, and Karavat, the 26th, and Moroto, which covers about 80 km, are among our current projects. In total, we have 86 learning centers, each staffed by two facilitators. In total, then, we have 172 facilitators and 18020 students (7527 boys and 10,493 girls) currently involved in the ABFK program.

Objectives Of Abek

1. To increase access to formal schools: our records indicate that from 1995 to the present, 799 boys and 916 girls have joined the formal school system out of ABFK. As mentioned, formal education has not taken root here because children have to work on the coffee farms as well as attend school, leading to a negative attitude towards education. This program aims to transform their attitudes. Although some children go straight to formal schooling, most parents require a little convincing, which we are able to do through our learning centers. We ask them why they keep their bright children, who can read and write, under the trees, requesting that they let us take them to formal schools to fulfill their potential. Because of the awareness created through ABFK, more parents respond positively to our requests. As a result, their children are performing well in school; some even progress to secondary education. Their numbers remain low (around 5%), however, and we estimate that around 360,000 children in Kenya and Uganda still have no access to formal education because of problems at home.
2. To increase access to and provide relevant child-friendly basic education in a manner acceptable to the community in Karamoja, meeting their interests and expectations.
3. To increase access to basic education in our primary schools: the government introduced Universal Primary

Education (UPE), but most parents were unwilling to send their children. Some even procured guns to defend their children against officials who would take them into schools.

4. To promote stakeholder and community support for education. Typically, teachers and other stakeholders have not been involved in supporting or running school infrastructure because they did not have ownership over the projects. Instead, they saw schools as government initiatives. By building learning centers to promote children's education, we will help people mobilize to take ownership of the program. In Karamoja, the World Food Programme (WFP) has played significant role in education. One of the primary factors inhibiting education in the region is hunger. We reminded the community that they must take their children to the learning centers through their own means, without depending so heavily on WFP.
5. To help students develop functional skills, literacy skills, and technological/occasional skills. We emphasize literacy in particular, with a focus on practical skills. We demonstrate to the learners how to identify letters, read and write, and count, as well as other special skills, going topic by topic. Students also use the learning centers to make crafts.

Uniqueness Of Abek

1. The curriculum of ABFK is entirely different from the present formal system, and is much more relevant to the interests and needs of the people. We have a long distance to traverse from the current curriculum, but we believe strongly that we must first teach our children our traditions, way of life and history. With that background in place, we can then teach them other places and traditions.
2. ABFK has a flexible timetable that formal schools would do well to replicate. Parents and facilitators know which times their children must be in class, and when they can herd cattle. Furthermore, our approaches are indigenous and child centered, and each matavata has its own learning center.
3. The learning centers are located in the villages, making them easily accessible. There are no classrooms; students sit under the trees, where old men in the village traditionally sit to chat.
4. Children no longer have to move around in search of schooling.
5. The facilitators are sons and daughters of the villages who know the problems facing their community, how to handle their people and what their people need to progress. When problems arise, they are easily solved. If it is a serious problem, facilitators consult with coordinators to make the required change. ■

Children of Sudan's Cattle Camps

By Emily Wax - Washington Post Foreign Service

In the South, Peace Brings Hard Choices between Traditions and Education.

RUMBEK, Sudan

Bakic Magol, a boy of 10, wakes each day on a straw mat in a field of muscular, speckled cattle. Powerful horns tower above him; mounds of steaming dung surround his bare feet.

By dawn, Bakic is deep in his routine. His small hands speedily collect and flatten the dung. After it dries in the sun, he burns the piles until they turn into a dusty ash, filling the air with choking smoke. In the burning heat, the cattle pen seems volcanic. To keep away flies, Bakic smears gray ash over his face. To stop bugs from biting the cows,

he coats their horns with a paste of ash, dirt and cow urine. When he makes a clicking sound with his tongue - *theth, theth* - animals four times his size obey his commands.

By the standards of southern Sudan's nomadic society, Bakic is highly skilled. To his family, he is indispensable. His father is a crippled war veteran, his mother a sorghum farmer who scratches the earth for their meals. Even though Bakic cannot read or write, he is the only wage earner in his family.

"Sometimes I feel sad because he works too much," said his grandmother, Mary Ajok. "But cattle is our only economy. Bakic is a child, but he is like a man. I am proud of him."

Now, the future of children like Bakic Magol could change drastically, with peace returning to southern Sudan after nearly half a century of civil war and conflict, though violence continues in western Darfur - and with recent oil discoveries promising to catapult the vast, long-neglected region into modern life.

As in other African countries emerging from years of conflict and isolation, Sudanese parents and leaders are confronting hard questions. Should they continue passing down traditional skills and rituals, or help prepare the next generation for urban life and technical job opportunities?

Should they keep sending their children to cattle camp - where they learn to brand, milk and deliver cows - or shift their sights toward classrooms and literacy?

"Because there were so few schools during wartime, cattle camp is our school of life," said Simon Kun, an official of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, a former rebel group that is now the region's government. "But with peace, education has to be compulsory. We can't stay with our cattle forever."

"Other places have made that transition," he said. "South Sudan will have to become a different world."



School children in Ferra in Juba, Southern Sudan.

Temptations of Town

Alanitch Mading Mabur is a teenage milkmaid at Alkounj, a woodsy cattle camp about a half day's walk from Rumbek. In the evening, before milking, she struts through the camp with her girlfriends. They exude a certain mystique and sass, with blue plastic milk pails swinging from their arms.

For the children of the region's largest tribe, the Dinka, cattle camp is a hot, reeking, exciting experience. They can dye their hair with cow urine and drink all the milk they want. They cheer on bull fights and learn to fish. And boys and girls are free to flirt, often making marnage matches amid the dust.

But Alanitch, who believes she is about 17, faces a new choice. Rumbek, the regional capital, is booming,

Should she stay at Akoung, where she has skills and respect, or take a risk and leave camp to marry a town boy?

Four years ago, she tried to enroll in a school that was opened during a lull in the fighting between government and rebel forces, but her brother asked to go, too. "Do my parents want me back at cattle camp," she said. "Now I am just looking for a husband. It's time. Where should I find him? Maybe Rumbek town."

Her older female relatives tell her to stay and keep milking. If she abandons her responsibilities to seek adventure, they worry, other girls will follow, and the older generations will be burdened with more work. If war explodes again, they could lose everything.

On their way to milk the cows, Alanitch and her friends pass family corrals full of cattle, each with a hut on stilts in the center. Most huts have an AK-47 assault rifle strung up next to gourds used to make butter or yogurt. Older women shake the gourds with a rhythmic sound. Calves nurse and their mothers kick up dust. Teenage boys, fighting each other with sticks, stop to glance as the girls pass.

For a long time, Alanitch found it hard to imagine any other world.

"Cattle are our lives," she says, pulling a calf off its mother's teats and roping it to a wooden peg. Then she kneels and milks, tugging with both hands. Her friend Nyaneyai Maker, a strong girl with a shaved head, crouches nearby.

In the Dinka language, highly valued children are often given cow-related names. Alanitch means "the place where cow dung is dried." The Dinka have more than 100 names and phrases to describe bovines by shape, color and strength.

Their chores done, the girls link arms and walk back through the camp. The orange sun is sinking. A full moon is rising. Some of the boys are parading bulls, their horns pierced and decorated with tassels. A drumbeat pulses, and a few boys begin singing songs of praise to their bulls.

Alanitch confides that she has become bored with the boys at cattle camp and plans to walk to Rumbek to sell some milk. There's a boy she likes there. He was once a cattle herder, but he left to work at a settlement set up for foreigners and Sudanese officials hoping to start postwar building projects.

Two days later, she returns in a restless mood. She has seen a school open in the town, but she is too old to attend it. Instead, she has sold her milk to buy a new dress, asking the boy to chip in. "And he did," she says, laughing in triumph.

Alanitch has few possessions — two other dresses, a torn straw sleeping mat, a teapot, a milk pail, three plastic bracelets and a pair of flip-flops.

"I think the life of town is better," she declares suddenly. "They are always clean, and they have radios in the market."

Alanitch looks around the camp with new eyes. The boys dress with indifference to style or gender, sometimes wearing women's torn housecoats or dresses. In Rumbek the boy she likes was wearing a smart, tan uniform — and carrying enough money to treat her to beers in a new bar.

"I think I want to marry him and live there with him," she announces. "Easier life. He's making money."

Looming Change

Kneeling in the wet soil next to his family's bull, Machuel Munei helps his father castrate a bull. He is 12. He looks serious as he and a couple of other boys hold down the animal's wildly twitching legs. His father stretches the white skin taut and slices with a razor blade, spilling blood on the ground. The bull bellows in pain.

The Dinka castrate a bull when it is not a desirable shape or color for breeding. Instead, it is used in decorative ceremonies, its horns gradually twisted into elaborate curves. The bulls with the nicest horns are offered as part of a wedding dowry.

The operation completed, Munei Makuai Gong pats his son's back in praise. Then they collect dung and place it on the wound. It will ease the bull's suffering, his father explains.

Gong has just taught his son an essential skill. "Teach him how to care for his cattle for the benefit of his own life, and able to make marriage and offer up the right types of cows when the time is right," he says.

Nearby, small children are tending young cows in a sort of cattle kindergarten. An old, wrinkled man pads through the camp with a calf slung around his neck. Other boys wander back from the marshy wetlands, where they have taken cattle to graze.

"Everyone has their role to play in cattle camp," Gong says. He acknowledges that it is a tough life. "But here you also see things that make you happy, like cattle giving birth," he says. "I can teach him that."

Still, Gong knows this time with his son may be fleeting. He's heard that the new government will fine parents who don't send their children to school. Some parents at camp have said they will just pay the fee and keep the children at their sides.

But Gong says he believes in change, even if it comes with sadness.

Their world is a remote, neglected place without cars or farm machines, with few clinics or schools.

His family owns more than 100 cattle, making them prosperous. He feels it is time to take a risk.

"Machuel is intelligent with cattle. But he can learn more things in school. Soon it won't be my choice," he says to the boy, who nods and smiles. His elder son, who is about 17, is already at school, reading and doing figures. He likes it.

"I suspect that if peace stays, camp will one day die out," Gong says.

"Become wise, like a doctor," he tells his younger son.

"The hands of educated people don't get dirty," he adds, looking at his own hands, cracked and caked with white powder from the burned dung.

The father has another choice ahead: whether to let Machueli undergo his tribe's traditional manhood rites, in which six bottom teeth are removed and four incisions are made in the forehead. This signals that a Dinka boy is ready for marriage.

The cattle camp manager has advised parents against it, saying the ritual, a mark of ethnic distinction, makes it more difficult for Sudan's many tribes to blend in at school.

Gong looks at his son, dressed in dirty brown shorts, gulping fresh milk from a pail. The father says he will not make the boy remove his teeth or scar his face.

"It's made my decision," he says. "School is more important."

A Man's Job

Bakic Magol has just been paid, so he and his friend Mangui Yuot can buy breakfast. Usually they just drink milk, but on paydays they can afford a bowl of beans. In the shade of a grass hut, they hungrily eat from bowls of oily mush without speaking.

As they walk back to the cattle pen, an old woman with a men dress begs Bakic for money to buy tobacco. Further down the dirt path, another woman clutches Bakic's arm, asking whether her daughter can come and milk the cows for some free milk.

Bakic's carefree mood is gone. He lowers his head and sprints back to work.

The next day his father, Alfred Magol, crippled and blinded from a land mine, rests under a tree and talks about how even peace has not brought relief to his family. No one from the new government has come to pay disabled veterans, he complains.

And if peace doesn't last, how can he afford to let his son leave work and go to school? The country is still not stable, and the family is worried.

Bakic's mother, Mary Achol, would also prefer him to be in a classroom.

When he visits home these days, she says, he doesn't like her to touch him or make him food.

"I feel worry because he's working without my care," she says. "When a person is educated, life is easier."

Bakic's grandmother dismisses such worries, saying he is a "strong and courageous boy." The two women start to hum a family song that compares Bakic to his

great-grandfather, a skilled cattle herder. In fact, every ancestor Bakic can remember was a cattle herder.

But Bakic is still a boy trying to do a man's job. A few days later, exhausted from the heavy, constant work, he seems to have reached his limit. Herding a group of cows into an auction pen, he gets hit in the eyes by a horn. Minutes later, some older men accuse him of losing a cow, and a fight breaks out.

"For God's sake . . . I don't hate your cow," he shouts, his



Thank God for the peace won in southern Sudan. Children can go to school and make a positive change in their life.

eyes filling with tears.

Recently, Bakic says, he had a dream. "It starts with the cows escaping.

I am running through the forest, looking for my lost cows. I can't find them," he says. "Then I go to sleep. I don't care anymore."

Bakic knows there is a new school in Rumbek, and he wonders if he should go. The auction house manager has told the young herders they need an education to become rich, and he imagines working as a trader, or perhaps at a radio station. But his family has no money and needs him to do what he calls "my small works" to support them.

"When I am tired, I do think of schooling. . . . Sometimes I concentrate when the schoolchildren write letters in the sand," he says. At the moment, though, what he really longs for is new clothes. "I would love some pants," he says.

Bakic's friend Mangui Yuot talks about going to the new school in Rumbek. He says he told his father there would be free lunch, provided by the United Nations, so the father has agreed.

Bakic, ignoring his friend, continues working.

"Are you going to join us?" Yuot asks.

"I can't," the boy answers, lighting a pyramid of dung. "Not yet."

(c) 2005 The Washington Post Company

"The hands of educated people don't get dirty," he adds, looking at his own hands, cracked and caked with white powder from the burned dung.

The father has another choice ahead: whether to let Machuci undergo his tribe's traditional manhood rites, in which six bottom teeth are removed and four incisions are made in the forehead. This signals that a Dinka boy is ready for marriage.

The cattle camp manager has advised parents against it, saying the ritual, a mark of ethnic distinction, makes it more difficult for Sudan's many tribes to blend in at school.

Gong looks at his son, dressed in dirty brown shorts, gulping fresh milk from a pail. The father says he will not make the boy remove his teeth or scar his face.

"I've made my decision," he says. "School is more important."

A Man's Job

Bakic Magol has just been paid, so he and his friend Mangui Yuor can buy breakfast. Usually they just drink milk, but on payday they can afford a bowl of beans. In the shade of a grass hut, they hungrily eat from bowls of oily mush without speaking.

As they walk back to the cattle pen, an old woman with a torn dress begs Bakic for money to buy tobacco. Farther down the dirt path, another woman clutches Bakic's arm, asking whether her daughter can come and milk the cows for some free milk.

Bakic's carefree mood is gone. He lowers his head and sprints back to work.

The next day his father, Alfred Magol, crippled and blinded from a land mine, rests under a tree and talks about how even peace has not brought relief to his family. No one from the new government has come to pay disabled veterans, he complains.

And if peace doesn't last, how can he afford to let his son leave work and go to school? The country is still not stable, and the family is worried.

Bakic's mother, Mary Achol, would also prefer him to be in a classroom.

When he visits home these days, she says, he doesn't like her to touch him or make him food.

"I feel worry because he's working without my care," she says. "When a person is educated, life is easier."

Bakic's grandmother dismisses such worries, saying he is a "strong and courageous boy." The two women start to hum a family song that compares Bakic to his

great-grandfather, a skilled cattle herder. In fact, every ancestor Bakic can remember was a cattle herder.

But Bakic is still a boy trying to do a man's job. A few days later, exhausted from the heavy, constant work, he seems to have reached his limit. Herding a group of cows into an auction pen, he gets hit in the eyes by a horn. Minutes later, some older men accuse him of losing a cow, and a fight breaks out.

"For God's sake . . . I don't have your cow," he shouts, his



Thank God for the peace now in southern Sudan. Children can go to school and make a positive change in their life.

eyes filling with tears.

Recently, Bakic says, he had a dream. "It starts with the cows escaping.

