

Mechanisms of Resource Mobilization for Support of Universal Free Primary Education by Women of Mbale District, Uganda

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Abstract Education is a process by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence (Tomasevsky 2004; Phillips 1975). By this very process, the gap between generations is bridged as old and new values are passed on to the young by the process of teaching/learning. In formal education, there are social aims and objectives that constitute guidelines toward this progressive growth which develops an individual's capacity and basic means for preservation of a society. The quality of learning is influenced by a number of factors including school attendance, distance walked to school, feeding, socio-economic status of the family, attitudes of parents towards education, peer influence, the school learning environment, quality of teachers and many other factors. Uganda Introduced universal free education in 1997 as a policy that grants every citizen opportunities to access all forms literacy. The purpose of this study was to assess the achievements, constraints and future prospects of women's continued support for their children's education among the urban and rural poor in Mbale district. Focus group discussions for parents, face to face interviews for pupils, teachers, district education officers and political leaders' were also conducted. This research established the mechanisms such as participating in formal and informal markets, casual work, borrowing from microfinance banks and many others are used by parents to mobilize resources. The study recommends provision of adult education to all illiterate women in the poor communities of Mbale district. School administrators and teachers should organize meetings regularly with parents to share with them goals of the school. School administrators should listen to their pupils in order to understand them and their needs.

Keywords: Resources mobilization, women, primary children

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals set a target of universal primary school completion to be achieved by 2015. Primary education was made free and compulsory and this is affirmed by all of the key international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human rights and the Convention on the rights of the child (Tomasevsky 2004). The underpinning principal, it is assumed, is that there is a close correlation between low levels of education and poverty, both at individual and society level. Governments have the obligation to improve the quality of education by ensuring that the entire education system conforms to all human rights. It is the responsibility of governments because it is a vital investment in a country's economic future (Tomasevsky 2004). Tomasevsky adds on that education transmits core values from one generation to the next and helps in eliminating poverty, racism, religious intolerance, and other reasons for social disharmony.

By universalizing primary education it is hoped that graduates will display a greater willingness and ability to participate, more actively in the political decision making process and in community development efforts (Schuller 2005 Education also increases the people's willingness and ability to try out new ideas and practices such as improved health practices, family planning and introduction of new techniques in agriculture (Bacchus, 1981; EFA Global monitoring report 2005). Children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection, development and participation is the prerequisite for the future development of humanity. UPE it is implied is both a human right concern and an important part of development strategy for human resource development using a mass oriented approach (Bacchus, 1981).

Quality education however, implies that certain conditions must be fulfilled like, a relevant curriculum, rules and regulations, quality behaviour of students, availability of furniture and textbooks, good school management, responsible attitudes of teachers and the support of the community where it is located (Munoz 2007). Phillips 1995; Munoz 2007)) on the other hand argues that quality of learning is influenced by the

conditions of school attendance, distances walked to school, midday meals, living levels of the student families, health, nutrition, attitudes of their parents whether positive towards education, cultural and religious views prevailing in the local community and the state, influence of peers and by the economic and social environment. UNESCO (2002) refers to quality education as an improvement of all aspects of learning and ensuring excellence so that recognizable and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all learners especially in literacy, numeric and essential life skills like appreciating and being able to accommodate others, necessary for responsible living.

Parents have a responsibility to contribute to the learning of their children (Monoz 2007). A few responsibilities taken from Monoz's list are listed below:

- To ensure a child's preparedness to start school
- Supporting and recognizing the right to education and the value of education for their children.
- Ensuring that children are not overburdened with domestic work to the detriment of their schooling. Parents need to create space and time in children's lives to enable them to attend school and other homework.
- Ensure that children are prepared for school and able to arrive, ready and on time, when school is in session.
- Getting involved in the school and support its work- through participation in meetings with teachers, committees, consultation, etc
- Showing encouragement and support for their children's work and where possible helping with homework.
- Ensuring that their children are health and well nourished so that they able to learn..
- Ensuring that local traditions and customs, such as child marriage do not prevent their children from going to school.

