

# Investment in Equity and Peacebuilding

Uganda Case Study

FHI 360 Education Policy and Data Center

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## Acronyms

ALREP	Agricultural Livelihood Recovery Programme for Northern Uganda
CBO	Community-based organization
CRE	Christian Religious Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDP	District Development Plans
DEO	District Education Officer
DFID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
EMIS	Education Management Information System
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IPUMS	International Public-Use Microdata Series
IRE	Islamic Religious Education
KALIP	Karamoja Livelihoods Program
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Program
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PRDP	Peace Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
UCDP GED	Uppsala Conflict Data Program Georeferenced Event Dataset
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Forces
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPOLET	Universal Post O-Level Education and Training
UPPET	Universal Post Primary Education and Training
USE	Universal Secondary Education
USh	Ugandan Shilling

## Executive Summary

This is a mixed-methods case study into the relationship between investment in educational equity and peacebuilding in Uganda, carried out as part of UNICEF's Peacebuilding and Education Advocacy (PBEA) program. In the aftermath of a long-running conflict in the north of the country, the government has instituted policy reforms to equalize educational delivery for marginalized populations, and to promote peacebuilding. Our research seeks to determine, empirically, the nature of educational inequalities in Uganda, to outline the policy framework that supports educational equity and peacebuilding, and determine how effective these policies have been in achieving their stated objectives. Our quantitative study, using data on horizontal inequalities in education and educational inputs, is followed by qualitative fieldwork that was conducted between November and December of 2014 in ten northern districts of Uganda. We held interviews and focus group discussions with educational stakeholders including officials with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), local education administrators and secondary school teachers, to solicit their perceptions on the effects of policies and the nature of educational inequality today.

The framework around the issues of educational equity and peacebuilding includes several policies which are of interest to this study: Universal Secondary Education (USE), the Peace, Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP) (both introduced in 2007), teacher recruitment policies, as well national curriculum and language of instruction. USE seeks to reduce barriers to secondary school participation by providing public funding subsidizing school tuition fees. The PRDP specifically targets the north of the country, and seeks to reduce disparities in infrastructure investment between the north and the rest of the country, in the context of a post-conflict environment. Central recruitment and deployment of secondary teachers serves, in part, to strengthen equity in the quality of instruction, and create a national character to education at the secondary level, exposing students to cultures and ideas from beyond their local community.

Our quantitative data on disparities in educational attainment based on ethnicity, religion and across subnational regions show that since 1991, education inequalities have been decreasing in Uganda, as more groups have attained access to higher levels of education. Across the north however, inequalities have remained at about the same level, aside from Karamoja where they have come down from a disproportionately high level. Qualitative findings from focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews indicate that despite the policy and infrastructure improvements, Uganda still faces a host of challenges in the equitable delivery of educational services in the aftermath of conflict in the north. They also provide glimpses of where policies and programming were effective, and lessons for organizations seeking to promote peacebuilding through education programming in northern Uganda.

- **USE** – Despite its contribution to raising secondary enrollment in the country as a whole, USE is largely inadequate to address equity gaps and meet the needs of students in northern Uganda. Respondents did not attribute modest increases in enrollment at their schools to the introduction of the policy. Importantly, *respondents believed that parents and community members needed to do more to support the education of youth.*
- **PRDP** – Despite government efforts to give PRDP a fresh start following corruption charges and resulting changes in its management structure, widespread perceptions of corruption continue in northern Uganda. Particularly in the North and West Nile regions, respondents continue to view the whole of the north as severely disadvantaged in terms of access to educational, and indeed all, social services. *Some respondents volunteered the effect this had of producing feelings in*

*individuals of feeling “less Ugandan” than those living in regions closer to Kampala.* Resource and infrastructure shortages, though not necessarily related to PRDP, were found to be a primary cause of destructive student strikes in West Nile and the Lango sub-region.

- *Teacher recruitment and deployment* – The central recruitment policy has arguably produced a positive effect in Karamoja, where there is little manpower to staff the schools, and across all districts among head teachers, who are believed to be uniquely positioned to impartially manage conflicts at the schools. That said, very few secondary teachers were found to come from communities far from the school district, although many had taught in other regions and were able to provide comparative insights on the nature of disparities between regions. *Overall, it was felt that teaching positions in northern regions, particularly Karamoja, were less desirable for qualified teachers.* A central hiring freeze has resulted in primarily local hiring by the school PTAs, while efforts to address inequities, such as the “hard to reach” allowance, appear to be insufficient to draw quality teachers.
- *Curriculum* – Among our respondents, the implementation of the thematic curriculum, whereby children learn in a local language during the earliest grades of primary, is universally negative. Secondary teachers felt that the implementation of the curriculum exacerbates inequalities facing disadvantaged communities. *Underlying these perceptions was the desirability of learning in English,* or in some cases Swahili, for preparation for the job market and integration into a more globalized community. There is indication that the sequential nature of the curriculum and the use of local language misses the opportunity to create a shared understanding of national identity from an early age.
- *Peace education and extracurricular programming* – Respondents were wholly positive about the peacebuilding, tolerance-promoting effects of extracurricular clubs and activities such as peace clubs, patriotism clubs, debate clubs, sports and other activities. The feeling was that these were spaces for children from different ethnic, linguistic or religious backgrounds to come together and learn how to work with one another. Gaining “exposure” through field visits to other regions was seen as a highly desirable way for children to learn more about their country and the other groups of people living within its borders. *There is a significant space for local and international organizations to invest in peacebuilding programming through schools, particularly at the secondary level.* The intentions and rationale behind existing child-friendly and peacebuilding programs, especially those dealing with alternatives to corporal punishment, must be better communicated to education stakeholders.

## Introduction

This case study is part of a global mixed-methods research project examining the relationship between inequality in education and violent conflict, carried out by FHI 360 Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC). Other elements of the project include a large-scale quantitative study that captures ethnic, religious, and subnational inequality and explores its effect on the likelihood of conflict. The country case studies, including the current case of Uganda, help address the flip side of this relationship, by examining the transformative potential of investment in education for peacebuilding.

Using the case of Uganda, we seek to extract lessons that can prove relevant to the field of education for peacebuilding at large. This case study focuses specifically on northern Uganda, the region with recent history of prolonged violence, where a host of government and donor funded programs have taken place in the effort to strengthen equity and peace. Through a combination of quantitative analysis of background data, document review, and interviews and focus groups with education administrators, NGO and donor representatives, and teachers, we offer insights on the contributions of these programs to equity and peaceful development in communities of northern Uganda.

We pose the following *research questions*:

1. What is the nature of horizontal educational inequalities in Uganda?
2. What is the policy framework in Uganda that supports educational equity and peacebuilding?
3. How effective have these policies been in reducing inequalities and strengthening peace?

We address these questions through a combination of methods. First, we examine the quantitative data on education from several surveys and census sources for the three northern regions, to identify the dimensions of inequality and examine time trends. Secondly, we review the existing policy framework that captures efforts in strengthening equity in education and advancing peacebuilding. Finally, we look at the nature of inequality and the impact of equity and peacebuilding efforts as they are perceived by education stakeholders in the target regions.

The paper is structured as follows. We begin with an overview of conflict and horizontal educational inequalities in Uganda. We then present our theoretical framework, which treats investment in equity as consisting of “hard” financial and resource inputs, and “soft” curriculum and programmatic efforts aimed at peacebuilding. We then present the methodology we use for the study, which is rooted in a quantitative analysis of current inequalities in educational inputs and outcomes. We then present a policy overview to detail which explicit activities the government of Uganda has undertaken to address inequalities and promote peacebuilding in the education system. We then present our main qualitative findings, highlighting the perceptions of key education stakeholders in Uganda in regards to the investments outlined above. We end with a conclusion and recommendations of policy and programmatic implications resulting from our study.

## Background

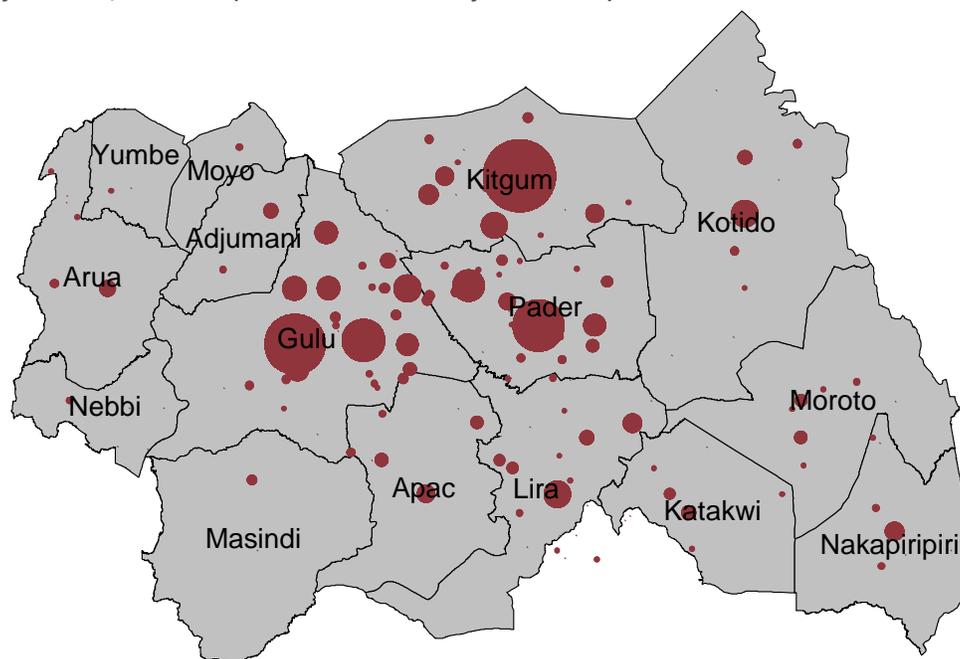
Like many countries on the sub-continent, Uganda is a country of great ethnic diversity and a long history of conflict, often – but not always – fought along ethnic lines. The nature of the conflict differs across the north of the country, ranging from cattle rustling tribal conflicts in Karamoja, to land disputes and resettlement issues for returnees and former combatants of the long-running conflict between the LRA

and Government of Uganda forces in Acholi and Lango regions, to border clashes and land wrangles in West Nile (Smith & Knutzen, 2011). These past or in some cases lingering conflicts continue to affect inter-group relationships and disrupt the provision of social services, including education. In this section, we provide a brief overview of the historical and geographic context for the policies on equity and peacebuilding.

### Historical context

The roots of education inequality in Uganda are thought to be in part a result of historical disparities between the Nilotic-speaking northern and Bantu-speaking southern regions of the country. Violent conflict has defined much of Uganda's history post-independence, and the geo-referenced conflict data on Uganda (Sundberg & Melander, 2013) analyzed by EPDC, shows that the regions of the north collectively had the greatest number of conflict events and casualties between 1989 and 2010.

*Figure 1. Conflict events, 1989-2010 (District boundaries as of 2002 Census)*



After independence from Great Britain in 1962, kingdoms which historically had wielded considerable power were loathe to submit to a newly delineated central political authority. As Kustenbauder (2010) notes, these nationalist feelings were exacerbated through “byproducts of British indirect rule, religious divisions...and tensions linked to the system of multi-party politics” that began with independence (p. 455). North-south tensions were demonstrated even with the first power-sharing agreement stipulated by the newly formed constitution when Prime Minister Milton Obote, from the northern Lango sub-region, was served with an order from the president (who was also leader of the southern Buganda kingdom) to withdraw. A bloody battle ensued, resulting in a consolidation of power by Obote, who was backed by the military which historically drew its ranks from the north.

In 1971, General Idi Amin orchestrated a successful coup d’etat, which unseated power from Obote and led to a particularly brutal reign of terror. Although initially seen as a strong and charismatic leader who gained sympathy from Ugandans for actions such as the mass expulsion of the country’s East Asian business elite (Mutibwa, 1992), his rule was increasingly marked by personal rivalries and paranoia, which

in part led to the systematic slaughter of northern Acholis within the military ranks, and eventually all of those he saw as challenging his power. Amin, himself from the far north-western region of West Nile, was responsible for thousands of deaths (ACCS, 2013), and was chased from power by a contingent of Acholi and Langi soldiers who formed the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). This resulted in the re-installation of Milton Obote in 1980, who was quickly challenged by a contingent of southerners under the auspices of the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by eventual-president Yoweri Museveni. This period during the early to mid-1980s was also marked by bloody entanglements, and one particularly grievous example was the massacre of over 300,000 civilians and NRA soldiers in central Luwero district, under Obote (Kustenbauder, 2010).

In 1986, Museveni was installed as President of the Republic. While far from marking an end to violence, the central and southern areas closer to Kampala have endured relative stability during the period since this time. Museveni has instituted economic reforms seen as amenable to those pushed by major international financial institutions. The economy has been growing, and more importantly, these southern and central regions have been relatively conflict-free. The same cannot be said for the north, where after Museveni took power, a long and bloody insurgency led by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) brutalized civilians and forced millions into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. It is commonly assumed that the LRA was begun as a religious movement to instill a government that acts in accordance with biblical principles, although as Kustenbauder notes, no member of the organization has ever articulated clear or realistic goals (p. 463). Although the LRA has been chased out of northern Uganda and IDP camps have been closed, in its aftermath the conflict continues to receive significant international media attention for its brutal nature and recruitment of child soldiers.

In recent years the North of the country has received significant investment from both the national government and international donors, with the goal of improving infrastructure and socio-economic conditions there relative to the rest of the country. Despite this, recent conflict assessments have noted a number of conflict drivers. These include land disputes, particularly those resulting from the closing of the IDP camps, border skirmishes, disputes over resource extraction such as oil, and disputes over livestock (IPSS Gulu University, 2014). As part of its Peace Recovery and Development Program (PRDP), the government instituted an amnesty program for returned LRA soldiers, and a comprehensive demobilization plan, which resulted in the confiscation of significant numbers of weapons, particularly in the North East (ACCS, 2013).

### Inequalities and ethnic diversity

The global research that FHI 360 has conducted for UNICEF explores horizontal inequalities as a mechanism for fueling conflict over time. We distinguish between inequality, or the social condition that results from an unequal distribution of scarce resources across all members of society, and inequity, which refers to the lack of fairness or justice in distributing resources to individuals who are at a disadvantage. Horizontal inequalities are distinguished from vertical ones in that they are a group-based measure. Rather than vertical measures such as the Gini coefficient of income inequality, which take individuals and rank them in hierarchical fashion, horizontal measures of wealth, education or measures of health such as infant mortality, are calculated for a social group as a whole. The literature on horizontal inequalities is borne out of earlier research that failed to find a link between inequality, typically captured as a Gini index of income, and violent conflict (Stewart, 2010). In this sense, it is a collective identity group to which

individuals belong, and the status of such a group relative to a larger geographical area is consequential for fuelling conflict. For FHI 360's global study, the primary measures of inequality are those relating to the educational attainment of religious and ethnic groups, as well as between those living in different subnational regions of a country.

