

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL OF PASTORALISTS: COMMUNITIES BREAK THROUGH

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Sector: Education

Three years ago, Lojore had to learn basic numeracy not in school - but by selling cigarettes in Kapoeta market, a rural region of South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state. Lojore was not skipping school: there was no accessible school he could go to. It's a region that was left in ruins by long years of civil war. Education seemed a distant dream. Yet today, the 12-year-old boy is studying hard in his fifth year at Longeleya basic school, after the Parent Teacher Association began the tough job to support the local community rise up to the challenge of providing education. Great achievements so far!



Lojore second left in class

CHALLENGE

Although in Longeleya's case school buildings were constructed, many more learning spaces elsewhere are inadequate. Policy, programmes and establishment are weak. Further the education system still faces enormous hurdles. The education levels remain incredibly low - with over 70% of the pastoralist children still out of school. Approximately only 15% girls have access to schools. Many in the community continue to have a negative attitude towards education.

Even the education ministry hoping to tackle these challenges has struggled from poor staffing, inadequate resourcing and weak service delivery structures at all levels. Large amount of work still lies ahead of the ministry. Efficiency, developing institutional infrastructure for better decentralised governance will take a while.

It was for these reasons that state and county education authorities sought and continue to recognize the capacity development support from SNV.

CLIENTS



Later that simple outside 'classroom' developed, with the PTA being encouraged to work with the community, Non Governmental Organizations especially Counterpart International, UNICEF, Irada Women Group, the Toposa Students Association and the decentralised Southern Sudan government at the county and state.



Classroom and teachers house

Meetings and planning dialogues were held to empower the community. With the Parents Teachers Association working alongside the ¹Irada, a women's community based organization, to generate the required resources from the communities, development partners and government. All these

¹ The Irada women group is a group of South Sudanese women mainly widows who got together to improve themselves through self help projects. Counterpart initially started giving them support in getting functional skills that would help them earn a living/send their children to school and also get functional literacy through Adult Literacy classes. They planned to train them in molding bricks, brick laying; bakery; agriculture among others.

METHOD / SNV INTERVENTION

helped change the school.

SNV supported the Parents Teachers Associations partnership with the Irada women's group, who worked to mould the much needed building blocks to construct the school at a subsidized rate. They also provided for security of the blocks, building materials, children and the school by employing a local guard and fencing the school with traditional local thorns twigs.

SNV has not only supported the work to develop Longeleya school – it has worked alongside other education development partners, state and county authorities, and communities across the Eastern Equatoria and Upper Nile states to assist in the establishment of 195 parent teachers association in primary schools.

A variety of activities were undertaken. Conducting cascaded state, county and community stakeholder meetings on issues hindering education development in pastoralist communities – and making action plans to start addressing them. Social mobilisation, peer to peer mentoring and coaching for education managers at various levels within and across the states enhanced learning, quality and replication of improved practices.

Backing the establishment of Girls Education Movement groups augmented the efforts. These encouraged the wider community to send their children to school, working alongside the parents association, as well as local authorities, traditional and religious leaders. The state education authorities and communities got support to partner with other education partners such as the World Food Programme to support the schools, especially the boarding section, with food for education.

Encouraging practices were shared at the state and national education coordination workshops like the Education and Reconstruction Forums.

OUTCOME

Working through local community based organizations and PTAs promoted the establishment of links within communities, and identified key education concerns. This informed their planning and implementation of education programs. Over 195 PTA committees have been democratically elected - and over 1,329 members have been trained and functioning to support school development. School development plans have been produced and implemented through the support of micro-planning programs in the training stages for education managers, Parents Teachers Associations and girls education groups. Practical and realistic education development plans created for all level. This included strengthening planning at both county and state level education departments, with 17 trainees supported at state level, and 40 at county level.

Innovative ways of revitalizing communities' participation in education development have been initiated. In one of the counties-Ikwoto, the parents' body with the leadership of education director initiated "Village to Village Elder's forum" where traditional elders group and go mobilizing households on the importance of education. Across the state, children and parents have composed an education **"anthem: YAUTU NG'IDE: Bring Children to School"** to advocate for access to quality education. County education task forces for pastoral education have been put in place and functional in three counties.

