



# UGANDA

POPULATION-BASED SURVEY  
ON PEACE AND EDUCATION

DECEMBER 2015

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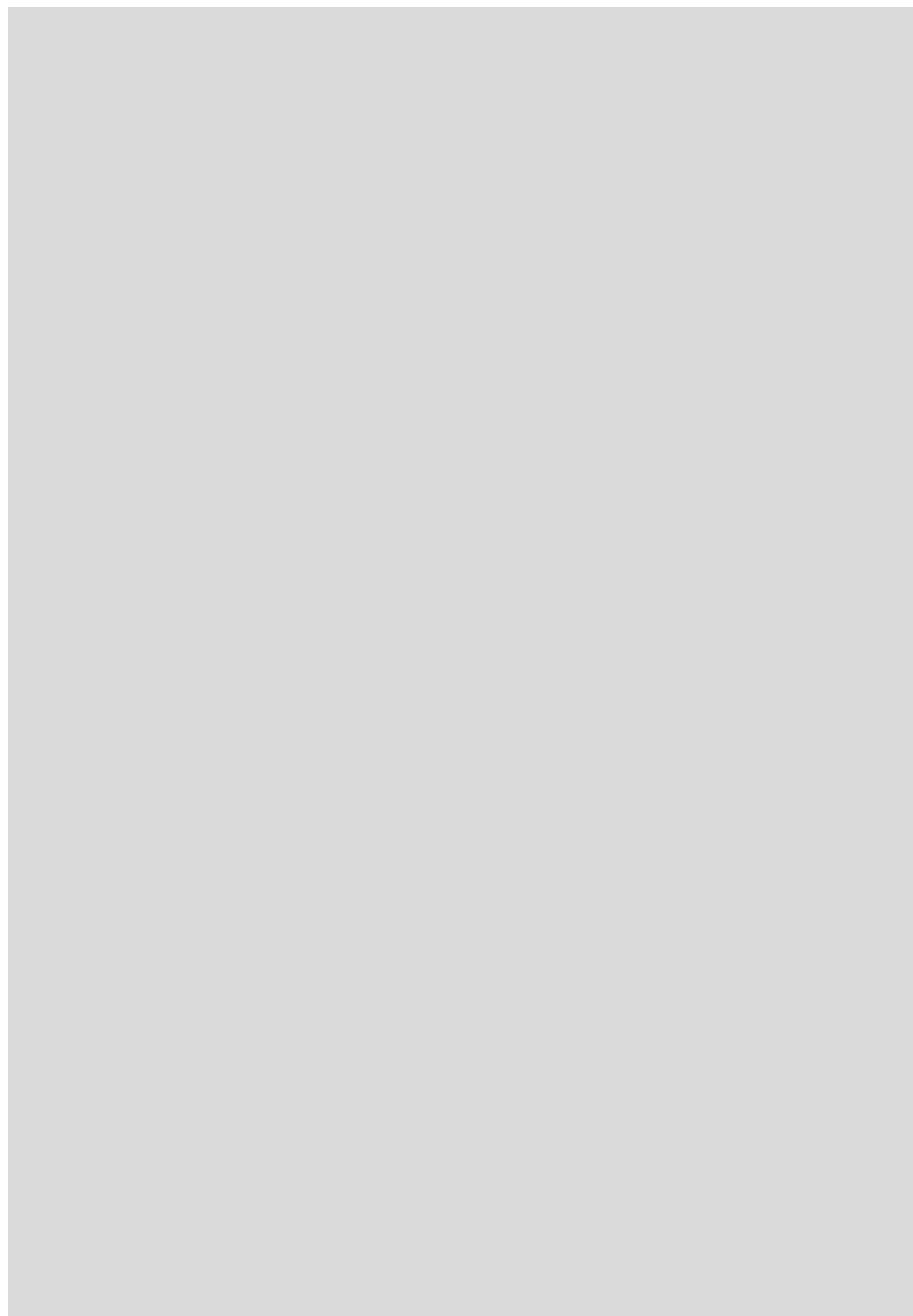
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Population-Based Survey on  
Peace and Education:  
Uganda

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was conducted in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)’s Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy (PBEA) Program. The four-year PBEA program – designed as a partnership among UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands, the national governments of participating countries, and other key stakeholders – is an innovative, cross-sectoral program focusing on education and peacebuilding. Its goal is to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in conflict-affected contexts, including countries at risk of – or experiencing and recovering from – conflict. This baseline study involved a survey of 2,079 randomly selected respondents in Uganda, a nationwide sample of 1,024, and four additional sub-samples of 1,055 individuals to assess factors affecting resilience, social cohesion and security as elements of peacebuilding in Uganda, and the interaction of education with those factors. The four sub-samples were drawn from four of the regions where the PBEA program is being implemented: Acholi, Karamoja, South West and West Nile. The surveys were designed to provide results that are representative of the population aged 14 years and older in Uganda nationally and in the four UNICEF PBEA intervention areas. Close to half of study respondents were male, with a little more than one-third (36.9%) being between the ages of 14 and 24, and the remainder (63.1%) adults over 24 years. The study identified significant areas of intersection between educational experiences, social cohesion, and resilience. This report presents the key results, which are also presented online in an interactive map format [here](#).<sup>1</sup> The report and the map can be read together; the report highlights key findings related to the PBEA program’s theory of change (ToC), while the map provides a more comprehensive overview of responses. Like the results section of this report, the map has four main domains: characteristics of respondents, educational experiences, social cohesion, and resilience.

## Educational Experiences

When comparing by age group, 50% of youth compared to 25% of adults completed at least primary level education. This is a positive trend, indicating nearly half of the youth population is finishing primary school, which is double the rate in the older, adult population. This rate for youth is lower, however, than official statistics, which put primary school completion at 64%. In the current national sample, three-quarters of the youth have either completed primary school or are currently enrolled in school. The percentages were similar in all other regions except Karamoja where only one-half of the youth have either completed primary school or are currently enrolled in school.

Overall, however, only slightly more than one-third of respondents in the national sample and the UNICEF intervention areas (with the exception of Karamoja) ranked their access to education and quality of education as good or very good. As with access to education, the highest percentage of respondents (63%) reporting that quality of education was good or very good was in Karamoja. The figures from Karamoja may seem surprising given frequent reports from the region of poor infrastructure and large distances between schools hindering both students and teachers from accessing educational resources. Reports also suggest, however, that there have been significant improvements in service provision in Karamoja in recent decades. One study on disparities in educational attainment based on ethnicity and religion found that inequality in Karamoja was still higher than in other regions, but had decreased from a 'disproportionately high level' in 1991.<sup>2</sup> The recent improvement may have caused respondents in this study to report higher levels of satisfaction with their access to education than in other regions, even if real educational resources remained comparatively weaker. Combining the indicators, however, suggests that there is still a need to improve access and quality of education in Uganda especially in the Karamoja region, to better align to the overall positive perceptions and attitudes to education.



### *Attitudes towards education*

This study confirms that Ugandans still value education highly despite reports that the educational system is not seen as preparing students well for the employment market.<sup>3</sup> When asked to identify their main priority and concern, the top response nationally was education (29%) followed by job opportunities (9%) and financial issues (8%). This is consistent with studies carried out in other post-conflict and developing countries, and previous studies in Uganda.<sup>4</sup> In the Acholi region of Uganda, the percentage was even higher (43%). The percentage of respondents indicating education as the top priority was lowest in Karamoja (12%), where food (24%) was the top priority for respondents in the current study.

Attitudes toward education were measured using a 7-item scale based on a set of statements provided to respondents. The average index score was .78 in the national sample (index scores ranged from 0 to 1 with scores closer to one being more positive). Scores were slightly higher in the four sub-regions, indicating that Ugandans place a high value on formal education, even in regions where the future adherence of children to the dominant lifestyle (e.g., semi-nomadic) or their involvement in the prevalent livelihood (e.g., agriculture), is not always seen as necessitating formal education.

### *Poverty*

Despite the high value placed on education, families still face a struggle to keep their children in school. Poverty and lack of social support are the most critical factors keeping children at home. Besides illness of the child, illness of a family member and the need for the child to work are among the most common reasons for missing school. In families that have fewer material assets and use more negative coping strategies, household members are less likely to have positive educational outcomes.

### *Violence in school*

About three-quarters of the respondents in the national sample stated that the environment in school was safe or very safe, with a higher

percentage found in all four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions. This contradicts other studies indicating that violence in schools is still a problem in some of these regions;<sup>5</sup> it may reflect the population's relative perceptions of safety in their lives generally when compared to their past experience. Indeed, when asked about the respondent's direct experience of violence in school, rates are quite high in some regions. Respondents in Karamoja were more likely to report teacher-on-pupil violence as a conflict in schools than was reported nationally (34% versus 19% nationally) pointing to an ongoing culture of violence in the region, which has been reported elsewhere in the literature. With regard to direct experience of conflict in school, nearly one out of four students (23%) in the national sample mentioned being called names, insulted, or humiliated at school, and nearly two out of ten students (17%) were the subject of gossip and rumors; one out of ten students have been either discriminated against (10%) or threatened with violence (11%). When comparing the four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions, the Acholi region had a statistically higher percentage of students who experienced these types of issues in school compared to the national sample and with the other three regions ( $p < .05$ ). Notably, 22% of respondents in Acholi reported being physically abused by a teacher at school in a way that resulted in pain, discomfort, or injury; 21% reported being threatened with violence in school; and 20% reported that they had not contacted anybody for help to resolve the problem.

#### *Sources of tension in schools*

A little more than one-half (54%) of the respondents in the nationwide sample, who are currently enrolled in school or have children in school, cited school feeding as the most common source of conflict in schools. Poor feeding is also the type of conflict most frequently cited as being likely to turn violent (50% nationally). The rate in Karamoja (84%) was higher than the national sample; this is consistent with other studies that have found that food insecurity was a prevalent concern in the region. In South West, 63% of respondents identified poor feeding as a source

of conflict, pointing to poverty among families negatively affecting children's ability to perform at school.

Teachers' salaries (42%) and teachers' absenteeism (34%) were other major drivers of conflict identified by respondents, corroborating reports elsewhere in the literature that payment of teachers was frequently irregular, leading to absenteeism due to low morale and pursuing other sources of income. Poor school leadership was reported by 33% of the national sample and was higher in all of the UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions (44% in South West and West Nile, 40% in Karamoja, and 39% in Acholi). About 41% of respondents in Karamoja cited accommodations as a source of conflict, consistent with the findings of another recent study commissioned by UNICEF that students and teachers traveled long distances to reach schools and found poor standards of accommodations at school.<sup>6</sup> Notably, respondents in Karamoja (48%), Acholi (30%) and West Nile (21%) also reported more frequent disputes arising from school land issues than the national sample (13%), reflecting previous studies' findings that land disputes were affecting schools in those regions.

Teachers' salaries and absenteeism are identified as two of the main sources of conflict in schools, reflecting the dissatisfaction with working conditions that led to a two-week teacher strike in May 2015.<sup>7</sup> Yet, with the exception of Karamoja, the majority of students in all regions indicated that they most frequently approached their teachers to resolve conflicts in schools, emphasizing teachers' important social role in mitigating conflict in schools. Respondents in Karamoja were also more likely to report challenges to educational policies (23% versus 11% nationally) as a type of conflict in school, which may indicate that students and communities are demanding improved educational access and quality.

### *Gender*

The findings of the current study are consistent with national data on education, indicating that gender disparity is being significantly reduced at the primary school level, especially enrollment rates in

primary school.<sup>8</sup> The study found no statistically significant difference between levels of enrollment of female and male youth respondents, whereas there was a significant difference in the level of education between adult respondents, with 49% of male compared to 36% of female respondents reporting having completed primary school. The study developed a gender equity index composed of scores for a number of factors related to gender equality in schools. The average score for the national sample was .82, and the index had great variation among the four UNICEF intervention areas, from .50 in Karamoja to .77 in West Nile, .85 in Acholi, and .89 in the South West. These results suggest that the Acholi and South West regions have made significantly greater progress in ensuring gender equity in schools than Karamoja and West Nile.

### **Social cohesion**

The study developed a social cohesion index which computed scores from 0 to 1 based on factor analyses of eight questions resulting in five factors: 1) trust, 2) social relationships, 3) civic and social participation, 4) inclusion and attitudes toward social processes and services, and 5) constructive dispute resolution. The factors are indicative of both vertical and horizontal social cohesion, for example, trust encompasses both trust in authorities (vertical) and trust in family, community, and other ethnic groups (horizontal). Scores on the social cohesion index were similar to the national average for the Karamoja, Acholi, and South West regions, and slightly higher for West Nile (.71).

