

# GNB MINI REPORT ON FIELD VISITS submitted by Joy for Children- Uganda



## INTRODUCTION.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, a team of 3 people from Joy for Children Uganda visited Karangura Sub County where the project will implemented. The field activities began with a mapping exercise where Joy for Children –Uganda staff visited the community to obtain information that would inform the implementation of the project ad also seek consent from local and community leaders. The team that carried our the mapping exercise included;

1. Mr. Ntenga Moses, Executive Director JFC-U
2. Ms. Kabahubya Phiona, Programs Cordinator JFC-U
3. Mr. Muganzi Joshua, Assistant Projects Officer JFC-U



*Left-Right: Ntenga Moses, Muganzi Joshua & Phiona Kabahubya climbing the mountain to the schools and community.*

### Location:

Karangura Sub County is located in Kabarole district on the foot hills of Mt.Rwenzori in western Uganda. It takes about 45minutes to 1 hour climbing uphill to get to the schools location depending on how good an individual is at climbing.



However, when one has finally reached the schools, the scenery is so good despite the funny school structures. It was found out that there are few school structures compared to a normal primary school that should have 7 class rooms and staff offices. Mahyoro and Kibya Sub Primary Schools have three and four classrooms respectively. Currently both schools are struggling to increase the structures so that each class can have its own classroom. In Kibya P.1 & P2, P3 & P4, P5 & P6 they share a class while in Mahyoro some classes study in the nearby church. That means children have to face different sides of the classroom as teachers conduct their lessons. The school and local community are determined to improve the schools through donating the energy and time in building more classrooms.



Constructing a class block in these areas is also another story of its own because the construction materials have to be got from down the hills. So after buying the materials, you also have to pay people to carry these materials on their backs or heads to the school because cars cannot reach there like shown in the photos below. Though sometimes, parents and well wishers plus children are asked to help on their way to and fro school to carry some of the light materials, like the bricks.



*Local people carrying bricks to the top of the mountain where the schools are located*

During our interaction with the headteachers from the beneficiary schools, we talked to Mr. Agaba Patrick head teacher Kiby Primary school, he has experience of five years as a head teacher and has spent more than 20 years in education and has worked with different schools in the Rwenzori region.

We also met Ms. Drusila the headmistress of Mahyoro primary school, **“It has been a challenge that girls are not completing primary seven”**, say **Biira Druscillah**. During her 3 years practice as a head teacher, she has been working hard to see that children in her school complete primary seven. In 2012 her school managed to send 15 children to secondary of the 24 children (12 boys and 12 girls). Of the 12 girls 2 gave birth and who went to secondary school and now they are in senior two.

In 2013 she has 12 girls and 7 boys making a total of 19 children in primary seven. In 2013 , Mahyoro Primary School had a total number of pupils 302 and of these 185 were girls and 117 were boys. From this report, more girls enrol but don't complete primary seven.



*Ms. Drusila, Head teacher of Mahyoro Primary school together with Mr. Ntenga Moses Executive Director of Joy for Children - Uganda*

## HEADTEACHERS VIEWS ON CHILD MARRIAGE

Mr. Agaba headmaster Kiby primary school says, child marriage is a common practice in the area most especially with in the Bakoonjo tribe community where the schools are located. He highlighted that their schools welcome this project with open hands because they have been victims to the tragedy, “many children have dropped out of school and have married either willingly or unwillingly” he said. He gave an example of the school enrolment picture where he said that at the beginning of every year, many children both girls and boys enrol for school; however as they move from one class to another they start reducing. However, he tells how during his term as ahead teacher in the school has tried to sensitize both parents and pupils the value of education.

When Mr. Agaba came to Kiby Primary school in 2011, there were a total of 20 pupils in Primary five, 10 girls and 10 boys, but only 13 made it to Primary Seven last year, that is; 10 boys and 3 girls. However of the 7 girls that dropped out of school in the two years on that particular class followed up, 3 were confirmed married off by their families.

Ms. Drusilla, head teacher Mahyoro primary school says, Child marriage is a disease that is eating up the education system in the region, she mentioned how there always hardly any one graduating from the University or college in the area. It takes a while for such a thing to happen.



*Left: Ms. Drusilla talking to one of our staff. Right: Our staff take a rest as the climb the mountain to the schools.*

### Causes of Child marriage as highlighted by the head teachers and community members.

In our interaction with the headteachers, children and the local community, the following were some of the reasons advanced for child marriages.