There are three main religious groups in Uganda; Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. According to the most recent census in 2002, Protestant religions collectively account for roughly 43% of the population, compared to 42% Catholic and 12% Muslim (IPUMS dataset). While historical power struggles between the Catholic (somewhat more prevalent in the north) and Anglican (central) churches have played out in Uganda (Mutibwa, 1992), and religion has arguably played a role in the formation of the LRA (Vinci, 2007), religious divisions are not typically seen as major conflict drivers in Uganda.

Ethnic and regional inequalities, on the other hand, have played an important role in driving conflict throughout Uganda's history post-independence. Major historical kingdoms such as the Buganda in the central areas, the Toro and Bunyoro in the west, and Acholi and Langi in the north were brought together under one central authority with the first constitution in 1962. Although it is acknowledged that ethnicity can be a fluid concept (Brown & Langer, 2010), for the purposes of our study, ethnic groups are those as defined according to the census and household survey datasets analyzed, which are fairly consistent over time and often correspond to major historic kingdoms of Uganda. Ethnic diversity is high in Uganda, with over 50 ethnic groups recorded in the 2002 census. The Baganda were the largest ethnic group in the 1991 and 2002 censuses, followed by the Banyakole, the Bakiga, the Basoga, and the Iteso. However it is important to note that there is a high degree of overlap to geographical boundaries and the ethnic group populations contained within. For example in Gulu district in 2002, Acholi and Langi represented over 95% of the population by ethnic group, although they are not among the five largest at the national level (see appendix). As of 2002, ethnic group distribution across districts is relatively homogenous in the North<sup>1</sup>, with Acholi and Langi the dominant ethnic groups. Karamoja and West Nile districts are more diverse<sup>2</sup>.

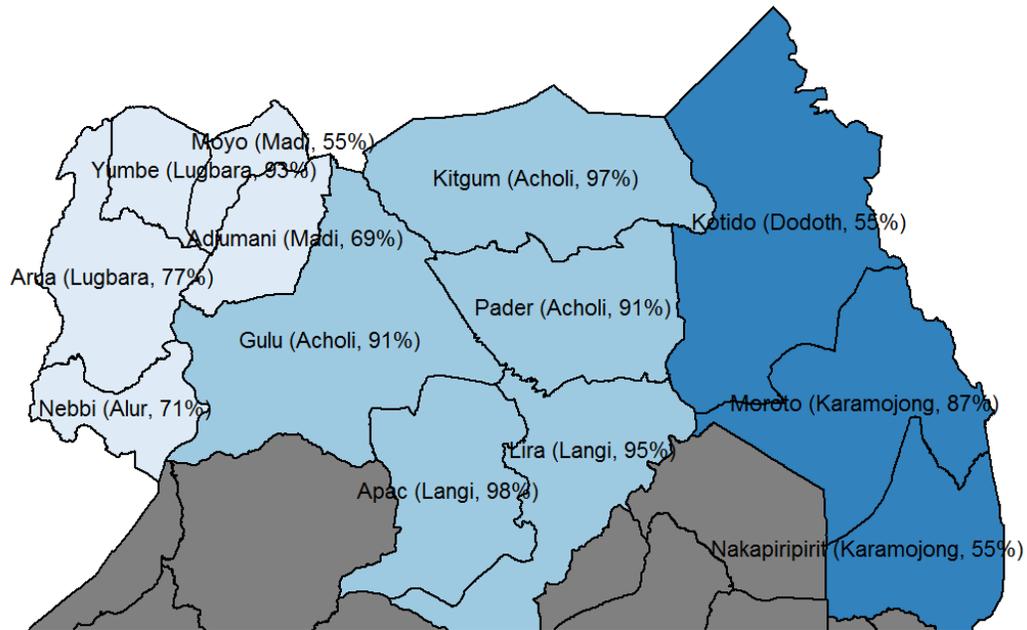
The ethnic composition at the district level has likely changed since 2002. Districts in Uganda, the first level of government administrative division, have undergone major boundary transformations in recent decades, resulting in greater fractionalization: there were 39 districts according to the 1991 census, 56 in 2002 and the most recent data from the Ministry of Education show 112 in 2013. The fractionalization brought the district lines closer to village lines, creating an even higher level of separation between communities.

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<sup>1</sup> The three regions of the north are based on the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and hereafter referred to as North (Acholi/Lango), West Nile and Karamoja.

<sup>2</sup> Notably, some surveys group the Ngakaramajong-speaking tribes into one a single ethnicity, while others separate them

Figure 2. Ethnic concentration in Northern Uganda districts (Census 2002 data)



**Summary** The post-independence history of Uganda has been marked by violent struggle, particularly in the north. As one scholar remarks; “It has been the tragedy of Ugandan politics that violence became a solution of first rather than last resort, in which every war can be justified since it is always embedded in a history of attack and counterattack, of suffering and revenge” (Van Acker, 2004, p. 336). While inequalities between north and the rest of the country have long been recognized, equity-focused policy initiatives undertaken by the Ugandan government in the aftermath of long-running violence have brought renewed interest in the nature of the relationship between inequality, conflict and peace-building. Our research focuses on horizontal inequalities in educational attainment, particularly those based on ethnicity, and seeks to address some of the unanswered questions about these relationships.

## Theoretical framework

The literature on peacebuilding emphasizes the role of schools in restoring normalcy and increasing opportunities for people to improve their livelihoods. Historical data show that societies with low overall access to education are more likely to experience conflict (FHI 360, forthcoming), and that schooling can both create inequalities as well as mitigate them. Education forms the cornerstone of group identity and defines a sense of belonging to a wider community larger than one’s immediate family (Darden & Grzymala-Busse, 2011; Darden, 2011). Through curriculum choices, such as the promotion of certain historical narratives, and language of instruction policies, schooling both reflects and shapes identity politics. Education may instill a shared national identity, respect for diversity, or a sense of global citizenship (Reimers, 2006). It can also be used to indoctrinate hatred or marginalize particular groups (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). During the colonial era, education was often used to segregate elites from the masses, and served as a tool for creating groups with vastly different access to political power. Unequal access to quality education – or to schooling more broadly – is in most societies a path to disenfranchisement and marginalization, and even subservience.

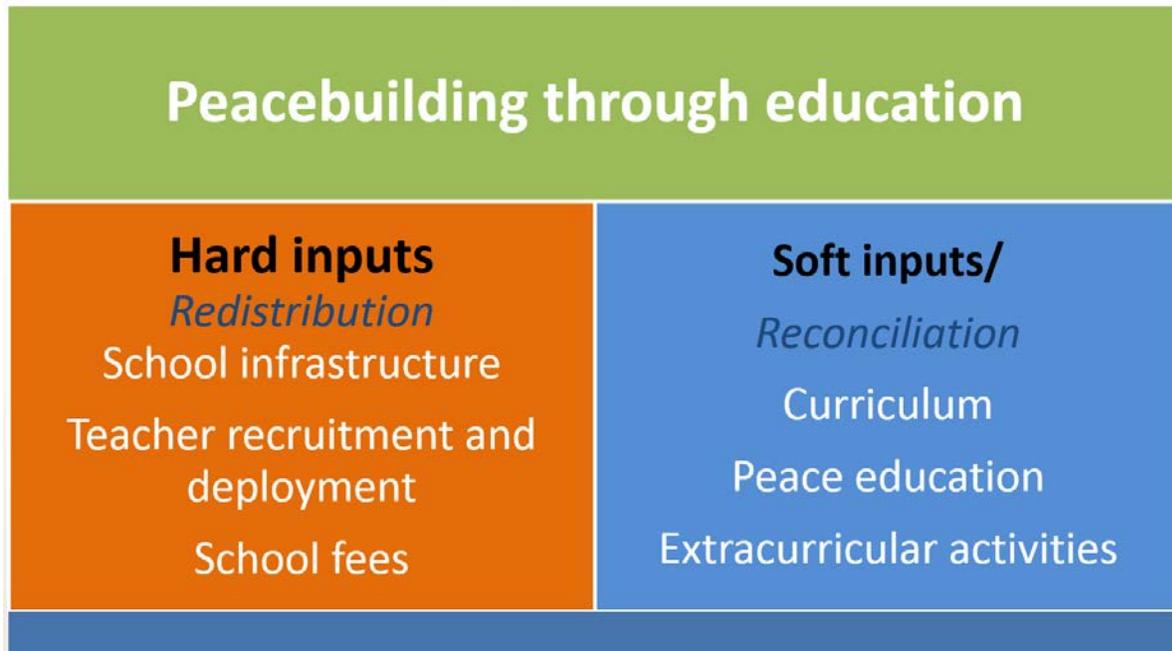
The notion of shared national identity is central to the study of peace and conflict. In multiethnic societies, competing group identities may interfere with the sense of shared culture and allegiance to the national institutions, customs, and boundaries. Shared national identities, on the other hand, support the development of functioning state institutions (Kaplan, 2009), facilitate effective public goods provision (Laitin, 2007), and promote allegiance to the state rather than groups (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Mass schooling in such contexts helps create a shared narrative and unites disparate ethnic groups, or to the contrary, it may reinforce the domination of one group over the other. Education is therefore an inherently political and cultural process, with a profound impact on the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in society more broadly (Brown, 2011). Through curriculum choices and policies on the language of instruction, schools project and cultivate shared narratives and either expand or diminish tribal and familial spaces.

Despite the general consensus on the importance of education for nation-building, there is little evidence on the peacebuilding effects of education in post-conflict environments. There are a number of conceptual frameworks that position schooling as a key element of relief and reconstruction. However, this literature is primarily composed of advocacy and policy materials, and empirical research on the role of education in shaping positive peace (Galtung, 1979) is confined mainly to ethnographic studies. After the seminal work of Bush and Saltarelli (2000), research on peacebuilding has been relatively limited. In the Smith, McCandless, Paulson, and Wheaton (2011) review completed for UNICEF, evidence on education policies explicitly addressing inequality as a way of strengthening peace has been captured mostly in policy publications and less through empirical research.

The research questions driving the study seek to uncover the relationship between investment in educational equity and peacebuilding in communities affected by recent conflict. Investment is defined broadly as targeted efforts by the national government or outside parties with the purpose to strengthening equity and improving peacebuilding.

We distinguish investment into that of “hard inputs” – investment in infrastructure and demand-boosting policies such as fee abolition or scholarship as a way of improving equity of access, and “soft inputs”, or investment in curriculum, materials, classroom-based and extracurricular activities with the goal of shaping a shared cultural identity (reducing the concept of the “other”), the minimization of tribal or ethnic prejudice, and the development of frameworks for handling disputes. We argue that the accomplishment of peacebuilding objectives through education requires investment in both types of inputs, with clear linkages between these parallel efforts.

Figure 3. The dual approach to peacebuilding through education



Investment in hard inputs and provision of resources is a critical measure in alleviating regional inequalities and reducing the potential for resource-driven conflicts. In the context of education, the provision of school infrastructure also serves to normalize daily routines and expand access to quality education for conflict-affected households. On the other hand, efforts focused on the shaping of a common cultural identity serve to reduce ethnic and tribal divisions, especially critical if past conflict took place along these lines.

We approach the Uganda case with this framework of dual investment: on the one hand, investment in *hard inputs* designed to strengthen equity of access to school resources, such as infrastructure, teachers, and fees; and on the other, investment in *soft inputs*, or efforts aimed at the development of a common national identity, peace education, and other activities that use education to break traditional identity fault lines and create spaces for dialogue and mutual learning.

## Methodology

This case study includes a quantitative and a qualitative element. The quantitative analysis was performed on data from household surveys, censuses, and the education management information system (EMIS), while the qualitative data collection involved key informant interviews and focus groups. The quantitative analysis provides information on the nature and trends in educational inequality in Uganda, as well as on the investments that have been made in improving equity in access to education resources. The methodology for the secondary data analysis, as well as a full breakdown of emerging trends with the distribution of educational attainment across ethnic and religious groups, are described in the Uganda

Educational Inequality Data Abstract<sup>3</sup>. The following describes the methodology for the qualitative field portion of the case study.

### Selection of districts

We place the focus of the case study on northern Uganda, the broad geographic area that has historically lagged behind the rest of the country in its economic development and the provision of social services, including education<sup>4</sup>. The region has also suffered a long and difficult history of recurring violent conflict throughout the five decades since the country gained its independence. The most recent cycle of hostilities, fueled by the LRA insurgency, ceased in 2006, “thus opening the doors for recovery” (ACCS, 2013, p. xii).

*Table 1. Characteristics of the selected districts*

Region	District	Conflict and ethnicity characteristics			Education characteristics		
		Latest conflict recorded (year) <sup>6</sup>	Fatalities (1989-2010)	Ethnic majority <sup>7</sup>	Total enrollment, secondary	% change in Pupil – Teacher Ratio (2004-2013)	% Enrolled in secondary <sup>8</sup>
Karamoja	Moroto	2008	613	Karimojong	1,928	0	9
	Nakapiripirit	2008	242	Karimojong	1,160	+7	5
	Kotido	2009	550	Dodoth	1,940	+16	5
North/Acholi	Gulu	2006	3,343	Acholi	17,115	-2	31
	Pader	2007	1,442	Acholi	3,237	-4	11
North/Lango	Lira	2005	1,123	Langi	19,491	+6	19
	Oyam	2005	3	Langi	4,709	+4	9
West Nile	Arua	2003	338	Lugbara	23,475	+1	23
	Moyo	1996	25	Madi	4,610	+1	10
	Nebbi	2008	31	Alur	8,627	+8	18
UGANDA		2010	17,011	Baganda	1,362,739		26

Our universe of target districts is defined by eligibility for inclusion in the PRDP, which captures the Northeast (Karamoja), Central North (Acholi/Lango), and Northwest (West Nile). From this Universe, we select districts using several factors:

- 1) *The magnitude of hostilities*, measured in total number of battle-related deaths in the district, as reported by the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (UCDP GED). This was accomplished for districts as they were defined in 2002. All sites experienced some level of hostilities, and our sample includes districts with the largest total number of deaths in the north.
- 2) *Ethnic group composition*: we strove to capture the diversity of the region by including districts with different majority ethnic groups. Again, in at least one case the ethnic majority shifted

<sup>3</sup> Available upon request: epdc@fhi360.org

<sup>4</sup> The history of the North-South divide is well documented; among others, sources include (Smith & Knutzen, 2011; ACCS, 2013)

<sup>5</sup> EMIS

<sup>6</sup> UCDP GED – measures conflict for the time period 1989-2010.

