



Promising Practices to Increase Equity in Education Among Refugee Populations

Case Studies from Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda



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Rationale

- ECCN's Equity Task Team highlighting promising strategies and programmatic approaches (<https://eccnetwork.net/equity/>)
- Looking at a variety of barriers to equity across:
 - Access
 - Learning Process
 - Learning Outcomes
 - Systems/Institutional
- School can be a critical normalizing experience for displaced children and youth. Yet, they may face increased barriers and inequities to education during displacement. For many girls and young women, displacement effectively ends their chance for continued schooling.
- Despite this dynamic, the active engagement of Education Sector actors provides the opportunity to seek solutions to equity issues.



Background



- Plan International: Growing portfolio of refugee assistance programming, notably across Africa
- Organizational commitment to Gender Equality
- Practical programming to address Equity Issues
- Reflected in highlighted programs:
 - *Common Theme: Seeking practical good practices to address inequities facing young refugee learners, with a focus on gender equality.*



Today's Presenter



Dedicated To Increasing Equitable Access To
Education In Areas Affected By Crisis And Conflict

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Promising Practices to Increase Equity in Education Among Refugee Populations

Case Studies from Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda



Photo Credit: Plan
International Rwanda

Rwanda



Alternative Education Program Leveling the Playing Field for Children in Crisis

Implementing Agency: Plan International Rwanda

Managing Agency: Plan International Sweden

Donor: Swedish Broadcasting Agency

Location: Mahama Refugee Camp (Camp opened 2015)

Target Population: Burundian youth refugees

Implementation Period: June 2016 – December 2016

Number of Beneficiaries: 400 youth (204 females and 196 males)

Rwanda

Alternative Education Program Leveling the Playing Field for Children in Crisis

Background Information

- Plan International Rwanda is currently hosting over 75,000 Burundian refugees in refugee camps and in urban areas.
- Mahama Refugee Camp is home to over 54,000 refugees – more than half are children.
- Child Protection and Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Emergencies Programming in Mahama Refugee Camp since 2015.



History of the Alternative Education Program

- Needs assessment indicated a large gap in Mahama Refugee Camp in terms of responding to the needs of out of school children.
- In many cases, these were children who had never been to school in Burundi and were therefore unable to integrate into the formal school system in Rwanda. Most were unable to read and write.
- Education programs for developmentally delayed children and children with disabilities were not available at the time of program inception.
- Due to lack of engagement in education, many of these children demonstrated negative behaviors that exposed them to child protection concerns.
- The program provided alternative education which included literacy and numeracy courses, and instruction in basic life skills.

Rwanda

Alternative Education Program Leveling the Playing Field for Children in Crisis

Primary Objective of the Alternative Education Program

Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and other vulnerable children are protected from child labor and other forms of exploitation through increased access to quality alternative education.



Implementation Specifics

Alternative Education program activities included:

- Developing a curriculum for basic literacy and numeracy sessions incorporating key messages on child protection.
- Identifying out of school children interested in literacy/numeracy courses.
- Training staff and volunteers in delivery of the curriculum for basic literacy and numeracy courses.
- Constructing a recreational room, four classrooms, and eight single gender toilets for use by program.
- Providing psycho-social support through individual counseling sessions and home visits.
- Training of female and male) stakeholders, community mobilizers, and children on child labor, trafficking, and exploitation.
- Reviewing, improving, and testing a monitoring system of UASC to better analyze trafficking and for child protection trend analysis.

Successes of Alternative Education Program

- An adult literacy curriculum was developed by the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and was implemented and adapted to the refugee camp context for volunteers and learners.
- Psychological problems such as discipline and behavioral problems were addressed through the program.
- Learners were engaged through courses that allowed them to acquire minimum knowledge and skills. enabling them to procure jobs and carry out everyday activities.
- Learners became more empowered and prepared for formal education or TVET programs.
- 253 students completed the program, able to read and write.
- 10 people (4 females and 6 males) were trained as trainers on the delivery of numeracy and literacy.
- 112 community mobilizers, (41 women and 71 Men) were trained to increase their knowledge on prevention of child labor, trafficking, and exploitation.