The low overall social cohesion scores in all four UNICEF intervention areas and nationally suggested that there is room for improvement. But looking at the specific dimensions of social cohesion provides more information on aspects needing to be strengthened. The civic participation factor was the lowest (nationally and in all four regions), while the nonviolent conflict resolution factor was the highest in all regions. In West Nile and Karamoja, however, the average score for non-violent conflict resolution was notably lower than elsewhere. Trust of people from other ethnic groups and trust in authorities yielded the

lowest scores; the national index was .44 and .43, respectively, while trust in family and community were the highest (.76 and .56 respectively). If programming is developed to increase trust, the focus should be on inter-ethnic relationships and building trust in authorities. Since respondents reported relatively high levels of comfort in interacting with people from other religious, political, and ethnic groups, there is a positive foundation of community interaction to build on. The study also included a 'diversity index' based on a series of questions related to respect for diversity in schools. Low scores nationally and in each region suggest that respect for diversity in Ugandan schools still needs strengthening.

Increase in age and better educational experiences that encourage more positive attitudes and perceptions toward education, diversity and equality are statistically associated with higher levels of social cohesion. Exposure to violence, on the other hand, was associated with lower scores on the social cohesion index. Social cohesion is associated with greater likelihood of having enrolled in and completed primary education. It is less closely associated with factors of psychological resilience.

#### *Teachers, parents, students and the community*

Relationships among teachers, parents, students (TPS) and their communities were assessed by a series of questions; the results were calculated into two scores. Again, the highest possible value was one, and scores closer to one indicate more positive relationships. Nationally, the average score for TPS relationships was .68, and for TPS/community relationships it was .70. TPS relationships were slightly more positive in the areas receiving intervention by UNICEF. However, the overall low scores point to a need for strengthening these relationships across the country, and may reflect ongoing tensions in schools arising from teacher absenteeism or disagreements about curriculum or language of instruction.

## Resilience

This study adopted two self-reported indicators of individual psychological resiliency – a resilience scale (RS) and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. On the resilience scale, study respondents in Acholi and West Nile had average scores close to the national average, but those in Karamoja were significantly lower and scores in the South West, higher. The study calculated scores for the youth sample on the self-esteem scale, and found youth in all regions reporting scores within the range considered normal for the general population in any country. The findings are positive, suggesting that the general population and youth in Uganda – even in the regions most affected by conflict – are demonstrating the ability to cope psychologically with their environment and maintain a strong sense of self-worth.

In addition to the psychological measures of resilience and self-esteem, we also measured behavioral responses to stress and shocks. One of the indicators of resiliency used in this study is the ability of youth to stay in school and/or have completed it despite adversity. Two groupings were used in this analysis: youth who were currently enrolled in school or had completed at least primary school, and those who had not. With regard to the national sample, three-quarters of the youth had either completed primary school or were currently enrolled in school. The percentages were similar in all regions except Karamoja, where only half of the youth had either completed primary school or were currently enrolled in one.

With regard to other responses to stress and/or shocks, 6% of youth in the national sample reported that they had either withdrawn themselves or their children from school within the past 12 months. The three main reasons were health, crop failure, and financial difficulties. Consistent with other findings, the number of youth withdrawing themselves or their children was higher in Karamoja (33%) than in the other regions. The main reasons cited in Karamoja for withdrawing children from school were drought, health, theft (other than land seizure), financial difficulty and crop failure.

The findings on resilience suggest that among the study population, individual resilience and self-esteem was significantly lower in Karamoja.<sup>9</sup> These results can be viewed in relation to levels of violence in different regions during the past year: residents reported low levels of exposure to crime or violence nationally, while in Karamoja the rate was higher. Karamoja respondents also had the highest likelihood of using negative coping strategies, such as withdrawing children from school due to drought, lack of resources, or theft. The findings also suggest that while individuals may be coping relatively well with adversity and maintaining normal self-esteem, there is room for strengthening social cohesion in Uganda, particularly civic participation, inter-ethnic trust, and trust in authorities.

## **Recommendations**

Taken together the results of this study confirm the peacebuilding potential of education as an avenue to enhance social cohesion and build resilience, and suggest the following recommendations offered to the Government of Uganda and its partners in the educational sector. This study shows that the contribution of education to building peace cannot be isolated from broader peacebuilding and development goals. The specific programming recommendations below should be seen as integral to a broader development agenda.

- Security in schools: Further research is urgently needed to understand children's experiences of abuse in schools, and to identify feasible solutions to address ongoing violence.
- Discrimination in schools: Low scores on the 'diversity index', and the significant proportion of respondents reporting experience of violence or discrimination in school, suggest a need for programming in the educational sector to promote greater tolerance, respect for diversity and inter-ethnic trust.
- Community, teachers, parent, and student relationships: The educational sector should implement measures to strengthen the relationships between these actors, with the active involvement of local authorities, including specific measures to

promote more frequent, positive interactions between them. These measures should be aligned with improved school governance, which may also contribute to building greater trust in authorities.

- Gender equality: Further efforts are needed to strengthen gender equality in schools across Uganda, but particularly in the Karamoja and West Nile regions. The findings of this study also suggest that further research is warranted on the gender dimensions of violence and exclusion in schools, regional variations in gender discrimination and attitudes to sexual violence, and differences in the results for men and women on the resilience and social cohesion scales used in this study.
- Karamoja: In spite of some positive trends in Karamoja, continued investment in the region is needed in order to promote development, non-violent conflict resolution, and security, as well as to provide better access to quality education.
- Resilience and social cohesion: Further research is needed to understand how improvements in educational experiences in Uganda, and the implementation of specific programming designed to address the problems identified in this study, will affect overall levels of social cohesion and resilience in Uganda.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Uganda has been the scene of successive waves of conflict and upheaval since its independence in 1963. In the north of the country, a generation of children, youth and their families are still living with the after-effects of mass-scale violence during the conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. Other parts of the country have also experienced violence in recent decades. Many in the adult population still live with the legacy of violence committed under the regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote from 1971 to 1985, as well as from the more than twenty armed groups that have operated in Ugandan territory since 1985.<sup>10</sup>

Since 2005, when the LRA ceased operations in Uganda, the country has seen a period of relative stability, gains in peace-consolidation, and progress in meeting its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, the effects of decades of violence on resilience, social cohesion, and levels of equality among various sectors of the population are still poorly understood. Moreover, education is assumed to play a critical role in the promotion of peacebuilding goals, as discussed in greater detail in section 3 of this report, but these assumptions are rarely tested. In Uganda, as in many post-conflict countries, regional disparities in educational experiences, resilience and social cohesion in the population have not been scrutinized.

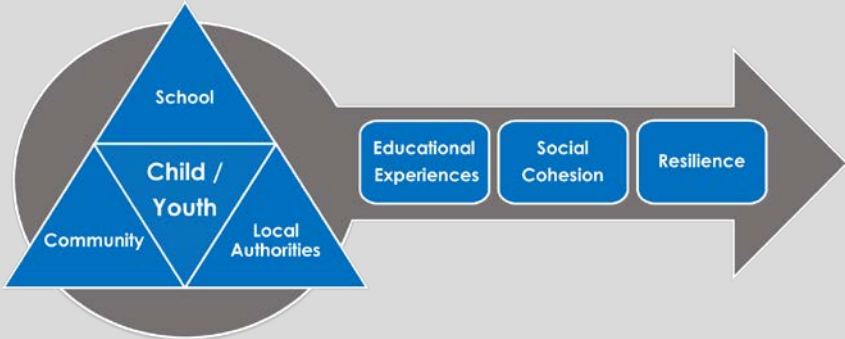
This study, implemented in partnership with UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) and its Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy (PBEA) Program, was designed to fill these gaps. The four-year PBEA program – designed as a partnership among UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands, the national governments of participating country teams and other key stakeholders – is an innovative, cross-sectorial program focusing on education and peacebuilding. Its goal is to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in conflict-

affected contexts, including countries at risk of – or experiencing and recovering from – conflict.

This study included consultation with key informants involved in peacebuilding and educational programming in Uganda, and a survey of 2,079 randomly selected respondents, 1,024 respondents in a nationwide sample, as well as 1,055 respondents in separate randomly selected samples in four of the sub-regions where UNICEF’s PBEA program is being implemented: Acholi, Karamoja, South West and West Nile. The present report focuses on educational experiences among Ugandan youth, as well as social cohesion and resilience in both the youth and the adult populations, using the framework illustrated below.<sup>11</sup> The framework illustrates how youth live in a context influenced by the community, including their direct relatives, the schools, and local authorities. Since educational services are managed at the district level in Uganda, the interaction between these three stakeholders is particularly significant. This interaction influences the youths’ educational experiences, which in turn, influences factors of social cohesion and resilience.

This study contributes to the discourse around education and peacebuilding in two main ways. First, the study assesses the experience of both adult and youth Ugandan respondents in attending school as well as their levels of educational attainment, quality of education, and disputes or conflicts in schools as well as the handling of these disputes. Questions also address the existence of discrimination, exclusion, marginalization or violence in schools, and how these are handled. Second, the study gathered data on social cohesion and resilience among the study respondents, and broader factors affecting these domains. Resilience and social cohesion are seen as crucial elements in building peace, and this study examines in detail the relationships between these two factors and educational experiences using the theory of change (ToC) framework illustrated in Figure 1. These questions were addressed to two groups of Ugandans: youth aged 14 to 24 and adults over the age of 24.

Figure 1: Education for Peacebuilding Framework



The results of this study are presented online in an interactive map format [here](#).<sup>12</sup> The report and the map can be read together; the report highlights key findings related to the PBEA program’s theory of change (ToC), while the map provides a more comprehensive overview of responses. Like the results section of this report, the map has four main domains: characteristics of respondents, educational experiences, social cohesion, and resilience.

## 3. BACKGROUND

### 3.1. Context

In the decades following its 1963 independence from Britain, Uganda has experienced significant turmoil and human rights violations through a variety of conflicts and political upheavals. Many Ugandans are still living with the legacy of the mass-scale violence – estimated to have killed up to 500,000 people – under the presidency of Idi Amin from 1971 to 1979 and during the subsequent regime of Milton Obote and the civil war with the National Resistance Army (NRA) that killed 100,000 people in northern Uganda alone. Since NRA leader Yoweri Museveni became President in 1985, Uganda has achieved relative political stability, improved human rights, democratic reforms, and an impressive rate of economic growth.<sup>13</sup>

Although state-sanctioned violence has declined during President Museveni's rule, Uganda continues to suffer from armed conflict. More than 20 militant groups have operated within the country's borders since 1985, with the most prominent and destructive being the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony. Founded with the intent of overthrowing the government to establish a state based on the Ten Commandments, the LRA became notorious for committing atrocities against the civilian population in Uganda's northern regions.<sup>14</sup> Between 1986 and 2005, it reportedly abducted more than 66,000 children and youth, forcing many to serve as child soldiers or sex slaves. At its height, the conflict displaced more than 2 million people – over 90% of the population of northern Uganda. The LRA was finally driven out of Uganda in 2005, but although diminished in size and influence, it continues to carry out violent attacks, lootings, and kidnappings along the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.<sup>15</sup> Uganda also remains vulnerable to inter-communal violence, such as the sectarian clashes that broke out in the

Rwenzori district in the west of the country during which at least 90 people were killed in July 2014, and terrorism, including the suicide bombings that killed 76 people in Kampala in July 2010.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, Uganda today is in a period of post-conflict recovery and peace consolidation. GDP growth averaged 7% through the 1990s and 2000s, slowing to about 5% in recent years. According to official figures, the national poverty rate decreased from 31% in 2005–2006 to 22% in 2012–2013. Yet, the absolute number of people living in poverty has not changed significantly, in large part due to the doubling of the country's population since 1990. Moreover, a significant portion of the population remains highly vulnerable to economic shocks: 19% of the population lives below the poverty line, and it is estimated that if consumption were to fall by 20%, poverty would increase by 50%.<sup>17</sup> While it has made substantial progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, Uganda remains an extremely poor country with Gross National Income (GNI) per capita at \$520 USD. Rising inequality is also a concern, with the current income GINI coefficient standing at 44.6.<sup>18</sup> The country also still faces significant developmental challenges such as weaknesses in fiscal management and public infrastructure.<sup>19</sup>

Across Uganda's northern regions, more than 95% of the population housed in internal displacement camps during the LRA conflict has been re-settled to more permanent housing. More than 26,000 people, mainly LRA members, have been demobilized from fighting forces through Uganda's Amnesty Act. Since the conflict abated, northern Uganda has been targeted by several major recovery interventions, spearheaded by both the Ugandan government and foreign agencies. Among the most notable were the Ugandan government's Peace, Recovery and Development Plans (PRDP I, 2009-2012, PRDP II, 2012-2015) for northern Uganda, which seek to coordinate developmental efforts and consolidate peace in the region. A 2013 evaluation of PRDP found some positive results: 69% of respondents expressed confidence in sustained peace and security in their communities, and 77% believed that dispute-resolution mechanisms address community-level security satisfactorily. However, 69.2% said

that they still did not have sufficient access to economic opportunities, and many pointed to conflicts over land, livestock, and crops as potential sources of community strife.<sup>20</sup>