The formed Parents Teachers Association has been significant to the transformation of Longeleya basic school and the community. This is true for many of the schools in Eastern Equatoria State. Community attitudes towards education are changing as parents encourage one another. Napeyok holding a diploma in Business Studies volunteered to support the PTA and Irada group to conduct a door to door mobilization of parents to send their children to school. She comes from a family of 11 (6 girls 4 boys). Her father is proud of his efforts, *"all my children have a education...sell some of your livestock, put money in your pocket and send your children to school as I did..."* In the process parents and local authorities have learnt that through combined efforts they can pool their resources and improve the learning outcomes of their children. As Mr. Onyango the deputy County Executive director re-affirms, *"We now see that we should all*



Elders & PTAs meet in Kapoeta

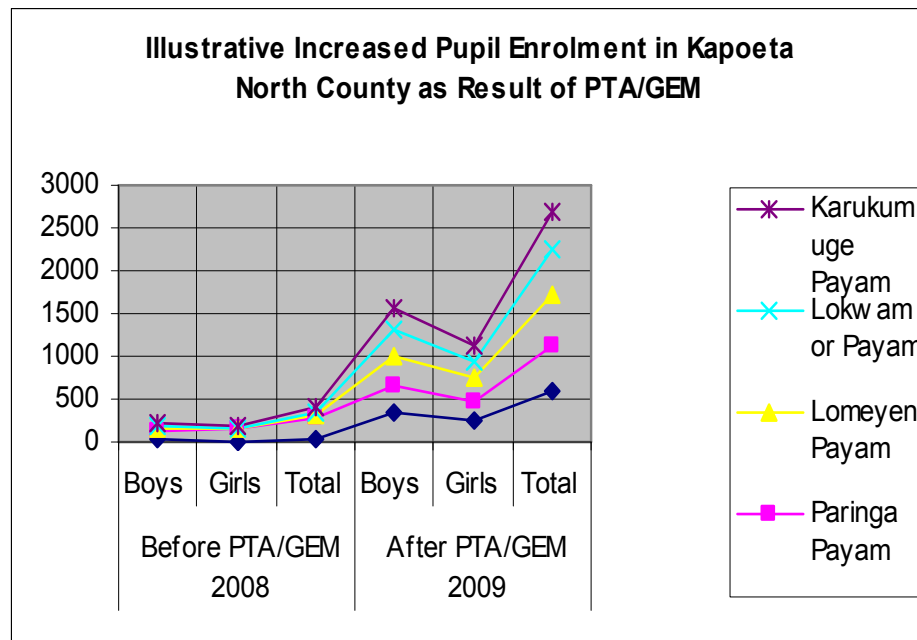
join the PTA to fight illiteracy which has kept our people behind and dependant on others...Our children must go to school"

The Parents Teachers Association is a group that SNV helped the government to establish.

IMPACT

In most ²counties there has been very significant increase in enrolment as illustrated.

Overall, access to primary education has rapidly grown, jumping some 37%, from 77,443 pupils in 2007 to 106,130 in 2009 across the state. That also included a



sharp increase in the numbers of girls in education, which leapt to 40%, from 29,485 girls to 41,339 girls over the same period.

LESSONS LEARNED

Despite successes, several challenges remain. Pupils are dropping out of schools as the quality and quality of the services have yet to yield quality education that attracts and retains them throughout the cycle.

At both state and county levels human and financial resources remain inadequate to support the parents' teachers associations and the community at large to function adequately.

The availability and use of learning and teaching materials remain low, while there are inadequate pedagogical skills incentives for the teachers for school managers. Another problem is a lack of continuity within the Ministry of Education Science and Technology staff and teachers, as deployment apparently remain highly unstable and politicized. In addition, a lack of capitation grants from the government to support the Head teachers run the schools, hinders many from implementing their school development priorities.

There are also cultural barriers to education, such as early marriages leave alone abject poverty.

² Counties are equivalent to districts