Where parents, especially mothers are illiterate the likelihood of their children realising their rights to education is slightly diminished. This implies mobilisation of resources for their children's education is a real huddle. The concept mobilization according to Rahman (1980) means the urge that arises from one's own consciousness, the satisfaction of which gives one direct emotional fulfilment. On the other hand the concept resource means the physical wealth like assets, stock family property including land available that can be drawn on when necessary. Mental resources are one's inner strength, ingenuity and skills utilized by people and can simply mean the confidence in one's ability to solve problems of life, the courage, creativity, knowledge, the stamina to make sustained effort, interpersonal strategies, powers of decision making etc (Gatlung, 1980). People normally draw on both the physical and mental resources in pursuing their objectives and find emotional fulfilment in achieving the objectives set.

Purewed (2001) confirms with Monoz (2007) pointing out that the education of the mothers affects both the work at home and at work consequently, affecting the standard of living of the community. They goes on to say that illiteracy dis-empowers people from giving the right information with regard to nutrition, health, childcare, production of goods etc. It reduces their awareness of choices available and chances of ensuring the best quality of life for their family. The fact that many mothers in developing countries are uneducated is one of the forces inhibiting school attendance and better performance of the children who attend school. Participation of women in the informal sector to grow crops as well as selling in markets to supplement family income has put pressure upon women's capacities to maintain the family units, although that supplementary income supports their children in schools.

The high fertility among the poor is another constraint to parents in poor families especially in a situation where there is no social security for parents in old age. In Uganda fertility is 7 (UG.GOV/UNFPA2010) and children are long term security because they look after their parents in old age. They are a source of happiness and hope, a source of income in case of dowry at marriage. However with large numbers of

children parents find it difficult to sustain their children in school. In order to develop their personality, children should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. Children cannot perform well without these basic needs, for example poor feeding interferes with their physical and mental growth. The rapid expansion of access in primary schools and output has eventually exerted high pressure on limited human, material and physical facilities in schools. These circumstances are thought to be affecting the educational quality Monoz (2004).

Context of the Study Area

Social Economic status of the urban poor is described by the Mbale Municipal authorities below; According to Mbale Municipal Development plan 2005/2006 – 2007/2008 *'there are many problems facing the people' High levels of overcrowding in the residential housing and difficulties in residential land development... High levels of poverty and the importance of the informal sector for household survival. Problems associated with economic strategies ... 80% of Mbale residents live in health problems..... low levels of education especially among the female population. The number of female headed house holds is on the rise due to a number of factors including HIV/AIDS.* There is a general lack of access to family planning and unequal gender relations. Birth rates remain high, the fertility rate being 7, (UG Government, UNFP 2010) imply women bear 7 children on average. Mooni and Namatala slums in Mbale municipality were used in the study. Bukyemde and Bungokho sub-counties are the rural areas in the district used in the study. The areas can be described as plains below Mount Elgon on its western side.

People in rural areas are agriculturalists growing cotton, millet, sweet potatoes, beans and a variety of green vegetables. They keep animals such as cattle, goats, pigs, birds on a small scale. Women in both the rural and urban areas brew local beer using millet for sale. Transport and communication facilities are not easily available in these rural communities. School going children walk long distances to school (up to 4kms). There is a severe land shortage, the population density is high (over 300 people per Square kilometre. There is over cultivation, deforestation leading to land degradation and low crop productivity. Source of fuel in both communities is charcoal or firewood. Electricity or kerosene are too expensive for the poor in these societies. This is a male dominated society where family property including land belongs to the male in a family (Government of Uganda/UN IFPA 2010).