I am running through the forest, looking for my lost cows. I can't find them," he says. "Then I go to sleep. I don't care anymore."

Bakic knows there is a new school in Rumbek, and he wonders if he should go. The auction house manager has told the young herders they need an education to become rich, and he imagines working as a trader, or perhaps at a radio station. But his family has no money and needs him to do what he calls "my small works" to support them.

"When I am tired, I do think of schooling . . . Sometimes I concentrate when the schoolchildren write letters in the sand," he says. At the moment, though, what he really longs for is new clothes. "I would love some pants," he says.

Bakic's friend Mangui Yuor talks about going to the new school in Rumbek. He says he told his father there would be free lunch, provided by the United Nations, so the father has agreed.

Bakic, ignoring his friend, continues working.

"Are you going to join us?" Yuor asks.

"I can't," the boy answers, lifting a pyramid of dung. "Not yet."

(c) 2005 The Washington Post Company

Untouchable Earth: The Cost of the No-human paradigm for the livelihood of Indigenous Peoples

By Christine Sinclair

Julia Samson Fraga was one of the first people to leave her community. She left just before her house was burnt down. Her community had received a letter evicting them from land that they had occupied since before the transition to independence because the government wanted to turn the land into a park. "Untouched land," as it were. Rangers had arrived and threatened to remove them with force if they did not leave voluntarily. Threats, however, were all the government offered; they gave the people no compensation, monetary or otherwise, for their loss of land or livelihood, and offered no help in the process of relocation. The community was left with few options: they could move onto land that already belonged to others by ancestral rights or deeds, into

communities that were foreign to them, or into even more marginalized lands that may not be able to support them. No NGO or government agency offered any support. Worse, the people were unable to file a report of complaint as no one in the community has the education or the understanding to complete the necessary paperwork and processes.

Luckily, nobody died in this particular instance of mass exodus. The community scattered, however; some people moved to nearby communities and others moved further afield, particularly those with large numbers of cattle that needed large tracts of grazing land. Like many others affected by the eviction, Julia joined the flood of people who moved to Iringa, another community in the area. Their relationship with the new community, however, is fragile at best. While in her old village, Julia and her peers traveled to other communities only to receive social services such as medical care, services with which their own village was not provided. That visiting relationship was a great deal easier to maintain than one of permanent shared residence. Today, the traditionally pastoralist Maasai face 200,000 shilling fines if their cow steps across invisible barriers between lands available for grazing and lands already

occupied by farmers. The invisible lines are becoming more and more arbitrary as tensions rise between those coming from a displaced community and the original



Adam ole Mwarabu, left, Julia and Christine Sinclair during the interview.

occupants of the area, who feel they are being invaded. The police of Iringa back up these farmers' claims and the Maasai herdsmen and women have no choice but to comply.

But Julia is tough. Not long after her husband died, her brothers tried to inherit her; after she refused, they came and took her 50 cattle, and with them her livelihood. However, Julia has nonetheless managed to raise and educate her five children. In fact, she has one girl in primary school, and both a girl and a boy in secondary school. She supports herself by selling ornaments and beadwork as well as by cultivating maize. Julia has also joined a women's group that formed in order to fundraise and generate a little income for the struggling women. The women's group, called Namnyak Women's group, was organized specifically to help women whose husbands took all their money. Their main activity is goat keeping and the revenue from their activities is put into a shared bank account, ultimately used to help the poorer women to send their children to school.

The forced displacement experienced by Julia and her community is certainly not an isolated event. Last year, the Mkomazi Maasai faced a similar forced eviction. Their

already politically, economically and socially marginalised people are made to endure conflict with park rangers, conflict within their own society as they decide how to handle their eviction, and often the eventual break up of their community and confrontation with the community into whose lands they move²⁷. As the pastoralists are pushed into smaller parcels of more marginalized land, they are forced to use resources more intensively, pressing on an already fragile balance and compounding the effects of overgrazing, erosion, deforestation and desertification. This, of course, only corroborates the conservationists' claim that natural resources must be guarded from human interference.

In the lands traditionally occupied by Julia's community, there was enough space for grasslands, cultivation and wild animals, yet there were no schools or hospitals. In her new community, although there are social services, her people are not welcome. There is no reason why indigenous people should have to make a choice between adequate social services and a place that is truly a home.

Indigenous people should be managing and sustainably utilizing their traditional lands, but instead, destructive urbanization and the unsustainable practices of foreign co-operations, who have further reaching and longer lasting negative effects on the earth, tend to be in charge. They hold the positions of power and put mechanisms in place



Julia presenting her organization in a training workshop in Thuret, Arusha.

The government created parks are meant to be "untouched land", land that is supposed to support wildlife, plant life and tourists and allow them to co-exist in perfect harmony. However, this vision of land-use is based on a fallacy; land use patterns have not existed in such a manner for centuries. Wildlife and fauna have co-evolved with the lifestyles of indigenous peoples and they have survived for centuries living together. The land is only "ouched" when men with big guns forcibly remove indigenous peoples and their livestock, an essential portion of the finely balanced equation of the ecosystem. The result is an artificial environment whose delicate balance is disrupted. Both the land and the pastoralists who depend on it suffer.

that enable them make decisions about the land. The urban-centered government is far removed from pastoralist communities and marginalized land, and tourists who come from foreign countries have little or no conception of what the land means to the people who were once able to live there, nor do they understand the contribution tourism itself makes to the processes of land degradation.

Leaving the land untouched is impossible; indigenous people know that every part of the environment touches every other part of it. To try and extract one fundamental building block of our fragile environment will have fatal consequences for both the system that loses and the piece that is lost. ■

Giving the Best Possible Start: Preschool Programme for Rural Indigenous Children in Sabah, Malaysia

By Anne Laximang

The Malaysian education system, from preschool onwards, follows a national curriculum that is highly competitive and places a high priority on school skills. Preschool education aims to enhance children's potential in all aspects of development, help children master the basic skills and foster positive attitudes as preparation for entering primary school. A child entering the first year of primary school is therefore expected to have already mastered basic skills in reading, writing and counting. Since the year 2000, the Ministry of Education has made kindergarten classes for six-year-olds compulsory but these are mainly located within the primary school compounds. They are still not widely accessible to rural communities, where the majority of indigenous peoples are located. Education facilities, infrastructure, and qualified teachers in the rural areas are not at par with those in the urban areas. Clearly an indigenous child enters school already disadvantaged and lags behind other Malaysian children.

As in other indigenous communities around the world, the indigenous communities in Malaysia consider the education of their children to be important. Adequate education is seen as a means by which their children's future is secured. In the East Malaysian state of Sabah, situated on the island of Borneo, 39 different ethnic groups make up about 60% of the 2.4 million population. The majority of the indigenous peoples live in rural areas where basic infrastructure such as roads, schools and health facilities is often limited or lacking altogether. It is against this

backdrop that the community-based organization PACOS Trust is working to strengthen and empower Sabah's indigenous communities through various initiatives such as community organizing, land rights and resource management, and community education. Under its community education programme, and with financial support from the Bernard van Leer Foundations, Netherlands, PACOS initiated a pilot preschool project in 1993 with 25 children and 3 preschool teachers. This was based on the villagers' identification of preschool education as one of their basic needs due to the low attendance of children in school, and their poor performance. In 2005, 15 years later, the preschool or early childhood care and development (ECCD) program has developed into a very strong activity. PACOS now operates one commercial training center and 15 rural preschool centers in remote parts of Sabah covering 600 children and 50 preschool teachers.

The Preschool Programme

When PACOS started the preschool programme, it had the following objectives:

- To prepare indigenous children for primary school using the curriculum from the Malaysian Education Ministry and developing other pre-school materials that reflected local language, culture, environment and materials;
- To conduct community discussions around topics such as health, nutrition, environment and child development;
- To create a forum for parents, men and women, to come together and

express their views about community issues such as gender relations, land, economy, indigenous knowledge and child rearing concerns;

- To promote positive indigenous values and traditions that strengthen the community across the generations;

Briefly, the strategies adopted were as follows:

1. Training programme (field and centralized)

A training programme was essential for building the capacity of the communities to be able to manage the project themselves in the long run. This included caregivers' training in early childcare and development, leadership training (especially for women), workshops on health and nutrition as well as some parent workshops for communities in remote areas. There was a gradual move from simple skills to a more complex understanding of early childhood care and development, concepts of collective leadership and community involvement and also an understanding of the importance of setting up and sustaining people's organizations.

2. Designing and producing relevant educational materials and curricula

There was a dire need to design and produce local material that was relevant to the rural areas and that took into account indigenous values, customs and traditions. To date, the preschool program has come up with an integrated curriculum incorporating indigenous knowledge, local language and materials.

3. Networking

Networking between villagers, local groups, organizations within the state, both national and international, was important because through networking communities could share their resources, problems and also support one another.

4. Community activities and outreach meetings

Community activities that are carried out within a village are important in order to bring people together. Outreach meetings were held in individual homes or within a group of houses. This was important in order to reach out to women in the rural areas, as many of them do not dare to give or share their opinions in public.

5. Strengthening the preschool centers and their links with the nearby primary schools

There was a need to provide early stimulation for young children before they are absorbed into the formal education system. Since the age range of 0 to 6 years is considered crucial and important for a child, preschool centers can provide systematic and planned stimulation at this early age. It was therefore important to continually upgrade and strengthen these centers. In order that the work during the preschool age would continue, it was also crucial to strengthen the links between these centers and the primary schools.

Lessons Learned

A number of important lessons have been learned from this project.

Children in all of the project areas are very close to their families and enjoy a tremendous amount of freedom to follow their parents

around or to attend the activities at the preschool centers. In areas where the communities are mobile, we find that the families stay in their farms according to the farming seasons and that the children's attendance in the centers will go down during certain seasons. However, as soon as the families are back in their village, the children's attendance in the centers will again become part of their daily routine. Despite this irregular attendance, the feedback from the primary schools has been positive. Children who have attended

families in the villagers. When their children enter primary school, parents are more willing to take part in activities organized by the school. By being actively involved in their children's learning both in the preschool and primary school, parents are becoming more aware of what is going on and are able to give support to their children when needed. Indeed, their children also become less apprehensive about school and do not drop out when faced with difficulties.

The preschool center is also



preschool are doing better and adjusting to school well. When PACOS started its pilot project in the village of Kipouvo, the primary school was scoring 0% passes in the government year six evaluation test. However, this has grown steadily from 20% to 80%, and one former preschool student scored distinctions in all five subjects that were tested, a result otherwise only possible in urban schools. This improvement in school performance is also evident in other villages where community preschool programmes are running.

Because parents are actively involved in the preschool activities—such as the monthly parents' meetings, center maintenance, educational visits and children's sports days—stronger bonds have been created between

community owned, unlike the primary schools, which are government property. Access to the preschool is also free and therefore the center is not only used by the children but is also used for other village meetings when there are no classes going on. Some of the centers are also used by the local health clinics when they undertake their periodic medical outreach. Other centers have also become learning centers for adults where literacy classes are conducted in the village. This is in clear contrast to the primary schools, which are not accessible to the community except by the school staff themselves: all others must get permission from the school authorities to enter their premises. It is therefore important that preschool centers are well maintained

and have facilities that are within the reach of children and the community.

In some villages, the houses are quite dispersed and remote, making it difficult for families and communities to relate to service providers and the centers of power collectively on matters such as requests from districts administrators for health clinics and improvements in infrastructure. As a result, their prospect of bringing about change are limited, more so where local culture has been weakened or lost and local leaders are appointed by the government based on their political affiliation and not on their ability and wisdom. But the preschools have created an avenue for the community to come together when the centers organize activities for the children. Despite political differences among village leaders, the preschools have been able to cut across these differences and they are considered a uniting factor in all the project areas.

In some instances, a family may keep their children away from the preschool center due to political differences. However, after a while they end up sending their children to the preschool because they realize that they will lag behind other children when they enter primary school. The preschool events that generate the most participation are family day and the preschool graduation day. During these events, quarrelling village leaders or families forget their differences and take part in the activities and this gives opportunities to mend broken communication. The preschools have therefore created a common identity for communities that binds them together in support of the holistic development of their children.

The preschool programme in the communities has also provided the teachers and caregivers with the opportunity for personal development. Through the preschool programme, PACOS has seen women leaders being built and coming forward to take up issues that are faced

by the communities. In the villages, women are generally not given the opportunity to voice their opinions or they take a low-key position by staying in the kitchen preparing food or sitting at the back with their small children during village meetings. Since most of the teachers, caregivers and village preschool committee members are women, being on the preschool committee has provided them with an opportunity as well as encouragement to be active, committed, organized, to make decisions and interact with other leaders from other communities.

The training of preschool teachers as leaders is also one of the aspects included in the preschool teacher training programme, besides skills and knowledge in early childhood. Slowly, they gain confidence and an ability to come forward in village meetings and even take up positions such as treasurers or secretaries in people's organizations. In the pilot village of Kipuro, we initially had 2 women leaders; now we have 9 women who are actively involved in the village administration.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation

There were also many lessons learnt from the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF), which is the funding agency. BvLF was not only able to provide long term funding support to PACOS but it also played many supporting roles such as connecting PACOS with other organizations working in the area of Early Childhood Care and Development. BvLF encourages and supports its partners to visit and learn from each other. Through these exposure visits, our ideas, knowledge and skills have increased and this has strengthened our programme. The materials sent from BvLF on the experiences of other partners throughout the world were also relevant to our work and helped a great deal.

BvLF also puts a great deal of effort into local capacity building and

promoting local institutional development through funding support, training courses and networking. As a result, PACOS is now able to contribute effectively both local and international level cohosting or contributing to workshops, conferences and seminars.

Conclusion

The strategies used in this project have benefited many rural indigenous children throughout Sabah. Local capacity and local institutions have also been developed, especially PACOS itself. There are still many challenges ahead relating to education among indigenous children in Sabah. One such challenge is to make preschools available to remote communities that lack basic infrastructure, and to provide quality support and follow-up. Another challenge is to make the curriculum really relevant to indigenous children while at the same time taking into account the national curriculum. Yet another challenge is to find long term financial support for preschool projects, which is necessary because most of the communities are faced with poverty and depleted resources.

However, despite these challenges, lessons from this project are now being used in another project phase of the preschool work among indigenous peoples of Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia through the National Indigenous Peoples Network of Malaysia. With more indigenous peoples' groups joining together, we hope that our children will not only get the best possible start but the best possible future.

Anne Lasing is a Kadazandusun educator who previously worked as a secondary school teacher and school manager. She now coordinates the Community Education Programme of PACOS. She is also a trainer in community organization for PACOS and actively promotes gender awareness at the grassroots level.

First published in Indigenous Affairs by IWGIA, www.iwgia.org

WAMIP: The World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples



WAMIP is hoping to work with elders like these from Parakuyo and Maasai mobile communities from Tanzania.

The World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP) is a global alliance of nomadic peoples and communities practicing various forms of mobility as a livelihood strategy while conserving biological diversity and using natural resources in a sustainable way.

WAMIP is supported by many international organisations, including the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEEESP <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp>) and the DANA Declaration Standing Committee, <http://www.danadeclaration.org> - and is currently hosted in CENESTA, the Centre for Sustainable Development, Iran <http://www.cenesta.org/>. CENESTA is currently offering secretariat support to the Alliance. WAMIP is an independent international NGO, established in accordance with Swiss law. In June 2005, WAMIP has 89 members from 31 different countries.

Our Vision

"A world in which mobility is recognised and appreciated as a strategy for both sustainable livelihoods and conservation of biological diversity. A world in which mobile indigenous peoples (MIPs) are in full solidarity among themselves and with other indigenous peoples. A

world in which the collective and community rights of mobile indigenous peoples to natural resources (as per the relevant United Nations Draft Declaration) are fully respected."

Our Mission

To empower mobile indigenous peoples throughout the world to maintain and improve their mobile lifestyles in pursuit of livelihoods and cultural identity, to sustainably manage natural resources under common property and to obtain the full respect of their rights.

