

Norwegian Refugee Council Review & Appraisal

“Strengthening Child Protection Mechanisms through Emergency Education Support to Northern Districts of Kitgum and Pader”

“Education for Protection and Recovery”

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The report is presented in a series, compiled by Norad to disseminate and share analyses of development cooperation. The views and interpretations are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

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NORAD

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

REVIEW & APPRAISAL

**1) “Strengthening Child Protection Mechanisms through Emergency
Education Support to Northern Districts of Kitgum and Pader”**

2) “Education for Protection and Recovery”

by

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Oslo, 9 July 2008

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Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| AVSI | Association of Volunteers in International Service |
| BRAC | Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee |
| CAP | Consolidate Appeal Programme |
| CHA | Cessation of Hostilities Agreement |
| DDMC | District Disaster Management Committee |
| DEO | District Education Officer |
| DIS | District Inspectorate |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| ESIP | Education Sector Plan |
| ESSP | Education Sector Strategic Plan |
| EVI | Extremely vulnerable individual |
| GoU | Government of Uganda |
| IASC | Inter-Agency standing Committee |
| ICLA | Information, counseling and legal assistance |
| IDP | Internally displaced person |
| INEE | International Network for Emergency Education |
| IRC | International Rescue Commission |
| KCPTTC | Kitgum Core Primary Teacher Training College |
| LRA | Lords' Resistance Army |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MFA | Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MOES | Ministry of Education and Sports |
| MSEE | Minimum Standard Emergency Education |
| NGO | Non Government Organisations |

| | |
|--------|---|
| NOK | Norwegian Kroner |
| Norad | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation |
| NRC | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| NURP | Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme |
| NUSAF | Northern Uganda Social Action fund |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| PEAP | Poverty eradication Action Plan |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PRDP | Peace, Recovery Development Programme |
| PTA | Parent& Teacher Association |
| SMC | School Management Committee |
| SNE | Special Needs Education |
| ToT | Training of Teachers |
| U shs | Ugandan shilling |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children Fund |
| UPE | Universal Primary Education |

Executive Summary

1. The Norwegian Embassy in Kampala (representing The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has provided support to Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) project “Strengthening Child Protection Mechanisms through Emergency Education Support to the Northern Districts of Kitgum and Pader” since 2004. The project has included teacher training, construction of schools, emergency initiatives and school farming. The project has received NOK 36,000,000 during the period 2004 to 2007.
2. The conflict in Northern Uganda has raged for more than 22 years. In the two districts, Kitgum and Pader more than 90% of the population has been displaced and spent years in overcrowded camps under extremely poor conditions. The situation has been relatively peaceful since the peace talks with LRA started in 2006. However, since the peace process collapsed in May 2008, the situation remains very fragile. The majority of the displaced people are still in camps.
3. This report contains both a review of NRC’s education project from 2004-2007 and an appraisal of a new initiative which will focus on education recovery primarily in Pader. The conceptual framework for the review is based on INEE Minimum Standards for Education in emergencies and the OECD/DACs Policy Commitment and Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations.
4. The international response to education in the Consolidated Appeals (CAPS) for Uganda has been very minimal. The school system is suffering a lot also because national education programmes to promote education such as ESIP or ESSP, or programmes for peace and recovery have not brought additional financial resources to the sector. The education system in Northern Uganda has therefore lagged far behind the national standards set by the GoU for its Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy.
5. NRC began working in Northern Uganda in 1997 and added education to its humanitarian interventions in 1999 (Gulu Primary Education Project). The project under review includes teacher training, school and classroom construction, school farming and emergency responses to very immediate needs. The project has been implemented primarily in Kitgum District. Target groups have been children, teachers and local education authorities. The teacher training component has included training in child protection and five specific modules on gender-sensitivity, human rights, child-centred learning environment, methods to teach reading and writing in local language and child centred learning environments.
6. NRC has had some capacity gaps. There has been a huge turn-over of country directors (five in 2007). This has constrained opportunities to create synergies between the various projects. NRC’s education team in contrast has had a low staff turn over. Only the PM has been internationally recruited staff, and all three of them (since 2004) have stayed on for at least two years. All education staff have a professional teaching background. A monitoring and evaluation officer has recently been recruited to the team. This is positive, but late in the project’s history. In general the review team finds that too little emphasis has been made in following up on outcomes and impact. The team recommends that a comprehensive M&E system be developed with both quantitative and qualitative indicators to capture outputs, outcomes and impact for each activity. The system should also indicate how regular M&E will be conducted, by whom and methods for collecting data and information.
7. The huge gender gap in enrolment and retention has been addressed by constructing latrines, training of teachers and emphasising the importance of girls’ education in the mobilising of the communities. So far however, there is no evidence to suggest that these strategies are producing the expected results. The consistent gap in enrolment and retention of girls in schools is one area which requires considerable follow up. NRC should develop a clear strategy to sensitize parents and School Management Committee of the importance of girls’ education. It is particularly important that all sections within NRC convey the same

messages. NRC would need to step up its monitoring and evaluation procedures to be able to capture why girls are not enrolled and retained in school.

8. One project, which was not originally planned for, came about as a result of savings due to favourable currency rates. The savings was used for constructing of private boarding school for children with disabilities. These children are the most marginalised in the community, both in terms of being excluded from educational opportunities and social stigma. However, the private initiative to establish a school for this group of children has met considerable problems in becoming financially sustainable. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that other donors are moving out of the area and that the project does not fall under MOE's responsibility.

9. Financial accountability mechanisms of the project have been further streamlined after two cases of misappropriation of funds were investigated. Technical staff used to have access to petty cash to buy necessities and pay for per diem during the training of the teachers. This created some loopholes in the systems which lead to fraudulent accounting. Contracts for the two staffs were terminated immediately followed by a financial restructuring in which all purchases have been reallocated to the procurement department.

10. NRC has involved the district education authorities in identification of schools to be constructed, teachers to be trained and joint inspection missions. The DEOs have also been trained in the INEE Minimum Standards for Emergency Education and as facilitators in the teacher training programme. It should, however, be noted that the DEOs are understaffed and under resourced, and are therefore not well positioned to take on the coordinating role which is required for a recovery/long-term development of the education sector. NRC on the other hand is working according to short term plans and objectives as is typical for an organization which is mandated primarily for humanitarian interventions. The team therefore recommends that NRC should make deliberate efforts to build the capacity of local authorities to ensure sustainability of activities.

11. Under school construction efficiency in project implementation has to a large extent been ensured through a transparent tendering process and mechanisms to ensure quality during the construction process. Availability of contractors, materials and accessibility during the rainy season and in addition the "emergency mode of operation" which follows a strict one-year funding schedule may sometimes hinder the pursuit of quality in all aspects of the construction process. In order to ensure sustainability in maintenance of the buildings, there is a need to reinforce the involvement of the School Management Committees and ensuring that their contribution (10%) goes hand in hand with the construction process.

12. Overall project activities exceeded their targets indicating good value for money. The actual output of 13% less teachers that have been trained compared to the target is acceptable, in particular because the training had to be conducted during the holidays, that some teachers went to other training institutions to upgrade their qualifications, and transfer of teachers.

13. The project has contributed effectively to realisation of the project goals and purpose in two major aspects. On the supply side the project has contributed to fulfilment of the right to education through construction /rehabilitation of classrooms and provision of school furniture. On the demand side the teacher training has enhanced the capacity of teachers to use appropriate teaching methods.

14. There is a need for NRC to take a strong role in advocacy for education and use its experience over ten years to spearhead a process for mobilising more funds to the education sector in the north. This is particularly important in the current context where the Education Cluster will phase out in 2009.

15. Care and maintenance of school structures remains a challenge but NRC tries to incorporate this as a component when handing over schools. A pool of local facilitators may potentially be used for further training of the teachers. However, the Kitgum Core Primary Teacher Training College (KCPTTC) which has

been used as a venue for the training, does not have any financial resources to continue this training without further external support.

16. Project implementation has largely adhered to OECD/DAC's principles for engagement in fragile states. The review team wants to highlight that NRC monitors the conflict situation and related development very closely and adjusts its strategies accordingly. All staffs are trained in the do no harm principles. The most obvious conflict inducing area was found to be in school construction where the local population that had not received any new classrooms schools sometimes attacked those schools which had been favoured. NRC has taken extreme care to avoid such potentially explosive situations by ensuring strict adherence to the local government's school construction plans, and has also started to focus more on the under-served areas. NRC has developed a good working relationship with the district authorities and also other partners within the education sector. On the other hand, NRC has a short term planning horizon and recruits staffs on short-term contracts which may hamper sustainable impact.

17. The project proposal for the project "Education for Protection and Recovery" has an estimated cost of NOK 11.8 Mill for 2008. The project includes most of the components that were first piloted in Gulu and then later in Kitgum. Thus the main thrust of the project relates to teacher training, construction, school farming and emergency education. NRC has good experience with these components and the government partners and other actors perceive NRC as an efficient and effective implementer in these areas. The review team therefore recommends that the Norwegian Embassy continues to support NRC in these areas.

18. Measures that have been taken to bridge this gap include mainstreaming gender and child protection as cross-cutting issues in the project components, identification of a gender and protection focal point person who will be responsible for identification and following up arising gender concerns. However measures should be taken to ensure that staff do not relegate gender issues to the gender focal point person but take the initiative and address gender issues as and when they arise in consultation with the gender focal point person.

19. For the year 2008, NRC also plans to introduce special needs education and accelerated learning for the youth. There is no doubt that support to these educational sub-sectors areas is greatly needed in Northern Uganda. The question is, however, whether NRC has a well thought-through plan and implementation capacity to implement such projects. The written proposal does not include specific details on these issues. . The review team learnt from NRC staff that with regards to the accelerated learning project for the youth, the intention is to collaborate closely with BRAC in this context. The proposal did not refer to BRAC at all. At this point in time NRC could not document that efficient strategies for starting up the accelerated learning for the youth had been worked out and how a possible partnership with BRAC would materialise. It is a concern that at the DEO's office in Pader, staffs were not aware of NRC plans to introduce the accelerated learning project for the youth. Furthermore, there were also some misunderstandings among DEO staffs about NRC's plans in relations to the special needs education project. It was quite clear that this project had not been extensively discussed with the government partner. It is furthermore important that NRC ensures that its in-house capacities and competence adequately reflect the emphasis on accelerated learning for the youth and special needs education.

20. The review team would strongly recommend that NRC discusses its future plans with the DEO and that a detailed concept paper containing operational modalities and partnership arrangements should be worked out. This concept paper should be presented to the Norwegian Embassy for a renewed appraisal before a final decision to support the new projects is taken.

1 Introduction

The Norwegian Embassy in Kampala (representing The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has provided support to Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) project “Strengthening Child Protection Mechanisms through Emergency Education Support to the Northern Districts of Kitgum and Pader” since 2004. The project has included teacher training, construction of schools, emergency initiatives and school farming. The project has received NOK 36,000,000 from 2004 to 2007.