<sup>7</sup> IPUMS (2002)

<sup>8</sup> Gross enrollment rate, 2011 EMIS (2013 not available by district)

following redistricting (Kotido was majority Dodoth, now majority Jie) – but without detriment to our overall composition.

- 3) *Size of the population and school enrollment*, gathered from EMIS data for the most recent year available (2013), for primary and secondary schools. The sample includes three larger urban districts and seven smaller rural ones.
- 4) Gross enrollment rates for secondary education, as a proxy of *equity in access to schooling*. The sample in two regions (and Acholi and Lango subregions of the North) includes schools that are at the higher end of the spectrum in secondary enrollment, as well as schools at the low end. In Karamoja, secondary enrollment is low in all districts, so this indicator was not factored in selection.

The resulting sample of districts is presented in Table 1. A total of ten districts were selected, reflecting a composition of districts that range all of the selection criteria. A total of 18 schools were included in the study across the ten districts. In the majority of districts, two schools per district were purposefully selected by FHI 360, in consultation with local CBOs and district education offices. In Kotido and Oyam, although two schools were initially sampled, teacher availability and exam schedule allowed for only one school per district to be included. In line with the overall focus of the research on inequality in educational opportunities among youth<sup>9</sup>, the majority of the selected schools were secondary schools (with two exceptions, one being a primary school and the other a vocational training school). All but one secondary school were government-funded schools. Because of the purposeful selection of the sites, results may not be generalizable to all schools in northern Uganda.

### Participant selection

Education stakeholders targeted for this study included teachers, officials at MoES in Kampala, and district education officials. While in country, the researchers were able to gain access to parents of current students, youth groups, NGO and local community organization representatives, who provided background information that was helpful in understanding of the local context.

**Table 2. Categories of respondents and methods of data collection.**

Type of respondent	Count	Type of data collection
Teachers	125	Focus group discussions
Central Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)	3	Interview
Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)	1	Interview
District Education Officers/District Inspector of Schools	12	Interview
NGO/CSO representatives	7	Interview and focus group discussions
Parents	8	Focus group discussions
Youth	15	Interview and focus group discussions

In each district, the research team interviewed district education officials or district inspectors of schools, school head teachers, and conducted focus groups with teachers. At least two focus groups with teachers were conducted at all but four of the schools. Focus groups were led by an interviewer of the same gender, unless the respondents requested otherwise or the number of female teachers did not allow for

<sup>9</sup> Our quantitative analysis (FHI 360, forthcoming) focuses on the educational attainment inequalities for the population of 15-24 year olds.

a separate focus group. In two schools, one on one interviews replaced focus groups due to small number of teachers available. In all schools, teachers were asked or permitted to participate by their head teacher, who did not then stay for the focus group discussion. Participants provided their informed consent to being interviewed or included as part of the focus group.

As Table 2 shows, the qualitative data collection reached a total 170 stakeholders at all levels of the education system, with the majority of respondents being teachers of secondary schools. The next largest group was the district education officials, followed by parents, NGO representatives, and Ministry officials at the central level. Although our study made an attempt to include perspectives from as wide array of respondents as possible, teachers and local government administrators were the focus for two primary reasons. For one, these were the stakeholders assumed to be at a position best able to view levels of inputs and policy effects at the school level, in line with our theoretical framework. Additionally, secondary teachers are recruited centrally in Uganda and so possess a unique vantage point with which to observe levels of inequality between different identity groups, and particularly between subnational regions. Indeed as will be demonstrated, those teachers who did live and work in non-northern regions often had rich and informed perspectives on the nature of educational equity. The disproportionate focus on these two types of respondents should be taken into consideration when interpreting findings from this study.

## Educational inequality in Uganda: general trends

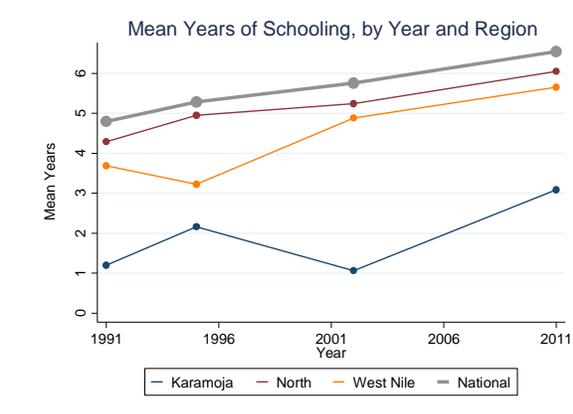
To examine the nature of education inequality in Uganda, we begin with an extensive review of educational attainment data for young adults across the country, using publicly available data sources such as household surveys and censuses. We focus on a single measure of educational attainment – mean years of schooling – to capture overall access to education, as well as inequalities in education across the country. We follow this analysis with a brief snapshot of investments made in the educational opportunity at the post-primary level that would most directly benefit this age group, with a focus on the target regions. In this section, we provide the main elements of this analysis.

*General patterns and trends.* Using data from multiple sources, we constructed a time series for the years 1991- 2011, measuring the changes in educational attainment of youth and young adults. Overall, educational attainment for those aged 15-34 has grown (Figure 4) and within-region inequality (i.e. disparity in mean years of schooling across identity groups residing in the region) has declined since 1991 in all three regions of northern Uganda (Figure 7<sup>10</sup>). This is consistent with global trends and is an expected outcome of the expansion of access to mass education: as greater numbers of individuals accumulate years of schooling, education becomes less concentrated in any one group. Note, however, that our quantitative measures of educational equity are blind to the issue of quality of schooling provided, as the emphasis is placed on access.

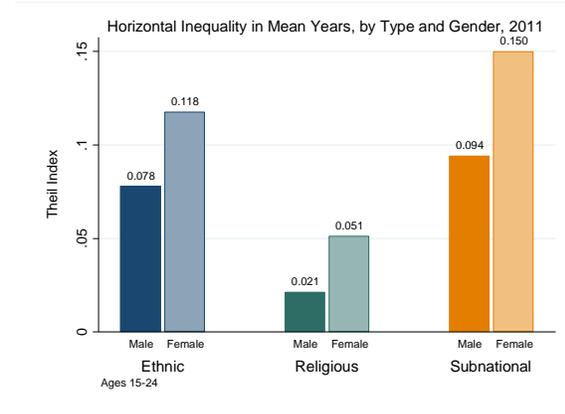
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<sup>10</sup> We use the Theil index which is a measure that captures the differences between each group mean and the mean for the country, for a given group type. See Appendix D for a more detailed description of the measure.

**Figure 4. Change in educational attainment, Uganda**



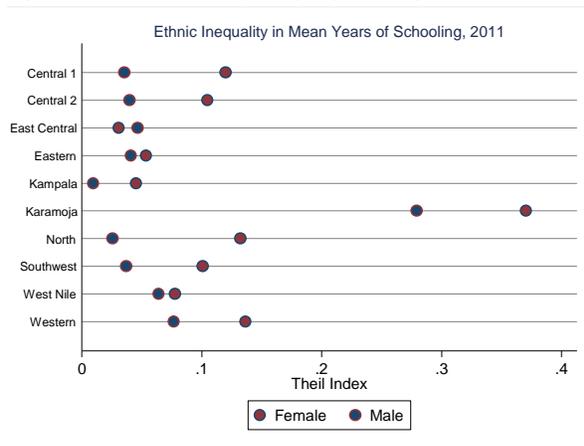
**Figure 5. Horizontal inequalities in Uganda**



In our analysis, data on mean years of schooling are disaggregated across several categories including region, ethnic group, religion, age, and gender, and subsequently used to construct indices of horizontal inequality in education. We use the Theil index applied to mean years of schooling as our key measure of horizontal educational inequality in Uganda. The choice of the measure follows the convention in the literature, and allows to gauge the disparities in the stock of education gained by an average member of a given ethnic or religious group, or subnational unit. As Figure 5 demonstrates, inequality is highest between subnational regions<sup>11</sup>, followed by ethnic inequality (defined by language spoken or self-reported ethnicity). Religion does not appear to be a salient category for inequality in education.

**Regional patterns of inequality.** As we establish the greatest dimensions of educational inequality (subnational, or between regions), followed by ethnic group inequality, we move to review these patterns and trends at the level of our target regions: Karamoja, North, and West Nile.

**Figure 6. Horizontal inequality in focus regions**



**Figure 7. Trends in educational inequality by region**

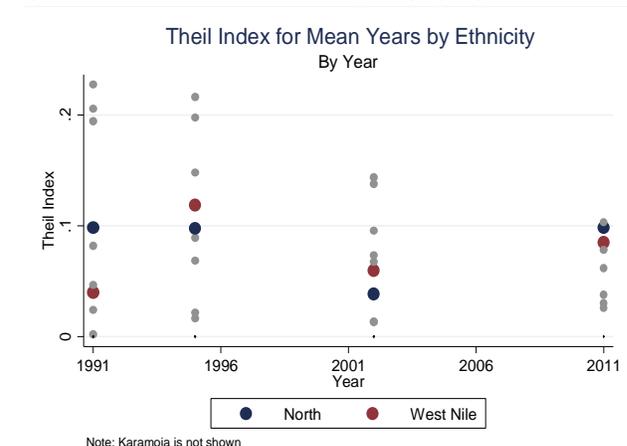


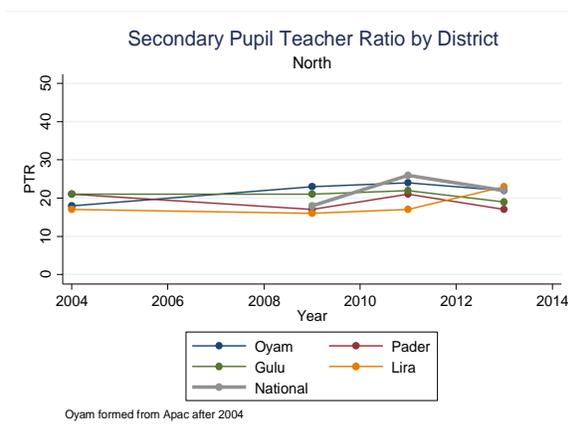
Figure 6 shows the levels of ethnic inequality among 15-34 year olds by region in Uganda, based on data from the 2011 DHS household survey, disaggregated by gender across all subnational regions. Compared to the rest of the country, Karamoja is the region with the greatest degree of ethnic inequality, as already-

<sup>11</sup> Subnational regions in survey and census datasets are captured at a higher administrative level than the actual district level.

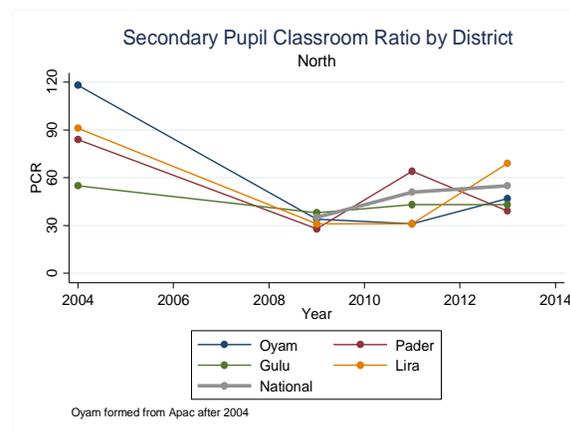
low schooling levels for all groups in this region are compounded by particularly low levels among the Karamajong and related tribes. The North and West Nile region also exhibit high degrees of horizontal inequality. Ethnic inequality between females is greater than between males across all regions, consistent with global patterns. Again we see Karamoja is the highest, with most other regions grouped together at a Theil index of about .05 to .1. There are fairly large differences between males and females in terms of inequality; some regions, such as East Central, Eastern and West Nile, show even levels of inequality between the sexes, while most others do not.

In terms of time trends, there is a general downward trajectory that can be seen across all regions of Uganda between 1991 and 2011. Figure 7 shows our inequality measure for 15-34 year olds over time; the grey dots are non-northern regions, and over time they move closer together, representing a decrease in inequality. Our northern regions, however, have either stayed the same (North) or increased slightly (West Nile). Not pictured is Karamoja where the level of inequality is too large to be shown in comparison with the other regions, although there has been a significant drop there, mirroring the drops seen in other regions. The drop in inequality levels across the country in turn mirror global trends, as increases in access to schooling mean education has been less and less reserved for the “elite”. In addition to inequalities in educational levels, we also examine the trends and patterns in levels of educational investment at the secondary level, using data from the EMIS system.

**Figure 8. Trends in Pupil-teacher ratio, North region**



**Figure 9. Trends in Pupil-classroom ratio, North region**



**Educational inputs: Trends in secondary education.** The efforts of the Government of Uganda and the donors on school infrastructure provision, both as part of PRDP as well as routine projects of MoES, have resulted in some improvements in resource availability in recent years. A longitudinal analysis of EMIS data for targeted districts shows a downward or flat trajectory on pupil-teacher ratios and pupil classroom ratios at the primary level across all three regions, between 2004 and 2013. Figure 8 shows pupil-teacher and pupil-classroom ratios for target districts in the North region over time. While pupil-teacher ratios are relatively low and have stayed the same since 2004, pupil-classroom ratios have come down somewhat. Despite this, infrastructure needs remain high, with pupil-classroom ratios as high as 108/1 in Karamoja, and 70/1 in North and West Nile regions (see Appendix C for a full regional comparison of inputs). Equity of resource availability between districts has improved within regions, with the exception of Karamoja, where Kotido has high input-pupil ratios.

*Secondary education budget.* Secondary education captures a sizable proportion of government resources allocated to education. According to the Ministerial Policy Statement for 2013, secondary education is projected to account for 45% of the education budget in 2012-13, down from 51% in 2011-12. At over 150 Billion Ugandan Shillings (USh), the secondary education budget represents over three times as much as is budgeted for primary and pre-primary combined, and receives the largest share of the budget by sector, including higher education. Expenditures at the secondary level are largely donor-funded in Uganda (UPPET APL1 2014) (see USE section on World Bank funding, for example). Budget projections for 2013 indicate that roughly 81% of the budget at the secondary level comes from donors. This is compared to a total ministry budget that is funded over 50% by the Government of Uganda. While investments in secondary relative to other sectors are high, the heavy emphasis on donor funding has implications for long-term equity challenges.

*Conclusion.* Our analysis of quantitative data shows that horizontal inequalities have come down but remain high in Karamoja, while they have stayed about the same in the two other northern regions. This is despite the overall increase in access to education for populations in the three regions of the north. For Uganda, among the three types of inequality we look at—inequality in schooling for ethnic groups, religious groups, and across subnational regions, inequalities across regions are most salient, while those by ethnic group are the next largest. The large inequalities in education across regions, followed by those among ethnic groups, were also emphasized by teachers and other stakeholders during interviews and focus groups. This is true despite the limited improvements in infrastructure reflected in the EMIS data. The inability of the government to effect a change in perceptions of people in the north through its investments in peacebuilding or equity initiatives indicates that a major goal of the project remains unfulfilled. In the next section we explore this in more depth.