Achievements 2003-2005

September 2003

Founding Meeting of WAMIP—the 5th World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa

WAMIP was created at the 5th World Parks Congress in September 2003 in Durban, South Africa by a group of mobile indigenous persons who attended the Congress with the support of different organisations. These persons participated very actively in many Congress events and in separate meetings of their own, and decided to establish the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples.

Focus:

- Common problems and conditions of MIPs
- Shared strategies among MIPs for managing natural resources and conserving biodiversity

Main results:

- The World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples—WAMIP—is created
- Recommendation 5.27 on Mobile Indigenous Peoples and Conservation, endorsing the principles of the Dana Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation, is approved by the World Parks Congress
- Mention of the "Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Mobile Peoples and Local Communities recognized and guaranteed in relation to natural resources and biodiversity conservation" in the Durban Action Plan (Outcome 5)

Winter 2004-2005

Consultancies helped WAMIP to develop some initial draft of the Alliance's Statutes (Bylaws) and define organisational issues including:

- Definitions and terminology
- International laws relevant to the MIPs
- Organisational structure of WAMIP
- Research issues
- Funding

February 2004

7th Conference of Parties (COP 7) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and 19th Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,

Focus:

- Mobile peoples and biodiversity conservation
- Landscape management and biological connectivity

Main results:

- WAMIP 2nd Meeting of the Coordinating Committee
- Draft WAMIP Statute and Bylaws reviewed and developed
- WAMIP representative addresses the CBD Conference of the Parties with a fellow representative of

Indigenous Peoples

- WAMIP representatives actively participate in COP side events

July 2004

Successful application for the 2004 Darrell P. Fellowship for Ethnobiology and Traditional Resource Rights. A small fund is granted to support building capacity within WAMIP and realizing some early programme activities, including developing its membership, establishing a web site and creating background and support material.



An indigenous woman from the Rendile community of Kenya, standing outside her hut.

November 2004

3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, Bangkok

Focus:

- Mobility, Livelihoods and Conservation

Main results:

- Revised version of the WAMIP Briefing Note produced and distributed at the Congress,
- A workshop dedicated to Mobility, Livelihoods and Conservation was held and produced a set of recommendations including:
 - Encouraging respect for and learning from traditional forms of natural resource management and biodiversity conservation practiced by mobile indigenous peoples;
 - Recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to make their own choices about how to live and how to adapt to change in the world;
 - Reforming land use regimes that undermine traditional resource management practices and the encourage open access situations.

- Development and adoption of an IUCN Resolution on Mobile Peoples and Conservation, which endorsed the principles of the Dena Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation.

The IUCN Resolution on Mobile Peoples and Conservation

- URGES IUCN to assist its members in the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and to provide technical leadership and support for understanding the relationship between mobile peoples and conservation; and
- REQUESTS the Director General and Commissions:
 - a) to incorporate, in the implementation of the IUCN Intersessional Programme 2005-2008 and relevant Commission mandates, due recognition of mobile peoples, their needs and their capacity to conserve biodiversity;
 - b) to articulate lessons learned and the potential to enhance conservation through mobile livelihoods, in particular with regard to:
 - ¼ traditional knowledge and practices for adaptive management;
 - ¼ sustainable use of natural resources;
 - ¼ landscape conservation; and
 - ¼ community conserved areas in the migration territories of mobile peoples; and
 - c) to develop conservation policies and practices that respond to those lessons and take
 - d) advantage of the unique capacities of mobile peoples.

January 2005

Global Pastoralist Gathering, Turmi, Ethiopia

From 27th - 31st January 2005, pastoralist groups from around the world gathered in a pastoralist area of Turmi, Ethiopia in East Africa. About 120 people attended, the majority of whom were pastoralists who wished to meet other pastoralists, and who were interested to find and exchange new ways of negotiating an improved deal for pastoralists.

Focus:

- Interaction with pastoralist peoples and associations
- Exchange of new ideas and ways of negotiating an improved situation for pastoralists

Main results:

- Several new supporting members were added to WAMIP

May 2005

Members of the WAMIP Coordinating Committee and the WAMIP Secretariat participated in the formulation of World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism—WISP. WAMIP is selected for capacity building support in that programme.

Membership

WAMIP's membership is organised in a two-tiered system including Members and Supporting Members. Members (First Category Members) can only be mobile indigenous peoples, organised in customary groupings and sub-groupings, which adhere to the mission and strategic approach of WAMIP through their legitimate traditional leadership. They include natural/ traditional/ customary groupings of MIPs with a distinctive identity and name, and local NGOs and other associations/ organisations formed, governed and directed by mobile indigenous peoples or explicitly authorised and delegated by mobile indigenous peoples as their legitimate representatives and directly accountable to them.

Supporting Members are all interested individuals and organisations that explicitly adhere to the definition of mobile indigenous peoples and the mission of WAMIP, and those who have a work record on issues related to mobile indigenous peoples, but do not fulfil the criteria for full membership.

Directions for Future work

- Membership drive for First Category Members (mission to Central and West Africa planned for July 2005 to recruit first category members)
- Capacity building through mutual exchanges and/or formal training
- Inclusion of mobile indigenous peoples' concerns into key future policy statements (e.g. The Millennium Summit, September 2005; the Fourth All Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture, Sept 20-24, 2005; International Conference on Peoples' Food Sovereignty, Bamako, Mali, 2006)

- Lobbying and advocacy work with governments and organisations to recognise mobility as a sustainable livelihood strategy and traditional migration territories as Community Conserved Areas by MIPs
- Holding a first General Assembly of WAMIP where the Statute and Bylaws will be revised and approved

Key strategic objectives for 2005 - 2008

- Legalisation of Community Conserved Areas comprising the traditional migration territories of mobile indigenous peoples
- Enhanced awareness of marine mobile communities and their plea
- Enhanced recognition of the biodiversity benefits of mobile lifestyle by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Get Involved with WAMIP!

There are many opportunities for interested individuals and organisations to collaborate with WAMIP. For that, please contact *Aghayia Ralamgaleh wamip@wamip.org* and visit the WAMIP website at <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wesp/WAMIP/WAMIP.htm>

Like brother, Like Sister

The importance of sibling relationships as coping mechanisms for HIV/AIDS

Siblings have a very special relationship. They can act as best friends or worst enemies. In either case, their intimate understanding of each other and their common experience gives them an edge over each other, an insight into values, how to comfort or how to annoy, what gets under their skin and what makes them smile. The relationship of brothers or sisters is not quite like any other relationship they are likely to form for the rest of their life; their bond is "typified by an uninhibited emotional quality, mutual interest in one another, high frequency of interaction, well-established attachment [and] well-described aggression. Siblings can influence each

other's later development" (Lorraine Sherr, pg.33). Children are perhaps more apt at communicating with each other than adults are with children. Thus, this relationship is not only useful in understanding child development, but it is integral to the entire process.

This relationship therefore is an important resource when dealing with difficult times. In families that have been affected by HIV/AIDS, it can be especially useful with very young children, as adults often have a hard time conveying the appropriate messages to them. The CCATH engages such an approach by helping families in Kenya and Uganda cope with the pandemic by training older children and parents or guardians to be able to care appropriately for the younger children through emotional support and constructive, creative, educational and fun activities.

The implementation of this child to child technique of support and education can also be introduced in schools and preschools. Indeed, it encourages participation, trust and mutual understanding. The horizontal transfer of

knowledge also allows for it to reach a broader spectrum of children as opposed to information being restricted to the vertical teacher-student dynamic and thus strains to a certain extent, in the classroom. The NACWOL in Nigeria even has a 'drop in playground' that provides a friendly atmosphere for HIV infected children, as well

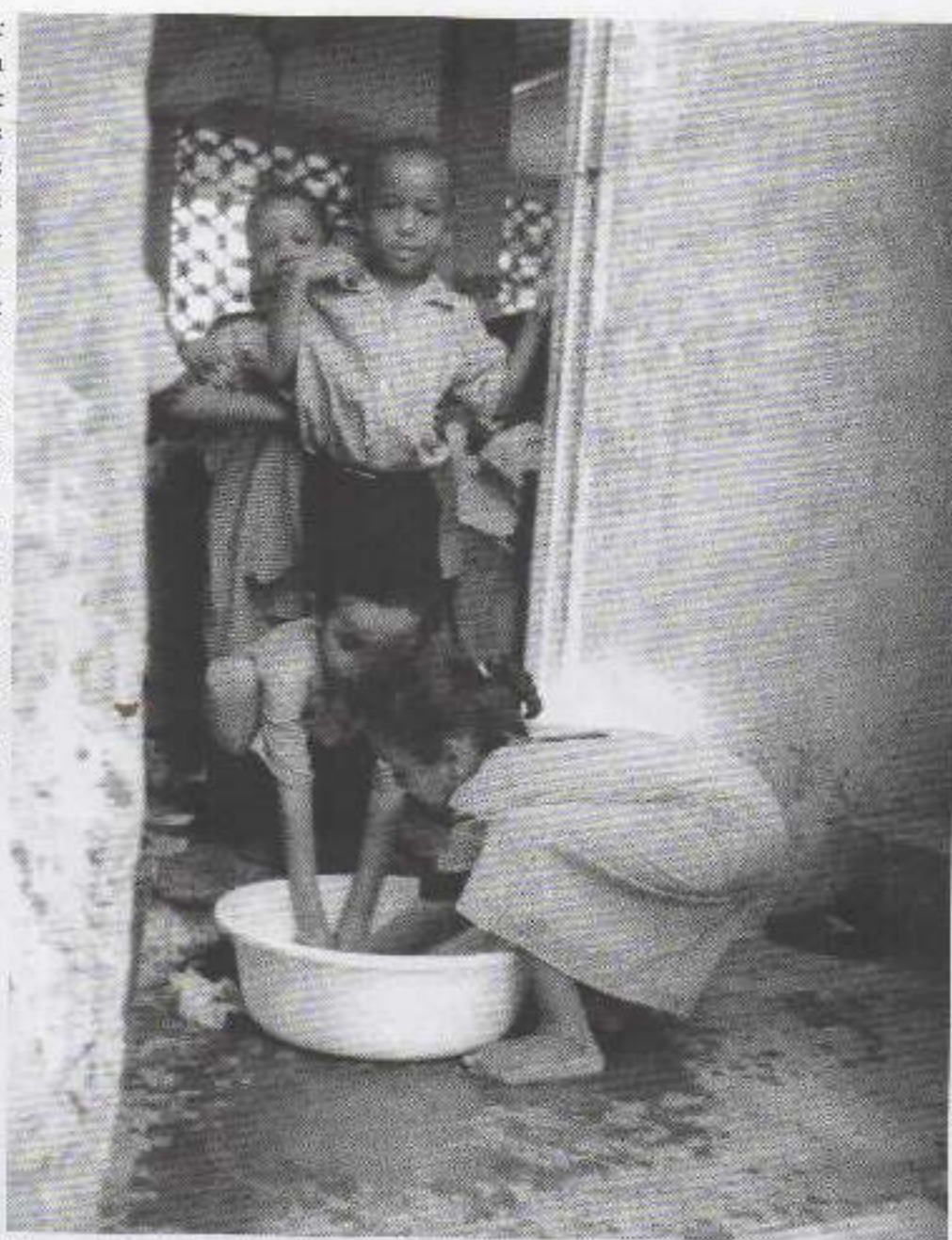


support for local children's home with a high rate of HIV. In Kenya, a case study is taking place to monitor and record the existing informal care of young children by grandparents, focusing on the perception of the grandparents and the children of their new roles and the care-giving framework.

In Kenya, girls often get the brunt of it because they are expected, more than boys, to do the caretaking. One girl interviewed took care of her four younger siblings although she herself works. It is common to expect the eldest daughter to be in charge of the family when the parents are absent, undertaking tasks such as cooking, disciplining and ensuring proper development of her brothers and sisters. Despite this, the sister manages to maintain a relationship of 'sister' as opposed to 'parent'. Another girl, not the oldest in the family, takes personal interest in the moral upbringing of her siblings and it was made clear from all interviews that the emotional, moral and social development of younger siblings is taken seriously by older ones. Although physical care was only

something they would do for siblings in need or when a parent was absent, that responsibility was not seen as optional. This at once implies that traditional gender roles are still in place, yet the hierarchy of the family is being disrupted in important ways when a disease such as AIDS comes into play. These siblings were also aware of the importance their sibling relationship has on the behaviour outside the home; one girl explained how important it was to her brother to know what was happening at home and to be constantly checked up on or else his performance in school would slide. All of this proves that, in Kenya especially, the role siblings play in each others lives are anything but minor and have the possibility, if harnessed, to play an important role in being the saving grace of a country disturbed by the pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

However, despite this work, siblings are not studied often enough and suffer in silence in the face of AIDS. In most families, several members are infected with



No matter what the case is, children are always good friends - working together is their happiness

HIV/AIDS yet somehow the horizontal bond between siblings is overlooked as a dimension to the poignant pain. This relationship is a window of opportunity for aid, in the form of existing support networks that can encourage healthy communication. Often, if only one child is ill, family, friends and members of the community, such as doctors, priests or other people of importance, will pay disproportionate attention to that child, which in itself disrupts the relationship between siblings and has specific psychological and self-worth repercussions for both children. In many cases, if the parents die, the children themselves become caregivers for the family. By 1996 in Uganda, over 10 percent of children under 15 had lost one or both parents. Without the parental support, children have to rely more and more on each other and thus the importance of correct information to spread from one to

the other is tantamount. This is compounded by the fact that school attendance drops as children need to care for their family, which again cuts off another important source of support and information. The siblings are left without a voice on any large scale, often abandoned in ignorance as parents attempt to shelter their children. After the parents die, the child must undertake caretaking duties and these family functions, bonds and dynamics are currently understudied. ■

Read more:

Dunn, Alison. *HIV/AIDS: What about very young children?* Young children and HIV/AIDS sub-series. Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The Netherlands. May;

Sherr, Lorraine. *Young Children and HIV/AIDS: Mapping the field.* Young children and HIV/AIDS sub-series. Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The Netherlands. January 2005.

Education and The San Of Southern Africa

By Jennifer Hays and Amanda Siegruhn

The San are the Indigenous peoples of southern Africa, numbering approximately 100,000 and representing three major linguistic groups. Once living throughout the southern part of the continent, today the San live primarily in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, with very small numbers also residing in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Angola. Like indigenous peoples worldwide, San communities are currently facing drastic social change, extreme marginalization and poverty¹.

experience of boarding schools (often necessitated by great distances between their home villages and schools).

Extensive consultations among San communities and their educational situation have revealed that for San parents and learners, educational success is vitally crucial for the survival of their communities. They want to have access to the skills they need to actively and effectively participate in the economic and decision making



literacy, numeracy and other skills learned at the formal schools are increasingly necessary for survival, and San communities want their children to succeed in the school system and to obtain these skills. Unfortunately, San communities across southern Africa experience serious problems with education².

The most obvious and commonly noted problem is a very high dropout rate (and thus low success rate) among San students. This has been attributed to a number of interconnection factors, including the lack of mother-tongue education for most San communities, cultural differences between home and school, cultural practices (such as hunting trips or initiation ceremonies) that keep students away from school, frequent abuse at the hands of school authorities and other students, and the alienating

processes that affect them. However, an attitude of resistance to existing formal education systems has developed, as communities see that children in these systems often turn their backs on (their communities or else return without employment in the formal economic sector and without having learned traditional survival methods. Many parents comment that their children have been 'stolen by the system' (Tsireleiso 1997; Le Roux 1999).