In an effort to fulfil the Universal Millennium Development Goals the government of Uganda introduced free primary education in 1997 for at least 4 children per family. The government took into consideration marginalized groups of the disabled and female children to be included in this figure. Enrolment in primary schools swelled from 2.9 million to 5.6 million and today it is 7.2 million. The parents were expected to provide a balanced diet, a warm bed to sleep in, medical care and opportunities to play and access to school. According to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report for Uganda 2010, the total number of school going age enrolled by 2009 was 93%, the boys being 96% and girls 90%. Uganda has made great strides in expanding access to primary education; consequently towards the global goal of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls will be able to complete primary schooling. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), which is a key MDG indicator and measures the share of children of children in school going age who are actually in school. This ratio hovers above 90% in recent years close to 100% needed to meet MDG. However there is a problem of non-completion of school. Businge and Kiwawulo (2011) reveal that the director of the Population secretariat reported that 1.5 million pupils never make it to secondary school every year. The government of Uganda has adopted numerous quality initiatives, policies and curricula reform; introduction of thematic curriculum in 2007 which focuses on literacy, numeracy and life skills. Using local languages, revised upper primary curriculum, setting management standards and the introduction of basic child-friendly standards for schools through revised basic requirements.(MDG report 2010).

The Government of Uganda has succeeded in increasing enrolment of children especially in urban areas compared to the rural areas (MDG report 2010). However a significant number of children do not attend

school. The quality of education in the public (UPE) schools is still low and a number of children cannot read and write by the time they finish primary five. The school infrastructures and educational teaching materials are still inadequate and poor despite government investment in these schools. Some schools still have untrained teachers while the qualified teachers are not motivated enough to successfully implement the curriculum. However the communities, parents and women in particular have played their part within their means to supplement the government efforts to provide free education to primary age children. This paper identifies and explains the successes of women, constraints they face and their hopes for the future of their children's education.

The Problem

It is observed the world over by gender studies researchers that women's work and contributions to national/society development is not visible, measurable consequently not recognized by the society and by many development planners (Moser 1989; Momsen 1987). Poncini (2009) argues "because women have been in unpaid work mostly and this is invisible, they have also accepted it. Women accept really any kind of conditions, because before they were not paid and even if they are paid less now, they take it. I think they shouldn't. That's why I think they should be helped by government policies and legislation." While women contribute a lot to their children's welfare at the domestic level, support them morally financially and psychologically, it is normally their spouses (men) who are praised for their children's success while women are blamed for their children's failure (Kandiyoti 1975). However, since education is a vital factor in the development of a nation it is important to identify the key areas where women contribute. By listening and recording their voices, it is hoped that their constraints and challenges, hopes and aspirations for their children will be packaged and forwarded to appropriate stakeholders and popularized in the district. Plans and strategies can be made to support women by their families, society, local and national governments. This paper identifies and explains the successes of women in mobilising resources, constraints they face and their hopes for the future of their children's education.

Purpose

The main purpose of this paper was to examine methods used by parents especially women to mobilize resources, constraints they face and their hopes for the future of their children's education in primary schools of Mbale district in Uganda.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the motivating factors for parents to send their children to school.
2. To identify parents' source of resources to support their children in school
3. To establish the constraints and challenges faced by women in the process of mobilizing resources

Methodology

The method used to collect data was qualitative where an interview guide was used for the focus groups to collect data from school managers, teachers, pupils and parents. Face to face interviews were used for the head teachers, and one district Education official. Most of the children were not fluent in English therefore vernacular language-Lugishu-was used. The researcher used four research assistants; three men and one female who were themselves Bagishu and familiar with the culture and other characteristics of the area social cultural context. The research assistants talked to the children individually, since they were too shy to talk in a group situation. The data was translated to English by the research assistants immediately.

The School management committees and parents were not fluent in English there I used the research assistants as translators. The school head teachers and teachers were interviewed directly by the researcher since we could converse easily in English.

Sample

The study was carried out in Mooni and Namatala slums in Mbale municipality and in Bukyembe Bungokho sub counties in the rural areas of Mbale district. These areas are representative of the urban and rural poor of Mbale district. These four areas are representative of the urban and rural poor of Mbale district. The two slums out of eight were selected because they were the most populous with 6000 people each. They both had settlers from different parts of Uganda especially from the neighbouring tribes of Teso, Bagwere, Kenyans, Basoga, Samia, Japadhola to mention a few. The children from these other tribes could speak Lugishu fluently like their peers. Another factor was that there were many children who had dropped out of school in these two slums. Namatala has two government aided schools while Mooni had one UPE primary school.

The two rural sub-counties were selected because they are near Mbale municipal centre making it easy to access them. Bungokho has 11 primary schools and Bukyende has sixteen schools.