### **3.2. Contemporary Conflict Drivers Affecting Young People**

Of particular relevance for this study is Uganda's large youth population: the country has one of the world's youngest populations, with 57% under age 18 and 75% under age 30.<sup>21</sup> A 2012 conflict analysis conducted by UNICEF's PBEA Program identified the country's large youth population and the limited opportunities for participation and gainful employment as potential drivers of conflict, but also noted the role of youth as a potential resource for sustainable peace and development. Youth consistently report feeling politically marginalized, disengaged, and fearful that they will not have access to natural resources and economic opportunities.<sup>22</sup>

A follow-up conflict analysis carried out by UNICEF's PBEA Program, in collaboration with the University of Gulu's Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies (IPSS) in 2014, covered 28 districts in the Acholi, Karamoja, Western, South-West and West Nile regions and found that poverty is one of the key drivers of conflict affecting education in those districts. The reasons include parents' inability to cover fees and other school-related costs, schools' not receiving tuition revenues, young people's being forced to end their education due to becoming heads of their households, and the educational services' straining to accommodate the increasing population.<sup>23</sup>

Unemployment affects children and youth in Uganda as a socio-economic constraint on their families and through poor employment prospects in the formal business sector. Official unemployment in Uganda is relatively low at 4.2%, according to the latest estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), but young people are more likely to be unemployed than older generations.<sup>24</sup> The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBS) reported in 2012 that 64% of the country's

unemployed were between 18 and 30 years of age. Moreover, the Ugandan economy's overall reliance on informal employment has negative implications for employed youth, of whom only 24% are in wage-paying jobs. Unemployment rates are higher among those with more education, which has been attributed to more highly educated youth pursuing scarce wage-paying jobs. People educated above the secondary school level face difficulty in finding jobs commensurate with their skills, which has been said to undermine the value placed on education overall.<sup>25</sup> Unemployment among youth also tends to be correlated with early marriages, high alcohol consumption, and violence.<sup>26</sup>

Youth unemployment has been attributed to inadequate investment in job creation, insufficient employable skills, and high rates of growth in the labor force.<sup>27</sup> In response to criticism that the formal educational system does not provide relevant skills for the workforce, the government has made efforts to establish more vocational and internship programs, though many such programs reportedly lack the resources to have a broad impact.<sup>28</sup> While formal education is traditionally prioritized in Uganda, it appears that youth are becoming more open to vocational training and entrepreneurship, with 90% of participants in a 2011 study expressing interest in learning a new skill, and 60% indicating that they would invest in small businesses if given access to resources.<sup>29</sup>

Areas of the country that have been affected by conflict tend to have underdeveloped infrastructure and social services. In the north, tens of thousands of children had their education disrupted by displacement and abduction during the LRA conflict, and a 2012 study found that continuing lack of infrastructure and security were impeding the delivery of education and other basic social services, such as health and sanitation.<sup>30</sup> A 2013 assessment of the impact of PRDP interventions cites a number of indicators where northern regions were performing at lower levels than the national average. In 2009, for example, the proportion of the population below the poverty line was 46% in the north compared to 25% nationally; the proportion getting only one

meal per day was 20% in the north versus 9% nationally; and the percentage of household members under 18 years not possessing a blanket was 79% in the north versus 57% nationally. Among the population over 10 years of age, the study cites literacy rates for females at 66% nationally and 52% in the north; for males, rates were 79% nationally and 77% in the north.<sup>31</sup> PRDP interventions aimed to bring the north to parity with the rest of the country on each of these indicators by 2015.

Many respondents interviewed for the 2012 conflict analysis expressed concern that the government appears to prioritize investments in the west of the country. A perceived lack of accountability for alleged abuses committed by security forces is also seen as eroding trust in the national government. Land disputes, exacerbated by the massive displacement in the north during the war and rising land prices nationwide, also represent a primary source of conflict in rural areas, and have a direct impact on children and youth due to lack of access to agricultural livelihoods for their families and for their own future prospects. Land disputes can also affect schools directly when the land on which they are built has other claimants.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the nationwide sample for comparison, this study focuses on four of the regions where the UNICEF Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy Programme (PEAP) is being implemented: Acholi, Karamoja, South West, and West Nile. The following section provides a brief overview of the discourse surrounding education and peacebuilding, with a specific focus on Uganda as a whole and the four regions included in this study.



## 4. PEACEBUILDING AND EDUCATION

### 4.1. General Context

Within the humanitarian and peacebuilding communities, two main levels of discourse influence education-related interventions in conflict and post-conflict settings: i) education as part of the humanitarian response and ii) education designed to promote reconstruction, reconciliation and peacebuilding. This study falls within the context of the second group, which includes conflict-sensitive education interventions, interventions aimed at strengthening education as a 'peace dividend', and education that supports peace through development.

#### *Education and humanitarian action*

Education as a humanitarian response aims to protect education from attack and to protect children's right to education during humanitarian crises. Conflict-sensitive educational interventions cut across the humanitarian, early recovery and peacebuilding periods, and act "to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of educational policies and programming on conflict".<sup>33</sup>

#### *Education and Peacebuilding*

Educational interventions linked to peacebuilding can be divided into three categories: i) service delivery, ii) educational sector reform, and iii) the contribution of education to broader social transformational processes. Service delivery initiatives in post-conflict settings – outside of humanitarian assistance – aim to provide children with a sense of normalcy after the upheaval of the conflict, to ensure that access to education is equitable and children are exposed to modes of education that support peacebuilding goals; these include respecting diversity and upholding respect for rights. Governance reform in the educational sector is considered relevant for peacebuilding, since it

aims to bring about change at the system-wide (or structural, political and economic) level rather than through fragmented programs.<sup>34</sup>

Arguably, the majority of educational programming in post-conflict settings to date falls within the categories of conflict-sensitive education and 'traditional' developmental programming. This categorization is problematic since conflict-sensitive education is not often brought into mainstream developmental processes, which tend to approach education primarily from the perspective of improving efficiency and performance. Moreover, the real contribution of education to promoting security and political, economic or social reform remains poorly understood. According to a literature review conducted for UNICEF in 2011, 'there is a very limited or, in many cases, no rigorous evidence base in relation to the contribution [of these initiatives] to peacebuilding'.<sup>35</sup>

The literature also suggests that there is a lack of evidence-based findings that substantiate a clear theory of change as to how education interacts with peacebuilding. According to Harris and Morrison (2013) "'peace education' is a key strategy of peacebuilding that teaches knowledge, builds skills, and provides students with images of peace and information about achieving security". Furthermore, peace education promotes respect for diversity, tolerance, human rights, justice, and the use of nonviolent means of expression and dispute resolution.<sup>36</sup> Beyond peace education programming, it is often assumed that education will play a positive role in peacebuilding, but it can in reality have 'two faces', potentially driving conflict by fueling grievances and stereotypes.<sup>37</sup> In Uganda as in other post-conflict societies, questions of curriculum and language of instruction have been found to be persistent sources of tension.<sup>38</sup> UNICEF's approach to peacebuilding has historically focused on peace education; however, with the proliferation of conflicts and the related increase in peacebuilding programmes, UNICEF's approach has broadened by expanding into conflict-affected regions and creating learning environments that encourage peaceful practices in students.<sup>39</sup>

## 4.2. Education and Peacebuilding in Uganda

Official figures indicate that 96% of Ugandan children enrolled in primary school, with rates increasing dramatically in the last few years, and with little disparity between boys and girls. The official, national youth literacy rate is 89.6% for males, compared to 85.5% for females, which are both encouragingly higher than the current adult literacy rate of 73.2%. However, primary school completion is only at 64%, and enrollment plummets over the course of secondary school, at 34.9% for lower secondary school and decreasing to only 15.1% for upper secondary school. Girls are especially likely to drop out of school at the higher levels.<sup>40</sup> According to UN data, the government of Uganda spent 3.3% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education between 2006 and 2012 compared to 5.6% in the United States over the same period.<sup>41</sup> Uganda has been reported to have a notably high rate of violence against children both in schools and at home, with 98.3% of children participating in a 2005 study having experienced physical violence.<sup>42</sup>

A 2015 report on inequality in Uganda's educational sector found that mean years of schooling had increased significantly across the country since 1991, but that the mean years in Karamoja (3), the northern regions (6), and West Nile (approximately 5.5) continue to lag behind the national mean (approximately 6.5). The report's analysis of data from the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) on pupil:teacher and pupil:classroom ratios across regions finds that Karamoja is the most under-served, with a pupil:teacher ratio of 37:1 and a pupil:classroom ratio of 108:1 in the Kotido district in 2013, compared to the national-level ratios of 22:1 and 55:1 respectively. The analysis suggests that pupil:teacher ratios have stayed the same or improved since 2009 in all regions, but that pupil:classroom ratios have deteriorated, reflecting reduced investment in educational infrastructure.<sup>43</sup>

UNICEF's 2012 conflict analysis found that poverty affects students through the interruption of education when parents are no longer able

to pay school fees, and under-resourced schools have difficulty providing quality services. Substance abuse, such as alcoholism, and domestic and gender-based violence negatively impact the welfare of children and their ability to access education, while these factors among teachers significantly diminish the quality of education they can provide.<sup>44</sup>

The 2012 conflict analysis concluded that education can have a role in solidifying Ugandan peace in several respects. Improving the reach and quality of educational services is a way for the government to demonstrate that normalcy has returned and that the government is capable of delivering essential social services. Training of teachers and curriculum development should promote conflict sensitivity by avoiding exacerbating inequalities and animosities, and by addressing different educational outcomes across regions. The conflict analysis argues that education can address attitudes toward violence, develop healthy ways of dealing with conflict, and increase political awareness and harmonious social relations.<sup>45</sup>

The Ugandan government has taken steps to address the range of conflict drivers affecting schools through the promotion of Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE), the adoption of thematic curricula, and the promotion of the use of local languages for instruction. However, government funding for UPE has been found to be incommensurate with the promise of free national access to education, leading to conflicts when schools ask for parents to pay fees.<sup>46</sup>

USE is primarily promoted through a grant available to students who successfully complete primary education, intended to allow them to continue at least through lower secondary, and through a second tier of the USE policy, to advance to upper secondary. However, the grants available through the USE policy have been found to be inadequate for the real cost of secondary education, in part because they do not take into account the location of the school relative to the recipient's home. Students in the Karamoja region have faced particular

challenges in taking advantage of the USE program, so that access to secondary education is still at a low level in that region.<sup>47</sup>

With respect to curriculum changes, they are found to be implemented unevenly across districts, based on the ability to train teachers and update materials. Many teachers are ill equipped to teach in native languages; parents and students often object to, and do not value, native language instruction, placing a higher value on learning through Swahili or English.<sup>48</sup>

When financial constraints are present, the education of boys is very often prioritized over the education of girls. Moreover, in many regions, gender roles dictate that women should marry young and stay at home, further preventing girls from accessing educational services.<sup>49</sup>

A 2015 report on inequality in education in the northern regions of the country finds that government policies – including USE; PRDP; and policies on teacher-recruitment, national curriculum, and language of instruction – are not yet meeting students’ and teachers’ expectations of equality in access to education and in the way education is provided. Respondents in the northern regions and West Nile reported the view that the whole of the north remains severely disadvantaged in terms of access to all services, including education. Policies aimed at recruiting qualified teachers for schools in the remotest areas of the country, and attracting teachers to work outside their native regions, have not succeeded in creating a consistent, talented pool of educators for the northern regions. The report also gave grounds for optimism; however, respondents whose children had been exposed to peace-promoting extra-curricular activities, such as sports, clubs, or peacebuilding programs, spoke of an overwhelmingly positive effect from these initiatives, suggesting grounds for the expansion of this kind of programming.<sup>50</sup>

#### **4.2.1. Acholi Region**

The conflict analysis carried out for UNICEF in 2012 found that both trauma and limited access to education and other social services

among the population of northern Uganda caused by the LRA conflict continues to hinder development, particularly given that the LRA leader, Joseph Kony, remains at large. The population in the north is reported to have unprecedented rates of domestic violence, alcoholism, and post-traumatic stress, which are both a 'legacy of conflict' and factors potentially creating pressure for new conflict.<sup>51</sup> The 2014 update to the conflict analysis found that drivers of conflict identified in 2012 persist but also identified a broader range of tensions. In Gulu, several key factors were found to affect the quality of education: language of instruction (English versus the local language); lack of teachers' attention to those with learning difficulties; inadequate funding for UPE; misunderstanding among both school administrators and parents as to who is responsible for educational costs; poverty, which keeps children from poor families out of school and de-motivates teachers who regularly do not receive their salaries; and unemployment, which leads to poverty and discourages young people from pursuing their education seriously. Land conflicts lead to disputes over and sometimes destruction of school property. Students lack discipline, and teachers use excessive or violent forms of discipline. Poverty and alcoholism lead to gender-based and domestic violence, and violence between parents affects children's ability to perform at school due to stress, fatigue, or being forced to take care of themselves and younger siblings. Conflict in schools and weak school administration were also found to have a higher impact on the most vulnerable groups of students, such as 'physically and intellectually impaired learners, HIV/AIDS positive learners, former child soldiers, children born in LRA captivity, orphans and abandoned children', since the school is poorly equipped to respond to their needs. In other Acholi districts, conflict drivers tend to arise primarily from the high level of poverty and frequency of land disputes. Teachers are frequently absent due to lack of payment of their salaries, leading them to pursue other sources of income. Land disputes affect schools because families spend money on dispute resolution instead of educational costs for their children, and children are kept at home to help protect the land. Girls' educational opportunities also suffer as a result of poverty, since

families do not see educating girls as a worthwhile investment. In the Nwoya district, a district official estimated that 80% of government-assisted schools are affected by land disputes, to the point where teachers feel threatened and school facilities are compromised. Other conflict drivers include gender-based and domestic violence affecting children's school performance; poor teacher motivation and irregular payment of teacher salaries; alcoholism among teachers and parents; and some ethnic and religious tensions in schools.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4.2.2. Karamoja**