Although some of these problems are shared with other minority groups in southern Africa, in San communities they are compounded by their extremely marginal social status and their general lack of access to land and other resources. Furthermore, a critical difference between the San and other groups in the region (including dominant and minority groups) is the fact that the San are descended

from hunting and gathering populations, as opposed to agro-pastoralists. Although today many San people live on farms and work with animals, and some do practice subsistence agriculture, a great deal of research and experience with these populations shows that they maintain a mentality and worldview that stems from the social organization and subsistence strategies associated with a hunting and gathering lifestyle. These include deep-seated egalitarian ethics, a non-hierarchical approach to social organization, differences in disciplinary strategies, in approaches to teaching and learning, time and time management, and a multitude of other subtle and overt differences. Thus far, attempts to simply integrate San learners into the existing mainstream education systems have proven ineffective. Even where some improvements have been made, the numbers of San students completing their formal education remains extremely low in comparison with other groups.

One of the strongest and most consistent requests of San communities consulted on educational issues over the past 10 years is the desire to have their own schools. They express a strong desire for education that respects and values their own language, culture, background and knowledge, that addresses their social and economic realities, and that provides their children with a positive learning experience. They would also like increased parental and other community involvement in education initiatives. Furthermore, they express a desire to have a variety of educational options available to them, and for these options to be available not only to children of strict school-going age but to older community members as well. In this, the desires of San communities are consistent with those of indigenous peoples worldwide and other minority groups, including religious groups, whose values are not necessarily reflected in the mainstream institutions of their society. Furthermore, the right to such an education is guaranteed by numerous international and regional human rights and educational rights documents (see also Hays 2004).

Unfortunately, southern Africa's recent legacy of apartheid includes a history of forced separation of people based on language and ethnicity, and the use of mother-tongue education as a tool for separation and oppression. Southern African governments and citizens are thus understandably wary of educational initiatives that seem to promote 'separate education', or education in one's mother tongue at the expense of the dominant language(s). This makes it difficult for San communities to make their desires understood. Although the pedagogical soundness of mother-tongue education, particularly during the early years, is recognized and educational bodies in southern Africa are, in theory, committed to providing this option for all of their citizens, what this means in practice varies. This article will briefly compare and contrast the educational approaches of Namibia, South Africa and

Botswana to San minorities, and current regional efforts¹. There are currently three major education projects in southern Africa that cater specifically or primarily for San populations, and a fourth project, to address the needs of San learners in Botswana, is currently in the early planning stages. Each of these projects will be described in more detail below.

San Education In The Region

Namibia (approximately 35,000 San)

Of the three countries, Namibia currently has the greatest potential to provide mother-tongue and culturally appropriate education for the first three years of school for San minorities. In 2000, the Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalized Children, under the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBSEC), identified San children as one of the three major "educationally marginalized" groups in the country, and has developed policies to cater specifically to these groups (MBSEC 2000)². Namibian educational policy explicitly recognizes the importance of mother tongue education during early years of schooling (MBSEC 1997), and the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), a directorate of MBSEC, has spearheaded the effort to create mother-tongue educational materials in San languages.³

Although Namibian policies create an environment in which innovative mother-tongue education projects may be implemented for San communities, in practice efforts begun in this direction often stall as key individuals change positions in government, or as new priorities arise in a changing political environment. Furthermore, the relatively small number of children who speak any particular San language also makes it difficult to continue to justify the expense and effort needed to create mother-tongue educational materials. At present, only a very small minority of San children have the option of attending school where they are taught in their mother-tongue, or which recognizes and respects their unique culture. One of the most progressive, and perhaps the best known of these, is the Nyae Nyae Conservancy of north-eastern Namibia. A second effort, different in approach and scope, is that of the Gqana School in the Omaheke Region. These two projects will be described below.

South Africa (approximately 7,500 San)

Current South African education policy encourages mother-tongue education for the first three years, and provides funding for the language development for all the official languages. However, although Khoe⁴ and San languages are recognized, they are not official languages and there is little government funding available for their development. The Northern Cape Education Department⁵ has indicated a commitment to designing a curriculum and materials that incorporate San languages and culture but consistent lack of funding and logistic difficulties have

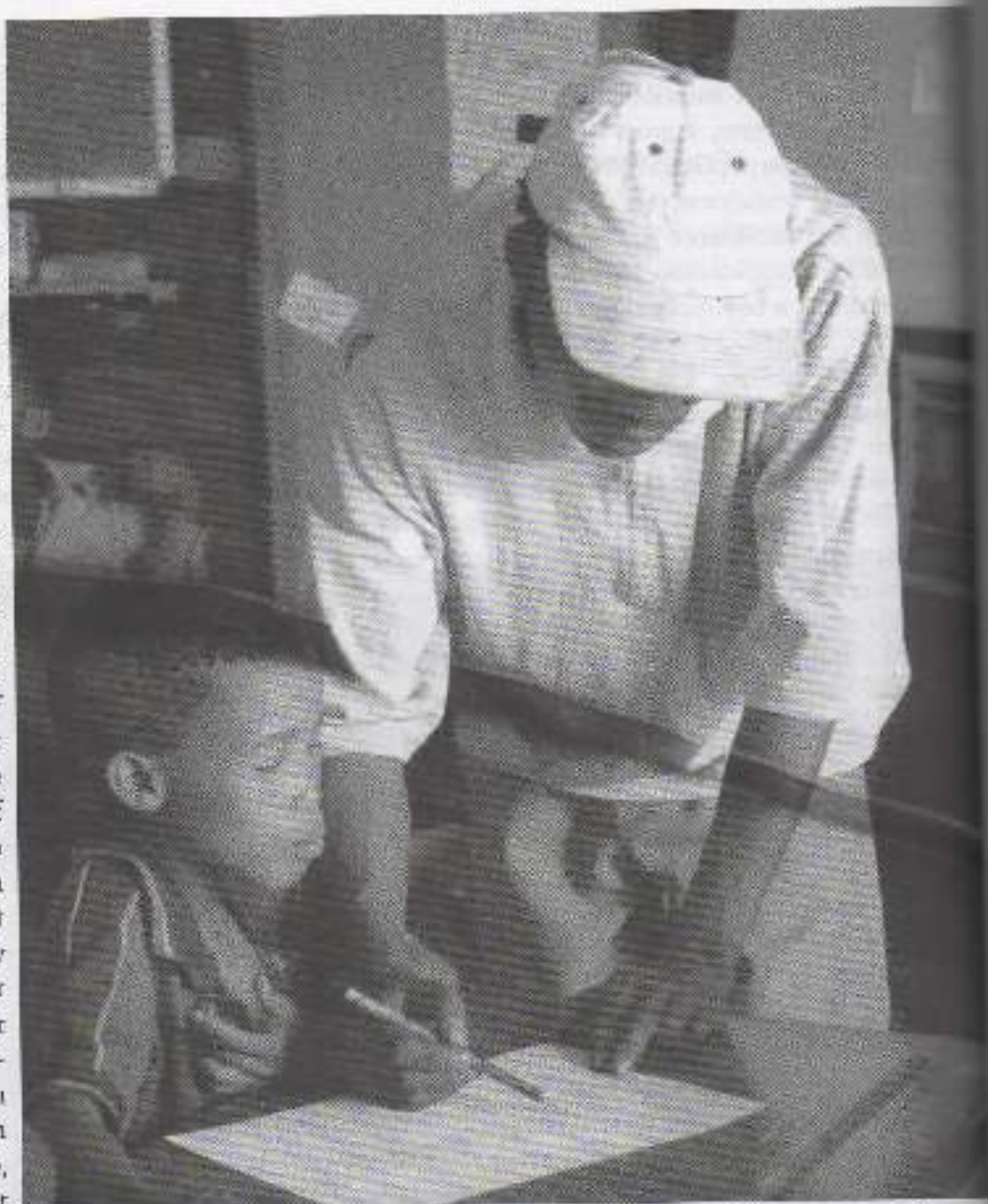
slowed this process.

Most of the San population indigenous to South Africa itself was assimilated into other African societies after their arrival during the early part of the second millennium, or exterminated following the arrival of European colonists in the 16th century. Armed commandos with the stated purpose of annihilating the San during the 18th and 19th centuries were quite effective, and those San that remained were largely assimilated in the "coloured" ethnic category during the apartheid era. As a result of decades of linguistic persecution under the apartheid era, today most of the San and Khoe population indigenous to South Africa speak Afrikaans as a first language with only a few elders still speaking their original mother tongue. For these groups, "mother-tongue" education is more an issue of language restoration than of effective pedagogy, though still a crucial aspect of community development. Efforts are being made in this direction with the cooperation of linguists and, for the Nama (a language in the Khoe family), by drawing upon the extensive educational materials available in Namibia²⁰.

The largest San community in all of southern Africa is that of the re-settled !Xun and Khwe²¹ soldiers (originally from Angola and Namibia) and their families in Platfontein, South Africa²². !Xun/khweša Combined School, which serves this community, is the largest San-only school in all of southern Africa, with 1,190 learners in pre-school through the Grade 12. This school will be described in greater detail below.

Botswana (approximately 50,000 San)

Although Botswana has one of the most successful formal education systems in Africa, claiming universal basic education of up to ten years, San children do not reap the benefits as children of more dominant groups in the country. A serious obstacle for San students (and other minorities) is language. The building of a national Botswana



identity has relied heavily upon the promotion of Setswana as the primary language of its citizens, and the use of other languages for any public functions, including education, has been strongly discouraged. While Botswana does recognize the right to mother-tongue education, the "mother-tongue" is assumed to be Setswana²³; this is the language used as a medium of instruction for the first years of school before switching to English as the medium of instruction by Grade 4 at the latest (Botswana 1994²⁴). There is no provision for mother-tongue primary education for minority language children, who must begin primary in a foreign language (Setswana), then switch to another (English) before they have mastered the first.

A great many San in Botswana fall into the category of "Remote Area Dwellers" or "RADs"²⁵. Botswana's Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) provides support services and material goods to remote communities and has a special focus on educational needs. Children from settlements without schools are transported to boarding schools where they are provided with school clothing, food and hostel accommodation while attending

school. Although the government of Botswana invests a great deal of resources in providing RAB children with the opportunity to attend government schools, at least up until Standard/ Grade 4, these schools, and the hostels, tend to be very unsympathetic places for San students. The idea of separating parents and children is foreign in San culture; the pain and alienation that San students feel at boarding schools can be acute. Abuse by hostel staff and other students, poor hostel conditions, stigma experiences by the San as "RABs" and a general lack of cultural sensitivity exacerbate the situation. The subjects are taught in a foreign language, cultural representations in the curriculum materials represent the perspective of the dominant group, and teaching styles are derived from the dominant culture (Nyati Ramahobo 2003). These factors further reinforce the marginality of San language and culture within the schools and make it more difficult for them to succeed in that environment.

Regional Structure¹⁶

Although the governmental approaches and specifics vary, the most serious problems that the San experience with regard to education transcend linguistic groups and national borders. Furthermore, several of the language groups reside in two, three or more countries. Recognizing this, the *Working group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa* (WIMSA), a networking and lobbying organization based in Windhoek and serving San communities in southern Africa, has initiated efforts at the regional level in order to facilitate the sharing of experience, information and materials across borders. In 2001, WIMSA established the *Regional San Education Programme*, which is co-ordinating a variety of educational initiatives in Namibia and the region. There include the production of a format that can be used to support initial mother-tongue literacy in the Grade 1 classroom, one that can be easily adapted to any San language and that can be modified to include aspects that identify individual communities.

An initiative of the Regional San Education Programme that has met with initial success since its implementation in 2003 is WIMSA's *Tertiary Student Support Programme*, which aims to ensure that more young San successfully complete higher education and further training, that skills and knowledge acquired can be used to support the development of San communities and organizations in the future. Now in its third year, the programme currently sponsors nineteen students, eight of whom are expected to graduate this year. Thus far, six San students have graduated, four with teaching qualifications¹⁷. One important result of this programme will be the increase in the number of trained teachers who speak San languages as their mother tongue; this is an important step towards increasing access to mother-tongue education for San communities.

Linked with the Regional San Education Programme,

The Southern African Education Forum (SASEF) is a platform for the ministries of education in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia to exchange information and ideas about San education organizations and communities. Their primary areas of concern include the development of San languages for use at school and the development of curriculum materials in these languages, along with addressing the high dropout rate and limited employment opportunities for San youth throughout the region. While the rationale and potential for SASEF is strong, the logistics of cross-border co-ordination among government bodies are cumbersome and progress is slow.

Furthermore, while cross-border efforts could enhance San education initiatives everywhere, the emphasis must always be on local community consultation and involvement. There is no quick-fix solution that can be implemented in a blanket form for all San communities. The three existing projects described below represent three different situations, and very different approaches. While each one has its strengths, each also has its shortcomings. The Minority Education Project in Botswana (also described below), still in its early phases, seeks to learn from other efforts in South Africa and around the globe, and to create educational alternatives for San that fully incorporate their culture, traditional knowledge and skills.

San Education Projects

The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project, Tsumkwe East, Namibia¹⁸

The *Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project* (VSP), located in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy of Namibia, grew out of a collaborative effort between local NGOs and Namibia's (then) Ministry of Education and Culture in the early 1990s, as a response to Ju 'hoan¹⁹ children's lack of participation in the government schools in Eastern Tsumkwe District. In the five Village Schools²⁰ children are taught Ju 'hoansi language, by members of their own speech community. While the focus is on providing schooling closer to home that incorporates the language, knowledge and skills of their communities, the goal of ultimately preparing children to be successful in the government school is central to the project. Emphasis is on increasing the self-confidence of both learners and the communities, so that Ju 'hoan children can enter the English-medium government schools in Grade 4 with basic skills necessary to succeed there, and a firm grounding in their own culture.

The VSP has drawn both acclaim, for its high ideals and innovative approach, and strong criticism for what is often seen to be a failure to achieve its original goals. Although very many children attend the Village Schools, most of these do not attend the government school in Tsumkwe (which they are supposed to start in fourth grade) for very long. The reasons children give for dropping out have mostly to do with the school in Tsumkwe or the town itself rather than the VSP²¹. Another problem

experienced by the VSP itself is the difficulty of providing adequate support to the teachers. Since they are in scattered villages, and have no transportation of their own, arranging meetings, workshops and other forms of support is difficult and time consuming. The lack of adequate support staff has meant that the teachers often feel isolated and unsure about their teaching approaches. For these and other reasons, the teachers sometimes abandon their posts, further fuelling criticism of the project.

Gqaina School, Omaheke, Namibia

Gqaina Primary School is a private, government-subsidized school that has been operating for 11 years. It is considered by many involved with San education to be a model school, especially because of its very low dropout rate²², its culturally sensitive boarding environment, and its emphasis on mother-tongue education for Ju 'hoansi as a subject in higher grades (Gqaina goes up to grade 7). Although none of the teachers are San themselves, two speak Ju 'hoansi fluently and there are San women employed as hostel maids and in the kitchen.

The school serves as a rural community, primarily teaching the children of farm workers; some come from up to 80 km away. The population is made up of many ethnic groups, though about 50-60% of the students are San and priority is given to San students if there are more applicants than available places at the school²³. In other parts of southern Africa, there is usually tension between the San students and those from other ethnic groups, and frequent reports of bullying. Gqaina School has managed to facilitate positive relations between the different groups. This is due in part to a lack of toleration of bullying, close supervision of the students' relations and effective discipline for fighting²⁴.

While Gqaina School is commendable in many respects, it is also important to note its limitations. Mother-tongue education is only through Grade 1, rather than the recommended minimum of three years. The school itself only goes through to Grade 7, and most students drop out at the higher levels. Furthermore, the community involvement is limited and the educational model still largely reflects the values, knowledge and culture of dominant groups.

The !Xunhwesa Combined School, Platfontein, South Africa

The !Xunhwesa Combined School in Platfontein constructed in 2003, serves the resettled !Xun and Khwe communities. The school follows the mainstream 'outcomes based' curriculum and, of the full-time staff, only two Grade R (pre-school) teachers are San, and they are the only ones who speak either of the San languages²⁵. Since the beginning of 2005, initial literacy, using the Molano 'Breakthrough' method, is also being taught partially in the mother tongue for Grade 1. After that,

education primarily takes place in Afrikaans and, more recently, in English. When funding is available, teaching assistants are appointed by the school to assist non-San teachers in lower classes, and to assist with the emotional difficulties faced by the children in a foreign learning environment. At the time of writing, there are no funds available for teaching assistants.