Rwanda

Alternative Education Program Leveling the Playing Field for Children in Crisis

Challenges of the Alternative Education Program

- Inadequate teaching and learning facilities with regards to the classrooms and equipment (chairs, secured cupboards to keep notebooks, and other instructional aids)
- Insufficient books and support materials to implement the literacy, numeracy, and life skills curriculum to its full extent
- Irregular attendance of learners particularly for afternoon courses



Monitoring and Evaluation of the Alternative Education Program

- Regularly monitored by the Plan Rwanda field team including: Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Plan Rwanda Child Protection Technical Team, and Child Protection Specialist.
- The Emergency Response Manager, CP and School Gender Based Violence Manager and Child Protection Specialist monitored daily activities in the camps by means of reports, verification of data through field visits and regular monitoring and management of databases on a weekly and monthly basis.
- Progress reports were shared with all stakeholders including clusters and sectors groups to ensure coordination and broader reporting.
- Suggestion boxes and feedback forms were made readily available for the project beneficiaries.

"We have no words to express our gratitude to PLAN Rwanda for the wealth of knowledge they are investing in us. We had lost hope but now we see progress and a light at the end of the tunnel." – 19 year old female, speaking on behalf of her classmates.



Improving the Alternative Education Program

A final independent reflection and lessons learned evaluation made the following recommendations based on a comprehensive review of the program's successes and challenges:

- Mobilize resources and put in place adequate infrastructures and facilities to support the program activities in refugee camp.
- Enough teaching and learning materials need to be provided for both learners and volunteers.
- Support material should also include supplementary various story books in various subjects so as to promote the reading culture and enhancing life skills.
- Mobilize resources for TVET programs for learners who graduate from literacy and numeracy classes.
- Conduct an in-depth assessment about the root causes of irregularity and absenteeism or delays of learners with appropriate solutions.

Tanzania



Girls Clubs Essential to Equity in Education

Implementing Agency: Plan International Tanzania

Managing Agency: Plan International Tanzania and Plan International Canada

Donor: Plan International Canada National Organization

Location: Hope Secondary School, Nduta Camp

Target Population: Female Burundian Refugees of Adolescent Age

Implementation Period: December 2016 – May 2017

Number of Beneficiaries: 8 Girls Clubs consisted of 15-20 members each (i.e., 150-160 direct beneficiaries)

Tanzania

Girls Clubs Essential to Equity in Education

Background Information

- Since April 2015, over 400,000 Burundians have fled political violence in their home country to neighboring countries. Of this number, over 230,000 are currently sheltering inside Tanzania.
- Nearly 134,500 Burundians are currently taking refuge in camps in Northwest Tanzania, of which 78% are women and children. A vast number of children living in the camps have witnessed extreme violence, while many have been separated from their parents.
- Plan International works in 3 refugee camps in Northwest Tanzania: Nyarugusu, Nduta and Mtendeli.



Significant Barriers to Equity

- Gender discrimination
- Extreme poverty leading to child labor
- Cultural practices and traditions including early marriage
- Exclusion of pregnant adolescent and young mothers
- Little understanding of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and lack of cloths
- Schools distance
- Teachers with little skills
- Lack of curricula and textbooks
- Shortage of female teachers as role models
- Classroom environments that reinforce gender stereotypes
- Sexual harassment and lack of security
- Inappropriate school facilities.

History of the Girls Clubs

- In July of 2016, Plan International Tanzania conducted a Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) in Mtendeli and Nduta camps. The RNA identified significant barriers that were preventing adolescent girls from going to school on either a permanent or semi-permanent basis.
- In Nduta and Mtendeli camps, statistics indicated wide gaps in school enrollment, retention and completion rates of boys and girls.
- The gap in performance and transition rates for boys and girls was even wider.
- Plan International Tanzania developed a three-year Education in Emergencies (EiE) strategic plan that would help provide better access to quality schools and a more equitable education for all refugee children, especially adolescent girls enrolled in secondary schools in the Nduta and Mtendeli camps.
- In order to address the issue of inequity in educational opportunities between male and female students, Girls Clubs were created.

Tanzania

Girls Clubs Essential to Equity in Education

Primary Objective of the Girls Clubs

To create a space for girls to learn, share ideas and interact so that they can be better developed to help themselves and contribute to their community.