## Policy Framework for Educational Equity and Peacebuilding

Investment in educational equity and peacebuilding in northern Uganda is governed by a number of policy initiatives, and builds on a complex arrangement of on-budget donor support, off-budget projects directly funded by donors, domestic resources, and a number of civil society initiatives. We examine policies and programs that fall within the two aspects outlined in our theoretical framework: investment in “hard inputs”, or access to educational resources, and investment in “soft inputs”, or shaping social cohesion and attitudes that promote equity and peace among different identity groups. These include, on the one hand, the PRDP and USE, and on the other, the national curriculum and language of instruction policies. This section describes the policies and their aspects as they relate to our research questions. The following section provides insights from field data collection on the emerging outcomes from their implementation.

### Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda

The PRDP is a large portfolio program aimed at bringing the northern regions into parity with the rest of the country and strengthening its potential for peaceful development. It was launched in 2007, with implementation reaching full scale in 2009 and completing the first phase in 2010. The first programmatic cycle was followed by PRDP II which started in 2011 and is scheduled to run through 2015. According to a representative from the OPM, the primary funding body of the program, talks were underway at the time of data collection for this study regarding PRDP III and its funding modalities. At this time, the program has four strategic objectives, including:

- 1) The consolidation of state authority,
- 2) Empowerment of communities,

- 3) Revitalization of the economy, and
- 4) Peacebuilding and reconciliation, which includes public education, amnesty and demobilization efforts (OPM, 2011).

The budget of PRDP I was estimated at \$606.5 million over three years, while PRDP II was placed at \$414 million, also spread over three years. These initial planned levels of funding were cut short, however, following reports of widespread corruption and wastage at the highest levels of the administration (Office of Government Audit, 2012)

Education became a program area of PRDP II, although school construction had taken place under PRDP I. There is also a stated emphasis on peacebuilding through education in the 4<sup>th</sup> strategic objective as outlined above, although funding for these types of programs remain a small portion of the overall budget, and even OPM admitted progress on this objective has been slow (ACCS, 2013). The bulk of PRDP funding is the budget grant, which includes on-budget donor assistance as well as domestic resources (exact level of domestic resources unclear). In addition to the budget grant, PRDP serves as an umbrella framework for separately funded “special projects”, including the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Program (KIDDP), the Karamoja Livelihoods Program (KALIP), Agricultural Livelihood Recovery Programme for Northern Uganda (ALREP), funded by the European Union, Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF I and II), funded by the World Bank and DFID. The corruption scandal that broke out in 2012 resulted in donors pulling on-budget resources from PRDP II and damaged the reputation of the program for the remainder of PRDP II implementation period.

The emphasis of the PRDP in the Education program area is on the provision of school infrastructure, with the construction of classrooms, staff houses, and latrines as the main outputs of the effort. The PRDP funds are administered by OPM, which transfers most of the funding directly to the PRDP districts, bypassing the sectoral ministries at the central level. According to the PRDP II Plan, districts are required to submit District Development Plans (DDP) requesting funds for specific district-level priorities, in accordance with the overall framework. Upon receipt of funds, the districts report on a quarterly basis to OPM and the line ministries, which are kept informed through a PRDP Monitoring Committee.

A 2013 evaluation of the PRDP program found that among respondents from northern districts, 63.7% felt that other regions receive more benefits and investment from the government than their own district (International Alert, 2013, p. 8). The top reasons cited for being worse off included the effects of war, corruption, unfair resource allocation, and bad leadership. It is clear that several years into the second phase of the PRDP, the national government has yet to win the sympathies of northerners in the aftermath of the long-running conflict there.

### Universal Secondary Education

The USE policy, adopted by the Government in 2007, is intended to offset the costs of secondary education to families, and allow children who benefited from universal primary access to continue their education. Alternatively titled Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET), it covers pupils from S1 to S4 (lower secondary), while a complementary 2011 program Universal Post O-Level Education and Training (UPOLET) was introduced to assist students in upper secondary (portions of these two programs also cover students in technical and vocational schools). The USE policy provides a capitation grant, tied to the number of qualifying students at each school; 47,000 US\$ per student is provided to private schools and 41,000 per student in government schools (roughly \$16 and \$14 USD, respectively) . Eligibility for the program is determined by satisfactory Primary Leaving Examination results (MoES, 2013b).

While the language of the policy, per the Education Act of 2008, creates the expectation of fee-free secondary education, in reality the USE allocation is a small amount and no adjustments are made for the location of the school or its actual costs. The location of schools turns out to be fairly consequential even according to the Government's analysis. For example, the National Headcount finds that 90% of USE-participating schools and 82% of the USE-participating school population are based in rural areas. The report further highlights the North Eastern (Karamoja) region of the country, which contributes only 1% of all USE students, but attributes low uptake into the program to factors such as rough terrain, nomadic culture and poor attitudes toward education (p. 21). Despite the intentions of the policy, equity issues are acknowledged as a source of significant challenge.

According to the most recent USE Headcount Publication, which assesses policy implementation, the percentage of secondary students participating in the program has steadily increased, climbing from 17% in 2007 (the first year of the program when only the cohort of pupils in S1 were covered) up to 60% in 2012. The government also tracks students who have dropped out of the USE program each year, which has remained between 9 and 12%. Reasons for dropout cited in the report include returned refugees to South Sudan, early marriage and pregnancy, as well as inadequate infrastructure and low number of teachers in USE-participating schools. These factors cause parents to send children to private (non-participating) schools and even are cited as reasons that some schools drop out of the program (National Headcount 2013, p. 17). While the 2013 Headcount is clear about shortcomings in its implementation, it hails the policy as a success in its primary objectives; "the introduction of UPPET/USE in 2007 immensely contributed to a substantial increase (28.2%) in the secondary school gross enrolment from the pre-USE total of 728,393 in 2005 to 1.1 million in 2009" (MoES, 2013b, p.3). (See Appendix B)

The Government of Uganda received a loan totaling US\$375 million over ten years from the World Bank, to assist in its efforts to promote USE policies. The loan has three components; increasing access through expansion of infrastructure at existing USE schools, improving quality through methods such as curriculum reform and acquisition of instructional materials, and enhancing the management capacity of key USE institutional bodies. As of July 2014 only phase I of III had been completed. While the implementation report highlights a number of achievements, the biggest challenges were related to procurement and construction, as the capacity of local contractors to implement awarded projects was stretched and a number had to be terminated (UPPET APL1, 2014, p. 8). Thus, while USE has a significant infrastructure component (in addition to PRDP), it also faces challenges in promoting equity as a result of implementation problems.

*Teacher recruitment and deployment for secondary schools.* As is common in Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher hiring and deployment in Uganda is managed by the government at the central level (World Bank, 2007). This practice is intended to close shortages across regions, foster equity in instructional quality, and ensure a unified, national approach to education in the English language (MoES interview, Kampala). In this sense, a policy of central teacher deployment supports peacebuilding through education, both by addressing equity and providing a single mechanism tying the education system together. Teachers hired by the MoES enter the civil service and can generally be redeployed every five years. In addition, school PTAs, with the involvement of the head teacher, have the discretion of hiring teachers on a contract basis at lower pay, without government benefits and job protections. A World Bank review in 2007 found that central recruitment had stalled and many trained teachers were unemployed or volunteering their time. Hiring freezes were frequent and recruitment cycles highly irregular. In addition, the MoES reported that redeployment efforts had faced challenges on the part of the teachers, who "do not like to be deployed

in remote areas and schools without PTA Allowances” (MoES 2013b, p.174). These challenges have implications for educational equity and national unity - two goals of the national curriculum.

## National Curriculum

Uganda follows a national curriculum, developed and disseminated by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), which develops curricular frameworks for each grade, as well as specific course syllabi and teacher resource guides. In developing the curriculum, NCDC is guided by the National Aims of Education, a set of six broad goal statements, starting with the promotion of the “... understanding and appreciation of the value of national unity, patriotism and cultural heritage, with due consideration to international relations and beneficial interdependence” at the top of the list (NCDC, 2006). The Aims and Objectives of Primary Education, a list of nine goal statements, place greater emphasis on learning skills, discipline and work ethic, rather than specific cognitive outputs. The list of primary education Aims includes learning to “appreciate the richness that lies in our varied and diverse cultures and values... a sense of patriotism, nationalism and national unity in diversity”. In secondary school, the Aims and Objectives call for “instilling and promoting national unity... [and] appreciation and understanding of the cultural heritage of Uganda including its languages”

In primary school, the NCDC recently introduced the Thematic Curriculum<sup>12</sup> in grades 1 – 3 of primary school (P1-P3), which offers an interdisciplinary approach to subject matter and instruction in the dominant local language. Through its twelve “themes” organized in a sequence throughout the academic year (examples include *Our School, Our Home, Food and Nutrition*), Thematic Curriculum captures the bulk of instructional content in lower primary, with the only other subjects being Physical Education (PE) and Religious Education (RE)<sup>13</sup>. Citing evidence that literacy is acquired faster in a language in which oral command is strong, NCDC calls for students in P1-P3 to be taught in “the first or familiar” language. The instruction of the English language is interwoven into the themes, with theme-related vocabulary and gradual introduction of grammar. In P4, “The Transition Year”, instruction gradually shifts to predominantly English medium and subject-based curriculum, such that the use of the local language is, by the end of the year, limited “only to explaining the most difficult concepts” (NCDC, 2006). Upper primary grades (P5-P7) and secondary schools (O and A levels) follow a subject-based curriculum in the English language, with the local language offered as a vernacular subject.

Peace education and conflict resolution goals are present throughout the curricular frameworks, with themes and modules in the curriculum which are specifically designed to promote peacebuilding. “Peace in our community” and “Keeping Peace in our District” are examples of interdisciplinary themes in primary, while O-level (lower secondary) students are asked to reflect on the different mechanisms for conflict resolution in their communities and in Africa more broadly.

The national curriculum also gradually builds the students’ knowledge of the world around them, starting with their immediate surroundings (“Our Home” in P1). As students progress through primary school, these geographic boundaries gradually expand to the community, district, subcounty and eventually

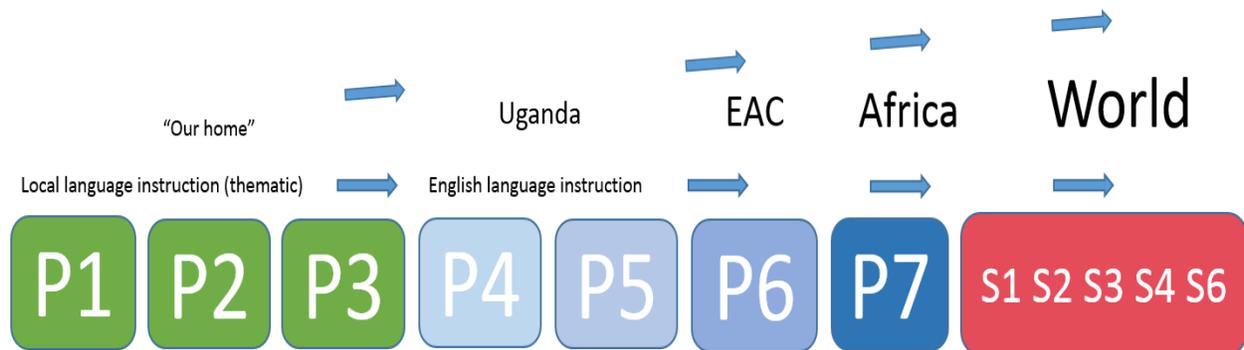
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<sup>12</sup> Gradual rollout began in 2006, with nationwide implementation of P1 curriculum in 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Christian Religious Education (CRE) and Islamic Religious Education (IRE) are the two options offered through the NCDC.

Uganda in P5. In upper primary grades P6-P7, as well as in S1-S4, students focus on East Africa as a region and Africa as a continent, with focused insertions of content on other countries and regions of the world.

Figure 10. Flow chart of progression through curriculum.



All of these aspects of the national curriculum have implications for the role that schools can play in fostering peacebuilding and strengthening social cohesion. We explore them in this study as part of the qualitative data gathering through interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in Northern Uganda.

*Summary* Our policy framework provides an overview of the primary mechanisms through which the government of Uganda invests in educational equity and fosters peacebuilding in the northern regions of the country. In regards to education, the government has a stated focus to improve resource conditions relative to non-northern regions, and through its USE policy to remove the barriers to secondary education access for those students and families on the marginalized end of the spectrum. Through the national curriculum as well, efforts are focused on the promotion of tolerance and understanding among the nation’s youth, in hopes of breaking the long-standing cycles of violence that have plagued parts of the country. Taken together, these efforts represent the base from which we form our analysis.

## Emerging outcomes of investments in equity

Investments in hard inputs in post-conflict regions are designed to strengthen public institutions, restore access to basic services, and in the case of Uganda, bridge the historical inequities in levels of economic activity between conflict-affected regions and the rest of the country. Examples of hard inputs include infrastructure such as schools, classrooms and boarding facilities, instructional and administrative personnel, as well as textbooks and instructional materials. In our framework, investment in the equitable distribution of educational resources forms the foundation for peacebuilding through education, while efforts in content of the curriculum and extracurricular activities are needed to advance equity as a value, bridge ethnic and religious prejudice, and form a common national identity. In this section, we provide an overview of the level to which educational inequality manifests itself in schools and communities in northern Uganda.

### Effects of Policy Investments in Educational Equity

As we noted in the section above, in examining investment in the equity of “hard inputs”, or educational resources, the policies of interest to us are the USE, and the PRDP program. Both have had the promotion of equitable services as a central objective; in the former, the focus is on bringing down barriers to schooling access while in the latter, the emphasis is on the delivery of hard infrastructure inputs to

northern regions in order to equalize government investment with non-northern regions. While our quantitative analysis shows some success in reducing inequalities and improving service delivery in a context of overall rising educational levels, significant challenges remain in their implementation, including changes in perceptions of equity and opportunities to bridge equity gaps.