!Xun and Khwe children, from grade R onwards, are in the same class. There are also children of mixed !Xun and Khwe relationships who are bilingual. Unfortunately the relationship between resettled !Xun and Khwe has been marked by conflict, and the tensions often spill over into school. Upon relocation from their initial settlements in Schmidtsdrift, the two groups wanted to establish separate communities, including separate schools. When this proved impossible the communities opted for two separate townships with the new school in between²⁶.

The original school in Schmidtsdrift was established twelve years ago by the South African military for the children of its employees. Since that time there has been virtually no relationship between the school and the communities and thus no community ownership of the educational process. Community members seem to consider the school as a potential source of income rather than as a partner in education. This lack of involvement places the schools at risk of becoming a place of assimilation into mainstream society.

The Minority Education Project, Botswana

Efforts are currently underway in Botswana to design and secure funding for a model education project that will serve as an example for San and other minority groups across the region who wish to develop alternative educational approaches for their communities. A team of consultants have conducted initial research and submitted recommendations, and partial funding has been secured from the South African diamond company DeBeers in conjunction with the Botswana affiliate Debswana. It is recommended that the proposed school(s) continue at least through to Grade 10, with mother-tongue education for at least the first three years and ideally longer. This ambitious project seeks also to create links with other educational projects in the region, and with indigenous education projects around the world.

There are several potential stumbling blocks that must be carefully negotiated, and discussions about how to proceed with the project are ongoing. For example, one complicated question is how to balance San communities' consistent request for schools that cater for individual language groups with the Botswana government's (and general southern African) wariness of schools that are identified with a particular ethnic group. Concerns revolve around both the potential for the exclusion of other ethnic groups (including other San language groups), and the desire to ensure that San communities have access to

education that is equal to that of other groups (as in other parts of the world, *traditional education* is still considered to be inferior to *formal education*). Addressing these concerns will require sensitive negotiation at the local level with the various communities involved, and government bodies. The project could also benefit greatly from the current global movement to recognize, respect and value diverse forms of knowledge, especially that of people who live in close contact with their natural environment as do many San Communities (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005).

Based on the experiences of San and other indigenous minorities, initial recommendation emphasized several characteristics as essential for the project, whatever form it eventually takes, including:

- The development of a learning environment that incorporates and builds upon the language and culture of the learners and builds their confidence and self-esteem.
- The cultivation and active development of San teachers through in-service training
- An education program that allows for options, in order that San communities may remain flexible in their economic choices
- An education system that allows the learners to develop skills that will be useful to them and will allow them to pursue the lifestyle that they choose
- The identification of and development of opportunities for San learners upon completion of various levels of schooling
- Community consultation and involvement at all levels of design and implementation of the project, and ultimate community ownership of the school.

This last objective is simultaneously the most critical to the project's success and also the most elusive. "Education" has come to be seen by many San as something that is defined and controlled by dominant institutions and outsiders. Although, as described above, San communities everywhere have expressed a desire for their own schools, they are also aware that there are elements of education they need today that must be provided by outsiders, and that funding and other logistics also require outside support. A delicate balance must be achieved

between non-San individuals and organizations involved and communities themselves in order to foster a sense of community ownership and return the responsibility for education to the communities.

Conclusion

Although southern African countries differ significantly in their approaches to education for San minorities, all three emphasize formal education, based upon Western models. The primary focus of attention has been upon removing the entry barriers for San students to government schools. The right of San communities and their children to have access to formal education is crucial, and is something that San people say that they want and need. As indigenous groups in other parts of the world have



also made clear, however, providing such access is not the whole answer to addressing educational issues for the San. It is also necessary to challenge ideas about what is, and to begin to understand and value the educational approaches of the San that have been developed over centuries. In doing this, Southern African governments—indeed, education-al initiatives throughout the world—may just find that they are the ones that have something to learn. ■

(Endnotes)

¹ Other terms used are Bushmen or (in Botswana) Basarwa. None of these terms are the peoples' own names for themselves, and people generally prefer to use their own terms such as Ju'hoansi, Khwe, or !Xun. In this article

the term San is used when referring to the larger grouping, as it has been identified by the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities of Southern Africa (WIMSA) as the least offensive.

² For an excellent description of the problems facing the indigenous populations of southern Africa today, see the volume edited by Hitchcock and Vinding (2004), *Indigenous Peoples' rights in Southern Africa*. Barnard (1992) provides a thorough overview of the San cultural groupings.

³ These have been well-documented; see for example Kann, Hitchcock & Mberé 1990, Kann 1991, Mendelsohn, Swarts and Avenstrup 1995, Le Roux 1999, Siegruhn & Hays 2000, Nyati-Ramahobo 2003, Polelo 2003.

⁴ For a more detailed description of the educational situation of San in each of the three countries, see Hays 2004.

⁵ Figures in these headings are from Saugestad 2004 and Chennells 2004.

⁶ The other two are the Ovahimba and the children of farm workers, many of whom are San.

⁷ The first is Ju'hoansi; similar plans are also underway for Khwedam. The South African-based Molteno Project has been contracted to adapt/translate its 'breakthrough to literacy' programme, developed for speakers of African languages into the above mentioned San languages.

⁸ The Khoe are the descendants of semi-nomadic pastoralists who were also present at the time of the arrival of the Europeans and who are also considered indigenous to the area; however their arrival in southern Africa dates back some 2,000 years while the San are thought to have lived in the area for at least 20,000 years. Today, although their languages are also marginalized, in general the Khoe are far more integrated economically and politically into the mainstream societies than are the San. See Hitchcock and Vinding (2004) for further discussion.

⁹ The vast majority of San in South Africa live in the Northern Cape Province.

¹⁰ In Namibia, the Nama are not considered to be a marginalized group as they are in South Africa, and a fully developed range of learning materials is available in the Nama's language, Khockhoegowab.

¹¹ These are two specific groups of San, with different languages. The '!' in !Xun represents one of the click sounds found in all San languages.

¹² This community of approximately 6,000 was temporarily settled in army tents at Schmidtsdrift in 1990, and in 2004 they moved to permanent settlement at Platfontein. The !Xun and the Khwe became caught in the crossfire between the forces of the SADF (South African Defense Force) and SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) during the South West African Bush War, which lasted for almost 30 years until 1989. Many San men were forced to become trackers for either of the two warring parties, and the survival of San communities

was often dependant on unequal alliances.

¹³ Recent surveys indicate that at least 18% of the country's citizens have other home languages (Botswana 2003).

¹⁴ There is currently a move to begin instruction in English as early as Standard 2, but this has yet to be implemented everywhere in the country. This early introduction of English instruction creates even more difficulties for minority language children, especially if the method of language introduction was designed for Setswana-speaking children.

¹⁵ Most RADs are also San; a common estimate is that more than 80% of the RADs nationwide are San, and that this number approaches 100% in some areas.

¹⁶ Updated information for this section was provided by the Regional San Education Programme Coordinator Yvonne Pickering.

¹⁷ The other two received diplomas in Natural Resource Management.

¹⁸ For more background and analysis of the Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project see Hays 2002; 2004.

¹⁹ *Ju'hoansi* is the name of the people and their language. *Ju'hoan* is used as an adjective.

²⁰ The number of village schools fluctuates somewhat. There were originally three schools, this number later increased to five, and schools periodically close and reopen depending upon water and food availability, movement of elephants, and other factors.

²¹ These are numerous, the most common being reports of abuse and/or teasing from other children and the teachers; theft of property; lack of food; not having the proper clothes and/or toiletries; and missing their parents and family.

²² For example, at the beginning of 2004 there were 305 students in the school; by August only seven children had dropped out.

²³ Herero students make up a large percentage of the remaining students; other groups represented include Nama/Damara speakers, refugees from Angola, and Ovambo speaking children from the northern parts of Namibia.

²⁴ For example, making the fighting students work together in a project.

²⁵ South African policy states that school staff should be representative of the South African population and of the specific community, where possible. An interest in and knowledge of the San culture is not a prerequisite, however, and although the teachers are encouraged to learn !Xun and Khwedam there is structure in place for this.

²⁶ The Platfontein deed is in the name of one legal entity: the !Xun and Khwe Community Property Association. ■

This article was first published by Indigenous Affairs by IWGIA, 2005.

Insecurity among the Karamoja

By Nathan Chelimo

Insecurity in this area is a tribal conflict and it's a matter of where are the animals. After that they can get back to school. It can only affect them in a way that it causes a lot of displacement if it sustains for a longer time. Fortunately with the government enhancement of schools the schools are thus well scattered in a distribution square. There are about 200 schools in Karamoja and that of the population and the whole range. I think the coverage

are away from other factors that could pull them away from school. Fortunately the government program supports boarding schools in this region. There is another area we look towards improving (though on the government side it's still on white paper we have not translated it very well to really practically be okay. We are going to take more affirmative actions in building more boarding schools. The parents, the children and the local government are really



Elders from the Karamojong discuss peace outside their kraal - Moroto, Uganda.

is good enough and they can all walk a distance of about 5KM.

Insecurity in terms of being a setback to class attendance is minimal. There may be other things that are underlined. Some of them are poor and may go down due to health. The bigger part which hinders the children is the cultural part which we won't go over that within very few years because of the pull between girls for marriage and the boys tending their animals.

Basically child rearing in the Karamoja is left to the children. When we go to some of the schools and we show you certain pictures, the young children are the ones doing the rearing and even when we will be talking of opening such centers we will see that we have to take care of them. A small child carrying another child is known. It's normal that's the order. That's really takes them more out of the schools than a lot of other things.

The other side in terms of affordability, the schools that have better retention and enrollment and class attendance are the boarding schools since the children

in support of it but the offsets are a lot to do with insecurity, cultural issues that will keep the children out in this area.

Well there are probably two aspects here; there is having enough food for the schools and having enough food when the relief is necessary. For the school certainly we have not been able to reach the target set aside for the project that means it's insufficient and we should be looking at increasing that. This year we are targeting 70,000 so this means we plan the resources that are necessary and put them in place but we've not really been able to reach there.

The other side of it which is the relief component. There may be what I can call donor fatigue. The fact that they have been for a long time and it's a recurrent expenditure, nobody wants to find this kind of thing.

In Uganda we still have some good will but because of the insecurity in the area a lot of our programs has been huddled up as one which is relief and recovery operation. So if there is any relief requirements it's all part of us. That's a constituency plan. If we would be

standing alone we would be getting faster to the donor fatigue and at the moment we have a three-year planner. We need to come up with the stakeholders in the region looking at different scenarios that come along and its anticipated that next year there might be need for relief and also in the year 2007.

But when those come depending on the magnitude if its still small scale we can absorb them in those general relief and recovery operations from northern Uganda but beyond that we will

ask for an emergency so the 207 we are expecting a much bigger one and we are likely going to put up a request for an emergency intervention at that time.

If we do our good groundwork at these point we had these resources and these was the situation and we ask for these much food and other assistance in partnership and the indicators we get right. Take what's been the level, what is the output and what are the outcome and the impact of these interventions if by getting these we've used them efficiently and have been able to put the situation to rest then YES we are able to be better in terms of advocacy. We have a lot of things to do in terms of our data collection.

We have nutritional surveys that we do. We have one team that is coming in already in the three regions and the rest of the country as well. they do nutritional assessment to know what is the impact of the interventions so far so that when you are asking for food you know what is the level of food malnutrition and at far time we will be talking of technical terms its should be based on truth.

On the side of school we think karamoja is one of the main parts of the national school feeding programme which will be targeted in 2000 2.5M children with increment of 5000 every year. Its going to be quite a big thing so the government way in to support this particular where indication of food will make a positive difference I think we can still get those resources and it's a big investment the government is going to put in to 3000 dollars and that's not going to worry us in the short run.

Other areas that we put educational emphasis on is



The fences around the Kibuli have to be real strong. However, sometimes the raiders still go through them.

those who have been left out of the formal education we can make it informal in terms of adult literacy and the under school age. We had some programs to do them but when save the children came in we want to merge it in and make it more holistic and wide coverage. I don't know you probably have discussed a lot of these with you and in the good year 20% of the population in karamoja are food insecure. Most of them are the children because we have said 20% are the children and these are the ones who are food insecure and there are those that when a school we are able to capture a proportion and that gives us about 10% of that. The others we are able to reach them through the health unit. When they are malnourished they get supplementary feeding even to the mothers so that the meal may help them produce more healthy babies. So the mother is also supported with the health unit. It is part of the holistic program. So we want to strengthen that so that in the future relief resources can be converted to training them to be able their capacities to cope as coping mechanism. All these are in the framework of insecurity. The insecurity erodes their capacities to cope that's why that's why I talked of the nine ethnic groups that are always conflicting with each other and also with the neighboring areas particularly southern Sudan side and also the nature of the conflict is becoming more complex the number of persons involved is larger don't be surprised to hear thousand of groups moving in one direction planning to go for raids. They are also getting complex in terms of the ammunition they are using it used to be spear but now its more complex. ■

The Fight to Write

By Christine Sinclair

Informal education does not involve an exemption from homework or deadlines, or imply an inferior quality of education. It is, in fact, a lifeline for many individuals from marginalised societies who are unable to work during regular hours or attend government schools. Informal education enables children all over Kenya to exercise their right to express themselves in the language of their choice; it is the tool that enables them to pick up a book and understand its purpose, and the driving force that gives them the power to change their lives forever.

Logologo is a small rural village with few amenities situated in the Northern part of Kenya. The single beam of light that shines through the village at night comes from the school for the blind that serves the needs of both blind children and orphans from around the district. Its single water source is a well on the outskirts of town. It has one government run primary school and few concrete buildings. To make a phone call, one must cross to the other side of the village, walk for ten minutes to a spot on the top of a hill, and have the good fortune of receiving service from the one accessible network.

Teresia Oryuba is a twelve year old student at an after hours school in Logologo. She attends classes held every evening, which are taught by two volunteer teachers in a tin building erected by a local women's group. The lessons take place in near darkness, since the gas lantern supplied by the women's group provides barely enough light for the students to read the chalkboard, let alone their books. Teresia has been attending the school for approximately a year now. She decided to go of her own accord and was encouraged by her parents.

Teresia is the youngest of her five siblings and the third to attend school. She does domestic work in the home of a local woman in exchange for room and board; her days are therefore filled with chores such as fetching water and firewood, cooking, washing and taking care of

babies, leaving her no time during the day to go to school. Most of her friends in school are girls in similar situations. Others are unable to attend school during the day because they herd livestock. In fact, in this area, it is not uncommon



Christine Sinclair donating a lamp to Teresia Oryuba for their school programme. Teresia is a student at Tchekuti School.

for a child to begin helping with herding as young as four. As is evident from its lack of infrastructure, Logologo is far from an affluent part of Kenya, and many families in the area struggle on a daily basis to survive. In many cases, families, stretched to the limit, are forced to withhold their children from school, not only because of the cost, but also because help is needed around the home. This occurs with startling regularity, despite the fact that primary education is officially free and compulsory in Kenya. In fact, even those responsible for enforcing school attendance in rural areas such as Logologo do not always send all of their own children to school, and thus set a poor example for other citizens to follow.