Three urban poorly resourced schools located in two slums and four rural schools were selected randomly. Seventy two (72) pupils were randomly selected from the schools used in the study; 42 of whom were female and 30 male. Fifty six (56) parents, 37 female, 19 men and 24 teachers participated in the study.

NOTE. The school management committee members are included among the parents.

Findings and Discussions

Background of Participants

Location of pupils homes in relation to School

Table 1: Location of pupils' homes in relation to their respective schools

Distance from School	Number
Those pupils who live within 5-25 minutes of the school were mostly in Mbale town.	30
The pupils who take 30 minutes -2 hours to get to schools are found in the rural areas of Mbale district.	42

Family Household Head

It was necessary to find out the household heads since they tend to be the source of income for their families. Forty five (45) pupils said their families are headed by males while ten (10) said theirs were headed by female. The rest didn't indicate. The number of people in the family varied from two to twenty one (21) where the family was polygamous, four (4) in some families the district average is six (6).

Response to Objective One

Motivating Factors;

1. First and foremost motivating factor is the government taking the responsibility of paying tuition fees. (Affirmed by all parents/guardians)

2. The second important factor is the children's aspiration and attitudes towards education. (80%).
3. The role models in the area who inspire their parents/mothers to educate their children so that they lead a better life than themselves (90)

Seventy two pupils from primary one to seven were interviewed to ascertain their aspirations, attitudes and expectations.

Table 2: Pupils' aspirations, attitudes and expectations

Item	Expression of Aspirations, Attitudes and Expectations	No of Responses	%
1	If we get well educated, we will get a job and salary, care for my family and educate my children.	22	4.54
2	We wish, we had lunch at school, we are hungry	40	8.25
3	We enjoy studying and staying in school	69	14.23
4	We want government to help us with school dues and text books	11	2.27
5.	we want government to provide a school truck, balls for games and sports	28	5.77
6.	We want more classrooms	20	4.12
7.	We want music instruments	11	2.27
8.	We want a library	17	3.51
9.	we want to learn to read and write (P.2)	14	2.89
10.	Studying is good, I have been able to get friends	44	9.07
11.	We want typed examinations at the end of the term instead of writing it on the chalk board	11	2.27
12.	We want piped water	12	2.47
13.	We want teachers to improve on their teaching, we have "poor education standard"	40	8.25
14.	We want more teachers	37	7.63
15.	We want to be taught well	41	8.45
16.	We want teachers who do not know Lugishu; we want more English language Teachers.	30	6.19
17.	We want all our teachers to be transferred and we get new ones.	14	2.89
18.	Some one should slash and clean the compound instead of us doing that.	03	0.62
19.	We want our classes to be cemented, they are dusty	10	2.06
20.	We want a play ground of our own	11	2.27

Responses related to schooling (response 1) indicate that children have a clear idea of what they want to be when they grow up and how to get the best out of life in UPE schools. They also show a sense of responsibility for their families and the community as a whole. Regarding their teachers, the children are crying out that it is wrong not to have good teachers like in responses 13,14,15,16,17, if we are to get much of our expectations. The education system in Uganda uses English as medium of teaching explaining why the children say it will be useful if we get teachers who will speak English to us instead of Lugishu. (16). Mothers are aware of the plight of their children in UPE schools which offer inadequate education "We would like to take our children to better schools but because of poverty we cannot". Children know how to think strategically in order to enjoy school and get the best out of it, (responses 5,6,7 and 8). Socializing is also another aspect children pointed out in responses 10.

The children also know what the schools are supposed to provide according to responses, 5, 8, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20. According to the New Vision editorial (7July 2006), by primary four (4) some children in some

UPE schools cannot read and write, echoed by response 9. Most of them walk long distances to school which open at 9.00am and close by 3.00pm. There are few teachers who have few skills to handle large classes of 50 -100 per class. Head teachers are rare at school, teachers' morale is very low and there is under teaching in most schools (Vision reporter, 2006). This confirms the children's anxiety regarding teachers. It is clear that children need to be listened too in order to understand their aspirations and needs so as to address them. This can be affectively done by teachers and parents through career guidance and counselling. Feeding children is still a big problem according to response (2). 57 children said they do not get lunch at school and this is corroborated by all the teachers interviewed. Only 15 children said they get lunch at school and this is corroborated by all the teachers interviewed. Only 15 children said they get lunch cooked from school which is food provided by NGO for orphaned children. The children living within 15 minutes walk from school go home for lunch, (32) mothers or female relatives provide money to their children. 9 said they carry sugarcane, cooked cassava and potatoes from home.