### Universal Secondary Education

*“The design of Universal Secondary Education does not favor Karamoja” - DEO in rural Karamoja*

*“It is called universal education, food is not there, boarding facilities are not there.. people have failed to understand the true meaning of USE...thinking that the government has done everything already, so that awareness and the meaning of universal education, is not well understood by the people” - Secondary school teacher in Nebbi, West Nile*

*“For me, I want parents to be given the liberty to contribute freely to the education of their children... no one should be able to confuse them...government should give support but if parents are willing to give support then why not?” - District Education Officer in north-central district*

*“The relationship (with parents) is very little.. most of the people in surrounding areas have negative attitudes toward the school.. something has to be done so that they see this is a school which can benefit them directly... they have no direct interest in the school.. they see it as a ‘foreign body’ in their midst..like on Friday we had a function, we made an appeal ‘come, this is your school..’ but nobody appears.. ” - Secondary school teacher in Gulu*

Uganda is often cited as a country that has had exemplary success in promoting universal schooling access at the primary level. Within 5 years of the launch of the universal primary school access policy, enrollment more than doubled, increasing from 3.1 million in 1997 to 7.6 million 2003 (ODI, 2006). This success has not carried over to secondary education, despite the optimism of MoES’ annual headcount exercise noted earlier. In large part, this is due to the vast disconnect between the actual cost of attending secondary school and the funding levels provided by the government. This was forcefully stated by a DEO in a north-central district, who urged the public not to confuse the word “universal” as being synonymous with “free”; *“If it’s free then why is government only paying 41,000? Give all the facilities, the classrooms, the desks, the books, and then pay the teachers, that is free!”* School administrators reported they must charge tuition fees ranging from 83,000 US\$ per term at a rural government school in Pader up to 400,000 in Lira. The shortfall is most often considered to have devastating consequences for equity in access for poorer students as well as girls, who are at a disadvantage compared to boys in parents’ decisions to send children to school. Teachers at the Pader school emphasized that fees are kept low to benefit poorer students, but many parents in the community still choose to send their children to private schools because of the perceived higher quality.

*The role of parents and the community.* Despite the many criticisms levied at the government, however, the respondents felt that the blame for challenges in USE implementation fell well beyond the Ministry of Education or its district offices. Teachers believed that for USE to work, there needed to be support from

the three “pillars” of school, government and community, which were often depicted by respondents as three connected circles drawn in the air. Resource and infrastructure complaints aside, they were extremely adamant in their belief that parents and communities needed to do more to support universal education at the secondary level. This was a view that persisted from the easternmost rural district of northern Uganda to a school that sits on the western border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Focus group discussions with teachers pointed to the lack of support from parents and community as one of the greatest challenges they faced in their work. “This job, we are in it alone”, remarked one secondary teacher in West Nile region. The rollout of the USE program had led many parents to believe that all expenditures associated with secondary school enrollment were now covered by the government, and it was common to hear that parents refused to provide payment for the balance of tuition fees as well as supplementary expenses for their children, such as lunches. A DEO in a rural north-central district asked “*Can you imagine a situation where parents are not feeding their own children? How do you expect a child to learn on an empty stomach?*” Fault was often laid upon opportunistic politicians, who exploited the rhetoric of ‘universal’ schooling to urge parents not to provide for their children’s education, with the idea that government was to bear full responsibility.

In this regard, many teachers were sympathetic toward the plight of parents, recognizing the economic struggles of families in their district. One secondary teacher at a private school in Pader remarked “*The spirit is willing but the body is weak*” when referring to the challenges of obtaining support from parents. However even in Karamoja, where most local secondary students received scholarships from aid agencies, a head teacher complained that parents often saw schools as competing with short-term revenue generating activities such as livestock rearing. Quoting the parents from whom he routinely asked for monetary support, a DEO in the region offered; “*It was you who wanted us to send our children to school, rather than us, therefore don’t come back here and ask for money now that you have them*”.

It was clear that in the view of most respondents, *USE had failed to reach the poorest students, unable to secure even minimal support from families for their schooling*. While wealthier students benefited from a decrease in school fees and were aided by the merit-based allocation of USE funding grants, it is the poor that continue to feel the lack of support from the three “pillars” of government, schools and community. In short, the funding shortfalls already present in historically disadvantaged northern districts are not aided, and in some cases are exacerbated by the low USE stipend and the lack of support for USE from parents and communities.

#### Peace, Recovery and Development Plan

*“The war on corruption seems to be a lost war, from where I stand now” - Secondary school teacher in Lira*

*“There are schools being built all right, but again, this is shoddy work...if you could travel to these buildings that are built, some of them are condemned...this whole process of allocation is politicized...nobody really knows the way it is done” - Secondary teacher at a teachers college, Lira District*

*“Our resources need to be multiplied by four...government gives resources to every district, and you find a district that is one county gets the same as a district which is four counties...so that is the challenge” - District Education official, urban West Nile*

As we describe above, PRDP is a policy framework intended to narrow the gap in terms of economic development between northern Uganda and the rest of the country, thereby strengthening the foundation for social stability and peacebuilding in conflict-affected regions. Besides objective measures of economic development and service provision in the target regions, the success of the program could in part be evidenced by views of changes in the equity of educational opportunity, support for the peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts of the government, and a more optimistic outlook regarding future life opportunities, particularly for youth. Our qualitative data show that as of today, this has not yet happened, although respondents acknowledged the presence of government efforts in improving the availability of school infrastructure. Importantly, data from interviews and focus groups indicate that more needs to be done to win the trust and broadcast success stories of the program to the wider public.

*Corruption allegations.* In general, mention of the PRDP led to immediate talk of corruption, suggesting that the program has yet to outlive its tainted reputation from the 2012 corruption scandal that saw major international donors withdraw support (Office of the Auditor General, 2012). Respondents were quick to demonstrate what they perceived to be the method by which funding for programs such as PRDP reach intended beneficiaries: money is transferred through central ministries and successively passed on to lower administrative levels before ultimately reaching the implementing agency. At each level, it is siphoned off legally or otherwise, so that what began as an adequate budget for projects to build schools or science labs ended up as much less. For example, a DEO in Karamoja lamented the decision he had to make about which schools would receive much-needed classroom construction, as there was only enough money for two classrooms per year. Projects that are ultimately funded with PRDP money are often met with disappointment. Even an official with MoES in Kampala expressed disappointment upon visiting schools with science labs that had been built using PRDP money. Teachers in Lira were similarly critical of the “shoddy” construction they had seen resulting from PRDP programs. These criticisms stood in contrast, however, to a DEO in Karamoja whose schools saw construction of much-needed boarding facilities from PRDP. In fact, this official believed that the government’s efforts, which reduced the need for children to travel long distances to school, was an instrumental factor in helping to turn the community’s negative perception of education around.

*Choice of PRDP districts.* There were also complaints about PRDP funding going to districts not directly affected by the most recent conflicts, particularly the LRA insurgency. Respondents expressed confusion about how districts in the western and eastern areas of the country could receive funding when they did not experience conflict. One DIS, somewhat incredulously, proclaimed that he had been a geography teacher as he drew a map of Uganda to emphasize the eastern districts that PRDP funding was flowing to. A representative for OPM was quick to point out, however, that these were districts which had taken in IDPs and had felt spillover effects of the LRA conflict.

*Decentralization and overarching governance* Local governments that had seen significant partitioning and re-districting in recent years claimed to be facing particular challenges in receiving PRDP funding. The complaint centered around the idea that despite the re-districting there had not been a corresponding re-formulation of funding allocations, so that a district that had split in two (for example) and now had a greater bureaucracy was expected to work with half the original budget. Challenges are also presented in border communities of West Nile that receive refugees from neighboring countries, such as South Sudan. Recent waves of conflict which had caused a rapid influx and return had represented a significant strain on resources. There are mixed reports about how well OPM and MoES coordinate in the implementation of PRDP in the northern regions. The MoES indicated that there was little coordination in educational

resource planning with the OPM. According to the representative we spoke with, he had only been invited “3 or 4 years ago” to a meeting intended to ensure OPM wasn’t “duplicating efforts”. According to a representative at the OPM however, sector Ministries are regularly involved in planning both at the national and district levels, reporting to PRDP Technical Working Group and Monitoring Committee meetings and helping to review work plans.

*In sum, PRDP has so far had mixed results.* Although substantial activity has taken place, it is often met with skepticism and perceptions of corruption. Few respondents outside of Karamoja tied PRDP investments with the support of the national governments towards their district or school, and almost none saw the link between these investment and the goals of building peace and stability in the region.

## Teacher recruitment

*“We’ve had a rather cruel history... we believe the sharing of experiences is important for this... we are afraid if teachers are recruited from districts it will sustain stereotypes that students hold.” - MoES official based in Kampala*

*“We have at least two (head teachers) from outside the region... doing very well... they know that their stay in the area is dependent on output, they know that locals will not allow teachers in the area if they’re not doing good things for their kids” - District Education Officer in West Nile region*

*“I tell you there is a very, very big difference between those schools and here... in those schools the teachers are committed and they are most of the times in schools, teaching and guiding the students” - Secondary teacher in Gulu who had previously taught in Jinja, Central region*

While there are official policies and practices on teacher recruitment and deployment, it has been found that they are rarely followed (Matovu, 2014), and are unevenly implemented across the north. Further, schools engage in the practice of hiring local teachers through PTA funding, to make up for shortfalls in government support and counteract the effects of a hiring freeze at the secondary level, which was only recently lifted. Locally hired teachers formed the bulk of the teaching staff in West Nile schools, and were a sizable presence during focus groups across all districts visited during the study. Locally hired teachers reported experiencing delays in receiving their paychecks. The strain that teachers feel as a result often has negative consequences for students and administrators, although where central recruitment was working, it was shown to also produce a number of positive effects.

*Challenges in teacher recruitment.* The enthusiasm with which central recruitment is conceived at the national level often meets a different reality in the districts, and even our MoES respondent had to admit that the policy had run up against a number of challenges. The MoES annual report for 2013 notes that teachers were generally reluctant to redeploy without substantial allowances. Our data indicate that the majority of secondary teachers in Northern Uganda, with the exception of Karamoja, are from the same or a neighboring district, even if they had previously taught at schools in other parts of Uganda. While some respondents noted that it might be common to see teachers from northern districts deployed in schools closer to Kampala, the reverse is not true. Teachers reported that it was relatively easy for them to remain in their district of choice indefinitely, or alternatively to request redeployment outside of the

normal hiring cycle. Central education officials said that there was reported resistance to southerners amongst the people in the North, as the former were perceived to be in positions of greater power.

There are perhaps more fundamental issues regarding teacher deployment in the north that prevent the central recruitment initiative from functioning successfully. Over the past decade, recruitment cycles have been irregular due to financial constraints (World Bank, 2007), and a complete hiring freeze was in place through 2013 (MoES, 2013b). Our respondents reported that a gap between recruitment calls may be several years. This leads to most teachers having to seek contract-based employment directly through local school boards, accepting smaller pay and fewer employment protections. Poor road quality and large distances between schools necessitate the provision of teacher boarding facilities, which are often unavailable. Indeed, one DIS in Karamoja noted that secondary teachers and students in her jurisdiction had been forced to sleep inside the classrooms on mattresses donated by UNICEF. Even local teachers were found to be renting rooms in the surrounding community, and the added expense was cited as a particular challenge. Further, interviews with national MoES officials indicated difficulty in convincing teachers to deploy in places such as Karamoja, where there was a perception of hostility toward outsiders.

*Implications for education equity.* The implications for equity, thus, are that there are in effect parallel teacher labor markets all over the country. What was begun in part as a scheme to ensure all secondary school students throughout the country receive the same quality of instruction has devolved into a highly fractionalized system, and efforts to address resulting inequity have been met with challenges. The “hard to reach” allowance, for example, is a stipend offered as an incentive for teaching in very rural areas. The feeling among teachers and administrators was that this allowance was insufficient, which was acknowledged by the respondent with the MoES in Kampala. An administrator in rural West Nile, who lamented that the hard to reach allowance does not appropriately target communities in need, stated that his district “*doesn’t have hardship allowance but in [other district] they do... those things are decided politically by the Ministers... when we politicize policies the end result is always disaster, but we are trying to review so that we can benefit from this scheme*”. Respondents were typically of the opinion that better quality teachers, particularly in high-demand subjects such as the hard sciences, were more concentrated in districts outside northern Uganda where the conditions were reportedly better. In addition, late paychecks resulting from overstretched budgets were cited as a factor leading to teacher absenteeism and poor performance in government schools across the northern districts.

Due to a number of factors, data indicate that *central recruitment is effective in a select number of cases*. These are in Karamoja, where most teachers are from outside the region, and among head teachers, whom local government officials believe to be uniquely positioned to manage disputes among teachers and students at the schools. Particularly in West Nile, where schools had experienced student strikes, it was found beneficial to bring in outside head teachers who were seemingly better able to manage conflicts among teachers and students in an impartial manner. Teachers at an urban secondary school in West Nile also referenced a high-performing nearby school where children were in essence forced to speak English, and could not revert to their local language when conversing with teachers who were from outside districts. While challenges in teacher recruitment and deployment often resulted in frustration, the areas where it has been successful in practice show the potential it has as a way to promote equity and mitigate conflict.

## Perceptions of resource inequality in education

*“For me Uganda is very far from here in terms of services... if you look at this place, Moyo, and maybe where I come from... when you compare these places with the Central you are bound to feel inferior” - secondary school teacher, rural West Nile*

*“I think to tell the truth, there is that feeling, that there are people who are more Ugandan than others...stemming from the fact that most of the people in the government they come from those regions, so they tend to give more to their people” - secondary school head teacher, Lira District*

*“Government is not for the people, it’s only for the NRM and UPDF. Soldiers get their salary first, teachers always last.” - Secondary teacher, Pader district*

**Resource shortfalls** Teachers and administrators across the district acknowledged the provision of new school construction in recent years. Despite improvements in infrastructure, however, substantial challenges remained, often outweighing any goodwill engendered from a long-term view of government efforts to address social service provision across the north. Teachers and education administrators alike noted the need for more classroom spaces, boarding facilities, and latrines, while teacher salaries are considered inadequate and are often delayed. In particular, as distance and transportation continue to represent a challenge, most secondary schools are by necessity boarding. At one of the few non-boarding schools we visited just outside Gulu, the principal believed attendance was more of a problem for students and teachers who lived further from the school. In fact on the day we visited, most of the teachers we had hoped to meet with were seen leaving the school not long after lunch to begin their long journey home. Perceptions of resource challenges have strong consequences for the manner in which most northerners view the relationship to their government and the wider society.

**Regional inequality** Similar to measurable levels of inequality captured by census and household survey data, perceptions of regional inequality are much stronger than those along ethnic or religious lines. Across the three regions of study, there was a general perception that districts in northern Uganda are disadvantaged in terms of access to services, compared to districts in the central and west of the country. Respondents reported feelings of inferiority compared to those who lived in the other regions, and evidenced by the above quotes, this produced a sense of distance or alienation from the rest of the country. Poor roads and a lack of transportation access were as important as feelings of inferiority due to what were perceived to be higher investment levels to the south. It is important to note that perceptions of regional inequality also have implications for other dimensions, particularly those along ethnic lines. The rapid proliferation in the number of districts that have been carved out of larger ones has likely had the effect of further concentrating ethnic groups within the smaller boundaries. Thus, while all ethnic groups collectively saw regions to the south as benefiting disproportionately in terms of services, it was not uncommon to hear feelings of inferiority expressed along ethnic lines.