The conflict in Northern Uganda has raged for more than 22 years. In the two districts, Kitgum and Pader more than 90% of the population has been displaced and spent years in overcrowded camps where they have lived under extremely poor conditions.

Purpose of the assignment

The purpose is two-fold: 1) an end review of the Kitgum and Pader project as was stipulated in the contract between NRC and the MoFA 2) appraisal of the new project which will focus more on education recovery in Pader. With regards to the latter it is actually an “after start-up appraisal” as commitment with regards to its support has already been given by the Embassy. The project is already in operation on the basis of 25% advance from NRC HQ- based on this commitment.

Methodology and conceptual framework

The team (Janne Lexow and Beatrice Ngonzi) conducted a nine day visit to Kitgum and Pader. The team visited several schools and interviewed school head teachers, teachers, School Management Committees (SMCs), Parents Teachers Association (PTAs), pupils, NRC staff, NGO and UN partners, district education government partners. It should be noted that the team did not have an opportunity to meet the elected members of the local government, in either of the two districts. Despite the team’s many requests, project –related documents were not received in advance. This hampered the desk study of documents which a review team usually conducts prior to visiting the field.

There are two sets of conceptual underpinnings/framework which guided the discussion during the review. The first are INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies Education ¹ which cover:

- Access and learning environment
- Teaching and learning
- Teachers and other education personnel
- Education policy and coordination

Common to all the above are areas of community participation, use of local resources, initial assessments, monitoring and evaluation

The other set of underpinnings relate to issues pertaining to service delivery in fragile states. Uganda is not considered a fragile state per se, but the northern areas can best be described in terms of fragility. With current emphasis placed on recovery and reconstruction, the OECD/DACs Policy Commitment and Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situation² are relevant in this context:

- 1) take context as a starting point

¹ The INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction (2004). The INEE Minimum standards are complementary to the Sphere Project’s Minimum Standards for Disaster Response and Humanitarian Charter

² OECD/DAC www.oecd.org/dac November 2006

- 2) do no harm
- 3) focus on state building as a central objective
- 4) prioritize prevention
- 5) recognising the links between political, security and development objectives
- 6) promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
- 7) align with local priorities
- 8) agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international partners
- 9) act fast, but stay on long enough to establish results
- 10) avoid pockets of exclusion

2. The conflict in brief

Magnitude of displacement

The conflict in Northern Uganda has continued since the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under Joseph Kony's leadership started the rebellion against the government in 1989. It has been considered as an especially brutal war, as children have been particularly targeted. Between 1.7 and 2 million people have been displaced as a result of the conflict. By 1996 the process of uprooting rural populations of Acholiland began and people were placed in so-called "protected villages" under the control of Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF). These camps were characterised by extremely congested and squalid conditions and were also sometimes targeted for attacks by the LRA.

The humanitarian consequences for people who were displaced have been enormous. It was estimated that in 2005, more than 250 000 children were not attending schools in the war affected areas. More than 40,000 children have been abducted for both short and long periods of time by the LRA. Many children have become orphaned. At the peak of the conflict more than 1.8 million people were displaced from their original homes and into more than 200 overcrowded camps. According to the Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda³ 70% of the displaced people had no monetary income and about 95% of the people in northern Uganda live in absolute poverty.

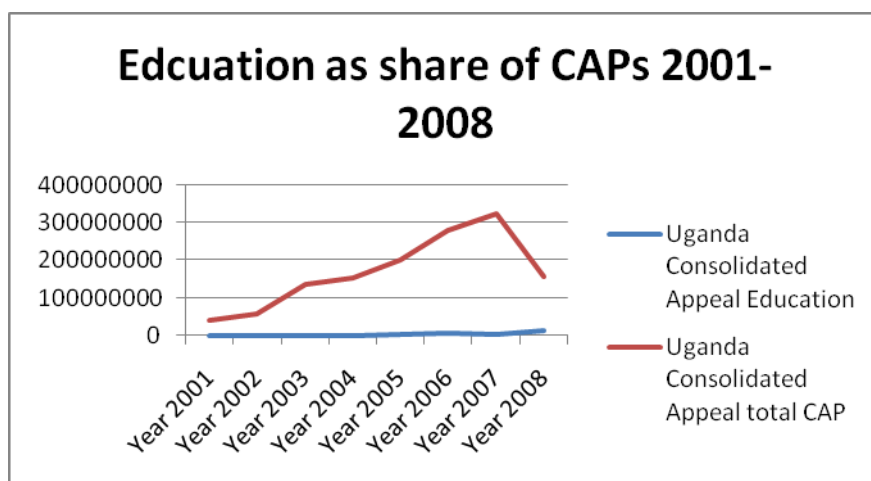
In 2003, Jan Egeland, the then UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said that the "conflict in northern Uganda is the biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today (11. Nov. 2003). Since Egeland's visit, the humanitarian community stepped up its presence and programmes in the north. In Aug. 2006 the Government and LRA signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA). After many long and cumbersome delays and setbacks the process stalled again when on 10 April 2008 Kony failed to sign a final Peace Agreement and never turned up in Juba for the signing. The CHA has not been renewed and has since expired. Since 2006, however, people have been slowly moving out of the IDP camps and back to either transit places or their original homes. In March 2008 there were still 1,118,633 IDPs (in camps plus transit sites), and 741,068 have returned.⁴ These figures do not include internally displaced people in towns.

³ CSOPNU March 2006 report

⁴ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre March 2008

International response

The international response to help children go to school during their displacement has not been very promising.



Source : Relief web Financial tables

Funding to education has been less than 2% of the total funding to CAPs in Uganda for the period 2001-2008 (5 June 08). This shows that education receives remarkable little financial support from by the international community. Education appears to be one of the most under-funded sectors. In 2007 CAP the funding to education was zero.

3. From emergency to “recovery”

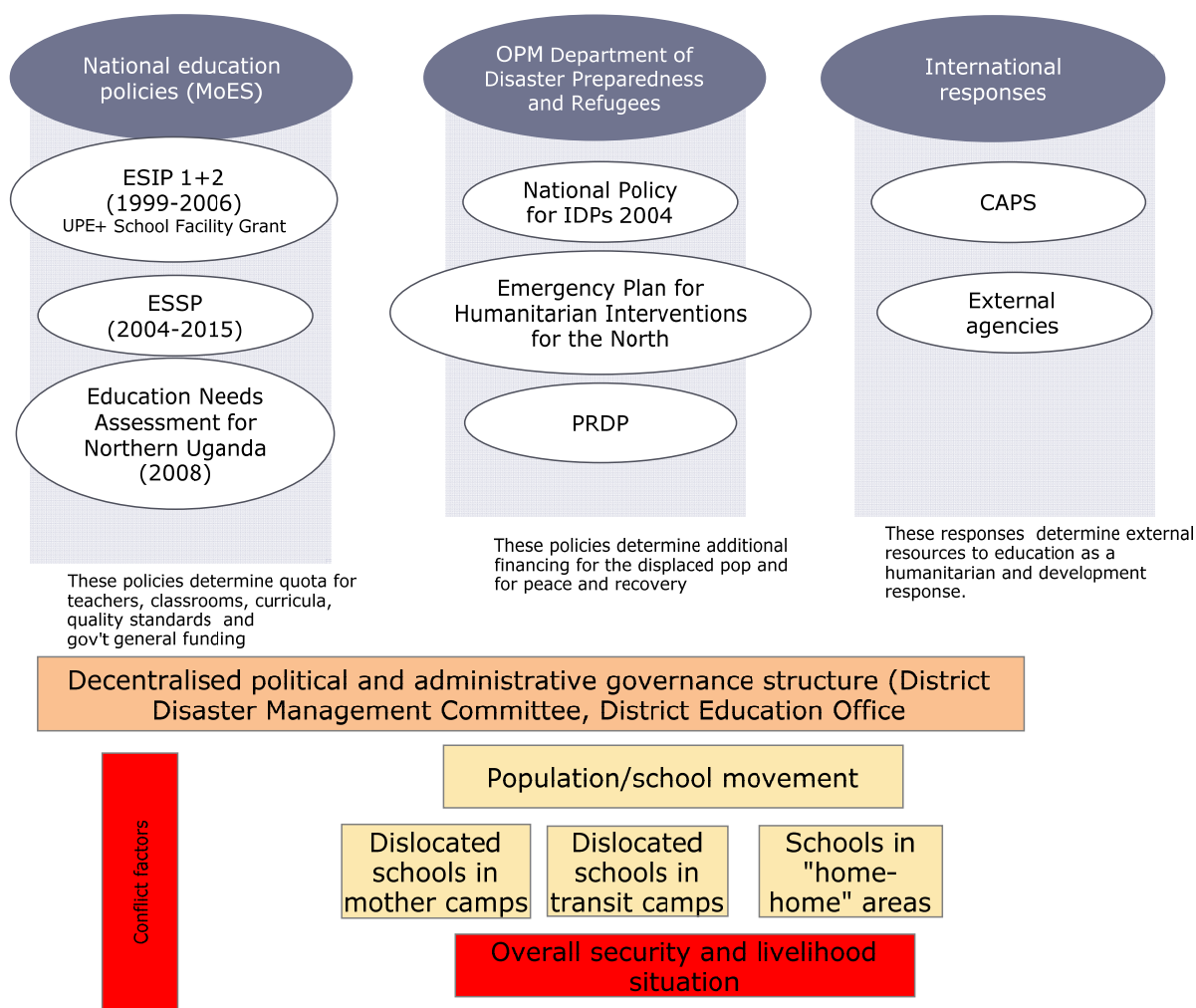
| District | Camp pop. 2005 | Camp.pop. March 2008 | Est. % still in camps | Est. % in transit areas | Est.% in village of origin |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Gulu/Amuru | 453,359 | 260,359 | 57 | 30 | 13 |
| Kitgum | 310,14 | 206,68 | 67 | 25 | 9 |
| Pader | 338,938 | 101,019 | 30 | 56 | 14 |
| Total Acholi | 1,102,438 | 568,058 | 52 | 36 | 12 |

Source: IASC Working Group March 2008

The table above shows that the population movement is still fluid. Many people are likely to remain in the camps, in particular those who were characterised as Extremely Vulnerable Individuals e.g. orphans, elderly, single mothers. The most devastating impact of the conflict has been at the psychological level. LRA's strategy has been one of terror, with child abductions, maiming and mutilating being the preferred methods. There is a stark fear of the LRA and of Kony himself. The government failure to defeat the LRA and the failure of the peace talks in Juba have made many people reluctant to move. The movement back to original homes has also created new protection issues, as in many cases the adults in the family moved back to till the land, leaving young children behind in the camps to attend school. Lack of social infrastructure in the villages is also considered a severe hindrance for full return. There were also different opinions of how voluntary the return process was. The GoU has, in the IDP policy of 2004 guaranteed voluntary returns, but in practice this was not well understood by the local governments.