The primary objective of the Girls Clubs is in line with Plan International Tanzania's overall strategy to: ***Improve the quality of education for Burundian Refugee children in Nduta and Mtendeli.***



Tanzania

Girls Clubs Essential to Equity in Education

Implementation Specifics

- Girls Clubs met for 2 hours per week, Tuesday and Thursdays from 3-4pm on school grounds.
- The average attendance at each meeting was 11 girls.

Implementing Staff

Clubs were run by female teachers under the supervision of a female Plan International Education in Emergencies (EiE) officer.

The Plan International EiE officer provided overall guidance for implementation and was responsible for reporting on the progress on a weekly and monthly basis.

Topics Covered in Girls Club Meetings

- Life Skills
- Self Esteem
- MHM (Menstrual Hygiene Management)
- HIV/AIDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)
- ASRH (Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health)
- SGBV (Sexual Gender Based Violence)
- Security
- Communication
- Sanitation
- Relationship and Social Integration



Successes of the Girls Clubs

The Girls Clubs experienced a great deal of successes documented by the EiE team including the following:

- Attendance at school and completion rates of female students increased.
- Female students demonstrated the ability to properly manage menstruation
- Peer to peer education and support took place between females.
- Teachers and parents were able to support adolescent students to continue attending school during menstruation.
- Enrollment of adolescent girls at secondary school level increased, with adolescent girls' enrollment increasing from 157 to 201 during the 2016-2017 school year.
- Girls Clubs helped in the identification of out of school girls and facilitated the conduct of home visits around the camp to encourage out of school girls to go back to school.

Tanzania

Girls Clubs Essential to Equity in Education

Challenges of the Girls Clubs

Members of the Girls Clubs basic needs were not being met due to the lack of resources available.

These included: pads, cloths, lotion, soap, shoes, school uniforms, and equipment for sports activities (netball, volleyball, basketball, football, etc.)



Tanzania

Girls Clubs Essential to Equity in Education

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Girls Clubs

- The Plan International EiE officer provided ongoing monitoring of the activities and reporting on the progress of the Girls Clubs on a weekly and monthly basis.
- To measure the overall impact, the EiE team in Tanzania conducted a survey which revealed that the implementation of the Girls Clubs has had a significant positive impact on female knowledge and actions on MHM in the Nduta camp.



Improving the Girls Clubs

According to an internal review conducted by the Plan Tanzania Education in Emergencies team, future implementation of Girls Clubs can be improved in the following ways:

- The basic needs of the Girls Clubs members need to be responded to. This includes providing menstrual hygiene items, regular hygiene items, school uniforms, and shoes.
- Female teachers from primary as well as secondary schools need to be trained so they can assist female students in dealing with issues surrounding menstruation.
- Girls Clubs need to be expanded to reach more girls, including those in upper primary classes.

Uganda



Menstrual Hygiene Management Helping Girls Stay in School

Implementing Agency: Plan International Uganda

Managing Agency: Plan International Australia and Plan International Netherlands

Donor: Combined funding from Australia (AusAid-ANCP and general donations) and the Netherlands (individual donations, legacies, national post code lottery and corporate donations)

Location: Tororo, Lira, and Alebtong Districts

Target Population: Rural women and adolescent girls aged 13-24 years

Implementation Period: July 2012 – June 2016

Number of Beneficiaries: Target 100,000

Uganda

Menstrual Hygiene Management Helping Girls Stay in School

Background Information

- Plan International Uganda has been responding to the influx of South Sudanese refugees in Northern Uganda since 2014 and Uganda is currently home to over one million South Sudanese refugees.
- Uganda was one of the first countries to sign the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, a commitment to provide a comprehensive response to refugee crises.



History of the MHM Project

- Plan International Uganda implemented a four-year Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Project in nine selected sub-counties in Lira, Alebtong and Tororo Districts.
- The project worked in partnership with AFRIpads (UG) Ltd to improve access of hygienically affordable pads for women and adolescent girls. AFRIpads was responsible for the production, distribution and sale of the re-usable sanitary pads among beneficiaries in Plan International Uganda-supported areas.
- The project was expanded in 2014 to target girls and women in refugee camps, in addition to the host communities the project was already working in.

Primary Objectives of the MHM Project

Plan's target was to provide 100,000 adolescent girls and young women in refugee camps and host communities in Uganda the opportunity to fully participate in education and work, without menstruation being a limiting factor. The project had three primary objectives:

- Improved Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) among rural women, adolescent girls, boys and men.
- Increased access to affordable and hygienic sanitary pads among rural women and adolescent girls.
- Increased access to appropriately designed, gender-equitable WASH facilities among girls in primary schools in Lira, Alebtong, and Tororo districts.