The Logologo "out of school program" started a year ago. It takes place in a one-room school from approximately 7pm to 9pm and is open and free to anyone willing to attend. Presently, about fifty students are enrolled. However, during times of acute drought, many of these students are unable to attend classes since their pastoral lifestyle forces them to move in search of greener pastures for their livestock. Malaria outbreaks, too, lead to lower attendance rates. As a result of these contingencies, the school's curriculum is flexible and integrates different educational levels into the same classes so the needs of



The lamp being received by the other Rendilekelt students in Logologo, Marsabit.

the absentees can be addressed. This adapted education system allows an unprecedented number of girls to attend school, since it does not interfere too greatly with their daily chores. It therefore provides them with a precious opportunity to pursue studies and develop their limitless potential. Indeed, it has been a key factor in minimizing the gender gap common in rural primary education. The school's curriculum also focuses on cultural issues to help communities strengthen and preserve their culture in a rapidly changing world. For example, the students are taught the letters of the alphabet using Rendile words and are encouraged to participate in discussions regarding issues facing their culture and traditions.

Teresia likes school, and speaks of her dream of one day becoming a teacher. The teachers at her school describe their students as bright and enthusiastic, as well as remarkably driven and tough. Children like Teresia work hard every day, and have done so their entire lives. Despite having to walk long distances in the dark after exhausting days of labour, their powerful thirst for knowledge carries them time and again to their poorly lit classroom to learn Kiswahili, Maafi and English for a few hours. Teresia would like to continue onto formal schooling, but her parents are very poor and may not be able to afford it due to the cost of losing her labour and the possibility of being

unable to secure a dowry for their educated daughter. Several of her female classmates are married, but Teresia does not know when her time to be married off will come. That decision will be made at her parents' discretion, and they do not feel they have to inform her in advance.

The school's facilities are far from adequate; it has no desks and too few chairs. Books are provided, but the students or their parents must buy pens. The students are not fed at this particular night school and its educational tools come from donations, either from the government school or from outside sources. The teachers often find themselves in particularly difficult circumstances. The Logologo out of school program is taught by two individuals who receive no salaries for their work, but they combine with further unpaid voluntary positions such as teaching adult education in the afternoon, or nursery school in the mornings. In fact, although the government provides training and curriculum for nursery school teachers, teachers have to pay for this training and then receive no salary from the government.

It is clear that education in Logologo still faces some problems; much remains to be done before every child is receiving the education to which they are entitled. Some power could help the school immensely and with further funding, better educational materials could be provided. With a simple improvement in lighting, the children would not be forced to strain their eyes to read and write, and would thus better absorb information, enhancing their educational experience. Furthermore, by using class time more efficiently, teachers would be able to integrate into the curriculum topics of study that are particularly relevant to the pastoralist lifestyle of their students, such as lessons and discussions about animal husbandry, basic health and sanitation, and issues such as land rights, political possibilities, human rights and gender issues. The teacher envisions a school that could split the large class up into forms to cater more fully to their students' various levels of understanding. A monetary stipend for these teachers would also go a long way, for it would ensure that an inability to generate sufficient income does not undermine their health and livelihood, forcing them to stop their valuable work.

Despite all these obstacles, the classroom in Logologo is alive with enthusiasm and energy emanating from both the students and the teachers; everyone who is there wants to be there, wants to learn and wants to teach. As they sit, sing and interact in the dark, everyone in that room is taking their future and the future of their community into their hands and making it their own. By providing these children with the opportunity to pursue an education, the students and teachers of Logologo are saying no to the marginalisation they are subject to in the backwaters of Kenya, a marginalisation created and then ignored by the government. Teresia's fight for literacy and emancipation is not over, but it has begun. ■

Mama Can't Buy You a Mockingbird:

The Threat HIV/AIDS Poses to the Mother-child Relationship

HIV/AIDS is more than a medical virus and disease. HIV/AIDS has a great deal of other effects besides the demise of the physical body. And of the utmost importance, is the effect it has on the one relationship we all share, that of mother and child. No matter the duration or quality of the relationship, every person has a mother and that relationship shapes him or her for the rest of their life. In the world, more than 13 million children have lost one or more parent to AIDS. As if Africa did not have enough devastating effects from AIDS, the mother and child relationship is practically targeted by the disease.

To begin with, transmission between mother and child is still very common in Africa with the absence or abundance of the necessary antiretrovirals that would prevent transmission. Transmission occurs about a third of the time during pregnancy, a third during child-birth and a third through breast feeding. The final one is most disturbing as "surely one of the most poignant tragedies of the HIV pandemic is this: whereas breastfeeding prevents an estimated six million infant deaths each year throughout the world, it also results in 200,000-300,000 infant HIV infections" (AIDS Africa, pg.16). Important bonding time between mother and child is cut down if breastfeeding does not take place and essential nutrition is lacking. Alternate options to feeding infants are often not feasible as poverty and lack of availability of other possible options prevent people from applying these techniques. Infants in this situation, therefore, are put at an incredible

disadvantage, not only do they have at least one parent who is ill and will likely not be fully functional as a parent, but are also exposed to the disease themselves with fifty percent of those infected dying before their first birthday and most of them dying before their fifth. The pandemic is thus doubly kicking the poor while they are down, by removing the pool of women who can have babies and then shrinking the surviving pool of infants.

It is also important to remember that AIDS does not just float into families with the wind. Mothers are certainly not to be solely held responsible for 'giving' their child AIDS, for the mother herself was 'given' AIDS, often by the father. The parents therefore need to take joint responsibility; if one or the other or both have HIV/AIDS, the future of their child, infected or not, is precarious.

Relationships made within the home are fundamental for the development of a child. With a household ravaged by a disease, those relationships may not be able to provide the support required or set the proper examples for a young and impressionable child. For example, if parents try to hide the harshness of their illness to a child, perhaps out of fear of stigma, an aura of secrecy can be created which may breed feelings of being uncomfortable, lack of trust and suspicion, all of which are not ideal conditions for growing up. If the parent or child is in and out of hospitals or has to spend extended time not active in society due to sickness, important care-taking and interacting time is cut down. Resources are also relocated to health

and may be taken away from other important aspects of a child's life. The child may not receive the attention necessary for normal development and psychological effects are common later in life. Africa is not only thus raising a more emotionally and physically impoverished generation, but a psychologically unstable and unpredictable one.

With HIV/AIDS in the household, a child may find it difficult to make friends, either directly, because of stigma but also indirectly due to absenteeism, bereavement, and distorted social or psychological behavior due to their difficult childhood. This in itself causes further disruption to normal development and the child finds themselves in further need for guidance, love and attention from a parent who may be weakened, sick or absent because of the disease. A vicious cycle is thus created and the child, who remains the one hope for the family to continue, is put under further pressure and their hopes are bleakened.

With the changing health dynamic of the family, so the roles of the various members of the family change. Children or grandparents may become caregivers and be given more responsibility than their little experience or ageing frame respectively, can handle. This leads to further hardships with lack of adequate nutrition or resources affects an already damaged family. Children and elderly do not even really have a source of income to provide for the family as both are traditionally taken care of by the economically active within the family. However, this aspect of African culture is an important one

and a saving grace for many families. The importance placed on extended family and ones' responsibility to play active and supportive roles to the usually large network of people called family, means that even in poor states, there is an informal safety net for most people. Despite this, with the heightening effects of HIV/AIDS, the families themselves are getting smaller, and less capable of holding together as families and individuals in society.

The situation is worse for women and girls. Nearly ten percent of infection in babies occurs because of sexual abuse. With rumors such as 'sleeping with a virgin cures AIDS', there has been a parallel epidemic of violence against women and young girls in particular, as they are taken against their will to 'cure' AIDS. This blatant fallacy has destroyed the lives of too many girls and women already, and considering the fact that it is biologically easier for women to contract AIDS than men, and that it is they who traditionally have to be the caregivers for the whole family and rear the children, clearly, the female position within the disease is tragic.

This has direct implications for mothers, as their daughters are raped and viewed as dirty or unmarriageable, not to mention their emotional, physical and social pain. Mothers themselves, in being sick or taking care of the sick, do not necessarily pay enough attention to the necessary nutrition that can make incredible differences in survival rates. If the mother is not feeding herself properly because she cannot afford to with rising medical costs, or she is unable to because she is too sick or simply does not have the resources, the people who depend on her, such as babies in-utero or children or elderly, also suffer as their caregiver cannot provide good enough care. More than a third of pre-primary

school aged children are severely malnourished. Their immune systems are also weakened and are more likely to contract AIDS faster from HIV, as well as a host of other diseases the ill-fed are subject to.

Every child is in need of unconditional love, but in the face of HIV/AIDS the pool of people capable of giving such affection for a child wanes. There is already a lack of true information about AIDS and the problem of dealing with the reality of the disease for young children is large. Communication is difficult with very young children. How do you explain what AIDS is to a two year old? There are ways of course, with delicacy, with play and song. There are methods and literature on the subject, but there aren't enough pre-schools, not enough knowledge where it should be. Therefore the voices of children are not listened to, despite the fact that it is they who are the experts in their own lives. A great deal of misunderstanding and mistrust can arise and the relationship between the child and their mother is strained under such circumstances.

There is one unexpected upside. In a patriarchal society, men tend to be more concerned about the health of their children than that of their wives. In this case, women are empowered to protect their sexual freedom if they can use the excuse of the child: if having unprotected sex with your husband means you might give your child HIV, the man might be more receptive to using protective methods.

Bereavement takes time and energy away from being a child. In a community riddled with HIV/AIDS, morbidity would be an everyday reality for growing children. On a large scale, this could have devastating effects on the future outlook of the upcoming generation. Adding to this the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and what that means for

development of social behaviour and by extension conception of self, the child's positive development is threatened. With social difficulties comes a slower development of social skills for the youngster. The fundamental role a mother plays in the upbringing of her children is undermined and the love she provides is thinned as her energy and abilities are. Parenting, an already stressful task, is made more so by the pressures of illness, separation and death and although no loving parent wants to see their child suffer, far too many do. Despite all this, many mothers are still raising families, running households, and providing unconditional love in ways that baffle anyone who cares to notice. If only lessons could be learnt from the infinite energy and compassion mothers show their children; if only that same energy and compassion can go into solving the problem of AIDS in Africa, then perhaps mother's can see their children smile for longer and children can watch their mother return the same smile unhindered and uninhibited by everything that AIDS means in a world where illness is the rule rather than the exception. ■

Resources

Stories We have lived. Stories we have learnt. About Early Childhood Development Programs. Ed. Robert Zimmermann. Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The Netherlands. 2004.

Dunn, Alison. *HIV/AIDS: What about us young children?* Young children and HIV/AIDS sub series. Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The Netherlands. March 2005.

Jackson, Helen. *AIDS Africa: Continent in Crisis.* SAAIDS. Zimbabwe. 2002.

Sherr, Lorraine. *Young Children and HIV/AIDS: Mapping the field.* Young children and HIV/AIDS sub series. Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The Netherlands. January 2005.

Until there is nobody completely

By Christine Sinclair

Far away from the national consciousness of the majority of the peoples of Uganda, strung along the picturesque escarpment on the border between Kenya and Uganda, live a little talked

about community, called the Ik. Lokwang Hillary, a twenty-two-year old member of the community speaks on their behalf.

no schools, no social services, no iron sheets for housing. The entire community survives on subsistence farming. Everything they own, they either make themselves or gather from nature. They are sandwiched between

on agriculture as opposed to livestock, they are also deeply vulnerable to droughts and bad weather; their entire existence relies on the productivity of a harvest.

Remediation is not an option



Christine Sinclair and Hillary in Mbale, Uganda - August 2005.

about community, called the Ik. Lokwang Hillary, a twenty-two-year old member of the community speaks on their behalf.

Hillary is the first one of his community to have finished senior six, and he is now living back at home. He had to return home because his sponsorship for school ended and he was now expected to make his own way. Upon returning, Hillary finds he has nothing to do, but it is certainly not due to laziness. There are no jobs, whatsoever. There is no commerce, no shops, no electricity, no phones,

two warring tribes and are constantly subjected to their land being ravaged by aggravated warriors. The Ik do not even keep livestock as it can easily be stolen by the cattle raiders, and it is for this same reason that they do not keep surplus food or start up businesses. Any excess or tangible wealth could be reason enough to be attacked by the Turkana. In fact even living with the bare minimum as Hillary recalls in 1989 when the Turkana came and burnt all their fields, leaving them with no food for the season. Because they rely so heavily

for these people. To begin with, they are very peaceful people and are often the peacemakers between warring tribes, if at all possible. They attend all peace talks, and listen, without talking. When others have peace, they are at peace. They are also defenseless as during the voluntary disarmament in 2000, the Ik gave up the weapons they had accumulated for protection immediately in the expectation that the government would send soldiers to protect them. The soldiers never came. Today, the community is at the mercy of the whims of passing

warring tribes, and if the Turkana have not succeeded in their raids, on their return journey, they are sure to make a stop at the Ik community to release some of their rage and frustration on the community and pillage what little they do have.

Due to this insecurity, the community often moves around, and this also does not allow for any stable infrastructure. Insecurity brings hunger and hunger stops development. Planning for anything in such a tumultuous atmosphere is practically impossible. If parents cannot feed themselves and their children, they cannot send them to school either. Hillary was an altar-boy and was taken under the care of a priest who sponsored him throughout his education. Out of a community the size of more than 4000 people, Hillary asserts that "since creation, only three boys and one girl ever went through secondary school". Literacy in the community therefore is not very high and this further worsens the plight and marginalization of the communities. As it stands, there is not one community project or NGO working with them. It is doubtful the government even knows they exist.

The Ik live in a land that is fertile and forested and recently the forest has been declared a reserve, although the people are still allowed to enter the forest to collect their herbs and fruits that they survive on. Because they have so much land, they are also very spread out and the one place where there was minimal social services build such as a dispensary and a school, are a full day's walk away from most of the people. If someone gets seriously sick, this 40 km seems like a long way away on foot, their only mode of travel. If they are not as seriously sick, that walk takes away from precious time cultivating and the only remedy available to these people are their herbal traditional remedies. Many of the diseases that affect them are water born and preventable. If by chance the barriers between the Ik and their

forest become more tightly controlled, those last resorts of herbal medicine will be lost.

Even with that knowledge, there are some things traditional medicine has no cure for, such as a bullet wound. Hillary's father could not be saved from this, and he left behind him a wife and five sons to fend for themselves. Hillary's nephew died from a snake bite and his brother from another illness. None of them were able to see a doctor. "Many people die because of guns and diseases and insecurity and lack of health care" says Hillary. This is a community that is no stranger to death and morbidity.

Despite this, they are a very hospitable and friendly people, open to new people and suggestions. Hillary plans on starting up his own organisation to sensitise his people on issues such as environmental awareness, rights and literacy. He would like most of all to get his community to work together to realize their potential. The Ik culture is very unique; their traditional dances and customs are all distinct from the cultures that surround them and their language is spoken only within the Ik people themselves.

The protection, education and emancipation of the Ik people is no easy task. Because of extreme poverty, those few children who do go to school take one term off out of three to raise enough money for the other two terms. When they do go to school



Hillary presenting his group work outcomes in a training workshop by IIN - Mbale, Uganda.

however, they work hard and do well, often ranking in the top of the class. Those who do get an education appreciate it very much, as Hillary declares that "I am very aware of what I've been taught".

Hillary speaks very fondly of his family, his community, his land. He is sad for his mother, left to raise her sons, she has worked so hard he can barely recognize her anymore. "I wish I was born early, I would have rescued her" this tiny hero says, and it is clear he feels the same about his community as a whole. He invites visitors openly, but getting there is apparently a challenge. There are no roads that lead to Ik country and it is risky to travel. Nonetheless, Hillary is not deterred, in his earnest kindness his invitation stands alone as embodying the gentle, marginalised society: "Come visit, we will walk East until there is not anybody completely, then we will be there. ■

Partnership that brought light and Joy to our Pastoralists Girls

By Edna Kapotoyo

Goal no 8 of the Millennium development Goal is "Develop a Global partnership for development." This goal is one of our great example for this success and wonderful partnership, we from Indigenous Information Network have had with ASALFO - Arid and Semi Arid Lands Foundation based in Laikipia Kenya. Both our managers have had long history of working together and the two organizations have heart in helping the needy in our Semi-Arid lands Communities. The areas of focus for ASALFO are Education, Environment Agriculture and Health issues. INN's main areas of focus are similar to ASALFO with an addition of information sharing, networking and human rights. Both Organizations work closely with Pastoralists and hunter gatherers in the country. They have come together on this particular project to ensure the advancement of the girl child from the Pastoralists areas. ASALFO through its other partners has provided for funding for 14 girls from the pastoralist areas to attend University education. This are girls who passed but did not attain grades to allow them being admitted to the regular programme in the national University. The girls listed below who are beneficiaries of this programme have stories to tell. These stories also tell you the diversity of our Pastoralist Communities and what their children encounter as they try to achieve goals like other Kenyans. True partnership has proved that no matter what work and whatever you try to do you can implement the Millennium development goals in a small way that help our country and our communities in general.