There were also perceptions of inequality expressed as a result of non-material investments by the government. A secondary head teacher in Lira articulated his observations about the lack of appropriate targeting in educational policy;

*“I would say the government is mainly contributing to dividing us even more... the idea to bring a loan scheme (for higher education) is to help the disadvantaged, but*

*the people who take this loan are well-to-do and well-connected...the government loves monitoring, but it is a lack of monitoring to know where it goes”.*

Further, disparity in resources and service delivery were perceived as a result of non-government investments, as many expressed resentment of NGO programs in nearby districts. For example, there was a perception throughout West Nile and parts of the Acholi and Lango subregions that Gulu enjoyed a high level of access to NGO services, while other districts had seen a large post-conflict reduction in support. There were some respondents in West Nile, particularly on the border with South Sudan, who had witnessed physical altercations between school children who received support from UNHCR and Ugandan children who didn't.

**Conflict and “student strikes”** A new phenomenon had emerged throughout West Nile and parts of the Lango sub-region, where student strikes were reported as a result of resource challenges in the schools. These strikes mostly consisted of acts of disobedience, or vandalism after school hours. The most common cause of student strikes was reported to be the poor quality of the food. Respondents, for the most part, were dismissive of their complaints, noting that the few cases of tainted food were dealt with appropriately, whereas students in rural West Nile were thought to demand too much in terms of the quality of the food. “Students pay (tuition fees), so they believe they should eat beef three times in a month, which is not possible”, according to one teacher in rural West Nile. Representatives from district education offices expanded further on the strikes, reporting that in several cases teachers were actually behind them, retaliating because of issues such as late paychecks. These strikes were a recent phenomenon, and administrators reported success in dealing with them through “peace clubs”, changing school management practices, but also methods such as corporal punishment.

### Summary

In this section, we focused on the “hard inputs” of educational equity – its infrastructure, human resources, and finance mechanisms designed to broaden access to secondary education. We examined the early effects of two ongoing programs addressing these inputs: the PRDP, which focuses on bolstering the provision of social services and economic activity in northern Uganda, and the USE, which intends to bridge the barriers facing poorer students in attending post-primary education. We found that several years after the launch of PRDP and USE, infrastructure and resource challenges continue to play a fundamental role in perceptions of inequality seen across regions. In education, PRDP and USE have complementary goals, providing needy communities both with the facilities and teachers, as well as assistance in paying tuition so that more students can take advantage of new resources. However, so far successes have been limited in both areas, the former as a result of inefficiencies and corruption, and the latter being generally inadequate to make a difference for youth in the North. If a continuation of the PRDP program is authorized in 2015, greater coordination and resource allocation vis-a-vis the Ministry of Education should be a priority for the Education program area.

### Formation of cultural identity and peacebuilding

Given the importance of cultural identity in post-conflict multiethnic societies, we asked respondents to reflect on interethnic relationships in their community, and on the role played by the national curriculum and language of instruction in fostering the sense of “being Ugandan”. Across the board, respondents were initially reluctant to discuss matters of ethnic tension, particularly with respect to their own schools and communities, but were quick to point to stereotypes and negative misconceptions that were attached

to them by others. The regional social divide was clearly articulated across the districts visited, with teachers frequently commenting on the feelings of inferiority felt by students that ventured outside of their districts. Respondents stated that they were unfairly labeled as backward and barbaric, and looked down upon by “the people in Kampala” and other non-northerners. In this respect, our findings echo prior research and conflict assessments conducted in the north in the past few years (ACCS, 2013; IPSS Gulu University, 2014).

Respondents were nearly unanimous in their views that schools were places where ethnic differences could be placed aside, and students can form allegiance to the country as a whole. While students in multiethnic secondary schools were said to form tribal “cliques”, teachers generally felt that being required to speak English on school grounds served to bridge these differences. However, high ethnic diversity in a given school was extremely rare across the districts visited, and it was more common to find student bodies with a clear majority ethnic group. As we noted above, districts are often highly homogeneous in Uganda, and the recent fractionalization of districts into smaller units is likely to have increased this homogeneity. In this context, we consider the role of schools at the following key points of interaction with the communities: a) the national curriculum and language of instruction; b) role of schools in peacebuilding, including interactions during and outside school hours. The rest of this section discusses these key points.

### National curriculum and language of instruction

*“The language problem comes when they are in the dormitory... They find themselves grouping when they are in the dormitory. They speak their own mother tongue language. That’s when the problem comes”. Nebbi Focus group*

*“If you ask someone in the classroom in Kampala what they know of other tribes, you will be appalled. They will tell you the Karamojong are violent, they rustle cattle, and they have thousands of cows. They will also tell you Acholis eat their first child. You will be shocked”. Kampala interview.*

*“The Ministry is supposed to help [us] in the integration, [but] it is talking about local languages... Assuming I dropped out of school in P5, and I spoke well the local language here, would my local language be helpful in Buganda?” Moyo interview*

National curriculum provides one avenue for the state to bolster shared cultural and historical narratives and form a unified body of knowledge and perspectives on equity and justice. As we describe above, the national curriculum in Uganda follows a sequence from lower primary to secondary, in which interdisciplinary, local language curriculum – the so-called “Thematic Curriculum” – gives way to subject-based, English language instruction. Further, there is a gradual spatial expansion of the curricular scope, where the focus on the student’s immediate surroundings (Our Home) in P1 builds gradually to reach the scale of Uganda as a whole in P5 as part of the Social Studies, to be followed by instruction on Uganda and East Africa as a region (P6), then Africa as a continent (P7), and finally other regions of the world, in upper primary and secondary grades (see Figure 10).

The curriculum includes modules on peace and on conflict resolution, frequently asking students to reflect on recent conflicts in their communities, particularly those related to land and other natural resources, and discuss ways of resolving these conflicts peacefully. At the same time, none of the frameworks and

syllabi we reviewed explicitly discuss the conflict history of Uganda following independence, or address the issues of ethnicity at any length – other than to state that all ethnicities must be accorded respect.

*Language of instruction.* While instruction in secondary schools – the primary focus of this case study – is in the English language across the country, the effects of the Thematic Curriculum and its emphasis on the local language were strongly felt among teachers of secondary grades. Rolled out to P1 in 2007, the Thematic Curriculum had by 2014 affected the cohort that reached the entry age for secondary school. The vast majority of respondent teachers and head teachers felt that the requirement deepened inequalities between students in rural northern districts compared to those to the south, where it was felt that the use of local language was not strictly enforced. In addition, as claimed by respondents, instruction in *private* schools continued in the English language throughout all primary grades. Teachers felt that the opportunity allotted to urban and wealthier students to study in English gave them an advantage in passing the Primary Leaving Exam, which was administered in English, and hence created an unequal playing field for students seeking government scholarships (such as USE grants) and admission to higher quality secondary schools.

Further, the choice of one predominant local language disadvantaged ethnic minorities, which were now forced to study in a different language than their mother tongue during the first three years of primary school. The scarcity of teachers and instructional materials in different local languages made it even more difficult to ascertain equity and quality in the implementation of mother tongue instruction. The Karamoja region was one possible exception to the generally negative attitude towards the use of local language of instruction; however, implementation there was reportedly patchy due to the lack of human resources and materials to make it possible in the Ngakarimojong language: *“There is wonderful new curriculum but no textbooks or materials so we have to figure out how to teach it”* (Secondary school FGD, Moroto). The inability of students to master the new curriculum and the language of instruction is believed to hinder their performance.

The language policy, while arguably rooted in research on early literacy, thus exacerbated majority vs. minority dynamics and the existence of “preferred” ethnic groups, implicitly denying the acknowledgement of smaller tribes. During a focus group discussion in Nebbi, West Nile, secondary school female teachers complained: *“They don’t even know about the Alur tribe. They think that in West Nile, everyone is a Lugbara.”* Finally, some teachers argued that the use of local languages made it difficult for students to transfer between districts, and, by emphasizing local content for the first four years of primary, did not do enough to “integrate” or bring together students of different ethnic backgrounds.

*Space and time in national curriculum.* The concept of the surrounding space and environment draws heavily on local community and district, and transitions fairly rapidly to the scale of the region in upper primary school. Students following this sequence would not learn about Uganda as a country until they reach grade 5 of upper primary. The ethnic composition beyond one’s immediate district does not enter the social studies curricular frameworks until the second year of O-level (general secondary school), where curricular objectives for one unit include the requirements to “know the names of the main ethnic groups in Uganda” and “be able to draw a map of Uganda showing different ethnic groups”. In the third and fourth year of secondary school, respectively, the course begins with a discussion of the independence movement and spends a total of 12 hours on post-independence history of Uganda, before moving to the study of existing leadership and government structures and the history of important economic and political alliances in East Africa region, as well as key events in African and world history.

Despite the presence, albeit limited, of the concepts of tribe, ethnicity and the ethnic composition of Uganda in secondary curriculum, in interviews and focus groups teachers generally struggled to offer examples of spaces in the national curriculum where students would have the opportunity to gain an understanding of ethnicities living in other regions of Uganda and their cultures. The scarcity of training opportunities affected the ability of teachers to understand the curricular objectives and address them in their lessons. A district inspector of schools in a northern district put it this way: *"[The curriculum] spells out the skills very well... The methodologies are lively and marvelous, such as problem solving, sharing, field demonstration... but because of the haphazard teaching and preparation of the teachers these aspects do not come out clearly."* (DIS, West Nile) Where teachers are not centrally recruited and deployed, professional development and quality assurance in instruction fell on the teachers themselves.

The structural limitations on the amount of instructional time and sequencing of the curriculum, coupled with capacity and resource challenges in its implementation serve to reinforce the existence of multiple narratives, and make building a shared Ugandan identity a difficult task.

### Role of schools in promoting peace

*"For those who are not educated, their dreams do not go beyond a bottle of soda. They will always look at the world through the eyes of their elders. Here, their dreams change, and their aspirations become bigger". Interview, Pader.*

*"When a child learns, he lives beyond his environment... Those who are educated can live with other people with different cultures, values... through education they can come together" FGD, Arua.*

*"During the [school] breaks they go back to their communities, and they put on their funny clothes, and they speak their language. I tell them, be different, wear your uniforms, show them that you are educated, so that others will want to be like you". Interview, a secondary school in Karamoja.*

*"Their (South Sudanese) behavior does not match behavior of Ugandans...I think some of those are transfer of aggressions from the country...the rule of jungle is survival of the fittest" Interview, district education office in West Nile*

Most respondents felt that education, in the broader sense of the word, had an important role to play in peacebuilding. It was felt that schools had worked to provide a sort of safe space while lingering conflicts in the community may be ongoing. Generally, respondents agreed that schooling contributed to helping students develop a rational way of thinking, provided skills for effective communication, and promoted nonviolent means of resolving local conflicts.

At the same time, teachers were well aware of the limitations in the peacebuilding power of education. In the North (Lango subregion) and West Nile in particular, teachers were unlikely to state that more education necessarily brought about nonviolent resolution of conflicts. Many argued that the unfulfilled aspirations of educated young people, unemployment, alcoholism, as well as pervasive corruption and nepotism all fueled frustration and anger that could not be resolved through peace education and sensitization campaigns. In two discussions, in Lira and Nebbi, participants argued that the *less* educated and *less* "exposed" were in fact less likely to become violent.

Questions on equity in education invariably led to discussions about the mismatch between the lives for which schools prepared their graduates and the reality of the socioeconomic environment in the country. There was a common refrain among respondents about the need to prepare “job makers” rather than “job takers” for the Ugandan economy. It was felt, across all three regions, that the curriculum did not provide students with the skills that most would need to participate in a struggling economy. While the juxtaposition between “takers” and “makers” referred to the lack of entrepreneurship skills among young adults, many respondents made these statements with reflections on the demand for expanded vocational and technical education as an alternative to general secondary.

Where ethnic conflicts were recent and the distinctions between groups stark, as in West Nile, the tone of the conversation was somewhat more negative, and the linkages between the students’ cultural background and their behavior drawn more clearly: *“We find that... the way they look at these things... they are a bit hostile, because of their history... it is the differences in way of life”* (Secondary school FGD, Moyo). An NGO interviewee in West Nile told of frequent clashes between local students and refugee students, and teachers acknowledged the resentment among locals toward the level of resources (such as textbooks and instructional materials) allotted to refugees against the backdrop of poverty in the local community. Similarly, ethnic clashes were present in Karamoja, where the legacy of cattle rustling fed the hostilities between communities. A teacher who formerly taught in Karamoja, residing in Lira district at the time of the data collection, said there had been challenges at his former school of co-boarding students from warring groups together, which were managed through teacher mediation.

In areas severely affected by the LRA insurgency, the fault lines lay not between ethnic groups but between those who were in the camps and those returning from the bush after spending time with the rebels. Association with the rebels, even if forced, was stigmatized, bordering on anger and rejection. In one school in Gulu catering to older students, teachers reported being somewhat wary of the students, some of whom were former soldiers, were “difficult to manage” and taken to violent outbursts.

In this regard, it is worth noting the mixed views on the recently imposed ban on corporal punishment in schools, put forth by the MoES with support from UNICEF and other international organizations. While not originally part of the research focus for this study, corporal punishment surfaced as a subject of conversation in FGDs and interviews alike, often with lamentation as a lost custom. Seen as a necessary tool for addressing “indiscipline”, caning (the most common form of corporal punishment) continues to be a practice in many areas, at both primary and secondary levels. Although much effort has been expended, it is clear that more remains to be done to help teachers internalize the principles of nonviolent resolution of discipline issues.

#### Extra-curricular activities

*“Students who are in peace clubs in schools, also part of peace clubs outside of schools... in churches...the drama they do, the songs they sing, carry these messages...I believe there’s been a change because of these peace messages, programs for peace building, coming from churches, from governments, individuals, NGOs...”* Lira FGD.

In contrast to the ambiguity regarding the role of formal school systems to address issues of peace, equity and conflict resolution, extra-curricular activities such as peace clubs, patriotism clubs and community peace and sensitization programs were overwhelmingly positively received. These included peace clubs

sponsored by the Catholic Church of Uganda, patriotism clubs promoted by the President and activities involving drama, sports competitions, and artistic and musical performances collectively attributed to “the NGOs”. Many respondents stated that these activities, often centered at the school and involving students, had been important factors in the aftermath of the recent conflicts that had affected their communities. In West Nile, teachers believed that the club activity helped lessen the number of student strikes and provided students with a channel to voice their concerns in a peaceful manner. In Karamoja, peace clubs were seen as effective ways to engage students in peacebuilding in their communities involving drama, tree planting, poetry, and debate competitions. Student governments, where they were present, were also noted as mechanisms to engage students in constructive activity while teaching the concepts of good governance. Extracurricular programs also provided students the opportunity to travel outside of their home district on study tours and competitions, which was seen as increasing “exposure” and learning about environments other than their own. These study tours were rare (only one school reported having a regular exchange program), but highly prized and popular with students.