To respond to the second objective:-Source of resources to support their children in school- the following data was obtained from pupils;

Table 3: Occupation of household heads of the families of the pupils

Occupation	Number
Regularly paid	29*
Self employed	24
Business	08
Peasant Farmer	30
Others	05

* (10 of these are teachers on the Government payroll)

NOTE: Most of the household heads have dual occupations: e.g. farming and trading, farmers and casual labourers, e.t.c. Women and pupils were asked to name the person responsible for their education.

Person Responsible for Education

The pupil's (72) and teachers (24) were asked to identify the people responsible for the education of the children in the schools which participated in the study.

Table 4: Person responsible for pupil's education

Item	Frequency of pupil responses	Frequency of Teachers responses
Father	38	08
Mother	26	03
Guardian (Male)	05	04
Guardian (Female)	08	03
NGO	03	02
Don't know all above	02	04

NOTE. Some pupils named two people as being responsible for their education. It is very difficult for children to know whether it is the father or mother who made the money in cases where the father confiscated all produce from farms cultivated by women or money from vending by their mothers. Women, in some

instances, run homes because their husbands are away in urban areas. In this instance, children cannot tell who provides money for their upkeep and education, since they have absentee fathers.

Women's Contribution to Education

The pupils were asked to list female relatives who contribute to their education.

Table 5: Women's contribution to pupils' education

Female Contributor	Number
Helped by female relatives (grand mother)	11
Mother	61
Other female relatives	11

Some pupils are orphans living with aunts whether on father's side or maternal side.

Pupils were asked to list what they feel their mothers and female relatives contribute to their education. Here the pupils gave tangible and intangible contributions made by their mothers or guardians. The teachers were also asked what they observe as being the most important contribution by women to their children's education.

Table 6: Forms of contribution to pupils' education made by women

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSE BY PUPILS	TEACHERS RESPONSES
Buying uniforms & shoes	48	
Washing my clothes	46	
Buying scholastic materials	60	2
Cooking and feeding us	60	3
Gives me pocket money	30	
Helps me to do my homework	30	11
Pays school dues (Stationary)	30	2
Monitor the UPE funds		3
Buys other clothes and toys	11	01
Cares for me when I'm sick	42	10
She takes me to school	12	1
She takes me to the village for holidays	22	

School dues include coaching fees, registration fees, reports, school badge, tests, etc. Without coaching fees, the child will not gain much from UPE schools.

In some few cases, the fathers of these children give money to their mothers to buy school provisions. In addition to this financial support, women showed love, care, comfort and encouragement to their children. Children's sense of self worth, security, confidence is boosted if there is some one at home to provide what they listed above consequently their performance at school is boosted. Some women are members of "school management committees". That explains the teachers' response that they monitor UPE funds. Teachers added that a big number of female teachers who are committed and motherly also contribute to the success of UPE schools. It is believed that women are endowed with nurturing, interpersonal and intuitive skills by nature (UNESCO, 1993).

Sources of Income of the Mother and Other Female Guardians

All participants (including mothers) in the study were asked to list sources of income of women who support their children at school (152 people). This is where women use their mental resources to make ends meet by outsourcing from different areas/points/sources.