Karamoja, home to 1.2 million people in the northeast of Uganda, has the poorest human developmental indicators in the country. Climate variability and insecurity threaten traditional pastoral lifestyles, with the result that the region has been hugely dependent on foreign aid for decades. Governmental development initiatives tend to prioritize sedentary and agrarian lifestyles, creating tension with traditional practices. Chronic poverty and dietary insecurity resulting from the scarcity of food and water exacerbate conflict in the area, and present immense challenges for development and peacebuilding.<sup>53</sup> This region has the lowest school enrollment and literacy rates in the country, largely because the semi-nomadic lifestyles of the Karamojong complicate access to formal educational facilities.<sup>54</sup>

The widespread practice of cattle rustling became far deadlier with the introduction of automatic weapons in the region in the 1980s; violence surged dramatically in the subsequent decades as severe droughts in east Africa heightened competition for scarce resources.<sup>55</sup> In 2001, the Ugandan government launched the Karamojong Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (KIDDP) to clamp down on the spiraling cycle of violence in the region, and a key element of the push for security involved the forceful disarmament of the Karamojong. While disarmament has produced remarkable improvements in public security, the process has left its own scars with the Ugandan army accused of human rights abuses, leading to mistrust of the army among civilians in the region.<sup>56</sup>

While cattle rustling has been reduced, reports still point to violence perpetrated by young men who act alone to commit theft and other crimes, often against their own communities, due to pressure to establish their economic status and the lack of opportunities to do so through legitimate channels.<sup>57</sup> There are concerns that governmental efforts to promote commercial mining, while meant to help develop the Karamojong region, may foster yet more conflict if not approached with sensitivity. Mining companies have been accused of environmental damage, exploitation, and failure to take into consideration the needs of the community.<sup>58</sup>

These tensions are reflected in the 2014 conflict analysis, which finds that resources – including disputes over school land and theft of cattle – are still the most prevalent source of conflict. Resource-based conflicts include inadequate funding to schools, lack of accommodations for teachers and students, and district officials' having difficulty reaching remote schools. Widespread poverty also prevents families from covering children's school fees or other school-related costs. The history of poor relations between the Karamojong and other ethnic groups in the region also continues and can still result in active conflict. Problems were also identified at the level of school management and allocation of resources to schools, some of which were seen to be associated with political interests. According to respondents in the conflict analysis, education is commonly not given priority by families in Karamoja since it is seen as taking both girls and boys away from their traditional way of life. Yet many girls reportedly see school as being safer than home, with some leaving home permanently in order to continue in school.<sup>59</sup>

#### **4.2.3. South West**

The South West region of Uganda has a history of rebel activity, but in recent years, the region has been even more strained by the influx of Congolese refugees and ongoing tribal clashes. Increased migration has led to high tensions over land ownership and access.<sup>60</sup> Floods of refugees have entered the region since 1997, with the United Nations



High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimating the number at more than 220,000 as of January 2015. Both local and national governments have struggled to cope with the scale of the humanitarian need.<sup>61</sup> Recent improvements in the security situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (EDRC) have led many refugees to express willingness to be repatriated, so that the present challenge for Uganda is to facilitate their transition.<sup>62</sup>

#### **4.2.4. West Nile**

Prior to a 2001 peace agreement, the West Nile region was primarily affected by the activity of two rebel groups operating out of the EDRC, the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) and the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF II).<sup>63</sup> More recently, the war between government and opposition forces in South Sudan in 2013 has sent more than 125,000 South Sudanese refugees fleeing across the border, and the Ugandan government has struggled to provide adequate assistance, given already stretched resources due to support of Congolese refugees.<sup>64, 65</sup> The region was also heavily affected by the LRA and remains highly volatile, yet stakeholders perceive that it has received relatively little attention. The population is highly transient, complicating the delivery of social services and rehabilitation programs. The large Muslim population is perceived to have benefited most under Idi Amin, which exacerbates tensions between Christian and Muslim communities in this region, although conflicts do not typically result in violence.<sup>66</sup>

### **4.3. Social Cohesion and Resilience in Peacebuilding**

#### *Social Cohesion*

Social cohesion has been described in terms of the attitudes and behaviours of individuals toward membership in society.<sup>67</sup> UNICEF's measurement guidance tools highlight three key domains for social cohesion: 1) belonging and inclusion; 2) respect and trust (tolerance); and 3) civic and social participation.<sup>68</sup> Belonging is related to an individual's sense of being connected to a community that, in turn,

recognizes the individual as a member of that community. Belonging is also related to an individual's sense of connectedness to the state (e.g., perceptions of state legitimacy), social networks, social capital, as well as equality of opportunities and access. 'Respect and trust' are related to an individual's acceptance and tolerance of diversity in other groups. 'Participation' is related to an individual's involvement in political, social, and civic life. These domains can be measured through inquiry on attitudes about the responsiveness and inclusiveness of the state, mutual respect and trust among groups and individuals, attitudes toward other members or groups, group participation, and structural equity and social justice.

This study includes a series of questions aiming to assess both vertical and horizontal social cohesion in Ugandan communities. For the purpose of the study, vertical social cohesion is understood to mean perceptions of structural or institutional inequity, while horizontal social cohesion means perceptions of the 'social glue' that binds individuals and groups in society.<sup>69</sup> Key questions on vertical social cohesion included confidence in government, equality in access to services, participation in public life, and participation in political processes. Horizontal social cohesion was explored through questions on prevalent types of disputes and how they are addressed, trust and respect among people and groups, and relations and level of comfort in interactions between people and groups.

### *Resilience*

In recent decades, the concept of resilience has gained increasing currency among practitioners and policy-makers in the peacebuilding field, and more broadly in social science and policy-making. There is no commonly accepted definition or meaning of resilience in relation to peacebuilding: Table 1, below, provides a summary of definitions recently used by scholars and practitioners in the field.

*Table 1: Definitions of Resilience* <sup>70</sup>

Reference	Definition
Cadell, Karabanow, and Sanchez (2001)	"...the ability to adapt to, cope with and even be strengthened by adverse circumstances." <sup>71</sup>
Frankenberger et al. (2007)	the "collective capacity to respond to adversity and change and maintain function. A resilient community can respond to crisis in ways that strengthen community bonds, resources, and the community's capacity to cope." <sup>72</sup>
Cutter et al. (2008)	"The ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event, as well as post-event adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the social system to re-organize, change, and learn in response to a threat." <sup>73</sup>
Norris et al. (2008)	"a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance." <sup>74</sup>
Pasteur (2011)	"the ability of a ...community...to resist, absorb, cope with and recover from the effects of hazards and to adapt to long-term changes in a timely and efficient manner..." <sup>75</sup>
DFID (2011a)	"...the ability of ...communities... to manage change, by maintaining or transforming the living standards in the face of shocks or stresses...without compromising their long-term prospects." <sup>76</sup>
UNDP (2011)	"...a country's resilience reflects its ability to counteract (quickly recover from) or withstand (absorb) the impact of a shock." <sup>77</sup>
Arbon, Gebbie, Cusack, Perera, and Verdonk (2012)	"...when members of the population are connected to one another and work together, so that they are able to function and sustain critical systems, even under stress; adapt to changes...; be self-reliant...; and learn from experience to improve itself over time." <sup>78</sup>
Béné, Wood, Newsham, and Davies (2012)	"...the ability to resist, recover from or adapt to the effects of a shock or a change." <sup>79</sup>
USAID (2012)	"...the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth." <sup>80</sup>

Frankenberger et al. (2012)	"The ability of countries, communities, and households to efficiently anticipate, adapt to, and/or recover from the effects of potentially hazardous occurrences (natural disasters, economic instability, conflict) in a manner that protects livelihoods, accelerates and sustains recovery, and supports economic growth." <sup>81</sup>
Mitchell (2013)	"...the ability of households, communities and states – layers of society – to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change and uncertainty." <sup>82</sup>
UNICEF (2014)	"...the ability of children, communities and systems to anticipate, prevent, withstand, adapt to and recover from stresses and shocks advancing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged" <sup>83</sup>

The majority of definitions use language derived from one of the earliest definitions of resilience in engineering, describing the behavior of a spring in terms of 'the ability to store strain energy and deflect elastically under a load without breaking or being deformed'.<sup>84</sup> In the peacebuilding context, resilience is understood in similar terms; most definitions refer to the capacity of an individual, community or society to cope with, deal with, adapt to, resist, absorb and withstand the effects of adverse circumstances, stress, threats, crises, emergencies, disasters, and shocks. Some definitions also emphasize the ability to recover from and counteract the negative effects of stressors. Frankenberger et al. (2012) introduce the idea of anticipating stress and shocks, an idea built on by UNICEF's 2014 definition that resilience is '...the ability of children, communities and systems to anticipate, prevent, withstand, adapt to and recover from stresses and shocks advancing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged'. This study does not seek to propose a new definition of resilience, and given its focus on youth, families and the educational sector, it relied on the elements of the UNICEF definition in its design and analysis.

Resilience operates at the level of individuals, communities and, more broadly, society. From an individual perspective, resilience is most often

studied in terms of the effect of traumatic life events on mental health, focusing on psychosocial aspects. There is a large body of work that assesses factors that relate to resilience at the individual level. Personality traits such as optimism, equanimity, and self-reliance are associated with lower rates of lifetime major depression, and the ability to mitigate the effects of childhood abuse and neglect.<sup>85</sup> A sense of coherence, which refers to the ability to view life as structured, predictable, and explicable, has emerged as an important concept that correlates with better adaptation to adverse life events as well as a lower risk of mortality.<sup>86</sup> Other psychosocial factors associated with heightened resilience include cognitive flexibility (i.e., the ability to reappraise one's judgements or perceptions) and active coping skills (e.g., efforts to frame statements positively), as well as maintaining a supportive social network, attending to physical well-being, and embracing a personal moral compass.<sup>87</sup>

Research focused on children and youth has illustrated that traumatic events or mistreatment in childhood are associated with a person's resistance to or risk of mental illness in later life. The high incidence of traumatic life events has been linked to a lower sense of coherence in adolescents, which was also associated with higher self-reported psychopathology.<sup>88</sup> The high stress associated with childhood experience of adversity also manifests itself in poorer physical health outcomes with age.<sup>89</sup> There is even evidence that the ramifications of major trauma can pass down through generations: the children of Holocaust survivors were found to suffer from a higher incidence of anxiety and depressive disorders, compared to controls, and the researchers posit that weakened cohesion in families with a history of trauma may keep children from developing strategies to cope with adversity in their own lives.<sup>90</sup>

Studies have sought to identify factors that contribute to building resilience in young people, with most finding that family or social support has the most significant role. Educational levels, interpersonal and emotional abilities, connection to social systems, and the ability to attribute blame externally are also related to higher levels of

resilience.<sup>91</sup> Having a positive role model, such as a teacher or an athlete, is associated with healthier behaviours in adolescence,<sup>92</sup> as does improved family support.<sup>93</sup> The severity and frequency of the trauma to which individuals are exposed is also related to their vulnerability or resistance to impaired mental health, as are external factors such as socio-economic and domestic conditions. Female gender consistently emerges as a risk factor for lower psychological resiliency, although this could be the result of various forms of discrimination by gender.<sup>94</sup>

There is ongoing debate regarding the way resilience is best conceptualized in the peacebuilding context. What are the capacities for coping, adaptation and transformation that strengthen individuals, communities and societies in the face of shocks such as conflict, political upheaval or natural disasters? Resilience involves complex adaptive systems and changes over time; it is unclear what strategies are most effective in building it, either from the point of view of local agencies or of international actors. UNICEF's guidance tool for measuring resilience suggests three dimensions of resilience which must be assessed together: risks, individual skills or coping strategies, and assets.<sup>95</sup>

A wide range of studies point to the importance of family and social support in building resilience, suggesting that both individual and community resilience are inherently tied to social cohesion. 'Resilience thinking' has been described as a useful lens through which to view a society's efforts to overcome violence since it builds upon a community's existing experience and capacity to manage conflict.<sup>96</sup> In order to identify correlations between social cohesion, resilience and educational experiences, this study analyzed responses to the questions on social cohesion and resilience in relation to educational outcomes and demographic factors among the study population, using the study's hypothesized ToC framework (Figure 1).