While extracurricular programs on peace education generally fall within the framework of the PRDP (as off-budget projects), none of the respondents made the connection between these programs and the efforts of the government in building peace and strengthening social services in the North.

### Summary

Overall, while the presence of overarching mechanisms such as the National Curriculum and the Aims of Education creates space for strengthening social cohesion through education, the most effective mechanisms so far have been the extracurricular activities carried out by schools, with or without external support. In the mainstream curriculum, due to various issues of sequencing and language of instruction, opportunities are limited in primary school for developing a sense of national unity and a concept of shared Ugandan identity. In secondary school, issues of culture, ethnicity, and conflict likewise receive only general coverage. In focus groups and interviews, ethnicity came up as a primary marker for describing students and teachers alike, and feelings of negative stereotyping and the “inferiority complexes” were mentioned as collective grievances across all districts.

## Conclusion

We approached the case of Uganda using the framework outlined above: on the one hand, investment in *hard inputs* designed to strengthen equity of access to school resources, such as infrastructure, teachers, and fees; and on the other, investment in *soft inputs*, or efforts aimed at the development of a common national identity, peace education, and other activities that use education to break traditional identity fault lines and create spaces for dialogue and mutual learning. The Government of Uganda has put in place an impressive portfolio of policies and programs that were intended to address issues across this spectrum, and supported initially by a coalition of donors to support the effort. As our interviews and focus groups have shown, however, these efforts at improving educational equity and strengthening a sense of national unity through education among Uganda’s youth have had only limited success.

For investment in *hard* inputs, we show that while much activity is taking place, it translates into modest improvement on the ground, with northern districts still behind in access to secondary education. While infrastructure investments in education through the PRDP and other efforts have been visible, the real barriers to equity in education – high school fees, opportunity costs of attending secondary school – remained only partially addressed by USE. With only a fraction of tuition costs covered by the USE grant, post-primary education remains beyond the reach of disadvantaged families in the North. To the extent

that ethnic inequality is present – and our data show that it is – existing barriers may continue to exacerbate it.

National teacher recruitment for secondary schools, while a strong potential mechanism for creating a unified approach to secondary education, has been haphazard with little regulation at the local level. This has resulted in parallel teacher hiring and deployment systems, wildly different tuition levels set by schools, and lack of regular training and professional development opportunities.

For *soft* inputs, or the creation of a common national identity, much remains to be done through the mainstream curriculum. Response to peacebuilding initiatives, including sensitization campaigns, peace clubs, and other extracurricular activities, is overwhelmingly positive. However, peace education remains outside the bounds of instructional content at public schools, despite pockets of conflict resolution content in the national curriculum frameworks. Teachers see few ways to integrate discussions of identity, peace, and intergroup dialogue within the course of regular instruction. In addition, some policies, such as mother tongue instruction in government primary schools (through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) broadens the distance between ethnic groups and increases the equity gap between northern schools and those of the urban South.

## Recommendations

*Infrastructure investments:* It appears that the efforts of the OPM to address corruption charges and reassure the population are not reaching schools and communities in northern Uganda. More realistically, the successes of the program should be better communicated and messages targeted for local audiences, rather than solely international ones. A concerted effort both to strengthen accountability and transparency of management, along with a strong communication effort could go a long way towards repairing the tainted image of the program and shifting the perceptions of inequality.

*Equity promotion:* At this time, USE is a misnomer as it does not serve to universalize access to secondary schooling. A comprehensive plan to facilitate community ownership and parent involvement in schools is necessary, as this was felt to be a significant challenge in the implementation of USE. Given the scarcity of resources, a more targeted effort to provide capitation grants based on need, rather than on passage of the primary leaving exam, may help tilt the equity balance towards the poor. Relatedly, the clarity of messaging around what is and is not provided by USE, and avoiding exploitation of the concept of free schooling for political benefit is of paramount importance.

*Teacher recruitment and deployment:* Better and more targeted support for the hard to reach allowance could help attract more teachers to the north, helping improve the perceived scarcity in high quality teachers, particularly in high-demand subjects. Teachers also need more support in the implementation of the curriculum, particularly in working with children who come from non-majority linguistic group affiliation.

*Curriculum:* There are well-known issues with the practice of teaching in local languages, and the feeling among secondary teachers is that students who do not receive English language instruction during the early years of primary are forced to play “catch up” at subsequent levels of education. The transition to English language may be aided through bilingual education where it is possible. Further, allowing greater space in the national curriculum to Uganda’s vast geographic and ethnic diversity, as well as its history, could serve to strengthen a common understanding of its national narrative and foster social cohesion.

*Peacebuilding programs:* Given the overwhelmingly positive response to peacebuilding and sensitization programs, this is an area where investments by donors and government could go a long way. Particularly at the secondary level, where the target population is adolescents and youth, there is demand for activities that would provide purpose and direct the energies of students away from violence. There is space for NGO programming to invest in extra-curricular activities at schools, as this is lacking in many of the districts we visited. Further, our findings indicate that many stakeholders are skeptical towards efforts to eradicate corporal punishment. Better communication is needed on the merits of replacing corporal punishment with child friendly alternatives.

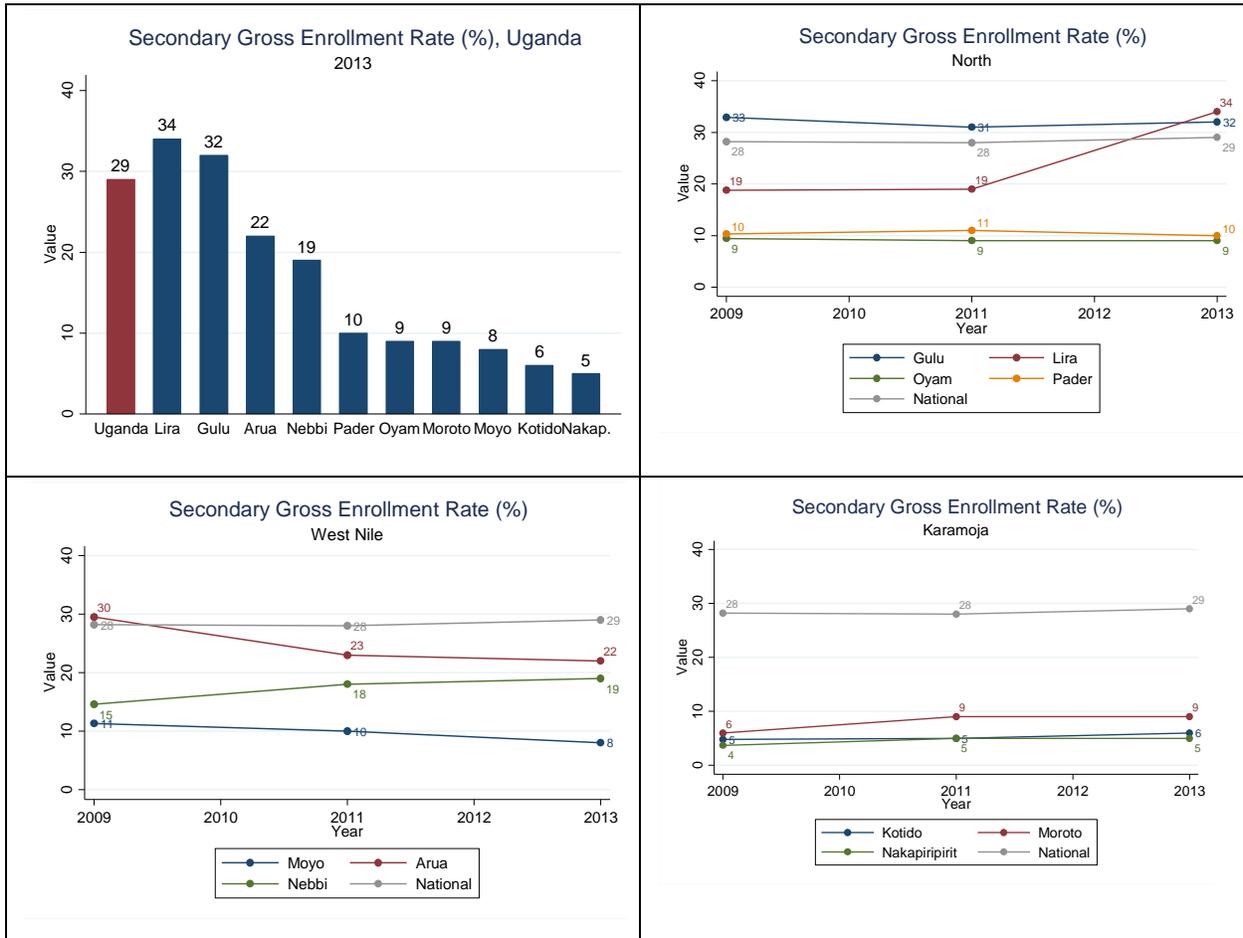
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# Appendices

## Appendix A – Trends in secondary enrollment in the target districts



## Appendix B: Supplementary information on secondary education and selected districts

**Table 3 - Secondary schooling budget (proj.), Uganda**

Expenditure by output, secondary	2012/13 projected (Billion US\$)
Outputs provided	59.8
Outputs funded	12.9
Capital purchases	104.4
<b>Total vote function cost</b>	<b>156.3</b>
<i>(Total excluding donor)</i>	34.0

Source: Ministerial Policy Statement 2012-2013

**Table 4 - Representation of ethnic groups by year, Uganda**

1991	(%)	2002	(%)	2011	(%)
Baganda	16.8	Baganda	16.9	Baganda	13.5
Banyakole	10.5	Banyakole	9.5	Banyanko	8.5
Bakiga	8.9	Basoga	8.5	Basoga	7.4
Basoga	7.5	Bakiga	6.9	Bakiga	6.8
Iteso	5.5	Iteso	6.4	Atesa	6.4
Acholi	4.6	Langi	6.1	Langi	4.4
Banyoro	4.4	Acholi	4.7	Mugishu	3.0
Langi	4.3	Bagisu	4.6	Lugbara	2.8
Lugbara	3.8	Lugbara	4.2	Munyoro	2.2
Bagisu	3.3	Banyoro	2.7	Munyarwa	2.2

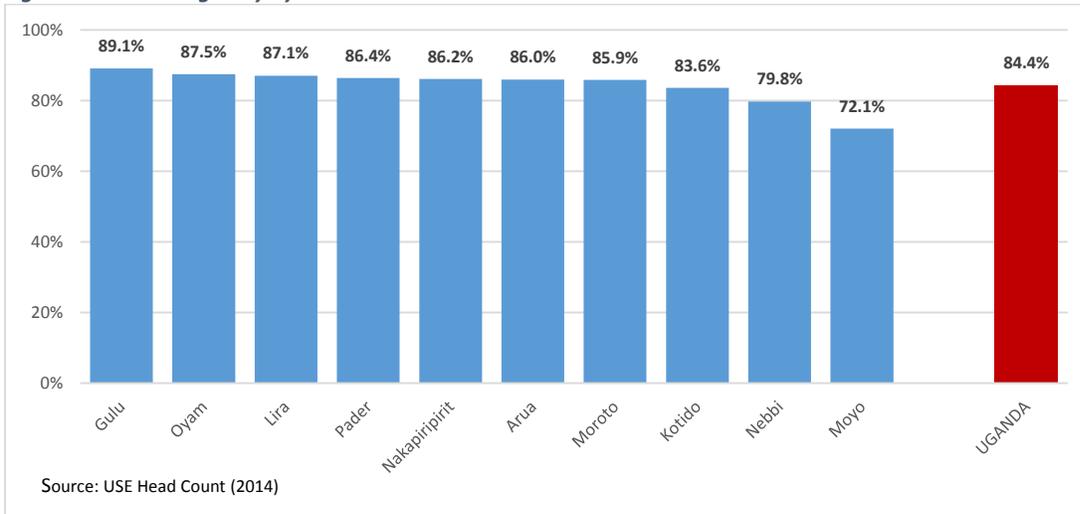
Source: IPUMS, EPDC extraction of DHS dataset