The impact of conflict on the education system and services has been well documented. In total 376 primary schools were completely destroyed as a result of the conflict, with Kitgum having 49 of its schools completely destroyed and Pader 75 schools. It should be noted that the recovery phase poses particular challenges to the provision of education in Northern Uganda. In addition to the general security concerns the biggest concerns relate to 1) availability of additional financial resources and, 2) maintenance of the presence of the international community in the north.

Influencing factors on education in Northern Uganda



It is important to note that the column to the left illustrates most of the standard policies for public primary education in Uganda are in place. These policies set the national standards for all primary schools and should have been implemented as part of the UPE policy under the ESIP⁵. MoES recognises that Northern Uganda has not reached those standards, and has worked out a needs assessment to illustrate the gap between the situation of the north and the national standards.

⁵ Education Sector Investment Programme

In Northern Uganda support to the education sector brings out starkly the gap between policies and practice. Although the government passed a national IDP policy in 2004, this policy has not been implemented. The Emergency Action Plan for Humanitarian Assistance in Northern Uganda has largely also been seen as a failure.⁶ The consistently low-quality education provided in the IDP camps has led to a large number of children being out of school. Poorly paid teachers have often been absent from schools. District education authorities raised concern about the gap between the CAPs and the PRDP. The latter had not brought any additional funding to the education sector.

Nevertheless, schools have started returning to the pre-conflict sites. This year (up to May 2008) in Kitgum, 45 schools have already returned, and 35 more are expected to return by the end of 2008. However, the situation they return to is dismal. Many find that there are no facilities at all and consequently lessons have to take place under a tree.

The government provides two types of grant as a result of the Universal Primary Education policy from 1996:

- School Facilitation Grant
- Fees/capitation grant (often referred to as UPE grant)

These grants are allocated centrally on the basis of children already enrolled in schools. The DEOs in both Kitgum and Pader districts claimed that they received no preferential treatment because of their poor status. On the contrary, they were of the opinion that the situation had gone from bad to worse. In Kitgum for example, the UPE grant for the school year 2007/08 had been 470 million Ushs, but this had been reduced to a total of 420 million Ushs despite the fact that the successful “Back to school campaign” had brought many more pupils to school. Another problem was that they never knew how much they would receive each year, and that this further eroded their already weak planning capacity. In both districts, however, it was confirmed that instead of a raise in these grants as a result of the special needs for additional resources, the grants had been significantly reduced during the last few years. The ESSP is not likely to generate more resources for primary education in the north as its key new focus will be on post-primary education with a so-called balanced input to UPE which the government now perceives to be within reach of the MDGs. In both districts, the PRDP had not brought in any additional money for education at the time of the review.

Another problem mentioned at DEO level, was the problem of the government’s ceiling on the numbers of teachers to be recruited and deployed.

Given the emergency nature of the post-conflict situation in the region, MoES has identified and costed the educational needs of the region based on comparing minimum requirements compared to national standards.⁷ MOES underlines that massive amounts of extra-budgetary resources are required to set the northern region on a minimum recovery path. Top priority should be given to extremely resource deficient districts and areas and, according to the report, the government’s top priorities for assistance include teachers’ housing, instructional materials, classrooms, latrines and furniture.

Other programs such as Northern Uganda Social Action Fund may also contribute to classrooms and schools.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) - the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees is the lead agency for the protection and assistance to the IDPs. It should be noted that according to most sources⁸

⁶ this has been stated in many reports eg. Humanitarian Practice Network HPN Michelle Brown, Refugees International

⁷ MOES Report on Education Needs Assessment for Northern Uganda 2008

⁸ e.g. The New Vision 21st of May 2008

the emergency relief supplies and in particular food distribution will end in a few months time. A number of teachers consulted during the review expressed concern about phasing out of the food for education project which had been a significant factor in motivating children to attend school. The failure of government to declare Northern Uganda as a disaster area has affected allocation of resources.

4. NRC in Northern Uganda

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) began working in Northern Uganda in 1997 and added education projects to its humanitarian interventions in 1999 (Gulu Primary Education Project). The project included teacher training, school construction and extra-curricular education activities. Since the termination of this project in 2004, NRC moved into the neighbouring districts Kitgum and Pader, while the Gulu project continued with the Youth Education Pack which provides informal education opportunities to displaced youth between the ages of 14-20 years. The original teacher training project has been further refined since the pilot project in Gulu⁹. In Kitgum and Pader new elements have been added such as school farming and activities related to emergency education on the basis of carefully designed concept notes and guidelines.

The agreement under review covers the two districts of Kitgum and Pader for the project period 2004-2007 and is based on contract between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NRC of 18 million NOK (UGA-03/313) signed 5 August 2004, a contract signed 6 December 2006 and an addendum (UGA-06/0004 signed 10 July 2006) of 5.257 million NOK. The addendum to the Kitgum contract extended the project for a year (2006) due to the insecurity that was then prevailing in Pader with the majority of humanitarian organisations suspending their activities¹⁰. The extension was necessary to allow time for development of appropriate emergency education interventions in Kitgum and to complete the needs assessment in Pader.

The red areas in the map below show “Acholiland” which constitutes NRC areas of operation. Kitgum and partly Pader are the two districts covered under this review.



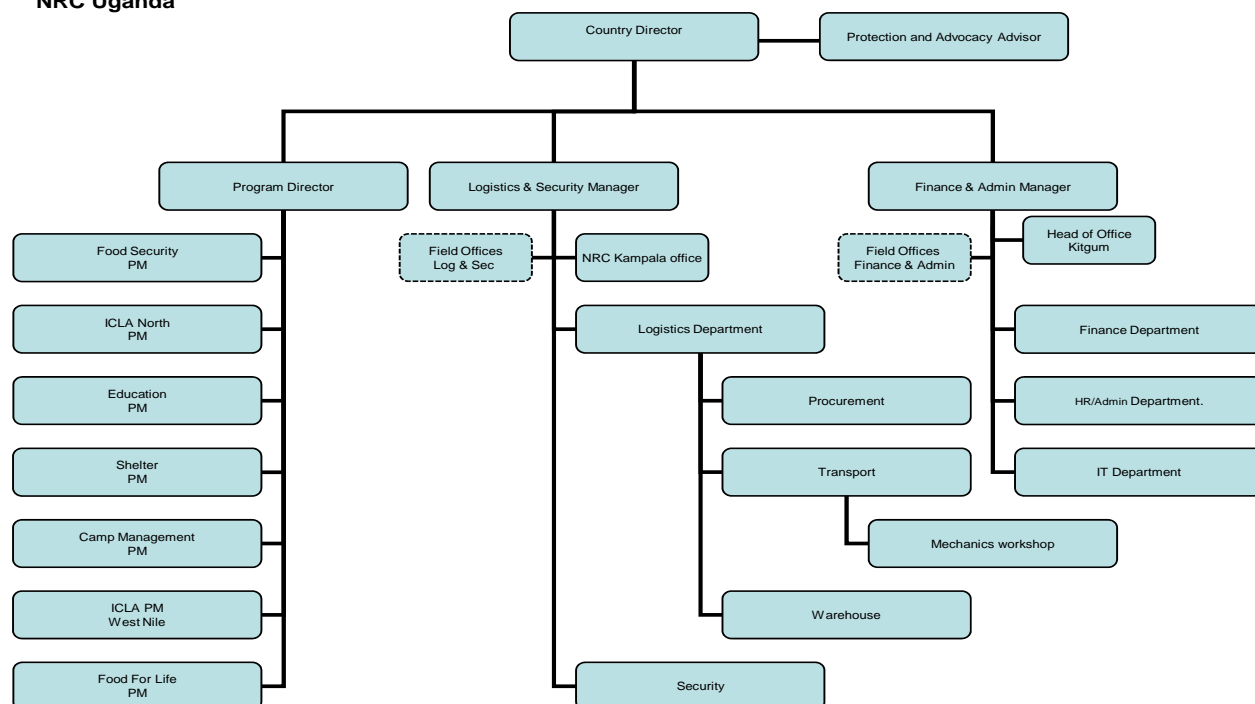
⁹ The topics covered: Child rights and responsibilities, school curriculum and socialization of children, teachers code of conduct and professional ethics, psychosocial effects on children affected by war, learning and training materials, supervision, community involvement in child protection, education as a protection mechanisms.

¹⁰ Further, the 2007 floods exposed the vulnerabilities of communities.

NRCs core activities are:

Camp management (NRC has been responsible for managing 17 camps), food distribution (which has of late been merged with food security and life skills). ICLA (information, counselling and legal assistance), shelter and education.

Organigram 2
NRC Uganda

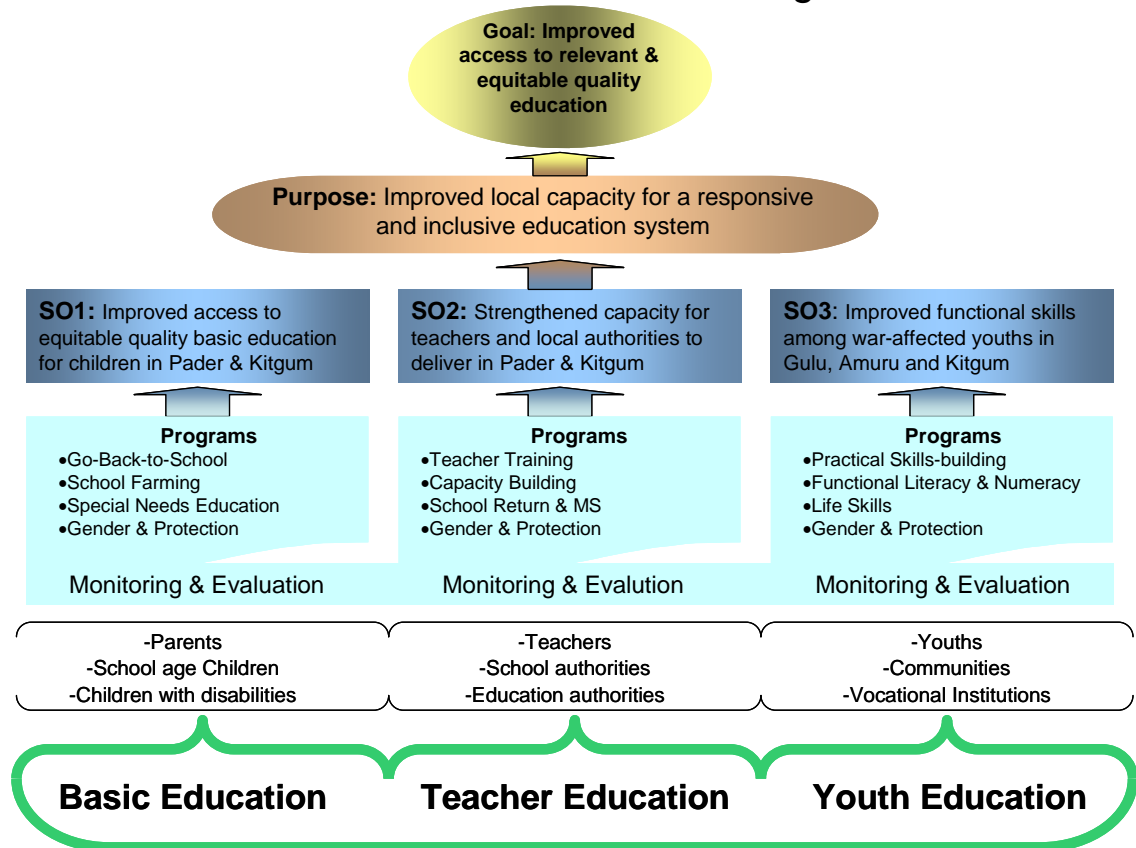


NRC has seen a huge turn-over at leadership level. During 2007, NRC Uganda had five different Country Directors. It appears that the organisation has some difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff at this level. Staffs at management levels usually have a one- year contract. While this echoes the emergency mode of NRC's operation, its efficiency for recovery and reconstruction might be questioned. Project staff mentioned that different country directors were inclined to emphasise issues which were close to their own heart and interests and that frequent turn-over lead to less synergies between the various components than was desired.