Table 7: Women's source of income in Mbale District

Item	Frequency	(%)
Market Vendor	40	24.69
Business women	20	12.35
Peasant farmer	29	17.90
Housewife + casual work	50	30.86
Regular income	23	14.20

In this study market vendors are women selling goods on streets in the evening, selling on market days or have stalls in the formal markets. They sell vegetables, charcoal, potatoes, bananas, second hand clothes, local beer and many other goods. Business women have small scale retail shops in the slums of Namatala in Mbale Municipality. Casual workers usually cultivate crops for the richer families as well as their own farms. Some women farm their gardens in the morning and sell various goods on streets in the evening. Some women borrow money from microfinance institutions such as Pride Microfinance, Finca, etc and use it to pay/buy school requirements. Some women have formed self help groups to help each other in cultivation, harvesting, look after children in case of problems and lend each other money (cash rounds), etc. As a result of the prevailing levels of education of the women, they cannot get well paying jobs in the formal sector. Those in the regular income category include policewomen, office attendants, teachers etc.

Other Mechanisms Used by Women to Raise Funds for Keeping their Children in School Include;

Using their children to do domestic work as they look for money is another mechanism

Example; Women in both rural and urban areas brew local beer (malwa) from millet and sorghum, sometimes from maize flour which they sell in the evening while their children take over the evening domestic chores. *"While the big girls are cooking and fetching water, the boys help me to sell beer"* Another mother added; *"when children come home the big girl(13yrs) looks after the two youngest (aged 1 and 3yrs). The big boy (10years) and the girl (8yrs) help me sell cooked food in the evening by the road side"* The women with stalls in the market on the other hand said that they utilize their children a lot over the weekends to sell the goods. The mothers meanwhile attend to other domestic chores at home or go to purchase other goods to restock their business.

Some mothers interviewed in rural areas said *"we grow maize, millet and other food crops for domestic consumption and sell the surplus. We also raise chicken and goats which we sell when a need for money rises. However, some of the income from sale of these crops is taken by our husbands.* In order to raise extra income, women in this category cultivate for richer families as casual laborers. *I normally dig for my neighbor, plant crops, weed and harvest the millet and she gives me money in return'*

An Elderly woman said *I look after five children while their mothers go to work. The money they give me, I use it to pay school needs for my grand children*

There was a group of eight women who formed a self-help club, *"We are able to get loans as a group and we use it to boost our business (Namatala Slum).* This group was getting funds through an organization in the Catholic Church in Mbale.

A young mother of about 28 years said *"During the harvesting period of Maize, oranges mangoes and other crops, I go in the rural areas and buy these foods from farmers. I bring them to town and sell them at profit. When the season is off, I sell second hand clothes, therefore I have an income throughout the year.*

It is women in urban areas who borrow money from microfinance institution, because they have daily income from their retail shops or market stalls.

These are the various ways in which women use their mental resources to keep their children in school- to teach their children skills of various kinds, while facilitating them (women) to do their commercial activities in the informal sector in the evenings or weekend. Parents' ignorance of the effect of overworking the children and biting poverty (Muloni, 2000) compels them to subject their children to house hold chores instead of doing homework.

The researcher went ahead to establish the type of work children do at home. Both students and parents responded to this question.

Table 8: Household activities done by both girls and boys after school

Item	Frequency	
	Pupils	Parents
Grazing animals after school	15	10
Fetching water and firewood	17	08
Digging	13	10
Cooking	07	10
Cleaning house utensils	21	08
Selling / vending food / goods	10	10
Baby sitting	20	10

Note: Children do multiple activities like grazing animals and fetching water, cooking, cleaning house and vending food/goods.

There are low levels of technology in Uganda and most of the domestic chores like processing food are done manually. Lack of rural electricity perpetuates use of firewood. Piped water is still a dream in both rural and urban poor homes explaining why children have to help out while their mothers look for money to support the family.

The heavy domestic chores have an effect on education of pupils in many ways. Absence from school on market days, weeding during rainy season or vending food in evenings, and harvesting crops for some days. This leads to less attention paid by pupils in class, dozing due to inadequate sleep and tiredness, some do not do homework given at school leading to a general loss of interest in schooling.

The Third Objective;

Challenges and Constraints Faced by Women in Providing for Childrens' Education

The researcher was particularly interested in identifying constraints faced by women as they mobilize resources for their children's education.

