An issue brief on the Gender and Equity Responsiveness of the Education Sector

With support from

USAID | UGANDA
Governance, Accountability, Participation and Performance (GAPP) Program
Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is a women’s rights organization that was established in 1995. FOWODE’s vision is “a just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making.” Since 1999, FOWODE has been implementing a gender budget programme that aims to see women and men benefiting equitably from government economic policies and programmes. On an annual basis, FOWODE conducts gender audits of government plans and budgets to assess the extent of their responsiveness and the degree to which they integrate the unique needs of women and men, girls and boys in the development agenda.

With the enactment of the Public Finance Management Act 2015 (PFMA), Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and Local Governments are now mandated to prepare Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) that duly consider balanced development and gender and equity responsiveness. The PFMA, under sections 9 (6) and 13 (15) g, provides that prior to the passing of any BFP by Parliament, a certificate has to be issued by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission certifying that the BFP is gender and equity responsive and specifies measures to equalize opportunities for men, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

In this brief, FOWODE assesses the gender and equity responsiveness of the education sector, on the basis of a review of the National Budget Framework Paper 2015/16 - 20 and the Draft Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2020. The brief is intended to inform technical officers and legislators at national and local government level as they consider education sector budget proposals for FY 2019/20.

1. Sector Overview

According to the NDP II (2015/16 – 2019/20), human capital and infrastructure development are the 2 fundamental priorities. Education, a key contributor to the human capital development has focused on: Strengthening Early Childhood Development (ECD) with special emphasis on early aptitude and talent identification; Increasing retention at primary and secondary levels, especially for girls, as well as increasing primary-to-secondary transition; increasing investment in school inspection, reviewing and upgrading the education curricula.

Pre-primary education is predominantly private sector-led. Following the implementation of Universal Primary Education in 1997, access to primary education increased from 2.5 million to 8.5 million pupils by 2013 and the gender gap in primary school enrolment was closed as of 2014. The introduction of
Universal Secondary Education in 2007 also increased the transition rate of pupils from primary seven to senior one by 26% from 47% in 2007 to 73% in 2014. During the same period, the absolute number of girls enrolled in Senior One also increased by 71 percent from 370,371 to 635,527 girls. At the level of higher education, total student enrolment increased by 26% from 183,985 students in 2010 to 232,612 students in 2013, with universities enrolling the majority of post-secondary students. Between FY 2014/15 and FY 2015/16, BTVET registered increased overall enrolment by 16.2% from 111,479 to 129,599 students. Male students, however, continue to outnumber female students in BTVET institutions.

By 2020, as stated in the NDP II, the sector targets to: “increase the completion rate of primary 7 from 70.3 percent in 2013/14 to 85 percent in 2019/20; increase the transition rate to secondary from 73 percent in 2013/14 to 83 percent in 2019/20; and increase net secondary completion rate from about 36 percent in 2012/13 to 50 percent in 2019/20.”

### 3. Trends in gender responsiveness of the NBFP’s for Education since FY 2014/15

According to the Equal Opportunities Commission, the gender and equity compliance of the education sector in the National Budget Framework Paper is improving. The compliance was rated at 64% in FY2016/17; 64% in FY2017/18; 71% in FY 2018/19 and 75% in FY 2019/20.

#### 3.1 Gender issues in the Education sector

The education sector has achieved parity in primary school enrolments. However, many gender issues are being faced namely:

1. High school dropout rates for female pupils due to inadequate sanitation facilities, and early pregnancies
2. Low transition to secondary schools especially for girls
3. Low enrolment and participation of girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in schools/institutions.
4. Low completion of S4 and S6 especially for girls due to teenage pregnancy, early marriages, child labour especially among the cattle keeping, hard to reach areas, sugarcane growing areas and border communities.
5. Low enrolment of female students in Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) courses;

### 3.2 Gender responsiveness of the Education sector in the NBFP FY 2019/20

This sector was very gender sensitive with specific interventions to foster gender equality. The sector basically reflected on most gender issues. For instance, one of the sector outcomes is: Increased enrolment for boys and girls. Relatedly, the Performance indicators are:

- Net Enrolment Ratios of Boys and Girls
- Gross Enrolment Rate of Boys and Girls

In addition, another sector outcome is: Improved proficiency and basic life skills. The Performance indicator is:

- Literacy rates at P3 and P6
- Numeracy rates at P3 and P6

### 3.3 Trend in gender budgeting responsiveness for the Education sector

The education sector has had significant increase in gender and equity responsiveness of its Budget framework paper (Figure1).
The education had implicitly gender responsive objectives even before the enactment of the PFMA in 2015. The level of articulation of the gender sensitive interventions has improved with the enactment of the Law, although this declined\(^1\) in FY 2017/18. The good practice with education is the use of gender responsive performance indicators since the onset of the PFMA law.

Challenges hindering gender and equity compliance

The sector faced some challenges in integrating gender and equity into planning and budgeting. These include:

1. Inadequate funding which has limited the implementation of the policies and interventions developed. For example, the dissemination and sensitization on school health and sexuality policy; provision of emergency sanitary towels in schools to reduce on learners absenteeism; construction of incinerator and wash rooms in schools to promote menstrual hygiene have not been funded adequately.

2. Social attitudes towards gender and equity issues like gender based violence, back to school after pregnancy etc. These issues impact on education achievements, especially for girls.

3. Weak laws on defilement and early marriages which factors negatively affect education achievements.

\(^1\) However the sector assessment score was the same for FY 2016/17 and FY 2017/18 because of improved integration of equity interventions. There was an increased consideration for special needs education.

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**Glossary**

**Gender:** refers to the cultural and socially constructed roles, relations, behaviors and identities that are assigned to men and women. These roles and behaviors change from place to place and with time.

**Equity:** is fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, rights and responsibilities in society. There are some socio-economic groups that may not easily access/benefit from government programmes. Addressing equity issues entails ensuring that all vulnerable groups are accessing/ benefitting from government programmes.

**Gender analysis:** is a tool used to reveal and examine information about the differences between men and women to expose and address the resulting gender-related inequalities in social, economic and political life. Gender analysis recognizes that men and women’s needs, priorities, interests and life experiences are different and are also influenced by other identity markers such as class, ethnicity or age.

**Gender Equality:** is the provision of equal opportunities for women and men to access, participate in and use public services.

**Gender issue:** is a statistical or social indicator of inequality between males and females arising from discrimination and/or marginalisation.

**Gender neutral:** is when a policy, programme or situation that has no differential positive or negative impact in terms of gender relations or equality between women and men.

**Gender Responsive:** is considering the particularities pertaining to the lives of both women and men, while aiming to eliminate inequalities and promoting gender equality, including an equal distribution of resources, therefore addressing and taking into account the gender dimension. It means putting place concrete actions to address gender inequality.

**Gender and Equity responsive planning:** This is recognizing the different needs and interests of women and men, girls and boys, marginalised groups and regions/locations, during the planning processes.

**Gender-sensitive:** Policies and programmes are gender-sensitive if they consider the particularities pertaining to the lives of both women and men, while aiming to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality, including an equal distribution of resources, therefore addressing and taking into account the gender dimension.

**Gender-responsive budgeting:** Men and women are affected differently by expenditure and revenue decisions due to inequalities in their decision-making power, access to and control over assets and other resources, and time spent providing care and domestic work. GRB is an important tool that can be used to incorporate gender equality principles and commitments into budgetary processes and policies to ensure a more efficient and equitable use and distribution of resources.
Forum for Women in Democracy

Our Vision
A just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making process.

Our Mission
To promote gender equality in all areas of decision.