5. NRC's education program

This section is a description of the NRC education project in Kitgum and Pader. Components of the project and strategies utilised to achieve project objectives are examined in this section. An overview of the staffing in the project and the reporting structures is highlighted. Financial overview in terms of cash flows, reporting flows, amounts of money for the project and use to which it has been put are discussed.

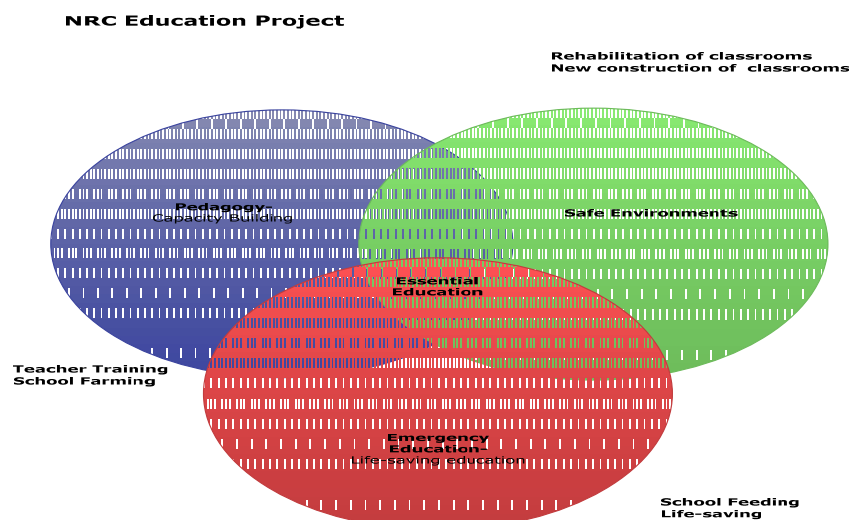
NRC UGANDA – Education Program



Resources are divided between Kitgum and Pader districts- on a 70-30% basis. Youth Education receives funds from the MFA humanitarian allocation and Sida, and is not part of the current review and appraisal.

Project Components

The education project includes teacher training and capacity building, renovation of old classrooms and construction of new ones (including furniture, and latrine stances), school farming and emergency activities. School feeding was added to strengthen the education project and as an incentive for enrolment.



The primary education project in Kitgum commenced in 2004 and in 2007 in Pader and had as its overall goal protecting and providing essential educational opportunities to children and youth that supports their rights and psychosocial development. The project had several objectives which can be classified as; access to quality education, supporting establishment of safe learning environments and provision of support to emergency education needs. Target groups of the project were children, teachers, local government authorities in the education sector District Education Officer (DEO) and District Education Office Inspectorate (DIS)) and instructors of the Kitgum Core Primary Teacher Training College (KCPTTC). Consequently the project had three components – school construction¹¹, teacher training and supporting emergency education needs.¹² School farming was added in 2005 with savings from exchange rate differences and support from the Royal Danish Embassy till April 2007 and MFA support from June 2007. This component seeks to impart modern agriculture knowledge and skills to pupils.

Safe Environments

One of the objectives of the project was to provide safe and secure learning environments. This was implemented through construction and renovation of classrooms including construction of teachers' houses, provision of furniture and renovation of structures at the teacher training college in Kitgum.

Pedagogy – Capacity Building

This component focused on building capacity of teachers to deliver quality services and use context specific teaching methods. Activities under the component entailed training teachers both pre-service and in-service on the 5 NRC modules of gender sensitivity and awareness raising, human rights, child-centred teaching methods, methods to teach reading and writing in local languages and child-centred learning environment. Gender disaggregated data on numbers of teachers trained reveals more men than women benefited from the training. This is a reflection of the gender disparities in the education sector at various levels. Under the School Farming component teachers were trained on basic agriculture and management of the school demonstration farms.

Numbers of Teachers Trained

| <i>DISTRICT</i> | <i>YEAR</i> | <i>FEMALE</i> | <i>MALE</i> | <i>TOTAL NUMBER</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Kitgum | Aug 2004 – Dec 2006 | 282 | 1196 | 1476 |
| | July 2007 | 46 | 170 | 216 |
| Pader | April – Dec 2007 | 125 | 654 | 779 |

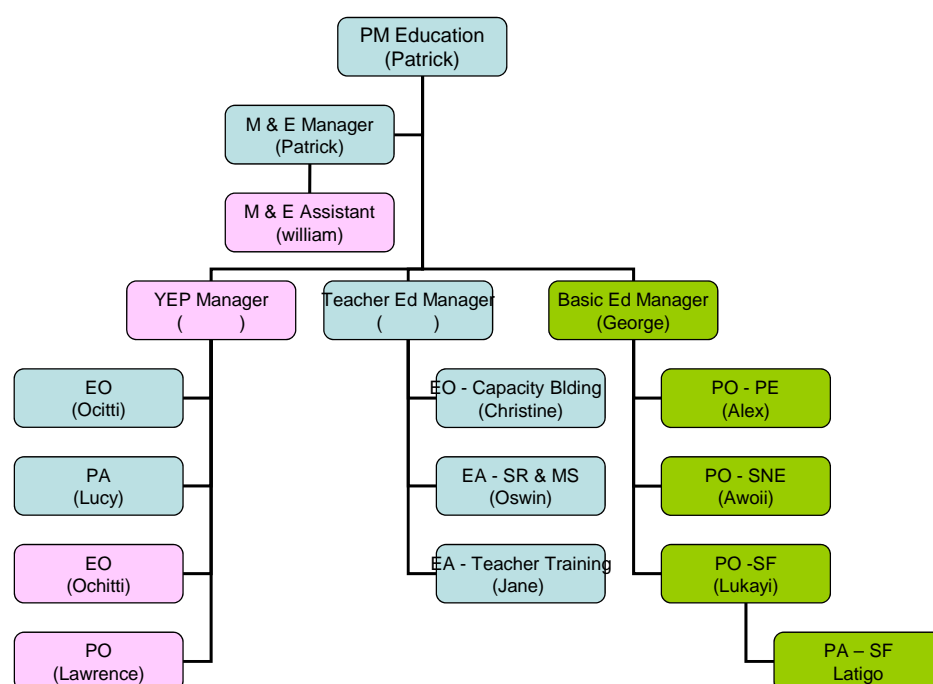
¹¹ Activities implemented under school construction include renovation and construction of classrooms, dormitories both in primary schools and teacher training college, latrines, teacher houses, provision of school furniture and scholastic materials and office equipment.

¹² Such responses entailed provisions of supplies (School in a Box), advocating for children with disabilities, rehabilitation of classrooms and awareness raising campaigns on life-saving messages.

Emergency Education

This component was designed with the chief objective of responding quickly to urgent needs related to education activities. The emergency education interventions focused on providing children with life saving messages. Activities implemented during the project lifespan comprised of provision of educational supplies, rehabilitation of school structures and hygiene training in schools.¹³

Staffing in Education Project¹⁴



The project is composed of 17 members of staff headed by the Project Manager Education but only 12 were filled by 2007 creating capacity gaps. This was particularly the case with regard to monitoring construction,

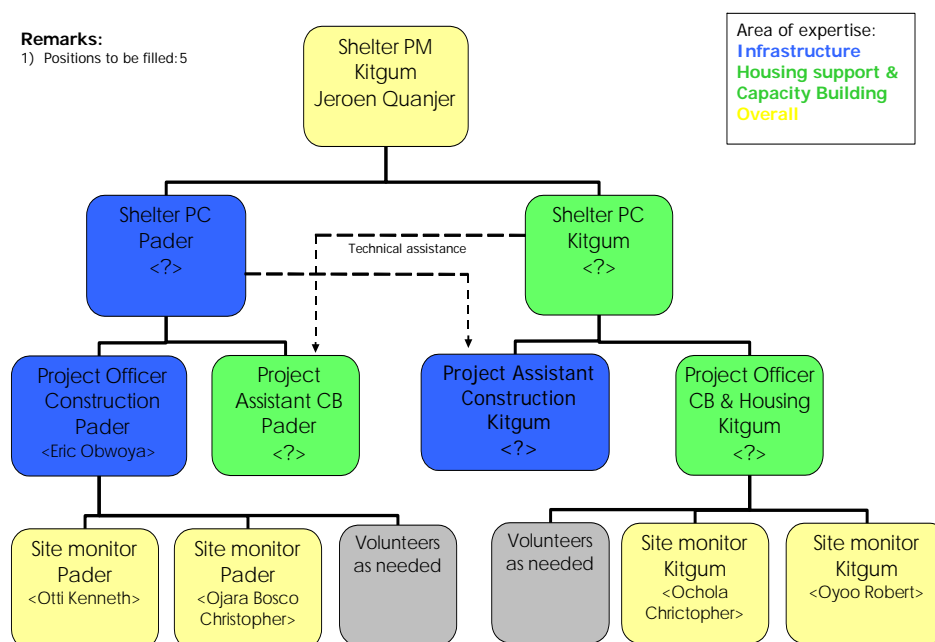
¹³ Emergency interventions included provision of School-in-a-Box and Recreation Kits to school, rehabilitation of classrooms destroyed by trees

¹⁴ Position of YEP manager and Teacher Education Manager not filled.

mainstreaming gender and establishing an M&E system. All team members are qualified teachers. Only the PM is international staff.

Since 2004, NRC has had three education project managers. Each of them has stayed with the project for more than two years¹⁵. This has been advantageous for continuity, and has contributed to the success of the education component. The recruitment of a special monitoring and evaluation expert in 2007, was positive development, but late addition to the education team. There are many assumptions in the project which require further verification particularly with regards to expected outcomes and yet there is no evidence to support them. The consistent gap in enrolment and retention of girls in schools is one area which requires considerable follow-up.