## 5. STUDY METHODS

The study involved a survey of 2,079 randomly selected respondents, a nationwide sample of 1,024, and four additional sub-samples of 1,055 individuals to examine the relationship between education and resilience, and social cohesion in Uganda. The surveys were designed to provide results that are representative of the population aged 14 years or older in Uganda as well as individuals from the four UNICEF intervention areas.

### 5.1. Survey Design and Sampling

With the support of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, during the first stage of sampling, enumeration areas (EAs) were randomly selected with a probability proportionate to size (PPS) for each of the five sampling schemes (one nationally representative sample of EAs and four regional strata). For the nationally representative sample, we selected 30 EAs randomly from a database of all the EAs, with an additional 60 EAs selected as replacements. The EAs were listed in the order in which they were selected. Replacements, when needed, were selected based on that list. In the final nationally representative sample, only 1 EA from the original 30 selected was replaced because of inaccessibility due to a destroyed bridge. In each of the four sub-samples, which corresponded to the four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions, 16 EAs were randomly selected with an additional 9 EAs selected as replacements. In Karamoja, 2 originally selected EAs were replaced; 1 EA was replaced in the Acholi region; and in the South West region, 2 EAs were replaced. Inaccessibility necessitated the replacements. No EAs were replaced in the West Nile region.

At the second stage, each EA was geographically divided into 4 quadrants, and each team of 2 interviewers (one male and one

female) was instructed to randomly select two dwellings to interview. Male interviewers were assigned to male respondents at one of the two selected dwellings, and female interviewers were assigned to female respondents at the other selected dwellings. In each selected dwelling, interviewers randomly selected one adult in the household (defined as a group of people normally sleeping under the same roof and eating together) to be interviewed from a list of all eligible respondents. Three attempts were made to contact a household or individual before replacing them with another. In total, a minimum of 16 interviews were conducted in each EA.

The minimum target sample size for the national sample was 1,000 and 250 for each of the 4 UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions. For the national sample, the interviewers approached 1,447 dwellings. At 463 (31%) of these dwellings, the interviewers could not conduct interviews. Among the 463 dwellings where interviews could not be conducted, 239 (52%) were due to the house's being empty, 68 (15%) were due to the household's refusal to participate, 67 (15%) did not have eligible respondents, 62 (13%) were due to all eligible respondents' being away, and 27 (6%) were for other reasons. At the 1,024 dwellings where interviews occurred, interviewers approached a total of 1,246 eligible participants who reported being 14 years old or older and conducted 1,024 interviews. Among 222 individuals who did not participate, 108 (49%) of these individuals were not interviewed because they were not home, 66 (30%) of the eligible participants refused, and 48 (22%) were for other reasons.

With regard to the 4 UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions, a total of 1,055 people were interviewed (Karamoja: n=260, Acholi: n=256, West Nile: n=259, and South West: n= 277). A total of 1,381 dwellings were approached; in 326 (24%) of the dwellings no interviews were conducted. The reasons included the following: the houses were empty when the interviewers arrived (53%), household members refused to participate (10%), no eligible household members were at home (18%), no eligible household member resided at the house (13%), and other factors (6%). The survey's margin of error for the entire



sample is  $\pm 3.0$  percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 3.0 percentage points away from their true values in the targeted population.

*Table 2: Sample Groups and Number of EAs Selected*

Sample Group	# of EAs	Districts included in the sample
1 – Nationwide	30	All districts and Kampala
2 – Karamoja	16	Abim, Amudat, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Napak
3 – Acholi	16	Agago, Amuru, Gulu, Lamwo, Kitgum, Nwoya, Oyam, Pader, Otuke
4 – West Nile	16	Arua, Nebbi, Yumbe, Zombo, Moyo, Adjumani, Maracha, Koboko
5 –South West	16	Bundibugyo, Kabarole, Kasese, Kyenjojo, Ntoroko, Kisoro, Kabale, Kanungu, Ntungamo
TOTAL	94	

The research was reviewed independently by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Partners Healthcare in Boston, Massachusetts, and Research and Ethics Committee at Makerere University School of Public Health in Kampala. Approval to conduct interviews was also obtained from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology as well as from district and local authorities at survey sites. The interviewers obtained oral informed consent from each selected participant; neither monetary nor material incentives were offered for participation.

## 5.2. Survey Instruments

Interviews were conducted by trained interviewers using a standardized structured questionnaire with open-ended questions installed on a tablet. The questionnaire included sections addressing demographics, priorities, access to and perception of services, education, security, exposure to violence, sense of cohesion and resilience factors. The questionnaire took approximately one hour to one and one-half hours to administer. The identification of indicators was guided by consultation with local experts and UNICEF key staff members. The research team developed the questionnaire and consent form in English. The final version was translated and back-translated into the five major languages of Uganda and provided to each interviewer in five key primary languages.

Response options based on pilot interviews were provided to the interviewer for coding but were read to study participants only for questions employing a scaling format (e.g., the Likert scale). An open-ended field was always available for interviewers to record complete responses. These answers were coded for analysis.

Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was programmed into Android Nexus 7 Tablets running KoBoToolbox, our custom data collection package.<sup>97</sup> The use of the tablets allowed interviewers to enter the data directly as the interviews were conducted. Built-in verification systems reduced the risk of skipping questions or entering erroneous values, resulting in data of a high quality.

## 5.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected over a period of 3 weeks, in November and December 2014, implemented by 5 teams of interviewers with each team comprising 4 to 8 interviewers for a total of 26 interviewers. The teams conducted the interviews under the guidance of 5 field coordinators and 1 lead field researcher. The interviewers were

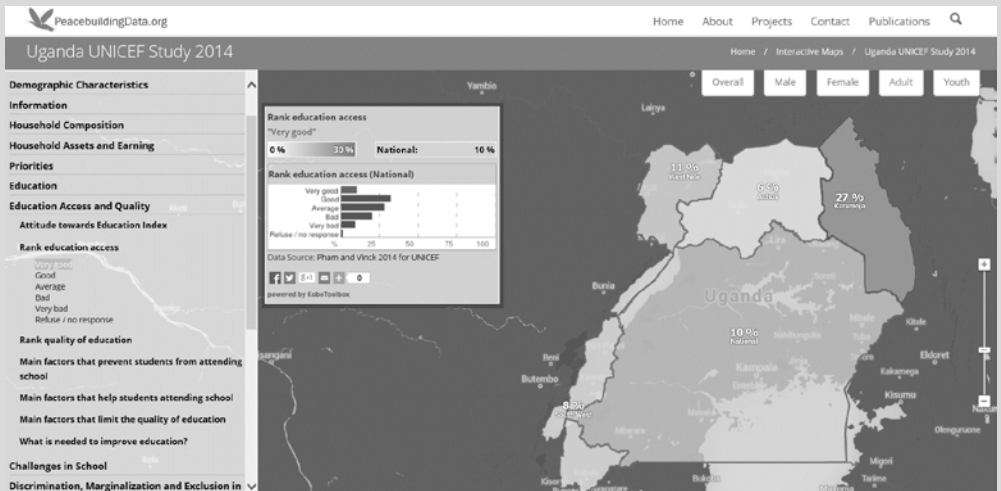
professionals who were selected on the basis of their past research experience and trained by the lead researcher for 5 days in close collaboration with a local partner organization.

Prior to collecting the data, the interviewers participated in a weeklong training that covered interview techniques, the content of the questionnaire, the use of tablets for digital data collection, troubleshooting, and methods for solving technical problems. The training included mock interviews and pilot-testing with randomly selected individuals at non-sampled sites. The research protocol required each team to collect data in one location per day. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, anonymously, and in confidential settings. When possible, data were synchronized with a central computer, enabling the lead field researcher to check data for completion, consistency, and outliers. The lead field researcher and supervisors discussed any issues that arose with the team prior to the next data collection. Once all of the data were collected, the database was imported into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16 for data analysis. The results presented here are adjusted for the complex sampling design. The findings were presented to and validated by educational sector stakeholders during a Research Symposium co-hosted by the Ugandan Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Sports (MoESTS) and UNICEF Uganda, in support of the Annual Education Sector Review, on 24th August 2015.

#### **5.4. Data Visualization**

After analysis, all of the results were imported online in the interactive, online map platform to enable users to browse detailed results stratified by the 5 samples (i.e., samples from the nationally representative sample and the 4 UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions), and arranged to visually complement the results presented in this report. The 4 UNICEF intervention areas were sampled to represent those regions and are also part of the nationally representative sample statistics.

Figure 2: Interactive Map of Study Results



## 5.5. Limitations

The present study was developed and implemented carefully to ensure that the results would accurately represent the views and opinions of the youth and adult population, aged 14 years and older, residing in the nation of Uganda and the 4 UNICEF intervention areas during the data collection period in November through December 2014. As with any social science research, there are limitations.

Some selected individuals could not be interviewed for various reasons (see section 4.1: 'Survey Design and Sample'). It is uncertain how responses from individuals who could not be interviewed would have differed from those of the sampled individuals, but the sampling approach was designed to reduce any potential for selection biases. Results also represent the population 14 and over at the time of the survey, and opinions may change over time.

The study relies on a self-reported method of data collection. A number of factors may have affected the quality and validity of the data collected. These factors include inaccurate recall of past events, misunderstanding of the questions or concepts, reactivity to the interviewer due to the sensitive nature of the questions, and intentional misreporting (e.g., for socially unacceptable answers). We minimized such risks through careful development of the questionnaire to make the questions sufficiently clear and to reduce potential bias.

## 6. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study, organized in five main sections to reflect the PBEA ToC: respondent demographics and general priorities, followed by results on educational experiences, social cohesion, and resilience. Results presented in the online map follow a similar outline, and the report and map can be read in tandem.

### 6.1. Characteristics of Respondents

By design, the gender composition in the study is almost evenly distributed with 50% male respondents and 50% female respondents in the national sample, with a minor (1%) discrepancy in three of the regional samples: Karamoja, West Nile, and South West. In the national sample, the average age of the respondents is 32.8 (SD=15.8). Respondents from Karamoja and Acholi tended to be slightly younger than the national sample while the respondents from the West Nile and South West regions tended to be slightly older. When the respondents are grouped by age categories, a little more than one-third (36.9%) of the respondents are between the ages of 14 and 24 while the remaining ones are adults (63.1%). We did not sample any children aged 13 years or younger since interviewing younger children would require a separate questionnaire designed in accordance with their level of cognitive development, which would have limited our ability to compare results across the study population. About one-third of the respondents were single and have never been married, and the remainder either were or have been married, lived with a partner, or were divorced/separated or widowed. In the nation-wide sample, nearly one-half of the respondents (49.2%) were head of their household. In the South West sub-sample, a higher percentage of the

respondents (62.1%) were head of household compared to the national sample and the other regional samples. A lower percentage of respondents from Karamoja (41%) reported that they were head of household. The average number of people in each household sampled nationally and in South West was six people. The average number of people in the households in Karamoja and West Nile was 8, while the average in the Acholi region was 7.

*Table 3: Characteristics of Respondents*

	Karamoja	Acholi	West Nile	South West	National
Female (%)	49.2	50.2	49.4	50.9	50.4
Age (mean)	30.0	30.4	34.4	35.5	32.8
Youth (% 14-24 yrs.)	34.6	43.6	25.1	29.6	36.9
Young adult (% 25-35yr)	36.9	27.0	37.8	31.0	29.5
Older adult (% >35 Yr.)	28.5	29.3	37.1	39.4	33.6
Marital status (%)					
Single, never married	33.1	36.7	18.5	28.2	32.9
Married (monogamous)	32.7	26.3	48.6	52.7	45.5
Married (polygamous)	28.8	13.5	23.6	5.1	8.4
Partner/living together	0.0	13.1	1.9	3.2	3.3
Divorced/separated	0.4	4.6	4.6	5.1	4.6
Widowed	5.0	5.8	2.7	5.8	5.0
Household composition					
Total number (mean)	7.8	6.8	8.1	5.6	6.0
Children <6 (mean)	1.9	1.7	2.2	1.2	1.6
Children 6-12 (mean)	1.7	1.6	2.1	1.2	1.2
Children 13-18 (mean)	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.3
No. of children per respondent (mean)	1.4	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.8

## 6.2. Priorities

When asked to identify their main priority and concern, the top response in the national sample was education (29%), followed by job opportunities (9%) and financial issues (8%). Similar responses were found in the South West (30% stated education as a top priority) and West Nile regions (29%). In the Acholi region, the percentage was even higher (43%). The percentage of respondents indicating education as the top priority was lower in Karamoja (12%), where food (24%) was the top priority for respondents. Despite the slight variation across regions, education is clearly a top priority for most respondents.