Caroline Lekodoom - Nkasotok village - Baringo.

When I was informed on this long wanted wish of the university, I was extremely perplexed and filled with an overwhelming joy, since I never thought I might get such a crucial, golden and God given opportunity in my life thought I was determined to go to the university.



I also never believed it due to the fact that parents were unable to meet the university fee due to their low economic level/status. My father is a polygamist with four wives with over 31 children, and 35 grandchildren, despite being a Maasai, we depend only on fishing which is in small scale the livestock we have can assist such a large family. I went through thick and thin while in secondary school and almost gave up at one point. I was also a victim of negative cultural practices among our indigenous Peoples. I was to be given away for marriage to

a 51 year My God was with me. I then attained grade B in my KCSE. Thank you God.

Due to such factors, including boredom and lack of funds to meet my needs there in the rural areas, finding such an opportunity became one of the things which made my mind's fresh and I had the feeling of knowing that I am equal with other students or any others persons in the world. It also came to my notice that once dreams will be fulfilled, provided you become determined in your life.

The wonderful miracle that God did unto me is providing me with full sponsorship. This is an opportunity which few people may get and for me, I'm thankful to all concerns of those programs in every good you did unto us God is going to reward you. And for us who are being helped, we need to show our hard work and determination in the faculties that each an everyone undertake for our success and avoid demoralizing the working group. All in all I am thankful to the ASALFO programme, for being mindful of the welfare of unable people in the society irrespective of tribe, colour etc.

Mary Kubo Ilwas - Kargi, Marsabit.

TOPIC: opportunity is a chance in life introduction

Opportunity is as precious as a diamond, when it comes to the right person at the right time. Having brought up in a family of 9 members, 4 brothers, 3 sisters, a father and a mother, and being a poor African pastoralist child who was about to be engulfed in by harsh and negative cultural practice at the age of only 7 yrs was the most unfortunate and harrowing experience. But thanks God, cause if the attempt was not of one, then, academic life was nowhere to be mentioned.



As it is common to all African societies, education is taken as invention of white men, but not facts to Africans. Especially girl-child education is not known and if one had a chance, not beyond primary level. It was in 1992, when my lucky star saved me from a dragon (useless culture), a plan was donned without my father's knowledge by the community elders, that I will be married off to a man who is 6-times older than me. But luckily on the final day when I heard the rumors I decided to take the perfect alternative that will take me out of this trap, so I went into the house when nobody was around and took the pesticide, mixed with water and drink and immediately, since the chemical was so strong I fell down and fainted and since my name was not yet in the list of deads but living I woke up after 9 hours. Hence I won the victory.

This is where I begin the foundation of my academic life. Thanks to my cousin John segelan who took me to school (skan pry in marsabit district) and nurtured me as his own dear daughter. till STD 4 when he went on transfer. Moved me to a boarding school (st.teresas pry sch) where I was assisted by a parish priest, Fr augostine muddu till STD 8. Once again my God was with me, when I became the first successful student in KCPE. A lady Allyce Kurerpa who was working then with GTZ, Marsabit, a Rendille who had heard my story was contacted by Lucy Mulenkei to get a girl from a poor family and in need. I was the girl. I was to be sponsored by KEPAAWH. These group of Professional ladies is where both my today's stars Professor Mwangombe and Lucy Mulenkei are members. This took me through up to form four in St Teresa's Wamba.

Since my ambition was to dedicate all my life to books, I volunteered myself to read day and night to get the best position in K.C.S.E and get the best university, but as the saying goes God gives what you need but not what you want. I get the average I needed but not the highest I wanted.

God had a purpose for everyone and life goes on. And life is what one makes. Being a volunteer for more than 2 yrs in Indigenous Information Network was a learning experience and community service. Its executive director Lucy Mulenkei is more equal than mother Teresa because of her volunteer service to all pastoralist communities without discrimination.

Reward is mostly from above not earth. All people are equal but some are more equal than others, prof A Mwangombe is equal to both my mother and my role model. Going through secondary to university and onwards is through her effort and caring spirit may the spirit of God rest upon her.

Acknowledgement.

I acknowledged the following –

- A) Prof A-Mwangombe- my role model
- B) Lucy Mulenkei- concrete supporter
- C) SR Chantal- great grandmother at school.
- D) FR Augostine muddu- spiritual and financial.
- E) SR Tranny dad- spiritual guider
- F) John segelan – my dear cousin

Motto: - Strive for the very best, no matter the obstacle.
- Education as the best foundation

Francisca Khoboso Lito - Korr, Marsabit.

It was really a day of great joy in my life, which I will never forget, when I was in high school, I had to depend on bursaries both from mission and the government so as to pay my fees. There a moment I regretted of



going to school because know maybe I may not be a position to go to college due to lack of funds. But I gave myself hope that God is there and that he had a plan for me. Coming from one of the marginalized district in Kenya- Marsabit, my division Korr is the driest and the poorest, as it is completely out of any main road. Coming from the Rendille one of the Pastoralist communities in Kenya I am luck to have escaped the negative cultural practices and continue my education to this level. Though I had attained a C+ in my KCSE, at a point I said that I should work extra hard so that I can get a bigger grade (B1 and above) so as to get loans but I was unfortunately didn't, but I continued praying and God who is always my provider heard my prayers. The very day I heard about me getting a sponsor I was really extra happy that I had a sleepless night just thinking about my dignity after joining the campus I sometimes saw myself already at the campus. Immediately I informed my parents and friends and was also happy and thanked to God for all.

Caroline Kaman Barangoi - Samburu.

It was on that particular day that I was informed that I had to come to Nairobi to fill the applications letter for the university I thought it was a dream and not truth. I have been praying God all the time. I attained a C- in my KCSE in 2002. My dream



was to join a university to enable me get a good job to save my family from poverty. I lost my father many years ago, we are 10 in the family with our mother who has not employed or business. It is by the grace of God that I managed all through my school with the help of missionaries for me to join university because I have been applying but I didn't get result. That day served to be blessed by God. I was very excited almost jumping to heaven but all in all heaven is far from earth.

Any way after all my excitement, I wondered where to get school fees, transport and money for other things but it was then that I got a message from Ms. Lucy Mulenkei, who informed me to look for means that will make me move to Nairobi and from there enforce she will be taking care of everything I was beyond my happiness. I have never been to that place but now am going to see it. God have fulfilled my dreams when I reached Nairobi and apply for the university. I thank God very much and also Ms. Lucy Mulenkei and all partners. I promise to work hard and to put all my effort to be the best in school. May God bless all those who volunteer to help and sponsor those who are not able. Lord hear my prayers.

Ekidor E. Loise - Kanamkema, Turkana.

When I heard that I am going to university I was very happy and excited because when I got K.C.S.E. result it indicates I was not qualifying to join any university (public). I attained a C-



When I got the message that I was going to be offered a scholarship to join university, I was very delighted because I knew I am going to make my dreams come true. And I thank our almighty God for such a blessing. Also I am grateful for the effort and support of IIN has done to me since May up to this time. I appreciate that.

I am also very grateful for the good advices that our facilitators and the rest of the group have taught us because it has really made me an all round person, socially and academically. And its now my opportunity to decide/choose which kind of life I'm going to live in future? (A gloomy or a precious one). Thank you.

Patsy Maitano - Naseria Village, Baringo.

My ambitions always had been to join a university since primary school level/ struggled in primary although my family financial/economical status is poor, I was born in a peasant polygamous family with two mothers and 24 of us children, I became the first to complete secondary in the family despite the hardship considering also that my father is handicapped. I managed to pass and join one of the best high schools in baringo district through the sponsorship of a missionary. I never failed to aspire for university one day one time, I read hard when I finished form four and got a grade of B (minus) I was down hearted and helpless.



When I heard that there's someone who is willing to help me join university I felt very happy and was really overjoyed. I knew that my dreams and vision of joining a university and take a course in the faculty of education will come true and I will work hard till I obtain a PhD and called a professor one day. Thanks a lot to the concern for the pastoralist's girls and communities at large God bless you, IIN. Continue with that spirit of helping the needy.

Thanks a lot.

Tiyo Nabiki - Transmara.

When I was told that I was to join university, I thought it was just a dream because my parents were not able to pay for a degree



course. I just decide to apply for a P1 course.

When I got a message from Ms. Lucy Mulenkei that that I was to be offered a scholarship to me to go to the university, I was very excited because it was a clear indication that I am going to be a prosperous woman in the society despite all the problems that I have been undergoing and irrespective of the way our community view women.

I thanked God for such an opportunity and I hope that in future, I will also help those who are needy. Thanks a lot Ms. Lucy Mulenkei and the rest who suggested this. May the Lord bless you so much. I got a C+ in my KCSE even though i expected a higher grade.

Maria Apeyan - Ngare Mara, Isiolo.

The first day when I heard that I am going to join the university I really felt very happy. I completed secondary education in St. Teresa's Girls High School, Wamba in 2004 and attained C+.



If I may recall my life there in fact I had a lot of difficulties. And thanks be to God Madam Lucy Mulenkei intervened because if not for her, this could have been shattered my dreams of becoming somebody in future.

I have come a long way. My parents are old and poor we lived first in Marsabit as squatters and there I went through primary schooling with great difficulties as I would not get any sponsors from any where apart from the Catholic missionaries. After my KCPE I was admitted in St Teresa's Wamba but could not get any school fees at all. The priest could only give me 2,000Kshs. The headmistress could not admit me. I was desperate I cried for days and despite my begging her it was not possible. Then God had his miracles. Lucy came visiting other girls whom she coordinated their sponsorship and Sister since it is a missionary school, told her my story. She then begged sister to accept me and immediately paid for me. As I got the stories she paid for me from her pocket for one full year before she got a sponsor for me. After that life became better and was even able to save my pocket money to help my old parents. We then moved to Ngare Mara in Isiolo she was still monitoring me to ensure all was okay. Indeed God brought her to me again and here I am going to University.

I felt very happy and mixed up. Because this never crossed my mind that one day I will join campus.

My experience now has come to a reality that God has opened the door for me to be a woman of substance in future and also to help others who are from poor families despite of their ethnic culture. Thanks.

Francesca Senewa Maitai - Olorkurto, Narok.

My name is Francesca Maitai, I am a Maasai by tribe, and I come from Narok district. I'm from a single parent family (mother), my father died when I was in standard five. I have six (6) brothers and three (sisters).



My mother is just a peasant farmer. Our first born (girl) is a primary school teacher, the fourth and the fifth born were not educated, sixth and seventh reached form four but did not continue with higher education. One is married and the other one is just at home. The second last is now in standard four.

For the three of us who have reached form four is through the help of our sister who is a teacher. She had been struggling to make sure that we got secondary education, although most of the times we were out of school due to lack of school fees.

When I was in secondary school I almost lost hope when my two sisters finished and just stayed at home due to lack of money for further education. My sister who is a teacher advised me to work hard to achieve a grade that can take me to university, but I was asking her where I was going to get the funds to further my education. She used to tell me the God would provide. Because I liked working hard so as even to make her feel proud of her work I continued working hard.

When I finished form four and achieved a C+ plus I started filling forms to some courses but it was unfortunate that I was not able to join any of them though not expensive but even the little amount I was to pay so as to join them was not available. So I decided to stay at home and help my mother in her farm, but I always hoped for a better future life.

One day, it was on a Wednesday 10th may 2005 when we just finished our days work and so we were taking our supper was sent to my sister because she lives in a small center near the road. As she got the message she was to come by foot at night up to home, which is 12KM from where she lives.

When She arrived at first we were so shocked to see her at night and it has never happened before. She was herself very happy that she even didn't greet us but she just started by telling me 'tomorrow morning you are going to Narok town to fill forms for university' surely I didn't believe, the plate I was holding, I even didn't know how I dropped it, because I jumped and screamed and shouted that even other members of the family came running thinking that something wrong has happened.

Sincerely I was extremely happy that I didn't have appetite to continue eating and I kept on asking my sister many endless questions e.g. who told you? Who said? Who was sent? That day we even stayed up to 2.00 am

discussing the message.

When we were to go to sleep I was the one who prayed, and sincerely, I thanked God that He is such a great God that helps people to be concerned and mindful about others.

As the others slept, I remember I didn't sleep the whole night thinking how my life will be.

So I am so grateful that I'm going to continue with education so as to achieve my goals and be a role model to the people in my area because I'll be the first person not even the first girl, it is the first person to go to the university in our area.

Thanks in advance.

Charity Rynah Lemingani - Mararal, Samburu.

My Story is long I have come along way I am the last born in a family of 9 children. I was one of the luckiest girls to have escaped the negative cultural practices due to my Sisters help and being near a place with some development.



I come from a poor family and therefore was assisted in my primary school education by the Christian Children Fund (CCF). It was after my KCPE that Indigenous Information Network which works closely in partnership with CCF got me sponsorship for secondary school after being admitted in St Teresa's girls in Wamba. I was very grateful and did the best I could and attained a B-.

When I was informed by the manager of Christian children fund (CCF) that I was offered a scholarship to join the university, I couldn't believe his words, I looked straight into his eyes, making sure that the it is a reality and not a dream. I asked him twice if it was really me or someone else. He was so kind and assured me that I was the one. I just uttered three words "God is great". I couldn't resist the joy I had inside my heart. I shade tears, because I am from a poor family and this is a clear indication that my future was brink no matter. Secondly my community in general believed that women should be below men always. So for them educating women is a no go zone. Despite all this I have never given up in life. I always put God first in everything asking him to give me a chance to continue with my education despite all the obstacles I undergo. Finally God answered my prayer through Ms. Lucy Mulekeni I can't tell how my life could have been without her. She has been assisting me since I was in secondary school both in thick and thin. I pray hard that God will assist me to pursue my career and be able to assist those who are in need like me and be recognized in my community as a good example. May God bless all those who offered their assistance. Long life.

Janet Mashara - Transmara.

I come from a peasant family of 9 children. I managed to go through my education with help from relatives. I lost my mother while young. None of my family members is employed so we depend on handouts and little from the small shamba we have.



I couldn't believe because I had never even thought of stepping into a university, as my result of B- couldn't allow it. I can recall my headmistress informing me about my fate. At first I thought I was dreaming and was about to conclude that it was one of the many ideas people had come with in relation to my results. My final decision was to go for Kenya Science since my family couldn't afford funds for my degree course.

I had to hold back my excitement and pray to God that all goes through before the whole story explodes through our surrounding. The confirmation became solid especially when applications were through and up to this day very day remains memorable. "Mola hamtupi mcha wake", I pray to God that he keeps lifting those who are willing to assist others. May God bless all those who made this deal succeed abundantly. Thank you.

Ilaria Potipa Loonkolila - Wamba, Samburu.

When I completed my secondary education, it was like my education life had come to an end, as I was so desperate as to where I would get the money to continue my education keeping in mind that no one in our family is



financially stable. As an orphan, I had lost hope. With a C+ I thought it was the end. But I never failed to remember that God created me with a purpose. He worked his miracles through Ms. Lucy Molenkei; I was informed about it one Sunday morning that she has offered me scholarship to university. I could not believe a bit of it the first words I uttered were 'thanks God you are so great'. I knew without doubt the lives of my siblings were going to be better since I was the only one to cater for their basic needs in future. I pray to God that I may study hard and be somebody in our society. Since I come from a society filled with male chauvinism this will then better

chance for any girl child in the society that I come to realize that they also have potential to be what they want to be in the society. God bless Ms. Molenkei and her partners as they have enabled me to see that my future is going to be bright. Long live ASOIPO and IDN.