Shelter Organisation 2008



Until 2007, shelter was part of the construction component under the education programme. The separation is justified on the basis that the current recovery phase warrants focusing on non-classroom activities e.g. teacher houses. NRC emphasises that planning between shelter and education goes hand in hand. This is, in the view of the review team, particularly important for NRC's relations with the community. Addressing the training needs of School Management Committees (SMC) requires consistent communication and clear advocacy as to the importance of education for both girls and boys. Many aspects of this require the participation of both NRC education staff as well as construction staff. Being short of staff in either shelter or education can in the long run hamper the development of sustainable local institutions such as the SMCs.

Financial Overview

Over the three year period (2004 – 2007) the project received an amount of NOK 36 Mill from the Norwegian Embassy (RNE).¹⁶ The money has been expended on implementation of project activities and

¹⁵ The current PM is in the process of extending

¹⁶ In 2004 amount received was NOK 18 Mill, 2005: NOK 5 Mill and 2007: 13 Mill.

operational costs with the school construction component taking the largest share. School construction received 12,327,899 NOK, teacher training 5,334,835 NOK, emergency education interventions 370, 291 NOK over the project lifespan which altogether amounts to 17,663,025 NOK which is almost half of the total budget sum. School farming was allocated \$ 35,000 from June 2007 when funding from the Royal Danish Embassy came to an end. A comparison between inputs and outputs indicates that cost efficient interventions were adopted which lead to the project exceeding its projected outputs. These interventions included use of local resources (material, human and technical) for both construction and teacher training. Promotion of mobilisation of local resources and favourable exchange rate of NOK to the US\$ lead to savings which were used to increase coverage of the project.

Due to insufficient staff the project officer for teacher training was responsible for procurement of logistics for the training in addition to accounting for moneys received. These loopholes lead to fraudulent accounting by the concerned individual that resulted into termination of the employment contract. Accordingly measures have been taken to reduce the scope for committing fraud. These include recruitment of a field finance assistant officer in charge of accounting for facilitation costs for trainees, limiting access to petty cash to U shs 200,000, seeking approval from the project manager before using contingency money and creating awareness among staff on consequences of fraud. The main challenge for the finance department has been the lack of access to the AGGRESSO accounting package which has resulted in delayed feedback to project managers on the status of their budgets. In turn project managers are not in position to know about savings on their budget in adequate time and plan for them.

The review team noted that NRC's own financial reporting in Gulu complied with that of NRC HQ and donor specification. Monthly reports are sent to the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala. There have been no cases of variance, except for the two aforementioned individual cases of misappropriation of funds.

7. Assessment of Project

This section is a review of the project on seven grounds namely; efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, gender mainstreaming and gender targeting.

Efficiency

Various systems have been developed for both components in an effort to ensure efficiency in project implementation. Under school construction a transparent tendering process and mechanisms to ensure quality construction have been developed and implemented.¹⁷ The tendering process has 5 stages – pre-qualification of contractors, division of construction work into several works whereby each contractor can bid for several works but eventually wins only one, ranking and invitation of contractors to bid for specified works, analysis of bids according to set criteria¹⁸ and final selection of successful contractors by international staff. However challenges remain with regard to strict adherence to set standards¹⁹ within a short planning period. Availability of contractors, materials and accessibility during the rainy season do in some instances hinder the implementation process and cause delays. The review team finds the “emergency mode of operation” which follows a strict one-year funding schedule from the donor's side may sometimes hinder the pursuit of quality in all aspects of the construction process. This is particularly

¹⁷ These include recruitment of site monitors and volunteers to monitor construction sites on a regular basis, setting standards for qualities of materials, identification of vendors from whom construction materials can be purchased and retention of 5% of the construction costs which is paid 6 months after completion of construction.

¹⁸ These include price, deviation towards district engineer's estimates, schedules and bank statements.

¹⁹ Standards are set by MoES.

true for involvement of the School Management Committee and ensuring that their contribution (10%) goes hand in hand with the construction process.

Overall all project activities exceed their targets indicating good value for money received except for teacher training. This was due to the unavailability of targeted teachers which can be attributed to a number of factors. The training had to be conducted during holidays and yet it was during this time that some teachers went to other training institutions to upgrade their qualifications and transfer of teachers. However given that official statistics indicate the number of teachers in the district to be 1295 then the project can be said to have trained all teachers within Kitgum District.

KPTTC has been the main venue for training of teachers. Rotating the venue for the teacher training has reduced costs associated with the training (in terms of transport costs of trainees) in addition to using non-commercial venues such as primary schools as training sites according to set criteria.²⁰ Such institutions charge minimal charges such as costs to cover damages to property.

Summary of Project Expected Outputs and Actual Outputs

| Project Components | Project Activities for June 30, 2004 – June 30, 2006 | Expected Output | Actual Outputs |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| School Construction | Classroom construction | 84 Classrooms built. | 69 classrooms constructed 34 classrooms renovated Total: 103 |
| | Teacher housing construction. | 10 Teacher homes built. | 11 Teacher homes constructed. |
| | Sanitation construction. | 60 Latrine stances built. | 96 Stances provided. (32 blocks of 3-stance drainable, permanent and gender-sensitive latrines constructed.) |
| | Provision of student furniture. | 2,016 Student Desks distributed. | 3,852 Student desks distributed. |
| | Provision of teacher furniture. | 84 Teacher Desks distributed. 84 Teacher Chairs distributed. | 135 Teacher desks distributed. 135 Teacher chairs distributed. |
| Teacher Training | Training of trainers | 43 tutors/key persons trained | 45 Tutors/key persons trained: 10 Tutors at the Primary Teachers College 17 Coordinating Center Tutors 3 District Education Office Staff 6 Primary School Classroom Teachers 1 Secondary School Classroom Teacher |
| : | Training of teachers | 1600 teachers trained ²¹ . | 1,406 teachers trained |

²⁰ Criteria for selection of training sites included overall space, structural facilities, seating capacity, availability of electricity and water, security

²¹ According to the Kitgum District Education Office Census on Schools there are 1,295 teachers in the district – not including community sponsored teachers.

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | on 5 core subjects | | |
| | Training of 700 pre-service students on the 5 core subjects. | 700 Pre-service teachers trained. | 663 pre-service teachers trained. |

Effectiveness

Implementation of project activities has contributed to realisation of the project goal and purpose in two major aspects. On the supply side the project has contributed to fulfilment of right to education through construction/rehabilitation of classrooms and provision of school furniture. On the demand side the teacher training component has enhanced the capacity of teachers to use appropriate teaching methods while the emergency education initiatives have ensured continuity in school activities. Provision of a conducive teaching environment has been ensured through teacher housing construction and provision of furniture.

Summary of achievement of expected results

| Component | Expected Result | Actual Results |
|--|--|--|
| School construction | | |
| Primary schools | Safe and secure learning environments constructed and rehabilitates closer to the need seen in relation to number of children attending schools Improved access to necessary learning tools, supplies and infrastructure for students and teachers alike | Improved access to supplies and infrastructure for both students and teachers thus creating a conducive learning and teaching environment Covered 18% of classroom needs in Kitgum yet the project had targeted 9% |
| Teacher training | Teachers utilise and demonstrate child – centred approaches to teaching that support the psycho–social development of children Capacities and professionalism among teachers and school personnel steadily improving Schools providing quality education and enrolment seen to increase as a result of the project (with greater number of girls attending school) | Improved appreciation of participatory teaching methods and gender sensitivity which has been demonstrated by teachers encouraging participation of pupils, using creative teaching methods Created a local pool of facilitators that have successfully facilitated trainings Enrolment has increased even for girls but the drop out rate is high in upper primary. Retention of the girl child therefore remains a challenge |
| Emergency education initiatives | Emergency education interventions occurring to provide children with life saving messages | Provision of emergency education tool kits to teachers improved capacity of teachers to continue teaching Provision of emergency recreation kits to schools supported the psychosocial needs of children |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Parent/community involvement in education initiatives | Parent and community group involvement in education initiatives and activities increasing | Parent and community involvement in school construction has been demonstrated through contribution of labor and materials for construction works SMCs have provided critical support in supervising and monitoring construction works Project support committee members have played a key role in overseeing demonstration farms under the school farming project |
| Inclusive and special education | Inclusive education and special education support provided to existing local initiatives within Kitgum and Pader Districts Increased awareness and understanding by school personnel, communities and teachers on issues faced by vulnerable and disabled children | 181 teachers were provided with 1 week training on sign language Supporting construction needs of NUCBACD Limited understanding of community about issues faced by vulnerable children many of whom have been abandoned at NUCBACD |

Partnership with local authorities

Deliberate efforts were taken to bring the DEO and DIS on board and involve them in implementation of project activities. The local educational authorities were consulted on primary schools (formerly referred to as learning centers) that should benefit from the school construction and in identification of facilitators for the training of teachers' training (TOTT). District engineers have also been involved in approving school designs in accordance with UPE standards.²² Joint monitoring missions with the DIS were undertaken to assess performance of teachers. The missions were critical in highlighting training areas that need to be further strengthened, bringing to the attention of the DIS prevailing conditions in schools which in some cases resulted in administrative changes being made. Capacity building for the local authorities focused on training on the MSEE. Partnership with local authorities has the potential to ensure continuity of project activities but their capacity to do so is undermined by the fact that the local authorities are under-resourced and under-staffed.

Sustainability of project interventions

In a bid to enhance ownership and sustainability (in terms of care and maintenance of school structures) community mobilisation and participation characterised the construction works with communities contributing labor and materials and monitoring construction activities.²³ Care and maintenance of school structures remains a challenge and a number of measures are being taken to address this issue.²⁴ Under the teacher training component local facilitators were trained so as to create a pool of local facilitators who can

²³ Communities' contribution which amounts to 10% of the total cost of construction is deducted and used to build structures in another school.

²⁴ Such measures include incorporation of a care and maintenance component when handing over schools, development of community by-laws on care and maintenance of schools and training site monitors how to encourage community participation in construction.

be utilised for future trainings.²⁵ Consultations with the Principal of KCPTC revealed that whereas manpower to facilitate the training is available lack of financial resources to meet costs associated with the training has rendered impossible continuity of the teacher training.²⁶

Gender and Inclusive education

Focus group discussions with primary school pupils identified separate sanitation facilities as one of the measures that have to be taken to ensure enrolment and retention of the girl child in school. Consequently NRC undertook the decision to combine classroom construction with provision of standard sanitation facilities. However there's no evidence to demonstrate that provision of gender sensitive sanitation facilities has improved enrolment and retention of the girl child. The project has been weak in gender mainstreaming and a number of measures have been taken to address this gap. These include mainstreaming gender as a cross cutting issue in all the project components, identification of a gender and protection focal point person who will be responsible for identification of gender concerns such as gender responsiveness of the learning environment and following them up with the local educational authorities. Instruments have also been developed to track impact of interventions designed to ensuring high enrolment and retention of the girl child. These instruments and measures have not yet been put into practice. Care should be taken that other staff of the project do not regard addressing gender concerns as the responsibility of the gender focal point person. Instead all staff should be encouraged to be gender sensitive and take the initiative as and when the need arises in consultation with the gender focal point person. Training in gender issues needs to be systematically followed up, also to new staff.