1. Poverty, they highlighted that many people in the Karangura sub county are poor, and when men promise them property and money in exchange for their daughters, they do it without any hesitation.

2. Ignorance about the value of Education. It was mentioned that many people in the community do not know what they can actually benefit from educating their children; they say it takes times and it's costly. The community lack role models that children can emulate. The most of the people in this community got married early and are now living a peasant life. They seem not to see a correlation between education and a descent life.
3. Exposure to leisure life, with so much trading centres coming up and business along the newly constructed Fort Portal – Bundibugyo Road, many children have resorted to working in the markets and going to watch movies than schooling. In their they find men and boys , women and girls who convince them into marriage at such tender ages.
4. Lack of exposure, Ms. Drusila says, most children in her school lack mentors people who have made it through school, like women leaders, business women, social workers among others, she suggested that if we had a slot within the project where we can always inspirational speakers to talk and encourage these children to keep in school it would be great.
5. Impact of the war where some children were left orphans. While taking with the headteacher of Mahyoro Ms. Drusilla she quickly pointed across the road showing us the boy whose father was killed by the ADF Rebel. The boy now lives alone and made a 13 year old girl pregnant from her school. Now the girl has given birth and the headteacher wants to convince her to go back to school when the baby grows. We later met with the same boy and is willing to join the campaign.

They also highlighted challenges being faced in schools that lead girls to drop out of school and these include;

1. Poor enumeration for teacher, this affects the teachers performance and leads to them missing some of the lessons regularly because of lack of transport and nearby teacher quarters. It was also mentioned that some teachers threaten to leave the school. This demoralises the pupils thus stopping to attend school. “why should I go to school yet teachers do not come to class all the time” one of the pupils mentioned.
2. Understaffing where there are only 3 qualified teachers of the needed 8. To bridge this gap some people are improvised from the local community to teach the children.
3. Hard to reach area, Kibyoo primary school is located on the foot hills of Mt.Rwenzori which has no roads. Getting to the school takes between 45 minutes to an hour climbing from the foot hills. Teachers and children are already tired by the time they reach the school.

4. Lack of enough structures, both schools have less structures compared to what a normal primary school should have. Due to this, the pupils are combined so that they all study under a roofed structure and this is how it's normally done: P.1 and P.2 share a class, P.3 & P.4, P.5 & P.6. then P.7 alone. In total the schools have only four structures instead 7 like any other primary schools. This affects the children concentration in class.
5. Schools have limited sanitary facilities like latrines where teachers and pupils (girls and Boys) share the latrines. Girls lack a washroom and need a changing room especially during their periods.



*Left: A temporary structure the school is struggling to complete. On the right, the brick brought in by the community to help in construction of the new classroom.*

It was also noted that some girls drop out of because they think life is easy out of school, they resort to digging and selling of their food stuffs and also getting married.



We took this opportunity to talk to some of the teenagers and married girls around the area, and they were glad to share with us there experience. One of these teenagers was married off at 13 years and

now she is 16 years with a baby girl of 3 years old. She was married off due to lack of school fees and the father testified to that.



*Right: Ntenga Moses Executive Director talking to some girls. Left: Posing for a photo with a girl married at 13 and in front of her is her 3 years old daughter.*

### **Animals for Economic Empowerment and Girls Education**

We talked to the teachers as well as the community about the animals for keeping girls in school. Many of them suggested goats because they can survive on mountainous area like Karangura.

They mentioned that it is easy for the child to tie her goat to graze before or on her way to school and take it back home after school.

The headteachers mentioned that they will monitor the project to ensure that each girl who is give a goat continues going to school.

They also suggested that we can adopt peer to peer monitoring where children can follow up their fellow pupil who misses school.

The kind of goats reared in this area for meat and sell to get income. They are much valued by the community because they multiply easily.





*Some girls found digging during school hours in Karangura sub county*

### **Recommendation of from the community on how the project should run**

1. The school can monitor the children and goats given to the vulnerable girls
2. Teachers' workshops can be a powerful tool of involving teachers to support the project and girls.
3. Giving recognition to teachers who support girls education as a motivation to do their work better.

### **One case Identified that will be documented at the beginning of the term**

A P.5 girl who got pregnant at the age of 13 in 2012. The boy who made her pregnant was 16 whose father was killed by ADF rebels.