## 6.3. Educational Experiences

The PBEA program theory of change holds that the interaction between the community, school and local authorities shapes the child's educational experiences. This study examined several facets of educational experiences in Uganda, including the roles and interactions between the school, community and local authorities as the key actors identified by the ToC. As illustrated in the following figure, 46% of the respondents in the national sample reported that they completed at least primary education. When comparing by age group, 50% of youth compared to 25% of adults have completed at least primary level. This is a positive trend; nearly half of the youth population is finishing primary school, which is double the rate in the older generation. The rate is lower than official statistics, which put primary school completion at 64%, but it includes 47% of youth respondents who were currently enrolled in school. Among them 28% are still enrolled in primary school. In the current national sample, 672 of 1,024 (61%) of the respondents had children of school age (over the age of 5 years). Among these respondents, 77% of them reported that their children were enrolled in school. In two of the four UNICEF intervention areas, the percentage of respondents with children of school age whose children were enrolled in school was higher than in



the national sample (West Nile, 84% and South West, 91%). In the Acholi region, the proportion of respondents with children of school age whose children were enrolled in school was 75%, slightly lower than the national rate. The Karamoja area at 77% was level with the national sample.

Furthermore, the trend in the current survey is consistent with national data on education indicating that gender disparity is being significantly reduced at the primary school level. There is no statistically significant difference between levels of enrollment between female and male youth respondents. There is a significant difference in the level of education between adult respondents, with 49% of male compared to 36% of female respondents reporting having completed primary school level. However, among youth there is no statistical difference in the percentage of females versus males who completed primary school level (65% and 68%, respectively). Comparing across regions, the highest percentage of people completing at least the primary school level of education are youth in the South West region (59%) followed by youth in the West Nile region (52%). These trends are consistent with the self-reported data on literacy.

Figure 3: Literacy

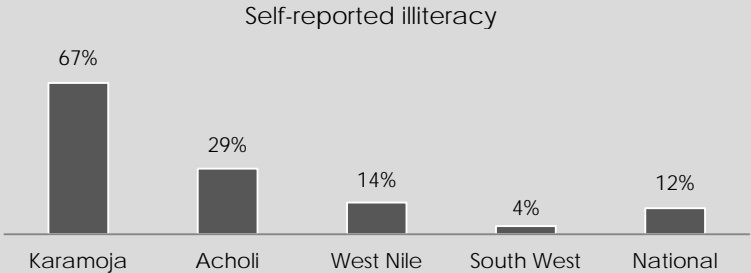
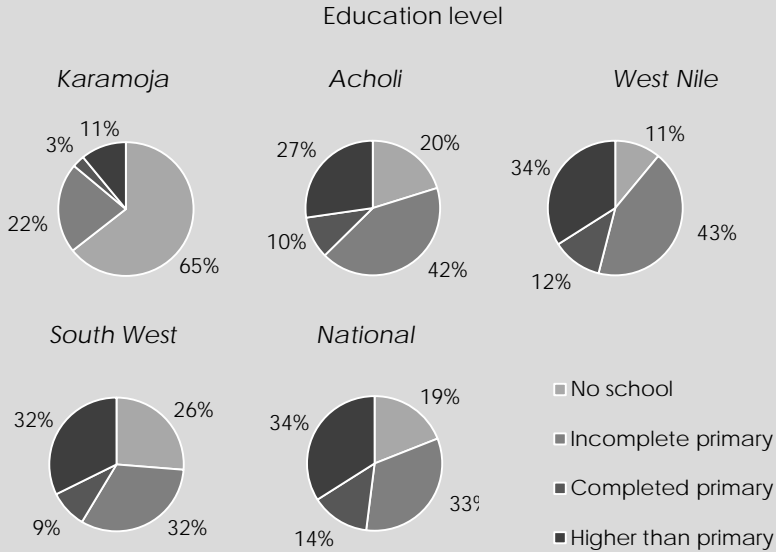


Figure 4: Education level



The lowest percentage of respondents completing at least the primary level of education were in the Karamoja region (65% of the total sample reported having had no formal schooling) and were similar to those with the highest percentage of respondents indicating that they could not read or write (67% overall, 48% for the 14-24 age group). Study participants in Karamoja were on average slightly younger than in the other three intervention areas and the national sample. However, nearly three-quarters (73%) of the youth respondents in Karamoja stated that they were currently enrolled in school, and the majority of these respondents (79%) were enrolled in primary school. This corroborates other reports of low adherence to universal secondary education policies in Karamoja, since the youth respondents were between 14 and 24 years of age, an age group that can be expected to have moved from primary to secondary education. It also suggests that in spite of high school-enrollment rates,

young people are not acquiring basic literacy skills. In spite of this, 96% of Karamoja's youth enrolled in school at the time of the survey reported that they plan to complete it. In the other regions, the Acholi region had the second highest rate of illiteracy (29% overall), significantly higher than the national rate of 12%, even though a very large number of youth respondents reported being enrolled in school at the time of the survey. West Nile had the next highest rate of illiteracy (14% of the overall sample); and South West, the lowest rate at 4%. Among respondents reporting no formal education, the rate in Acholi (20%) was slightly above the national rate (19%), while West Nile was lower (11%) and South West notably higher at 26%.

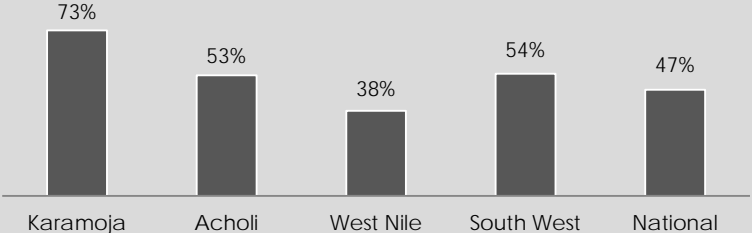
Among those who were currently enrolled in school, the majority (81%, national sample) reported that their parents or guardians met at least once per year with their teacher. In all UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions except the West Nile region (75%), the percentage of parents meeting with teachers was higher than the national sample.

### **6.3.1. School Attendance**

Among the 466 respondents in the national sample who reported that they have children currently enrolled in school, about 91% reported that their child was attending school regularly. The top three reasons for not attending school were: 1) illness among the students (57%), 2) distance of school from home (25%), and 3) financial hardship requiring the student to work (21%). In Karamoja, the percentage of students who were prevented from attending school due to the need to work, at 46%, was noticeably higher than in other regions, as was the reported percentage at schools in insecure areas (19%). Youth enrollment rates in Karamoja were higher than in other regions and the national sample, and higher than official data on school enrollment in the region. This could be a result of a combination of two factors: 1) intense investment in education and development concentrated in those areas, and/or 2) youth may feel compelled to report enrollment in school because of these investments. The high enrollment rate also does not correspond to high school completion rates: the study found

that primary school completion was extremely low among youth in Karamoja (8%) compared to the national sample (16%). When further asked what factors help students to attend school, the top three responses in the national sample were: 1) supportive family members (65%), (2) supportive teachers (45%), and (3) bursaries (58%).

Figure 5: School Enrollment among Youth 14-24 Years Old



### 6.3.2. Access to and Quality of Education

Attitudes toward education were measured by a 7-item scale based on a set of statements provided to respondents. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the seven statements about education (e.g., "Education is important to have a better future"), and responses on these 7 questions were combined and averaged to create an index of attitudes toward education. The average score was .78 in the national sample ( scores ranged from 0 to 1 with a score closer to one being more positive) and slightly higher in the four sub-regions, at .82 in Acholi, Karamoja, and South West, and .81 in West Nile. The overall high score was consistent with previous studies' findings that Ugandans place a high value on formal education, even in regions where the future adherence of children to the dominant lifestyle (e.g., semi-nomadic) or their involvement in the prevalent livelihood (e.g., agriculture), were not always seen as necessitating formal education. The findings contradict reports that Ugandans are losing interest in formal education due to the lack of formal employment opportunities for young people. Rather, they

suggest that interest in education is strong, but that the educational system needs to continue to adapt to the realities of Uganda's economy and labor market. The attitudes to education scores display some regional and demographic variations. In West Nile, female respondents (at .85) reported more positive attitudes than males (at .78); while scores were reversed in Karamoja (.85 for males vs .77 for females). Also in Karamoja, adults scored slightly higher than youth (.82 vs .79). The high scores for positive attitudes to education may also indicate that the population aspires to higher levels of education than they can currently access.

The study found that only 37% of the respondents in the national sample, Acholi, and South West reported that they had good or very good access to education. In West Nile, 41% of the respondents reported good or very good access to education. This percentage is the highest in the Karamoja region where 70% of the respondents reported that they had good or very good access to education. With respect to quality of education, only about one-third of the respondents in the national sample, Acholi, and South West reported that the quality of education was good or very good. For the majority – around two-thirds – quality of education was considered average, bad or very bad. As with access to education, the highest percentage of respondents (63%) reporting that quality of education was good or very good was in Karamoja.

The figures from Karamoja may seem surprising given frequent reports from the region of poor infrastructure and large distances between schools, hindering both students and teachers from accessing educational resources. In this study, however, only 17% of respondents in Karamoja stated that school was too far, with illness of the respondent, family member illness, or the need to work being the more frequently cited reasons for failing to attend school. This could mean, however, that our interviewers may have missed respondents from some harder to reach areas. Reports also suggest that there have been significant improvement in service provision in Karamoja in recent decades. One study on disparities in educational attainment based on

ethnicity and religion found that inequality in Karamoja was still higher than in other regions, but had decreased from a 'disproportionately high level' in 1991. The same study found that Karamoja's educational infrastructure also remained very poor, with high teacher:pupil and pupil:classroom ratios, but that these levels had also improved in recent years.<sup>98</sup> The recent improvement may have caused respondents in this study to report higher levels of satisfaction with their access to education than in other regions, even if real educational resources remained comparatively weaker. The three indicators combined, however, suggest that there is still a need to improve access to and quality of education in Uganda, to better align to the overall positive perceptions of and attitudes to education.

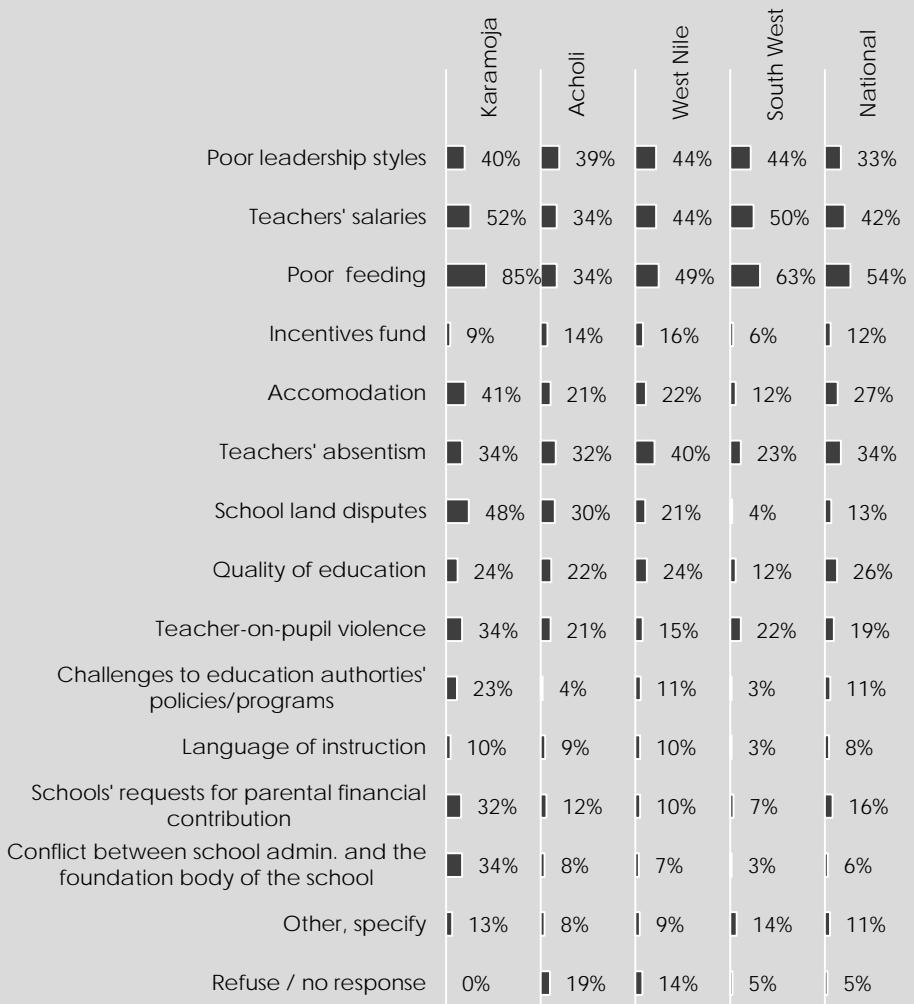
### **6.3.3. Conflicts and Diversity in School**

There were two sets of questions about conflicts and discrimination within the school system. One set of questions asked more generally about the most common types of dispute or conflict happening in school. The second set asked directly whether the respondents personally experienced the conflicts identified in the study. With regard to general perceptions of the types of conflict within the school system, poor feeding of students emerged as the most frequently cited issue. A little more than one-half (54%) of the respondents in the nationwide sample, who were currently enrolled in school or had children in school, cited school feeding as a common source of conflict in school. The rate was higher than the national sample in Karamoja (84%); this is consistent with other studies that have found that food insecurity was a prevalent concern in the region. In South West, 63% of respondents identified poor feeding as a source of conflict, pointing to poverty among families negatively affecting children's ability to perform at school. Teachers' salaries (42%) and teachers' absenteeism (34%) were other major drivers of conflict identified by respondents, corroborating reports elsewhere in the literature that payment of teachers was frequently irregular, leading to absenteeism due to low morale and pursuing other sources of income. Poor school leadership was identified by 33% of the national sample and was higher in all of the UNICEF PBEA

intervention sub-regions (44% in South West and West Nile, 40% in Karamoja, and 39% in Acholi). About 41% of respondents in Karamoja cited accommodations as a source of conflict, consistent with previous other reports that students and teachers traveled long distances to reach schools and found poor standards of accommodation at school. Notably, respondents in Karamoja (48%), Acholi (30%) and West Nile (21%) also reported more frequent disputes arising from school land issues than the national sample (13%), reflecting previous studies' findings that land disputes were affecting schools in those regions.