The project has supported inclusive and special needs education by providing construction support to the Northern Uganda Community Based Action for Children with Disabilities (NUCBACD) with construction of dormitories and training teachers on sign language. Continued existence of NUCBACD is hanging in the balance given that the school is privately owned and is dependent on donors. NUCBACD is an example of a project which was not originally planned for, but which NRC embarked upon due to savings as a result of favourable currency rates. NUCBACD has, through the support of NRC, become a boarding school for more than 130 children with a diverse range of possibilities. NUCBACD has received both in-kind and financial support from a wide range of donors and has also been on the list of recipients for emergency food distribution..Currently NUCBACD is facing serious problems with sustaining the support to the children. WFP has faced out its food distribution and a number of other donors are also pulling out. The project does not fall under MOE's areas of responsibility. At the time of the review NUCBACD's future operation was not at all clear and there was an imminent risk that the children who had placed under the its care, would have to be sent back home to their villages.

8. Adherence to DAC principles

The context as a starting point

The structures of learning and education were dramatically changed during the conflict. Firstly, all primary schools were displaced alongside the displacement of the population. Secondly, when the population moved to IDP camps, learning centres were created. Learning centres were grouped by sub-counties near the camps; they were physical classroom structures or designated areas of learning (beneath trees). In most cases learning centres were linked to an existing school in the area. At the project start in 2004/05

²⁵ The local facilitators included tutors of the teacher college, head teachers, DEOs

²⁶ For example since 2007 when the training component in Kitgum ended the College has been unable to train pre-service teachers.

over 140 primary schools in Kitgum were displaced into 34 learning centres. These were usually overcrowded and severely understaffed with insufficient instruction materials and uncondusive learning environments. The situation of teachers has been compounded by the displacement. Teaching has been carried out often by un-trained teachers. In Kitgum in 2005 there were 1,426 teachers and the pupil: teacher ratio of 150-300:1 compared to the government standard of 50:1, student to classroom ratio 400:1 compared to the government standard of 40:1, pupil: latrine 150:1 compared to government standard of 40:1²⁷

Until recently NRC's education services were delivered in the displacement camps and at the learning centres. The number of persons who have moved outside the camps was still only 4,000 in Kitgum district as late as May 2006²⁸. Resumption of the conflict cannot be entirely ruled out given that the Juba peace process hangs in balance meaning that the likelihood of people returning to the camps remains a possibility. NRC has adopted mechanisms which give it flexibility to rapidly adjust to the new situation through provision of emergency education supplies.

Do no harm

Many of the problems (overcrowding, poorly trained teachers, high de facto costs for the parents, gender gap) faced by the education system may not be unique to Northern Uganda. For example, it is noted in the current ESSP²⁹ (p.7) that a ministry study of UPE schools shows a general high level of attrition in the schools. A similar study is yet to be carried out in the North, but the situation mirrors that in other parts of Uganda.³⁰ However, the status of the education sector in the North is exacerbated by the conflict and NRC has to be mindful of this and ensure that its choice of activities both with regard to location and related activities corresponds to existing needs. As a matter of practice NRC conducts participatory needs assessments before implementation of an intervention which has greatly assisted the project in operating in areas where the needs are enormous.

The decision to train all the teachers (which was successfully implemented in the pilot project in Gulu) is commendable. Since everybody gets her/his fair chance, there is a strong sense among the teachers that NRC has been very inclusive in its approach to teacher training. The training itself would most likely be relevant also to other contexts in Uganda.

Adherence to this principle has proven more difficult with regard to classroom renovation and construction. During the conflict support was provided to learning centres that were accessible and generally considered safe. As a consequence one finds a situation whereby one such learning centre receives support from various agencies which has resulted in animosity from inadequately supported schools and communities in form of attacks and destruction of school property.³¹ In some cases the team was informed that other less fortunate groups of the returning IDPs had started to attack the more favoured schools and communities had in some cases destroyed what had been carefully built up during the conflict. Location of schools has the potential to become politicised, a fact which NRC staff is fully aware of. NRC has therefore strived to maintain neutrality through adherence of mutually agreed criteria which guides school construction.

²⁷ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children Feb 2005

²⁸ OCHA Northern Uganda Briefing Paper May 2006

²⁹ Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004/5-2014/15 (which has succeeded ESIP-The Education Strategic Plan)

³⁰ 2.1 m pupils enrolled in 1997 became 1.3 m in 1998, 1.1 m in 1999, 0.96 m in 2000. 0.83 m in 2001, 0.7 m in 2002, and down to 0.45 m in 2003.

³¹ In some places one could find schools with 8-10 post-signed referring to different projects. NRC has avoided such "branding" as a matter of policy.

Focus on state building as a central objective

Given that the local education authorities were partners in this project state building interventions focused on developing their capacity. In Kitgum, NRC has supported the DEO office in the following areas: training on the INEE Minimum standards, training as facilitators in the teacher training component, training the District Inspectorate in supervision of the contractors, involvement in the Back to School Campaign.

The working relationship between NRC and DEO has been challenged by the weak administrative and planning capacity of the DEOs which limits their capacity to manage the overall coordination role. NRC like the other NGOs therefore has to often play a balancing act between ensuring adherence to the implementation plan of their projects and waiting for the district education authorities to take the lead in the processes.

Prioritize prevention

NRC recognises the protective role of education, and ensuring safe spaces for learning, psychosocial healing and development on many levels. Psychosocial topics are part of the teacher training component, but given the magnitude of the traumatic experiences that many teachers, parents and pupils, have experienced during the conflict, brings to mind the question of the potential of the training to alleviate the situation given the levels of emotional distress. The LRA is unusual in that it has not employed conventional guerrilla strategies aimed at territorial conquest³² but that it has spread terror and fear amongst the population. LRA has been an unusual force in that it has particularly targeted children and that schools have literally been under attack on many occasions. The conflict has in many ways torn Acholi -communities apart. Lives are lost, families have been displaced and separated, and previous social support systems have broken down.

There is a widespread perception among many stakeholders that there has been a decay of moral values in the teaching profession. Teachers were often found to be either absent or drunk and many parents were reported to have avoided sending their girls to school, because of fear of sexual harassment. The review team was not able to verify the magnitude of the problem, but suggests that a survey should be conducted to establish the level of absenteeism and unprofessional conduct among teachers and identify long term solutions.

NRC has taken recognition of the fact that education models are needed that support young people's lives through education as a prevention measure. Opportunities for education often diminish or disappear in environments where they may have already been scarce and NRC intends to use some of the learning centres which are currently being redundant for vocational skills training in particular for the youth.

Aligning project activities with local critical education needs

NRC follows two principles 1) all activities are implemented on the basis of prior assessments of needs, and 2) careful consultation with DEOs and community members. The review team found that the construction needs assessment enabled the project to focus on schools that were functioning and had significant school structure needs. The training needs assessment was key to designing a context specific training module that sought to respond to prevailing circumstances³³ in the education sector in Northern Uganda in terms of low enrolment and retention of the girl child, child protection issues and low morale among teachers.³⁴

³² Institute for Security Studies. H. Ruaudel and A. Timpson 12.12.2005

³³ Such circumstances include high defilement rates, unethical behaviour and lack of professionalism among teachers and non conducive learning environment.

³⁴ The training curriculum contained five modules – gender sensitivity and awareness raising, human rights, child – centred teaching methods, methods to teach reading and writing in local languages and child-centred learning environment.

NRC should be commended for developing and maintaining a good working relationship with the DEO. Unfortunately the same cannot be said about other partners who have not deemed it necessary to consult and involve the DEO in their education projects. In such instances such partners have gone ahead to construct classrooms without consulting the DEOs to ensure that priority construction needs in the education sector are met. Although the DEO was grateful for any assistance with regards to school construction it is imperative that they are consulted to enhance alignment with priority needs. Emergency education assessments resulted in coordinated response with UNICEF to ensure that overlaps did not occur.

Links between political, security and development objectives

NRC is a humanitarian organization and has therefore limited competence to take on long term development interventions in the education sector. This is apparent in both its staffing and planning horizon. Staff are usually recruited for one-year contracts and the planning cycle usually follows the calendar year. Yet, NRC has to strike a balance between its usually short term responses and the long term development. To lift the primary education sector in Northern Uganda up to the national standards is likely to take a relatively long period of time, large amounts of resources and will require concerted efforts to build the capacity of the district education authorities. So far this does not seem to have been one of NRC's strengths. NRC would need to pay heed to the long term development of the education system and should increase its focus on strengthening the district education authorities in their roles as the lead in the educational development process.

Coordination between partners

Uganda has been a pilot for the IASC Cluster Approach. The Education Cluster which has been lead by UNICEF has had its structure replicated at the district level with meetings chaired by the DEO. In Kampala, NRC has been represented at the monthly meetings by the education PM, and at district levels representation has been rotating among the members of the education team. These meetings have been a critical forum for information exchange and knowledge sharing and to some extent coordination.³⁵

Participants in the Education Cluster do not seem to have any particular advocacy strategy or common approach to raise issues of concern vis a vis the government. NRC has not yet developed a specific advocacy strategy for education or followed a specific agenda to ensure that outcomes of these meetings inform its own policies beyond avoiding overlap or duplication.

The Education cluster will be phased out by the end of 2009 and be replaced by the Education Sectoral Working Group, which will gradually assume the functions of the cluster. At national level, the structural link at present comes from the Department of Special Needs Education, where one person is assigned the role as a focal person for the Northern areas.

Staying long enough to see results....