Clementine Lotunale - Kanyankwat Village, West Pokot.

I was born in a Polygamous family of 21 children. I am the only one who is educated to this level as our family depends entirely on 1.5 acre of land. We have no livestock at all since all was raided by rustlers sometimes back. I



was one of those who was helped by world vision and through the Manager there then Rhoda Rotino, she talked to someone she said was her friend and partner at work whom I later came to learn was Lucy Molenkei who then got me sponsorship from KEPawe a women's organization which Lucy Molenkei is a member. That is the way I managed to complete my secondary school in Kapropita Girls and attained a B-. I had of hope to do better and join University and when I got this grade I gave up but prayed hard to God to show me the way and here I am. God brought Rhoda Rotino and Lucy Molenkei Back to me and now I can continue with my studies. God bless all those involved and May He bless you all to get more and help need girls like us.

Bisharo Halake - Marsabit.

It is unbelievable that I am here to day with a lot of positive thinking that I am going to join the University. I was born in Marsabit District, one of the marginalized areas of Kenya. We are eight in the family. I lost my mother when I was young and now have a step mother. We have only half and acre of land which we cannot plant any crops as we live in town. I did my KCSE in Moi Girls in Marsabit and attain a C+. I had given up in live as this grade is not what I expected. When I had that I was getting a sponsor I was very happy and really thank my sponsors with a hope and prayer that I can make it one day to be a Doctor. ■



Batwa People

In this age of supermarkets and cell phones, it is hard to believe that somewhere in the world there are still people who exist solely on the fruits of the earth, and not even in the agricultural sense, but rather, hunter-gatherers. One example of such a people is the Batwa in South Western Uganda. As one would imagine, this is a very unique culture whose knowledge and understanding of the forest, mountains and wildlife is unparalleled in our modern urban society. However, their existence is severely threatened and it seems that the marginalization they experience because of their culture and way of life also runs along unparalleled lines.

The land that the Batwa have inhabited and gained their wisdom from for generations, has since the 1930s, been deemed a 'forest reserve', as when the colonialists arrived, they discovered the land ripe with minerals and extractable capital, thus wanting the land to be preserved for their monetary benefit. For another sixty years the Batwa were still free to enter into the forest, gather the herbs and other fruits of the forest, to be able to barter with other communities in order to survive. In 1991, however, with the creation of the Bwindi National Park, the Batwa were evicted completely from their land, and with no compensation, in land or money, for the forced relocation. The Batwa scattered and must become squatters on the land of other communities, working as cheap labour on other people's land, with no legal status or social framework for security. Discrimination and marginalization defined their existence.

With the forced removal of the people from the land and the land from the people, both have suffered. The traditional knowledge held by these people, although still alive within the adult generation, cannot be accessed by a younger generation who will not be able to carry on the traditions. Coupled with the unpleasantness they experience in schools, if they go to school at all, the education these children experience is characterized by lack of compassion to their culture, without themselves even having full access to their culture, and discrimination in the formal schools preventing them from embracing the classroom environment.

In a statement of their own, the Batwa explain: "Throughout all three Districts, Batwa communities want to secure access to education for their children, whose school attendance is generally much lower than that of other groups. Out of 4000 Batwa in Southwest Uganda, only three girls and two boys now attend secondary school. Due to their deep poverty, apart from Batwa education needs to include improved access to new schools, including Batwa-only schools, and also support for uniforms, school supplies and lunchtime meals. Even where schooling for Batwa is being supported, for example through the government's UPE policy, Batwa children's attendance is extremely low, and where they do attend government schools they often suffer persistent discrimination at the hands of their schoolmates and, sadly, some school staff. Many adult Batwa who experienced this type of discrimination when they were young, or who had no access to schools due to distance or resources, and who are currently illiterate, still want to learn to read

and to write so that they will be able to protect their rights and improve their incomes. Some have already participated in adult literacy programmes with great success, and Batwa from all over the region want these programmes extended especially to reach their communities."

This lack of education causes and is caused by further marginalization. Their employment opportunities are limited and thus they are relegated to working for employers who can dismiss them at their will, pay them less than other workers and treat them however they choose. Their ignorance of government policy and their rights does not allow for them to act against this discrimination or create awareness about their problems. They cannot read about the plight of others and learn from them. Many of them cannot even sign their names to own property, let alone have the capital to purchase any. In many cases, even the children who do go to school are absent for long periods of time due to hunger and absolute poverty. Unless the children get sponsored, there is no possibility for a child to go on to secondary or university level studies as Batwa parents do not have the resources to support them or pay the fees.

However, in 2000, the Batwa formed their first organization, to meet and share information and experiences. This NGO, the United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU), supported by Forest Peoples Project (FPP), operates in the three districts of South West Uganda where the majority of the Batwa live, and advocates for their rights. Their mission is to secure the Batwa's rights and sustainable livelihood and so far they have managed to put Batwa issues on some agendas of government programmes. Through sensitization, some Batwa parents have started sending their children to school and now there are over three hundred Batwa children at primary school. However, daily attendance is often poor due to lack of food during lunch break. Despite this, the usefulness of education is being recognized by most of the Batwa communities, as a recent report remarks: "Education was also ranked high amongst communities as it was seen as the reason for backwardness in the communities, making them vulnerable to trickery. There was also a call for functional adult literacy classes that Batwa felt would enable them to operate more effectively in the wider community and have better interaction with majority communities" (ibid. pg.10). The community therefore acknowledges that education of any sort, would be better than the marginalisation that they experience on a daily basis.

Although their community is fractured and spread out, the organisation has managed to do data collection and the information is free for anyone who visits their center. This is first basic information that has been collected on these people and is fundamental to grasping the size and dynamics of the plight of the Batwa people. With the relative youth of the project, coupled with the relative age of the people and their problems, clearly a great deal still remains to be done. However, this scattered community has managed to organise itself to such an extent as to have an NGO speak for them, work for them, and even if the steps are small, they are going somewhere.

Rising Curtain:

What pre-school teaches adults

In an attempt to start up a community based pre-school programme, a Muslim community in Kenya managed to combat more than just diminished academic success. The program itself, led by MRC in Muslim communities around Kenya, aimed to develop an effective secular pre-school program in the local madrasas. In the Nakasovi community, the management team, including the project director and trainers, were all women and were having difficulty communicating with men in setting up the project, as according to these people, the Qur'an forbade the interaction. Although traditionally women cared for the education of the children, they were not allowed to attend meetings. After heated debate, women were allowed to attend the meetings, but only behind a curtain, and if they wanted to contribute, they needed a man to do it for them. When the director arrived, the debate arose again as people wanted to hear what she had to say. This time, although still behind the curtain, the director was allowed to speak directly to the men. As the project progressed, the management team elected to allow more radically religious members of the community into the meetings so that they could participate and be aware of what the project was undertaking. Slowly but surely, women were allowed to speak directly to the men. Eventually, all agreed that the curtain could be removed, considering that it was the education of their children that was being discussed, and not religious matters. After a workshop held by the MRC, the community decided that women should be allowed to attend all the meetings.



Despite the way we look and the opportunities we get in pre-school/AFK centres, we will be ministers one day

The need for education in this instance, led to an opening up of communication lines between genders. Men and women began hearing what the other had to say, on the common, neutral ground of their children's education. Women now have a say in the future of their children and men have the opportunity to listen to women without feeling threatened. With this successful framework in place, the community would be able to replicate it, or at least learn that it is possible, to bridge any traditional gap in the name of a fundamental, common good: the education and proper development of the young.

Indeed, these small-scale community projects can contribute far more positive input than originally intended. This particular endeavor helped resolve pertinent religious difference and gender imbalances. By investing so much energy and thought into the project and debates about the framework, the community comes to

feel more ownership of the project and are thus more invested in its success. It has been noted that "the communities sometimes realize the value of the process so thoroughly that they subsequently undertake similar mobilization efforts independently to address other problems" (Bernard Van Leer, pg.98). With limited resources and funds, communities are forced to use what they have wisely, and this can lead to more environmentally aware practices, more willingness towards affirmative action and an awareness of the importance of volunteerism. Clearly new solutions to old problems can be found in compromises to new problems. ■

Resource:

Stories We have lived, Stories we have learnt: About Early Childhood Development Programs, Ed. Robert Zimmermann, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands, 2004.

'Voices' seeks to preserve languages

In an effort to preserve thousands of vanishing languages around the world, the global "Voices of the World" project aims to build awareness of the diversity of mankind through a worldwide documentary film and media project.

Linguists calculate that one language is lost every two weeks and most are indigenous peoples' languages. When each one vanishes, a method of expression, a way of looking at the world and the means of carrying forward ceremonies and traditional prayers disappears.

"The peoples of the world speak over 6,500 separate languages. Each language employs a vocabulary and a grammar that is unique to the communities that use them. Each reflects cultures that are equally unique, rich in folklore, history and humanity," said Voices of the World project manager Signe Byrge Sørensen.

"We want to portray the peoples of the world, giving face and voice to each culture and empowering every language community to speak. The goal of Voices of the World is to strengthen our global mutual belonging."

In the current era of globalization and telecommunications, most of the 6,500 languages have come under threat. A surprisingly large number, about 50 percent, will probably not survive this century. Many are already in terminal decline.

Voices of the Worlds, a nonprofit initiative of UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for Languages Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, is based on an original idea by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Janus Billekro-Jensen. Billekro-Jensen has received support from the Danish government, the United Nations and leading linguists from all over the world.

The springboard for the project will be in October 2005, in connection with the United Nation's 60th anniversary. Nordic public service television stations are already committed to this broadcast. The project is presently working on similar arrangements with other European and international TV stations.

Targeted for a global audience, the project will include documentary film segments, including interviews from indigenous peoples describing what it feels like to lose one's mother tongue. The film will identify the stages of language loss from endangerment to the point of vanishing.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, speaking in his native tongue of Fante on the film, shared his concern for cultural and linguistic diversity. "What could be a better

way to pay homage to the United Nations on the occasion of its 60th anniversary than to stress the value of cultural and linguistic diversity of the peoples of the world? After all, by celebrating the diversity of human culture we only strengthen the dialogue among civilizations, an idea rooted in the fundamental United Nations values."

Diversity of languages is found around the world. In Australia, there are 250 languages, while in Mexico there are 240 and in Brazil, 210. However, in Europe there are only 3 percent of the world's languages. China has 21.5 percent of the world's population and 8.6 percent of the world's area, but holds a mere 2.6 percent of the world's languages.

Some of the poorest nations in the world have the most diverse languages. Seventy percent of the world's languages are gathered in only 20 nations, primarily in two zones. One spans from the West African coast through the Congo to East Africa. The other runs from southern India and the southeastern Asian peninsula through the Indonesian islands to New Guinea and the Pacific.

Voices of the World is reaching out to indigenous filmmakers and media around the world for footage. The topics for the documentary include the language generation gap and expressions from the last speakers of a language.

The issue of language suppression because of economic, social, political and cultural reasons is being examined and how people cope when their language is not given space in the public sphere.

Further, the film project examines language and technology, how speakers of endangered languages are affected by globalization and the new information technology. The project is seeking success stories as well, including language revitalization, revealing steps taken to halt language loss in a community.

After the film is finished, all of the footage collected and shot for the Voices of the World project will be handed over to the Vigdis Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages at the University of Iceland. The aim of Voices of the World and the university is to create a database of all the world's languages, accessible to everybody via the Internet. ■

For more information, e-mail Signe Byrge Sørensen at byrge@voiceworld.dk.

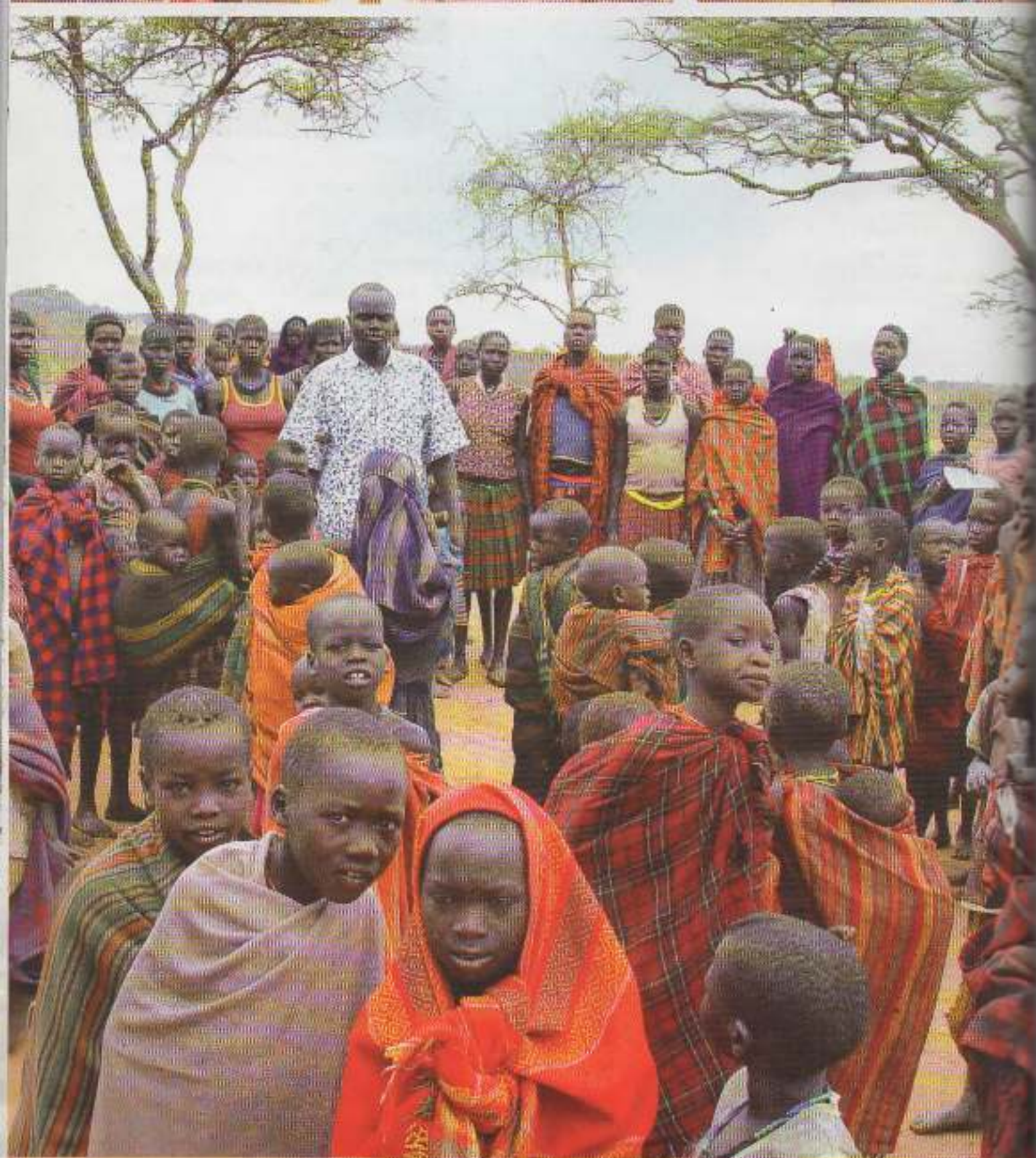
© Indian Country Today by Brenda Norrell, Indian Country Today.

ASALFO/IIN University Education Scholarship



*Use your gifts to your best ability,
Talent that is wasted has no value,
Talent that's used will bring unexpected rewards.*





Achieve universal primary education.
Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education.