Karamoja respondents also reported higher levels of teacher-on-pupil violence (34% versus 19% nationally), suggesting an ongoing culture of violence as reported elsewhere in the literature, and challenges to educational policies (23% versus 11% nationally), which may point to students' and communities' demands for improved educational access and quality. With regard to direct experience of conflict in school, in the national sample nearly one out of four students (23%) mentioned being called names, insulted, or humiliated at school; nearly two out of ten students (17%) were the subject of gossip and rumors; and one out of ten students have been either discriminated against (10%) or been threatened with violence (11%). When comparing the four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions, the Acholi region had a statistically higher percentage of students who experienced these types of issues in school compared to the national sample and the other three regions ( $p < .05$ ). Notably, 22% of respondents in Acholi reported being physically abused by a teacher at school in a way that resulted in pain, discomfort, or injury; 21% reported being threatened with violence in school; and 20% reported that they had not contacted anybody for help with resolving the problem.

Figure 6: Main Disputes in Schools



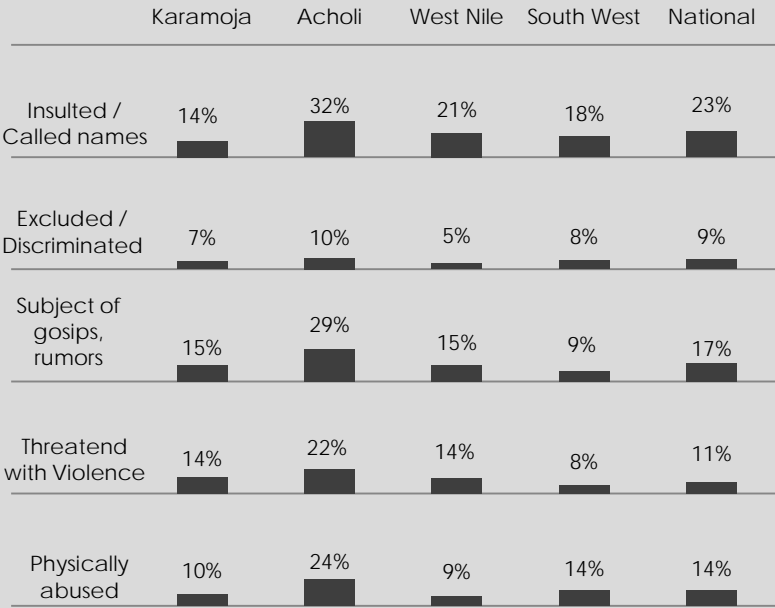
When asked how often these conflicts occur, nearly one half (46%) in the national sample said 'rarely' and 16% said 'never'. In Karamoja, respondents were significantly more likely to state that conflicts happened 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often'. The highest percentage of respondents reporting conflicts in schools occurring often or very



often (27%) was also in Karamoja. Poor feeding is also the type of conflict most frequently cited as being likely to turn violent (50% nationally), followed by teachers' salaries (39%), and poor leadership styles (29%). Teachers' salaries was one of the issues motivating the teacher strike in May 2015, which delayed the start of schools' second term by almost two weeks and ended with a government commitment to a 15% pay increase for teachers in 2016.<sup>99</sup>

A specific series of questions was also asked about discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion in school due to gender, ethnicity, religion, economic status, or political affiliation. Two indexes were computed based on responses to these questions: 1) a gender equality in education Index, and 2) a diversity in school index. Again, the indexes ranged from 0 to 1 with numbers closer to one indicating more equality and diversity.

*Figure 7: Percentage of Students Reported Being Subject to Discrimination and Conflicts in School*



With regard to the gender equality index, the mean score for the national sample was .82. This index had great variation among the four UNICEF intervention areas. In Karamoja, the index was .5; in West Nile it was .77, and in the Acholi and South West regions, the scores of .85 and .89, respectively, were higher than the national sample. These results suggest that the Acholi and South West regions have made greater progress in ensuring gender equality in schools than Karamoja and West Nile. However, since the scores in all regions are still significantly less than 1, girls' access to education remains an area for improvement. For the other scale, the coding was designed to measure levels of acceptance of diversity in school. The mean score for the diversity scale is .71 in the national sample with similar average scores in the Karamoja, Acholi, and South West regions. The score was higher in the Acholi region, indicating higher acceptance of diversity in that region. Again, however, scores from all regions demonstrate that there is still a need to strengthen respect for diversity in Ugandan schools.

#### **6.3.4. Who Resolves Conflicts**

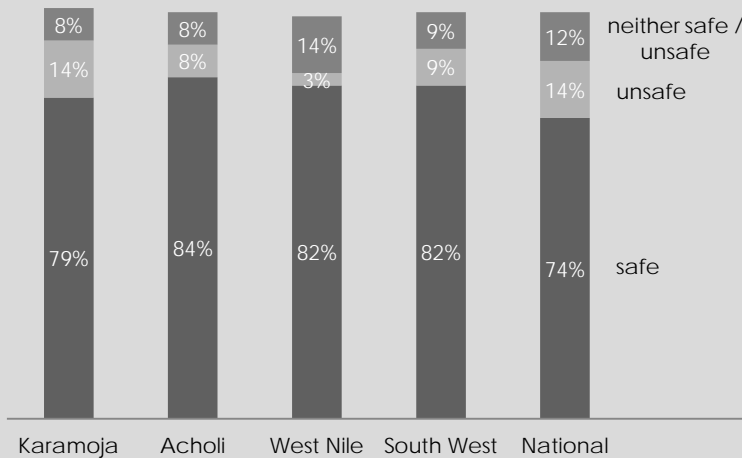
When asked in the national sample who resolves conflict between students, the majority (83%) report that teachers are the people most likely to help resolve the conflict. Similarly when asked who normally resolves conflict between teachers and students, the majority (63%) stated the head teacher and a minority (13%) stated the school committee. The pattern of response in the four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions was similar to the national sample. With respect to conflict between teachers and parents or the community, 51% of the respondents reported that the Parent Teacher Association was the body that usually resolved the problem. One-third of the respondents (33%) stated that school management committees intervened to resolve conflict between teachers and parents and committees.

When asked about specific conflicts, there were variations in responses among the four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions. There were variations in responses by gender as well. Among the respondents who stated that they have personally experienced exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination in school, 58% in the Acholi region, 33% in the South West region, and 64% in the national sample stated that they would reach out to their teacher. Nobody in Karamoja stated that they would approach a teacher in this instance. In Karamoja, the two main groups approached for support were parents (67%) and other students (67%). In the Acholi region, the main people they sought to resolve the conflicts were also teachers and other students, but 17% stated they did not go to anybody for support. When asked if the respondents were satisfied with the outcome, the majority stated yes except in the Karamoja region.

#### **6.3.5. Security in School**

With regard to security in school, about three-quarters of the respondents in the national sample stated that the environment in school was safe or very safe. This percentage was higher in all four UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions. However, this contradicts other studies on violence in schools which suggested high levels of insecurity in these regions' schools. The data may reflect the population's relative perceptions of safety in their lives generally when compared to their past experience: the majority in all regions except West Nile reported that the security situation in their community had improved compared to one year ago, with 89% reporting improvement in Karamoja. In most regions, when provided a list of types of crime, over 70% of respondents reported that they had not experienced any of the events listed within the past 12 months. The self-reported perceptions of children on safety in schools may merit further research, considering that the sample for this study did not include children 13 years of age or younger. A significant proportion of respondents in the Acholi region reported experiencing violence in school, and a similar proportion did not report the violence to anyone.

Figure 8: Sense of Safety in School



In the national sample, the top three reasons why the school environment was unsafe were: 1) crimes and theft (52%), (2) alcohol-related issues (51%), and (3) other types of issues such as conflict within schools. These reasons were similar in the Acholi, West Nile and South West regions. In the Karamoja region, the main security issues were ethnic problems (67%) with crimes and theft (37%) some way behind.

## 6.4. Social Cohesion

According to the PBEA program’s conceptual framework and ToC, positive educational experiences should contribute to social cohesion. This study assessed levels of social cohesion in Uganda, and the relationships between communities, parents, teachers, and students, which were considered a component of social cohesion.

### 6.4.1. Social Cohesion Index

A social cohesion index was created and based on factor analyses of eight questions, resulting in five factors: 1) trust, 2) social relationships, 3)

civic and social participation, 4) inclusion and attitudes toward social processes and services, and 5) constructive dispute resolution. The index, ranging from 0 to 1, was based on the proportion of the total score for the set of questions. Again, scores closer to one indicate stronger social cohesion. Figure 8 shows the overall average score for social cohesion at .64 for the national sample, which is similar to the average scores for the Karamoja, Acholi, and South West regions. In West Nile, however, the average score is slightly higher at .68.

Figure 9: Average Social Cohesion Index by Sampling Strata

TOTAL Score	0.65	0.64	0.68	0.64	0.64
Non-violent Conflict Res.	0.84	0.94	0.96	0.81	0.89
Inclusion Equity	0.68	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.67
Civic Particip.	0.32	0.25	0.34	0.34	0.33
Social Relations	0.78	0.77	0.80	0.83	0.80
Trust	0.62	0.60	0.62	0.58	0.54
	Karamoja	Acholi	West Nile	South West	National

The relatively low overall social cohesion scores in all four UNICEF intervention areas and nationally suggested that there is room for improvement. But looking at the specific dimensions of social cohesion provides more information on factors needing to be strengthened. The civic participation score was the lowest (nationally and in all four regions), and the nonviolent conflict resolution score was the highest.

Trust is a composite score for the level of self-reported trust of family members, the community, ethnic groups, authorities (elected officials and community leaders), and NGOs. Trust scores toward people from other ethnic groups and authorities were the lowest (the national scores were .44 and .43, respectively). The scores for the four regions were slightly higher. If programming is developed to increase trust, the focus should be on inter-ethnic trust and trust of authorities. On the other hand, respondents reported a higher level of comfort in interacting with people from other religious, political, and ethnic groups. Notably, the scores for access to services, a subcomponent of the factors, were also low.

#### **6.4.2. Parents' and Communities' Roles in Education**

In addition to the overall assessment of social cohesion, the study also examined the relationships among communities, parents, teachers, and students, using two sets of questions. One set of questions asked about the frequency with which parents met with respondent's teachers and frequency with which the community participated in the management of schools. The second set of questions asked respondents to rank the relationships among the students and relationships between student and teachers, teachers and parents, community and students, community and parents, and community and teachers. For the second set of questions, a teacher-parent-student relationship index and community-teacher-parent-student relationship index were calculated based on responses to the six questions assessing perception about the quality of the relationships; the closer the score was to one, the better the relationship. Among the youth respondents (aged 14-24 years), 43% of the national sample reported that their parents met at least once a month with teachers and 28% reported parents met with their teachers a few times a year. About one-fifth (19%), however, reported their parents never met with teachers. This number was higher among respondents in the West Nile intervention region, where 21% of the respondents reported that their parents never met with their teachers. On the other hand, a much lower percentage of respondents in the Acholi (5%) and South West

(7%) intervention regions reported that their parents never met with their teachers.

A little less than one-third of the respondents (32%) in the national sample reported that the community made little or no contribution to the management or functioning of the school. This percentage was similar in three of the UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions (Karamoja, West Nile, and South West) but was higher in the Acholi region (41%). The average teacher-parent-student index for the national sample was .68. It was higher in all of the UNICEF intervention areas, and the higher index was statistically significant in Karamoja, West Nile, and South West compared to the national sample. With regard to the community-teacher-parent-student relationship index, the average was .70 for the national sample, and the differences between the national sample and the 4 UNICEF PBEA intervention sub-regions were not statistically significant. Both indexes in each region were significantly lower than 1 and suggest that these relationships still need strengthening across the country. This corresponds to the findings of previous studies that tensions exist between parents and teachers, for example, on teacher absenteeism, language of instruction or curriculum issues.