In the education sector, emergency initiatives such as delivery of materials or crash course trainings will not leave behind permanent results. These are, however, important as protection measures and to restore normalcy in children's lives. Despite the fact that NRC's contribution in teacher training has been appreciated by participants, there is also a concern that pre-service teachers will be unable to benefit from the training. Both teachers and the principal at the KPTTC voiced their concern at the failure to provide refresher courses which would concretise knowledge obtained from the training. The dilemma for NRC is, of

³⁵ Examples of coordination activities include the "Go Back to School Campaign" with Unicef and teacher training with AVSI in different districts.

course, that with the enormous educational needs to be tackled in the north, one has to strike a balance between targeting new areas with training rather than providing refresher courses.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

- District Education authorities and other partners (Unicef, other NGOs), teachers and representatives from the communities consulted, regard NRC as a valuable partner in supporting education in Kitgum and Pader. In particular the combination of access and quality interventions were viewed as NRC's strengths.
- Administratively speaking, NRC has had some problems in recruiting and retaining international staffs. The division of labour between financial accountability and implementation of project activities has led to improvements in reducing the scope for fraud. Procurement of supplies for teacher training which used to be the responsibility of the education staff has been assigned to the procurement department. Handling of petty cash has been further reduced. These changes have come about after having discovered two cases of misappropriation of funds among NRC education staff whose contracts were terminated after investigations. Monthly reports have been regularly sent to the Norwegian Embassy throughout the project's duration. These reports have contained the information specified in the contract.
- Project activities have been implemented in an efficient and effective manner. Costs have been kept down with regards to all construction activities, through a carefully managed contractor-system. NRC has also developed its own pool of trainers and facilitators alongside trying to build district level capacity. Costs associated with allowances are kept below the UN- regulation. There is no comparable training in the two districts with which to compare costs. However, costs associated with the training e.g. accommodation, food, transport were considered too high for the KPTTC to cover within its severely limited budget. NRC has furthermore reached or exceeded all its targets. It has not been possible to assess whether the total NRC operations are too costly. The DEOs complained that while direct costs for e.g. classroom construction were transparent, they did not know the amount of the financial resources that would be expended in the education sector. Given the limited capacity of the local educational authorities to execute their mandate it is strongly recommended that the project continues with strengthening their capacities.
- NRC is continuously assessing the conflict situation and population movements, and is flexibly adapting its programme to recurrent risk factors and opportunities. This is reflected in the entire organization. NRC has restructured its organisational set up and approach to be more attuned to the recovery situation. It is therefore recommended that synergy between the different sections of NRC be enhanced. Further there is a special need to work closely together when dealing with training of the School Management Committees.
- The improved security situation has kindled a hope that the situation will remain stable. NRC has therefore embarked on initiatives which partly replace food distribution with life skills and emergency education with planning for a longer term development horizon. There is a move from rapid responses to development. NRC has experienced challenges in implementing this shift. Firstly, the organization has had a relative high turn over at leadership level, secondly, funding is secured on a one-year basis, thirdly, staff are contracted on a short term basis, and fourthly, there is need to put more emphasis on developing sustainable human capacity at local levels. The education team is highly competent in educational matters given that it is composed of professional teachers with good firsthand knowledge about the status of the education system. However, lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation tools that measure both outputs, outcomes and impacts is still outstanding. The team therefore recommends the development of an M&E system that measures outputs, outcomes and impact.

NRC has tried to focus on girl students and female teachers in all its activities (latrines, training). Gender is one of the five modules in the training programme for teachers. However, there is no indication that the gender gap in school enrolment is actually closing. There is a growing realisation that gender issues need to be tackled also outside the school arena. There is a concern that termination of food donations to schools will become a disincentive for parents to send girls to schools. NRC would need to step up its monitoring and evaluation procedures to be able to capture why girls are not enrolled and retained in school.

- There is a need for NRC to take a strong role in advocacy for education. A clear advocacy strategy needs to be developed. With first hand experience in education in Northern Uganda for nearly ten years, NRC is well positioned to spearhead a process for mobilising more funds to the education sector in the north.

Appraisal of Proposal

“Education for Protection and Recovery”

Displacement in Pader District

Until 2000, displacement took place in phases and affected mostly Atanga sub-county which was on the LRA route between Gulu and Kitgum. Following the GoU led operation “Iron Fiss” I and II in early 2002, five new camps were formed in addition to Atanga. By September 2002 the GoU advised/ordered the population to move into “protected camps”. A total of 20 camps were then established. Due to inability to provide security the GoU reduced the number of camps to 13. In February 2003, a joint GoU, UN, NGO and Local Authority assessment revealed that 74% of the population was displaced (241,216 out of 326,884 persons). By the year 2005, Pader District had 31 internally displaced camps, within which 95% of the population lived.

1.0 Background

The Norwegian Embassy in Uganda has received an application of NOK 11,761,638 for NRC’s education (including construction) programme for the project period 1.03.08-31.12.08. The entire project is expected to last until March 2010.

The overall objective is to “improve access to relevant, rights-focused and equitable quality education for the displaced children in Northern Uganda.”

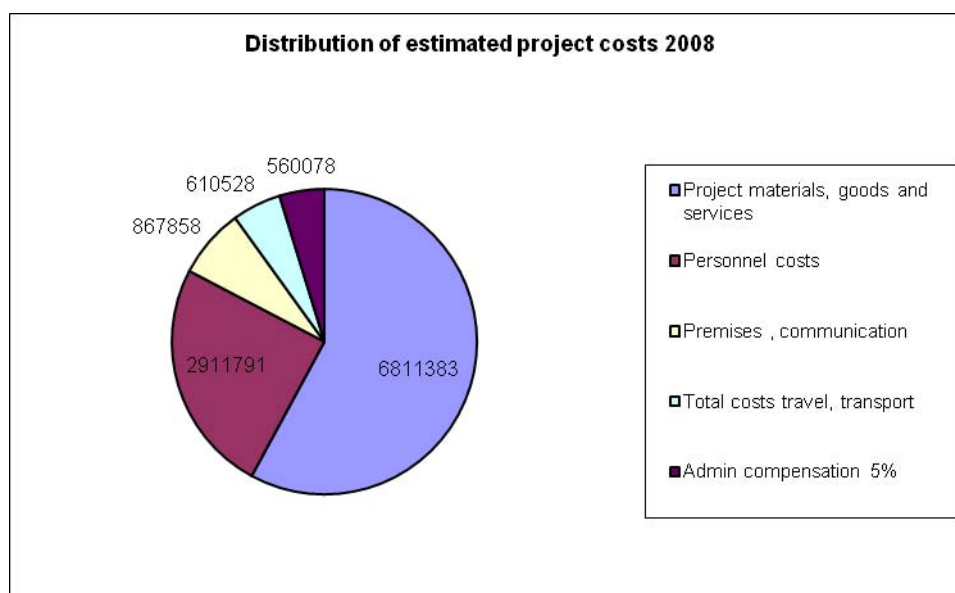
Geographically the project focuses on Kitgum and Pader on a 30-70% of resources allocated to the respective districts.

Several components remain similar to those NRC has previously worked on to strengthen the education system in Northern Uganda, most specifically Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts. These are teacher training, construction, school farming and emergency education. School construction will target 8 schools, benefiting 1,750 children and their teachers. 630 teachers will be reached during this one-year planning period.

The following new activities are included:

- 1) accelerated learning targeting out of school youth who have missed out on schooling , with the purpose of integrating these students into the regular school system
- 2) more emphasis on special needs education

The project started implementation in 2008. The first batch of teachers had undergone training.



2.1 Assessment of the Partners' Planning Process

There are some concerns about participation of the relevant stakeholders in design of the programme. Relevant personnel within the DEO office Pader, expressed the view that the proposal had not been adequately discussed with them prior to submitting it for funding to the donor. Their concern applied not to the "old" components which DEO staffs were quite familiar with, but to the new components ; the focus on accelerated learning and inclusive education. The appraisal team shares this concern. As far as the accelerated learning programme is concerned, the proposal contains very little information about how NRC plans to operationalise it , with what capacity in-house or through others. In principle, the appraisal team is supportive of such programmes, in particular because they help in addressing the educational needs of those who have missed out on opportunities as a consequence of the conflict. However, such programmes are never easily implemented and they require specific expertise. Furthermore, Pader district has already implemented a similar programme called "Oracle" under the responsibility of IRC. This project terminated in 2007, but Pader DEO still has considerable experience with the project, which NRC might have tapped to inform its own planning process. Further follow-up with NRC staff on this point revealed that NRC envisaged a close collaboration with BRAC on this project. The proposal does not, however, include whether NRC intends to channel funds through BRAC or the modalities of the partnership Inclusive education is important and NRC is commended for trying to reach out to the most excluded and marginalised of all children in the Northern region. NRC has worked out a Special Needs Education concept paper which makes clear which strategies should be pursued. However, discussions with DEO staffs in Pader districts revealed that opinions on optimal strategies may differ considerably. There is a need to clarify the issues and seek the DEOs support on NRC's strategies in this regard. Efforts should be made to discuss the proposal with the education local authorities in Pader and their ideas incorporated where possible.

2.2 Assessment of the Programme Design

(i) Support to the school system

Information on budgetary allocations from the central government to the education department at local government should be included. These amounts get reduced every financial year yet with the ongoing recovery program one would have thought that more resources had been allocated to the district. This makes the case for NRC's continued presence in the district. Kitgum district received U shs. 490m for the FY 2007/08 this has been reduced to 420m in FY 2008/09. Further information can be provided on how the project will raise the issue of inadequate resource allocation by for example undertaking advocacy initiatives for increased support to Northern Uganda in terms of resource allocation should be undertaken.

(a) Capacity building for school authorities

Specific mention should be made of strategies to be undertaken to strengthen capacities of local authorities to discharge their mandate. The identified strategies should correspond to the contextual background information restraining local education authorities from discharging their mandate.

(b) Training of teachers

Again reference should be made to critical capacity gaps that programme will correspond to given the current working conditions of teachers. The programme could address the high teacher: pupil ratios through advocacy for increased resource allocation from the central government to raise the quota ceiling for teachers.

Discussions should be held with the teacher training college on how the training of teachers should be sustained and feedback incorporated in the proposal. Similar discussions should be held on including an Acholi perspective (culture) in the training module for purposes of rebuilding the Acholi society. Such perspectives may include folk-lore stories, traditions, role of social networks. .

(ii) Special measures to return children to school

(a) Community mobilisation and advocacy for school attendance

Efforts should be made to bring the Community Development Officer on board to take an active role in mobilising the community to send children to school. Information should be included on measures to be taken to encourage girls' enrolment and retention. Discussions with the project staff revealed a number of measures have been taken to strengthen gender mainstreaming. These include mainstreaming gender as a cross cutting issue in all the project components, identification of a gender and protection focal point person who will be responsible for identification of gender concerns such as gender responsiveness of the learning environment and following them up with the local educational authorities. Instruments have also been developed to track impact of interventions designed to ensuring high enrolment and retention of the girl child. Care should be taken that other staff of the project do not regard addressing gender concerns as the responsibility of the gender focal point person. Instead all staff should be encouraged to be gender sensitive and take the initiative as and when the need arises in consultation with the gender focal point person.

(b) Accelerated learning programmes

Information on experiences of partners such as IRC-ORACLE, UNICEF and the District Special Needs Education Officer who have implemented ALP programs should be included. It is important to understand the experiences of these actors in managing ALP so as to avoid similar mistakes and identify lessons learnt that can be incorporated in the NRC version.

(c) Special needs education

Include information on the existence of policy framework which will guide implementation of this activity. Incorporate lessons learnt on supporting private initiatives on special needs education.

(d) School farming and curriculum support

The new strategy to be utilised in implementing this activity should be discussed and reasons for its choice.

(iii) School Construction

Incorporate relevant lessons learnt from the assessment of school construction in Gulu and Amuru district. The information on appropriate technologies and environment and community based intervention and increased ownership (on page 12) should be moved to school construction where it's relevant.

(iv) Quality of indicators

Indicators set are of quantitative nature with corresponding means of verification to be found for the most in school registers and activity reports. More emphasis needs to be put on capturing quality elements in such activities as capacity building, gender issues etc. As the mode of operation is moving away from relief to development, there is a need to develop indicators that capture outcomes and impact of the various activities.

Qualitative indicators should be developed for each activity so as to give valid and reliable information on impact. More light should be thrown on how often M&E will be conducted, who will be in charge and methodologies to be employed.