Table 9: Constraints faced by women in resource mobilization

Item	Frequency
Heavy domestic chores	17
Lack of regular source of income	37
Lack of support from their husbands	47
Lack of time	44
The belief that UPE means everything	25
Men's freedom makes women face it all	45

Large families (7) mean heavy domestic work to support the family through provision of food, cooking, washing and cleaning etc. Because of the low literacy levels it is not easy to get employed in the formal sector to escape the back breaking work in farming and competitive vending.

The most highly educated woman among the 50 interviewed is a graduate of senior four the rest dropped out before or after primary seven. With low levels of education, women have no alternative but to depend on cultivation or the informal sector to get money. Because of the rigid gender division of labor, men tend to leave everything to women including education of their children, making life extremely difficult for women. Lack of time explains why some women fail to support and give courage to their children to stay in school. As a result, some children, especially in rural schools, dropout before completing the seven years of primary education.

The Realities of poverty among rural and urban poor are clearly indicated by the teachers who participated in the study. (24 respondents)

Table 10: Indicators of poverty

Item	Frequency
Most households earn less than 3,000= a month	07
Peasant farmers eat what they produce no surplus	05
Lack capital to do business	09
Poor soils, poor traditional methods of farming with no particular cash crop	04
Standard of living is generally very low- poor housing	04

Uganda is one of the 25 poorest countries in the world and one is not surprised by this kind of response from the teachers. In rural areas like Busiu sub-county, there is a very high school dropout rate estimated at 475 per year from UPE schools due to the high levels of poverty. The young girls marry at 15 years and the cycle of poverty begins again for them.

Conclusions

Both the rural and urban poor ability to mobilize both mental and physical resources depends on the education of parents and their social economic status. All people who participated in study didn't go beyond senior two except 1(one) women and (5) five men.

The main motivating factor to send and retain children in school is the hope that they will escape the biting poverty in the slums and rural areas in Mbale district. The second important motivating factor is their children's high interest in staying in school, plus their willingness to help with the households chores while their mothers are busy looking for money. The most important factor is the wish to take advantage of the government offer of non-payment of tuition fee.

Women of Mbale district have devised various methods of mobilizing resources to send their children to school. These include participation in the informal sector of selling a variety of good in the evening like

charcoal, food, clothes. They also do casual labor for the relatively well off families like cultivation, shop attendants, cleaning jobs and low paying jobs in the municipality. Rural housewives who do not have jobs but depend on their husbands use whatever their husbands allow them to sell from farm produce, to give their children. They have also found a way of persuading their husbands to retain their children in school especially the girl child.

The main constraints facing the women of Mbale are the low levels of education which does not allow them to get relatively high paying jobs. Lack of access to and control of family property whose accumulation they actively contribute towards. Lack of support from their husbands and the large families which keep them busy the whole day (18) hours with little productivity contributing to the cycle of poverty. This explains the practices of child-labor, high number of school dropout especially in rural areas, little or no lunch contributing to poor performance of individual children.

Women will and are determined to send their children to school. Areas of where they need support have been identified as: Adult education classes, the existing microfinance organizations, agricultural organizations like NADS, Send a Cow can be encouraged to integrate those women in these development program to take advantage of those privileges available in their community

The above opportunities will be realized if the existing culture of male dominance is worked upon, through sensitization of men, providing immunization, family planning knowledge and services if available to all will reduce the fertility of women in the district. Since some of the above mentioned suggestions are already in place with the existing government affirmative policies in place, there is hope that their implementation, monitoring and experiment will help women send their children to school and complete the first seven years.

Listening to women voices is an important means of understanding them, internalize their challenges, how they survive and how they can be helped appropriately.

Lastly, achieving the millennium Development Goals set for access to primary education for all in 2015 will not be possible at this rate in many parts of Uganda unless the above issues are tackled

Recommendations

- School administrators and teachers should listen to children and engage them as active participants in their own learning.
- Mothers/women should be provided with adult education to build their capacity by governments. If women learn to read and write, they can help children with homework. They will gain greater understanding of their children's needs and more confidence in collaborating with schools.
- Schools should organize regular meetings with parents to share with them goals of the school. Their involvement leads to the contribution of practical skills and energy, increase sense of ownership of the school and commitment to their children's effective education.

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