**Table 5 - Percentage ethnic group by district (2002)**

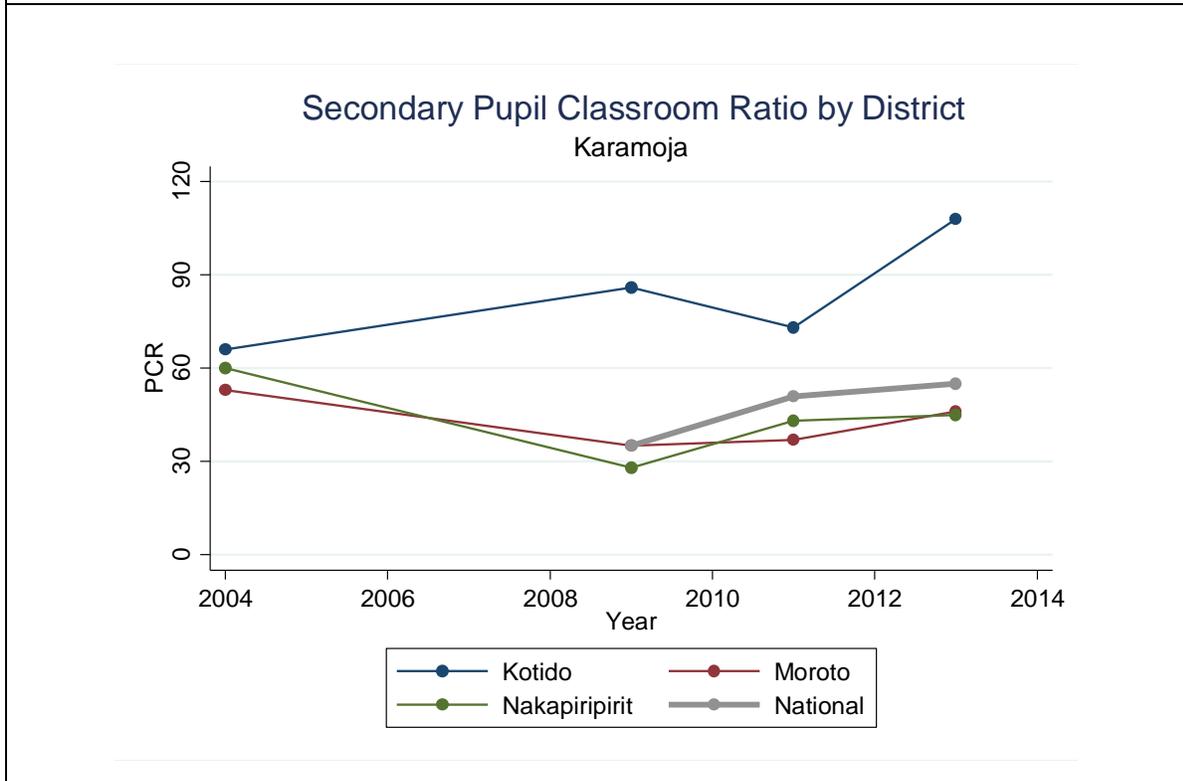
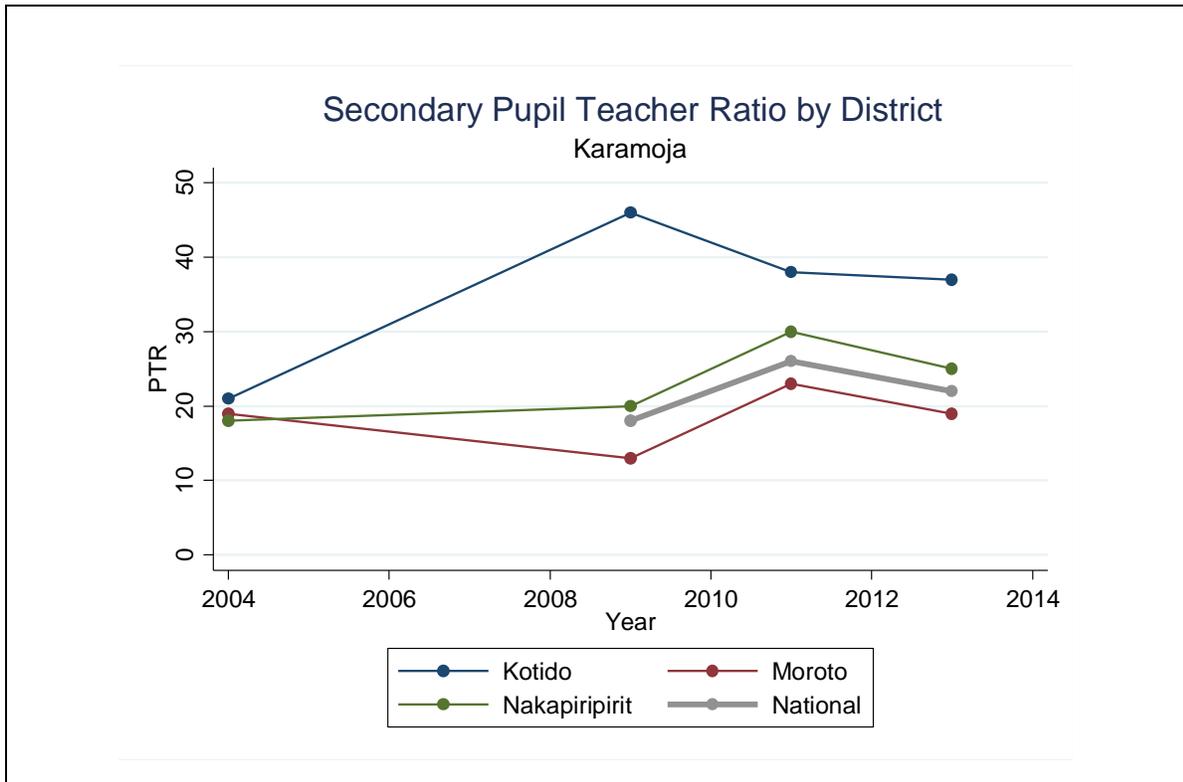
Region	District	Major ethnic groups	# groups > 1%
Karamoja	Moroto	Karimojong (87%) So (Tepeth) (9%)	3
	Nakapiripirit	Karimojong (55%) Pokot (43%)	2
	Kotido	Dodoth (55%) Jie (25%)	6
North	Pader	Acholi (91%) Langi (8%)	2
	Gulu	Acholi (91%) Langi (5%)	2
	Lira	Langi (95%) Kumam (2%)	2
West Nile	Moyo	Madi (55%) Sudanese (18%)	5
	Arua	Lugbara (77%) Kakwa (12%)	4
	Nebbi	Alur (71%) Jonam (20%)	5

Source: IPUMS

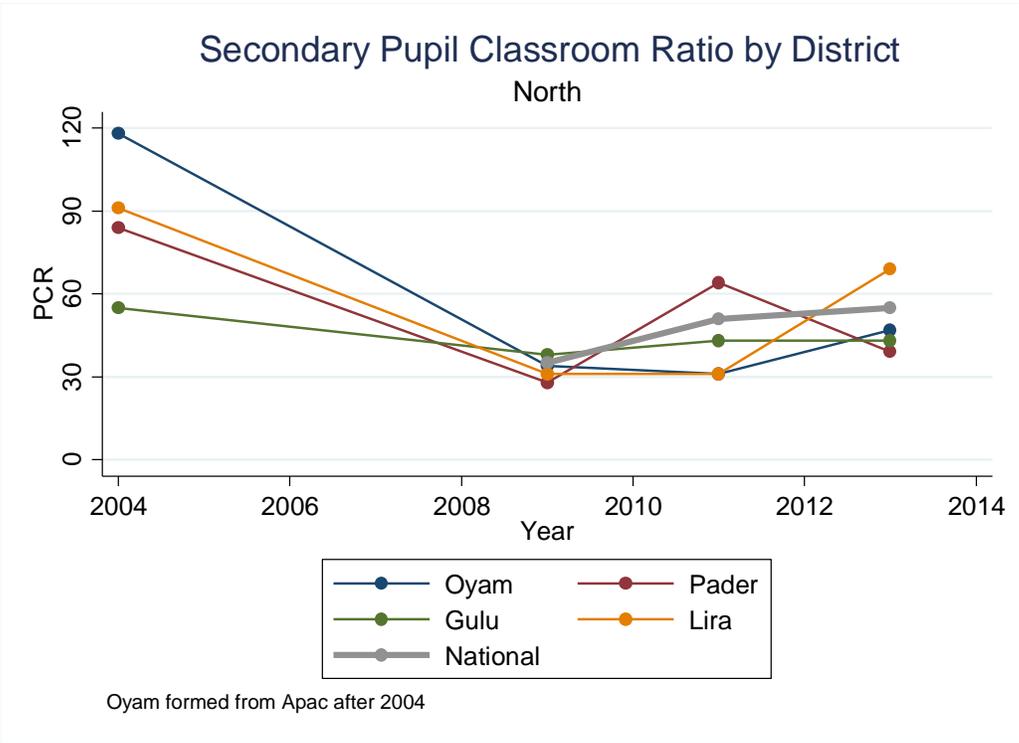
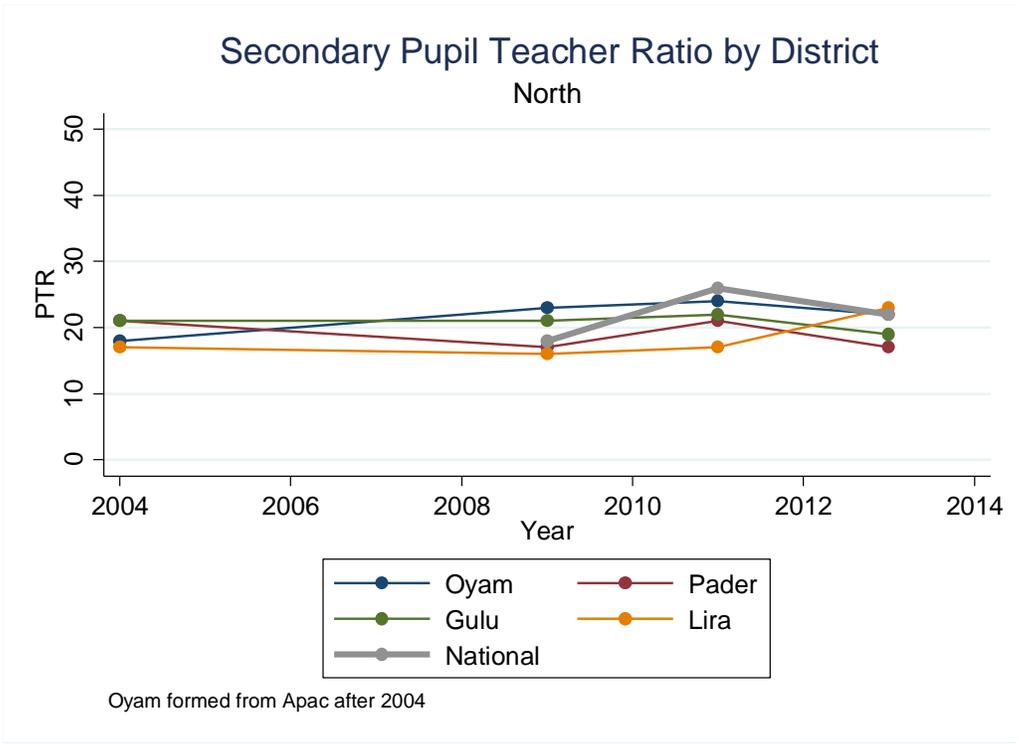
**Figure 11. % USE eligibility by district**



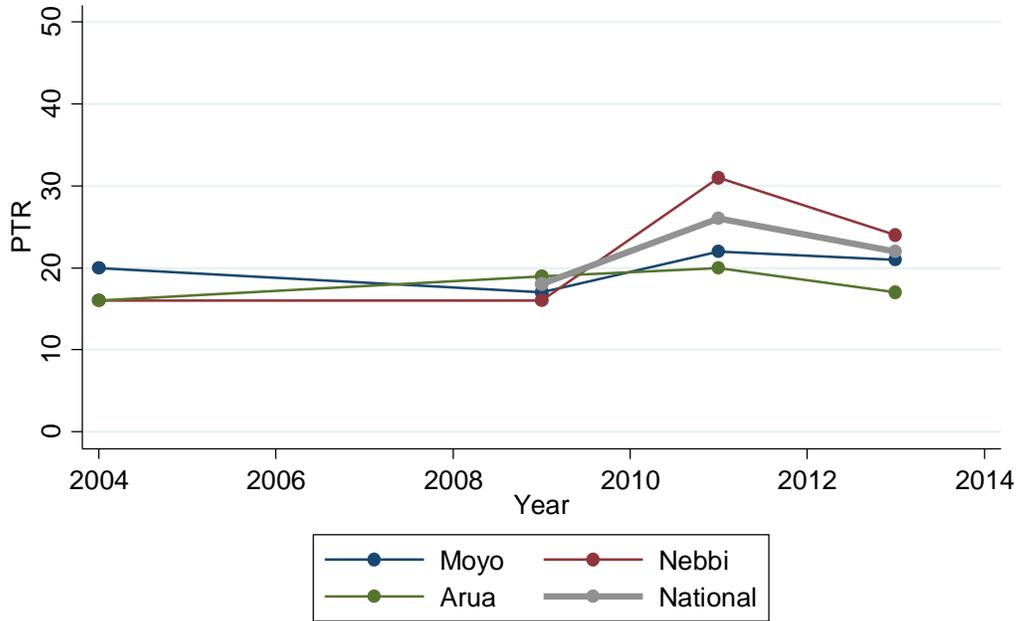
Appendix C. Schooling input ratios for northern regions<sup>14</sup>



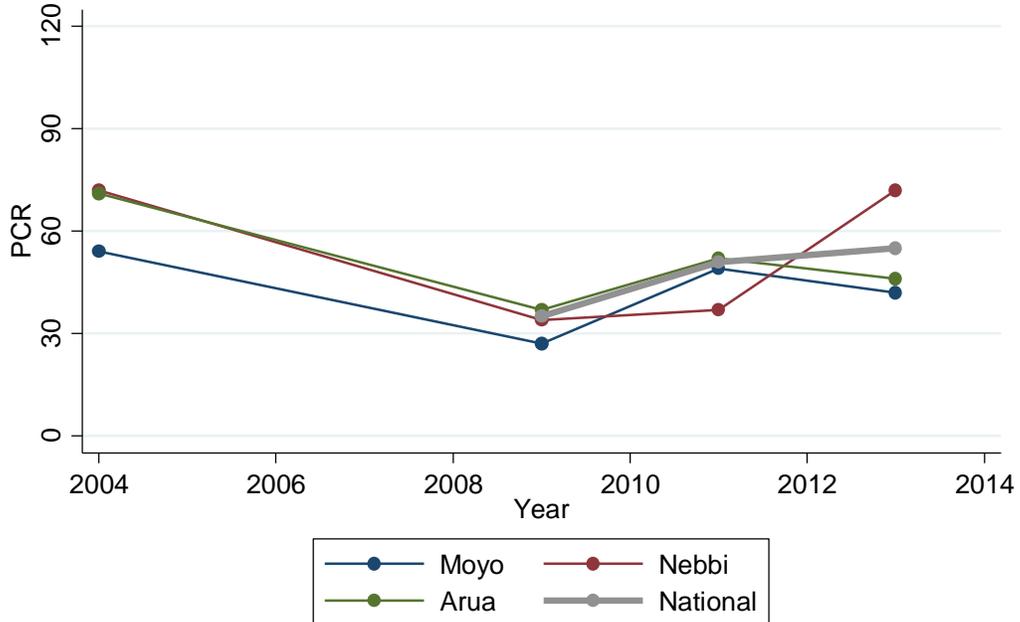
<sup>14</sup> MoES



Secondary Pupil Teacher Ratio by District  
West Nile



Secondary Pupil Classroom Ratio by District  
West Nile



## Appendix D. Description of the Theil Index

The Theil Index is a metric discussed in the horizontal inequality literature, albeit with qualifications around its interpretation across contexts (as it depends on the number of subgroups), and does not have an intuitive distribution as is the case with the regular (not group-level) Gini index.

$$GTHEIL = \sum_r^R p_r \frac{\bar{y}_r}{\bar{y}} \log\left(\frac{\bar{y}_r}{\bar{y}}\right)$$

where  $\bar{y}_r = \frac{1}{n_r} \sum_i^{n_r} y_{ir}$  is group r mean value,

R is the group r's population size,

$p_r$  is group r's population share,

$y_{ir}$  is the quantity of the variable of interest (e.g. income or years of education) of the  $i$ th member of group r,

$\bar{y}_r$  is the value of  $y$  for group r,

and  $\bar{y}$  is the grand total of variable  $y$  in the sample (Langer & Stewart 2013).

In the Theil index smaller distances between group values (e.g. 2 at the national mean of 4) are treated the same way as larger magnitude differences (e.g. 45 at the national mean of 90), provided that they form the same ratio. The distribution of the Group Theil index is somewhat wider than that of the Group Gini. However, the two measures are highly correlated (at 0.8 – 0.9).