See log frame below

| TEACHER EDUC LOGFRAME 2008 | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| | 1. Goal | | |
| | 2. Purpose | | |
| | 3. Output | | |
| | 4. Activities | | |
| GOAL- Improved access to relevant & equitable quality education | | | |
| PURPOSE- Improved local capacity for responsive and inclusive education system | | | |
| Output One | Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI) | Means of verifying | Important Assumptions |
| Increased capacity building for school authority | Thematic curriculum in place by June 2008 (Local language teaching) 10 Child protection training conducted 10 returning school supported 2 sensitisation meeting on education activities for DEO and partners held # materials support provided to the school authority (DEO) | Existence of curriculum Training reports Distribution records Minutes of the meetings Distribution report | Support from school authority |
| Output Two | | | |
| Improved planning and school management | 30 management committees set up and functional in Kitgum and Pader 3 training workshop conducted for school management committee 1 Luo school management training module developed 10 school management committee meetings conducted # materials support provided to the school management committee | List of schools and their committees members Workshop records Training module Minutes of the meetings Delivery and waiver forms | Support from school management committees |
| Output Three | | | |
| Improved knowledge and teaching skills for teachers in Pader and Kitgum | Training materials modified and in place by June 2008 460 teachers in Pader trained on NRC 5 modules 100 teacher in Kitgum trained on production of learning materials 200 teachers trained on basic writing phase/Thematic curriculum 10 Joint monitoring with the district on thematic curriculum done | Training modules in place List of trainings List of trainings List of trainings Monitoring reports | Innovative teaching methods introduced Methods and materials introduced are effectively utilised to improve teaching and learning. |
| Output Four | | | |
| Increased response to gender and emergency education | 200 lessons in the centers monitored # emergency education teacher tool kit distributed # emergency education school tool kit distributed # emergency education lighted space project (Solar lantern) distributed # education supplies to selected schools on return completed # mobile school infrastructure to schools on return distributed # education textbooks to schools on return distributed | Field reports Distribution report Distribution report Distribution report Distribution report Distribution report Distribution report | |
| Output Five | | | |
| Programme research and evaluation components improved and strengthened | Recruit M&E Manager Reviewed objectives and indicators in place and in use Monitoring and evaluation plan in place and in use Monitoring and evaluation report Annual reports by January every year Number of research findings published Number of research link to NRC Education | Personnel record Progress report Monitoring plan Monitoring reports Annual reports Published reports Records | Research based on rigorous and empirical methodology Research and project lessons are used by Teacher Education and Basic Education |

3. Sustainability

Lessons should be learnt from previous experiences. It is particularly recommended that the “softer” sides of NRC’s operations e.g. training efforts, support to disabled children are carefully examined on how they can be sustained. These aspects should be further elaborated in the project document. Inclusion of an exit strategy is commendable and it should be integrated in management and implementation of the project activities.

4. Coordination among partners

With the changes in the humanitarian situation the composition of the humanitarian community is also changing. First, the government has now decided to pursue a Parish approach. The purpose of the Parish Approach is to build capacity of the formal structures to ensure that “minimal basic services” are provided to the population regardless of their location. Secondly, both composition and strategies for the Education Cluster seem to be changed. With the phasing out of the Education Cluster (in 2009) the new Education Sector

Working Groups will be established. Details should be provided on efforts to be taken to ensure harmonisation among NGOs. Advocacy needs to become an essential part of NRC's interaction with partners and government authorities.

5. Conclusion

The appraisal team recommends that the Embassy continues its support to NRC's education program. This recommendation is based mainly on what the team has noted in terms of accomplishments and good work, rather than the content of the written proposal. The proposal is found to be too weak on details with regards to how NRC actually envisages the processes ahead, in particular the accelerated learning component. However, in the given situation the very presence of international agencies is extremely important as a protection against continued attacks from LRA. Supporting education is essential as a life-saving and life-building mechanism for children and youth in Northern Uganda. NRC is one of the most important partners in education in the North and its reputation is excellent. With the current slow move of funds for UPE and PRDP to education, the children will continue to suffer without significant international support. It will take many years before the districts will attain the national averages and standards, even with massive external assistance. Care should be taken, however, to work a fairly detailed concept note on the accelerated learning component and to follow up the special needs education discussions with the local authorities and other partners.

List of persons consulted

| NAME | POSITION |
|--|--|
| Hans Henrik Philpsen | Senior Program Advisor, Development Affairs, Royal Norwegian Embassy |
| Jessica Huber | Advocacy and Protection Adviser, NRC Gulu |
| Nina M Birkeland | Program Director, NRC Gulu |
| Inger Annr Hauge | Head of Office, NRC Kitgum |
| Jeroen Quanjer | Program Manager, Shelter, NRC Kitgum |
| Adnan Haruna | Finance Manager |
| Natig Alasgarov | Finance and Administration Manager |
| Grace Anek Oyet | District Councillor, Atanga/Laguti Sub-County |
| Odong Jiluano | Parish Deputy Chief |
| Patrick Awoii | Project Officer, Special Needs Education, NRC Pader |
| George Lukayi | Project Officer, School Farming, NRC Kitgum and Pader |
| Eric Obwoya | Project Officer, Construction, NRC Kitgum and Pader |
| Christine Jane Olal | Education Officer, NRC Kitgum |
| Willian Bongomin Orop | M&E Assistant, NRC Kitgum |
| Sebastian Oguti Oswin | Education Field Assistant, NRC Kitgum |
| Jane Atim Aanyu | Capacity Building Assistant, NRC Kitgum |
| Anthony Nyeko | Project Officer, School Farming, NRC Kitgum |
| FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, LACEKOCOT PRIMARY SCHOOL | |
| Oryem Ogonye | Member, SMC |
| Susan Piny – Oloya | School Typist |
| Margaret Opoka | Chairperson, SMC |
| Odong Okol | Headmaster |
| Charles Ochira | Deputy Head Teacher |
| Rose Aboda | Member, SMC |
| Olushola Ismail | Chief Zonal Office Kitgum/Pader Offices, UNICEF |
| PAJIMO PRIMARY SCHOOL | |
| Hellen Amony Omono Laker | Head Teacher |
| Lagudi Apolomia | Deputy Head Teacher |
| Rose Aceng | Senior Woman |
| Charles Lakima | Chairperson, SMC |
| Oryem Lamton | Chairperson, PTA |
| Jenny Ato | Member, SMC |
| Florence Alur | Member, SMC |
| Amo Okwe – Okaka | DEO, Kitgum District Local Government |
| Agnes Amony Hollyne | Program Assistant, AVSI |
| Dickens Olwoch Killis | Program Officer, AVSI |
| Francesco Paganini | Area Team Leader, AVSI |

| NAME | POSITION |
|---|---|
| Eric Sabiti | Field Coordinator, Kitgum, RC |
| Alex Ojwee | Principal, Kitgum Core Primary Teachers College |
| FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH TUTORS, KITGUM CORE PRIMARY TEACHERS' COLLEGE | |
| Kerosin Ochola | Deputy Principal |
| Sr. Martha Achan | Deputy Principal |
| Geoffrey Owonda | Tutor |
| Francissy Auma | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Lawrence Ogwang Oketh | Tutor |
| Aldos Loum | Tutor |
| Igantius Omona | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Maurice Olweny | Center Coordination Tutor |
| John Bismarck Okumu | Center Coordination Tutor |
| David Otim Ebong | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Maurice Onekalit | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Okello Ogweng | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Francis Okot | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Susan Tiperu Omona | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Alex Ongom | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Damasco Okettayot | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Joyce Amekare | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Mary Apollo Aceng | Center Coordination Tutor |
| Jimmy Okello | Field Assistant Camp Management |
| George Anguli | Basic Education Manager, Pader |
| Anthony Ojoki Jogi | District Inspectorate, Pader District Local Government |
| Charles Obol Okidi | Assistant DEO, Pader District Local Government |
| Margaret Alango | Education Officer, Special Needs, District Local Government |
| Bernard Lukwiya | Data Base Clerk, UNHCR |
| KALONGO GIRLS PRIMARY SCHOOL | |
| Sr. Esther Arach | Headmistress |
| Samuel Mwaka Okidi | Teacher |
| Alfonse Okot | Teacher |
| APIRI PRIMARY SCHOOL | |
| Robinson Oloya Omoya | Head Teacher |
| Bonny Okech | Member, SMC |
| Santo Ochen | Member, SMC |
| Nawaz Khan | HAO/Head of Sub Office, Pader, UN OCHA |

Draft Schedule for the Consultants

| When | | What | Where |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Monday May 19 | 09.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluators' preparatory meeting - Working on questions + methodology for the field | Kampala |
| Tuesday May 20 | 10.00 14.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with Hans Henrik Philipsen - Fine-tuning methodology - Meeting with Gary Ovington - Unicef (Education Cluster Lead) | Norwegian Embassy - Kampala |
| Wednesday May 21 | 08.00 15.00- 19.30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to Gulu/ arrival ca 14.30 - Introductory meeting with CD & PM-Education - dinner CD, PM, PC a few other key staff | NRC Gulu office Bomah Hotel |
| Thursday May 22 | 09.00 12.00 16-18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to Kitgum, arrival ca 11:30 - Meet, Head of Office & PM-Shelter - Presentation of the 2008-10 proposal (Patrick + Jeroen) | Kitgum - NRC office or Bomah Hotel |
| Friday May 23 | 09.00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions with programme staff on achievements, challenges and lessons learned over the period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o School construction o Teacher Training/INEE o School Farming o Emergency Education Initiatives | Kitgum - NRC office |
| Saturday May 24 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field visit - Teacher training + school construction - Field Visit - School farming - Reading of reports & other documents | TBA TBA Bomah Hotel |
| Sunday May 25 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further reading of documents - Preparation for meetings with beneficiaries and partners | Bomah Hotel Kitgum |

| When | | What | Where |
|---------------------|-------|---|---------------------------|
| | | | |
| Monday May 26 | 09.00 | - Meeting with DEO & DIS Kitgum | -DEO's Office |
| | 11.00 | - Meeting Principal + Tutors, Kitgum Primary Teachers College | -PTC |
| | 14.00 | - Field visit - School Construction | - School of the Disabled? |
| Tuesday May 27 | 09.00 | - Travel to Pader | DEO's office Pader |
| | 10.30 | - Meet DEO + DIS | |
| | 14.00 | - Field Visit - Teacher Training | |
| Wednesday May 28 | 09.00 | - Field Visit - School construction | Pader |
| | 12.00 | - Travel back to Kitgum | NRC Kitgum office |
| | 14.00 | - Debriefing with project staff | |
| Thursday May 29 | 08.00 | - Departure for Gulu | NRC Gulu office |
| | 10.00 | - Debriefing with Programme Director and PM | |
| | 11.00 | - Departure for Kampala | |
| Friday May 30 | 10.00 | - Debriefing with Hans Henrik Philipsen | Kampala |