## **6.5. Resilience**

The last outcome of the PBEA program theory of change is resilience, and this study assessed individual, psychological resiliency among respondents as well as self-reported use of negative and positive behaviors adopted as a means to cope with adversity. Some of these resilience strategies, such as failure to complete primary school or withdrawal of a child from school, relate directly to education. This educational outcome is considered to be one of the final manifestations of resilience. That is, if individuals are resilient to external shocks and stresses, they will have positive resilience strategies to continue with their education.

The survey adopted two self-reported indicators of individual, psychological resiliency: We used a Resilience Scale (RS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Our RS scale comprises 10 questions using a 4-point Likert scale to measure an individual's capacity to overcome adversity. The scale is based on existing instruments but differs significantly – the results may therefore not be generalizable or comparable, but nevertheless provide a Uganda-specific measure of resilience. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is also a 10-item, 4-point Likert scale to measure global self-worth. The range of scores of the RS scale is 0–40, with higher scores reflecting greater resiliency. The Rosenberg scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are considered to be within normal range, and scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

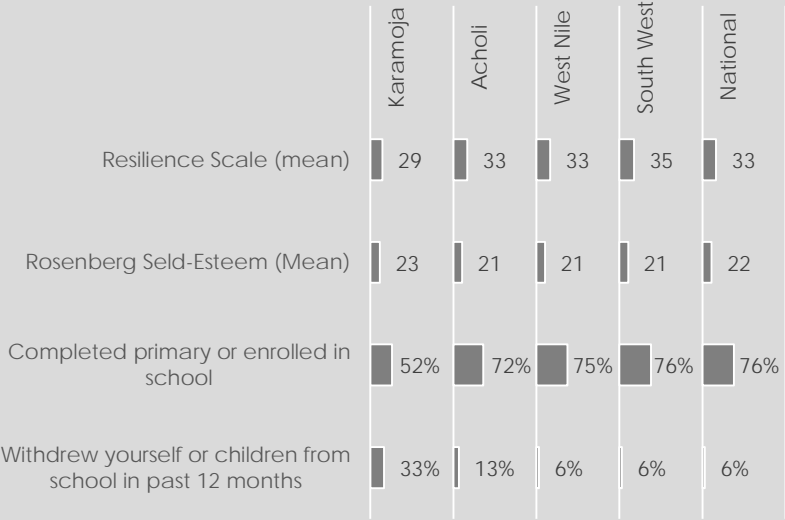
In Uganda, the average RS score for the national sample was 33.2 (S.D.=7.2). The RS score for the Acholi and the West Nile regions were comparable to the national sample, but the RS score for the Karamoja region (mean=28.7, S.D.=5.4) was significantly lower than that in the national sample ( $p<.001$ ), whereas the RS score in the South West region (mean=35.2, S.D.=7.2) was significantly higher than that in the national sample( $p=.001$ ). The RSES average total score among youth was 21.9 (S.D.=3.7) for the national sample, which is within the normal range. The score was similar across all four regions. This means that among the youth who participated in the survey, the group average scores for self-esteem are within the normal range. The findings are positive, indicating that Ugandan youth have a strong sense of self-worth and normal coping mechanisms despite the sources of adversity they face.

In addition to the individual, psychological measures of resilience and self-esteem, we also measured behavioral responses to stress and shocks. One of the indicators of resiliency is the ability of youth to stay in school and/or have completed it despite adversity (stress and/or shocks) they have encountered during the course of their development. In this analysis, we grouped youth among those who were currently enrolled in school or had at least completed primary



school, and those who had not. With regard to the national sample, three-quarters of the youth had either completed primary school or were currently enrolled in school. The percentages were similar in the regions other than Karamoja, where only half of the youth had either completed primary school or were currently enrolled in school.

Figure 10: Resilience and Education Indicators



With regard to responses to stress and/or shock, 6% of youth in the national sample reported that they had either withdrawn themselves or their children from school within the past 12 months. The three main reasons were health, crop failure, and financial difficulties. Consistent with other findings, the number of youth withdrawing themselves or their children was higher in Karamoja (33%) than in the other regions. The main reasons cited in Karamoja for withdrawing children from school were drought, health, theft (other than land seizure), financial difficulty and crop failure.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides insight on each phase of the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Program theory of change (ToC): the interaction between the community, school and local authorities in shaping the child's educational experiences, and current levels of social cohesion and resilience in Uganda. The theory of change raises several over-arching questions. As educational experiences become more positive, do we see improvements in social cohesion and resilience? Does investment in conflict-sensitive education, or other programming specifically focused on building peace, yield results? As a baseline study, the findings presented in this report cannot answer these questions comprehensively. Rather, they present a picture of the current situation in Uganda with regard to each of the three ToC elements as seen from the perspective of youth and adults, and provide some initial indications of how the elements of the theory of change interact with each other. The findings also suggest specific areas of focus for educational programming in the coming years, as summarized in this report's recommendations.

Taken as a whole, the findings on educational experiences indicate that in order for education to support peace, educational programming cannot be approached separately from the broader developmental agenda in Uganda. Poverty and lack of social support are the most critical factors preventing children from attending school and staying in school beyond the primary level. Poverty and lack of resources for schools also spills over into the child's school day: 'school feeding' – or shortage of food while at school – was cited as the most common source of conflict in school and the type of conflict most likely to turn violent. Lack of payment of teachers' salaries and teacher absenteeism due to low morale and the need to find other income sources were also frequently mentioned. Eliminating resource-based

conflicts necessitates a multi-faceted response, including greater resources for schools, better governance in the educational sector, and links to broader efforts to address poverty in Ugandan communities.

This study also found that violence and discrimination also still negatively affect some children's experience of education in Ugandan schools. Teacher-on-pupil violence was reported more frequently in Karamoja than nationally, and respondents in Acholi were more likely to report being physically abused by a teacher at school in a way that resulted in pain, discomfort, or injury. UNICEF's 2014 Conflict Analysis on these regions reports that some students display a lack of discipline, potentially arising from poverty or violence at home, and that teachers use excessive forms of discipline. Further research is needed however to better understand children's experiences of violence in these regions' schools, and whether the elevated rates there are related to the violent conflicts that have beset those regions in recent decades.

While physical violence in schools is higher in some regions than others, discrimination appears to be more widespread. Almost one-quarter of respondents nationally mentioned being called names, insulted, or humiliated at school; almost one-fifth were the subject of gossip and rumors; and approximately the same proportion had been either discriminated against or threatened with violence. It is encouraging that three-quarters of respondents nationally described the school environment as being safe, but the presence of significant minorities who experience discrimination in schools is still a matter for concern. Educational programming nationwide can be tailored to promote tolerance and respect for diversity, and to encourage more positive interactions among children.

## Karamoja

The study findings from the Karamoja region corroborate in many ways the need for continued investment in strengthening efforts toward development, non-violent conflict resolution, and the rule of law, as well as building better access to quality education in the region. However, they also indicate positive trends, particularly as regards more positive perceptions of educational access and quality of services. The regions receiving UNICEF intervention that have the lowest percentage of respondents completing at least the primary level of education were in the Karamoja region (65% of the total sample reported having had no formal schooling). Karamoja also had the highest percentage of respondents indicating that they could not read or write (67% overall, 48% for the 14–24 age group). Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the youth respondents in Karamoja stated that they were currently enrolled in school, and the majority of these respondents (79%) were enrolled in primary school. This reflects other studies' findings of low adherence to universal secondary education policies in Karamoja since the youth respondents were between 14 and 24 years of age, an age group that can be expected to have moved from primary to secondary education. Notably, nearly half of the respondents in Karamoja (48%) also reported more frequent disputes arising from school land issues than respondents in the national sample (13%), reflecting previous studies' findings that land disputes were affecting schools in those regions. The next highest rates of land disputes affecting schools were in Acholi (30%) and West Nile (21%).

On the other hand, the study found that 70% of Karamoja respondents reported good or very good access to education, compared to slightly more than one-third of the respondents in the national sample and other regions, and 63% reported that the quality of education was good or very good compared to approximately one-third of respondents in the national and other regional samples. While this may be attributable to the interviewers' inability to reach more remote areas for the study, it may also reflect improved educational service provision in this region in recent years, influencing respondents to report higher levels of satisfaction than in other regions, even if real educational resources remained comparatively weaker.

The PBEA theory of change is based on the assumption that educational experiences for children and youth are formed through the interaction between the school, the community, and local authorities. This study developed indices to assess relationships between teachers, parents, students and the community, and found that these relationships were viewed as needing improvement across the country, although they were viewed slightly more positively in the UNICEF intervention areas. This suggests a need for specific initiatives in the educational sector to encourage more frequent, and more positive, interaction between these key actors. The poor perceptions of these relationships may arise from some of the tensions affecting schools, so it can be assumed that decreasing tensions will lead to more positive relationships, although this assumption will need to be tested through ongoing research.

The study also developed indices using sets of questions designed to assess levels of social cohesion in Uganda on a nationwide basis and in the four PBEA sub-regions. The findings suggest that there is room for improvement in all five factors of social cohesion studied: trust, social relationships, civic and social participation, inclusion and attitudes towards social processes and services, and constructive dispute resolution, although levels of constructive or non-violent dispute resolution were encouragingly high across the country. The trust factor was particularly low, and respondents most frequently had negative perceptions of inter-ethnic trust and trust in authorities. Positively, respondents reported that they are relatively comfortable interacting with people from other religious, political, and ethnic groups, creating a positive foundation for promoting tolerance and diversity through the educational system. Further analysis is needed to better understand the causes of the lack of trust in authorities, but better governance in the educational sector could be a stepping stone to building more confidence in government at all levels. Levels of civic and social participation were also low, suggesting that the educational system could do more to encourage youth to participate in civic life.

The findings on resilience suggest that among the study population, individual self-esteem falls within the normal range found in other countries, and individual psychological resiliency is also relatively high, with the exception of Karamoja where resilience was significantly lower. These positive results can be viewed in relation to levels of violence in the past year: respondents nationwide reported low levels of exposure to crime or violence over the past year, but in Karamoja the rate was higher. Karamoja respondents also had the highest likelihood of using negative coping strategies, such as withdrawing children from school due to drought, lack of resources, or theft. The findings also suggest that while individuals may be coping relatively well with adversity and maintaining normal self-esteem, negative coping behaviors still occur, particularly among those most affected by poverty. Families who have fewer material assets are more likely to use negative coping strategies and less likely to have positive educational outcomes among family members. These findings further highlight the fact that education cannot be treated in isolation from broader developmental goals, particularly in post-conflict regions. Poverty and ongoing insecurity in Karamoja are negatively affecting educational experiences for children and youth, and appear correlated with lower levels of resilience. The educational sector can take steps to address this by providing greater support for families to keep their children in school. If the theory of change holds true, investment in combating violence in schools, promoting tolerance, improving governance, building trust, encouraging civic participation, and strengthening relationships among key actors in the educational system will lead to greater psychological resilience and less use of negative coping behaviors. Further research will be needed to examine whether these effects can be felt in future years.

## Recommendations

Taken together the results of this study confirm the peacebuilding potential of education as an avenue to enhance social cohesion and build resilience, and suggest the following recommendations offered to the Government of Uganda and its partners in the educational sector. This study shows that the contribution of education to building peace cannot be isolated from broader peacebuilding and developmental goals. The specific programming recommendations below should be seen as integral to a broader developmental agenda.

- **Security in schools:** Further research is urgently needed to understand children's experiences of abuse in schools and to identify feasible solutions to address ongoing violence.
- **Discrimination in schools:** Low scores on the 'diversity index', and the significant proportion of respondents reporting experience of violence or discrimination in school, suggest a need for programming in the educational sector to promote greater tolerance, respect for diversity and inter-ethnic trust.
- **Community, teachers, parent, and student relationships:** The educational sector should implement measures to strengthen the relationships among these actors, with the active involvement of local authorities, including specific measures to promote more frequent, positive interactions among them. These measures should be aligned with improved school governance, which may also contribute to building greater trust in authorities.
- **Gender equality:** Further efforts are needed to strengthen gender equality in schools across Uganda but particularly in the Karamoja and West Nile regions. The findings also suggest that further research is warranted on the gender dimensions of violence and exclusion in schools, regional variations in gender discrimination and attitudes to sexual violence, and differences in the results for men and women on the resilience and social cohesion scales used in this study.

- **Karamoja:** Despite some positive trends in Karamoja, continued investment in the region is needed in order to promote development, non-violent conflict resolution, and security, as well as provide better access to quality education.
- **Resilience and social cohesion:** Further research is needed to understand how improvements in educational experiences in Uganda, and the implementation of specific programming designed to address the problems identified in this study, will affect overall levels of social cohesion and resilience in Uganda.



## 8. NOTES

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This report examines factors affecting resilience, social cohesion and security as elements of peacebuilding in Uganda, and the intersection of education with those factors.

The study is based on a survey conducted among a random sample of 2,079 randomly selected adult residents of Uganda, including a nationwide sample of 1,024, and four additional sub-samples of 1,055 individuals.

*The information provided and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Harvard University, UNICEF or the supporting agencies*



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