Uganda

Menstrual Hygiene Management Helping Girls
Stay in School

Expected Results of the MHM Project

- To improve the personal hygiene and health of girls through the availability of sustainable and affordable sanitary protection.
- To remove barriers to education so that girls can go to school.
- To improve incomes of young women through the sale of affordable sanitary pad kits.



Uganda

Menstrual Hygiene Management Helping Girls Stay in School

Implementation Specifics

Implementation activities focused on achieving the expected results of the project.

Objective: Improved Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) among rural women, adolescent girls, boys and men

- Awareness campaigns, MHM education initiatives, and information education and communication (IEC) materials were created and carried out
- A holistic and integrated approach to menstruation and menstrual hygiene management was utilized to educate men and boys on MHM and encourage them to support girls and women during menstruation
- Senior women and male teachers were trained in MHM and instructed in how to best support female pupils at school.
- Boys and girls were trained on MHM to empower them with the knowledge to support other pupils. The trained pupils passed on the information to other pupils through health parades at the school .
- The project worked within the school system to disseminate MHM information and skills to both teachers and pupils.



Uganda

Menstrual Hygiene Management Helping Girls Stay in School

Implementation Specifics Cont.

Implementation activities focused on achieving the expected results of the project.

Objective: Increased access to affordable and hygienic sanitary pads among rural women and adolescent girls

- Local Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) were identified and members trained to make local reusable sanitary pads and recruited to sell the AFRIpads kits. The project involved community leaders and district officials during implementation which helped increase credibility and acceptance of the project.

Objective: Increased access to appropriately designed, gender-equitable WASH facilities among girls in primary schools in Lira, Alebtong, and Tororo districts.

- Plan Uganda constructed latrines fitted with washrooms for girls to provide the privacy that was lacking due to the poor sanitary structures.
- Hand-washing facilities were installed and located near facilities used by female pupils.
- Schools made concerted efforts to clean bathroom appropriately to limit infections.



Uganda

Menstrual Hygiene Management Helping Girls Stay in School

Successes of the MHM Project Cont.

- The project empowered females to attend school even during menstruation. Regular class attendance rose from 70% to 92%.
- 97% of girls surveyed possessed knowledge of menstruation (up from 78%) and 96% of boys surveyed possessed knowledge of menstruation and understood that it was normal.
- 97% of girls surveyed displayed a positive attitude towards menstruation.
- 94% of girls and women in Tororo, Lira, and Alebtong districts have access to appropriate sanitary materials (up from 76%).
- 100% of girls surveyed were practicing appropriate hygienic behavior during menstruation.
- The use of AFRIpads increased from 1% to 22% and the use of inappropriate sanitary materials decreased from 34% to 6%.
- VSLA members were able to establish new enterprises from income gained from the sale of AFRIpads



Monitoring and Evaluation of the MHM Project

- A baseline survey and mid-term review were conducted to ensure lessons learnt were transferred from one phase to the next phase.
- M&E methodologies utilized: regular visits, focus group discussions, surveys, key informant interviews, bi-annual reviews, and quarterly feedback meetings with key stakeholders.
- The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique was a preferred method for gathering evidence.
- A final evaluation was conducted and presented in May 2017.

Improving the MHM Project

An internal review by the Plan Uganda project team generated the following ideas for improvements that could be made to the project:

- Training of all teachers in MHM, not just the senior male and female teachers. This would generate a critical mass of teachers supporting female students at all levels.
- Training of in-service teachers and their instructors in MHM.
- Equip all schools with sewing machines so male and female students could make reusable pads at schools within the school health clubs.
- Strengthen and scale up boys and girls clubs and recruit retired teachers who are well respected in the community to mentor the clubs.
- Increase engagement with cultural and religious institutions to ensure that MHM is included in their topics discussed.



Wrap-Up Thoughts . . .



- Plan International establishing a regional Center of Excellence for refugee programming in Eastern and Central Africa.
- The ECCN Equity Task Team is very interested in learning what Promising/Good Practices others are pursuing in their work.
- We invite questions and comments on the website and will be monitoring to answer incoming enquiries for the next few weeks.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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