

# **SOCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR, ETHIOPIA**

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# Table of Contents

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Abbreviations

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....  | 1  |
| <b>2. SOCIAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY</b> .....   | 3  |
| <b>3. SOCIAL POLICY REVIEW</b> .....  | 6  |
| 3.1. Overview of approaches to addressing social issues within the Education Sector ..... | 6  |
| 3.2. Alternative Routes to Basic Education.....   | 7  |
| 3.3. Adult and Non-Formal Education.....  | 9  |
| 3.4. Promoting Primary and Secondary Education in Pastoralist Areas.....                  | 10 |
| Conclusion.....   | 12 |
| <b>4. KEY SOCIAL ISSUES AFFECTING EDUCATION AND EQUITY</b> .....                          | 13 |
| 4.1. Key social issues affecting access to education.....                                 | 13 |
| 4.2. Rural/Urban Disparities .....  | 14 |
| 4.3 Income Disparities: the impact of poverty and food insecurity.....                    | 19 |
| 4.4 Equity in education for pastoralist communities .....                                 | 21 |
| 4.5 Gender disparities in access to education.....  | 22 |
| 4.6. Child labour .....   | 26 |
| Conclusion .....  | 28 |
| <b>5. VULNERABLE GROUPS</b> .....   | 29 |
| 5.1 Educational access of Orphans and Vulnerable Children.....                            | 29 |
| 5.2 Out of School Children and Child Trafficking.....                                     | 32 |
| 5.3 Out of school girls and commercial sex work.....                                      | 34 |
| 5.4 Educational access for children with Special Needs Education .....                    | 35 |
| Conclusion .....  | 39 |
| <b>6. POLICY AND PROGRAMMES ADDRESSING EQUITY CONSTRAINTS</b> 40                          |    |
| 6.1 Alternative Basic Education .....   | 40 |
| 6.2. Adult Education Strategy.....  | 42 |
| 6.3. Increasing Equity in Accessing Formal School .....                                   | 43 |
| 6.4. Strategies used to improve girls ‘ retention and performance.....                    | 47 |
| 6.5. Improving the Supply of Quality Education .....                                      | 49 |

6.6. Quality of teachers/ABE facilitators.....52  
6.7. Community participation and Parent Teacher Associations.....56  
Conclusion ..... 57

**7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....59**

**References**

**Annexes**

## Abbreviations

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ABE     | Alternative Basic Education  |
| ABECs   | Alternative Basic Education Centres  |
| BoE     | Bureau of Education  |
| CMC     | Centre Management Committee  |
| ESDP    | Education Sector Development Programme   |
| FSCE    | Forum For Sustainable Child Empowerment  |
| GEQIP   | General Education Quality Improvement Programme                                      |
| MDG     | Millennium Development Goal  |
| MOFED   | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development   |
| NGO     | Non Governmental Organisation  |
| OPRIFS  | Organisation for Prevention, Rehabilitation, Reintegration of Female Street Children |
| OVC     | Orphans and Vulnerable Children  |
| PSNP    | Productive Safety Net Programme  |
| PTA     | Parent Teacher Association   |
| REB     | Regional Education Bureau  |
| SC (UK) | Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom)  |
| SGP     | School Grant Programme   |
| SIP     | School Improvement Programme   |
| SNE     | Special Needs Education  |
| SNNPR   | Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region                                  |
| TVET    | Technical and Vocational Education and Training                                      |
| WEO     | Woreda Education Office  |
| WFP     | World Food Programme   |

# Executive Summary

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The Government of Ethiopia has a strong commitment to achieving education for all by 2015 and has a policy of inclusive education for all children. It has made significant progress in expanding access and increasing enrolment to general education. Having achieved enrolment of over 80% it now wishes to concentrate on sharpening its policies and programmes to extend equity and quality.

The main objective of the Social Assessment of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) is to contribute to the understanding of factors that exclude children from school and *'to review and understand the social context for the implementation of general education (including GEQIP) and broader education policies in Ethiopia and to suggest how social impact could be improved'*. This report presents the findings of a qualitative study carried out in four regions, Gambella and Somali as examples of emerging regions, and SNNPR and Amhara to help fill gaps in information on early marriage, and on vulnerable children that are clustering in urban areas but who are at risk of dropping out or not being at school at all and are at risk of exploitation. It builds on an Inception Report that reviewed the literature on equity issues in education and social policies in the education sector.

## *Equity and Exclusion factors*

The field research confirms the findings of the literature review that the main determinants of inequity and exclusion from education are: poverty and food insecurity, child labour both at home and commercially, distance especially to second level school, gender disparities and in particular early marriage, and a pastoralist way of life.

- The impact of poverty and food insecurity cannot be under-estimated as parents are unable to provide children with clothing, food, and educational materials. Coping strategies manifest themselves in a high demand for child labour (from both girls and boys) to contribute to household work and to earn an income causing them to be absent, have insufficient time for study, or drop out of school altogether.
- A lower rate of female participation in school is strongly associated with economic factors and early marriage. For poor households in particular education is not seen to bring an immediate relief from food insecurity whereas early marriage of daughters offers instant benefits in terms of bride wealth and/or social capital accruing from links with another family who will help out in times of stress. Young boys may be withdrawn from school to help with animals or are contracted to work on farms and commercial enterprises.
- In a context where only 32% of rural households are within a 10 km radius of a secondary school, the option for poor households being able to fund children to stay in towns to attend secondary schools is minimal. Where they stay with relatives there is a risk of employment and sexual exploitation and many are not given the time to go to school.
- Girls emerge as a key group who require greater policy attention across all the areas, with, for example, opportunity and other educational costs, low quality education and lack of safe and secure access to schools, affecting them disproportionately. Within this group, pastoralist girls, working girls, young girls engaged in commercial sex work, girls at risk of

being trafficked illegally across borders, as well as married girls require more attention in education policies.

**Vulnerable Groups**<sup>1</sup> Though there are policies and programmes in place to tackle the educational and social needs of vulnerable children severe weaknesses are observed in applying these. The analysis reveals that the educational and social needs of vulnerable children, especially girls, orphans and those with disabilities, needs much greater attention. This includes strengthened service delivery, coordinated approaches and streamlined responses to the specific needs of the country's OVC. This involves more than education-related support including psychosocial support to traumatised children, shelter and food, and the means to earn an income, and schools must be prepared to be involved in providing a more holistic response. Those schools that run a shift system and evening classes are providing positive options to combine work and school. A reinvigoration of the National Plan of Action for OVC would assist in the application of existing legal and policy frameworks intended to provide protection and care to OVC.

**Special needs children** Despite government policy of inclusive education for children with special needs, they remain amongst the most marginalised, and inclusiveness is still at an embryonic stage. To a large extent, activities, services and interventions are left to NGOs and church groups to provide. There is considerable variation in social acceptance of disability, and significant differences in the approaches adopted to these children across the regions, which needs to become more uniform. On the demand side, there is need for greater awareness and incentives for parents to bring special needs children to school, while on the supply side, schools need to make arrangements and prepare the school, teachers and students to accept such children. There is evidence that some schools are open to accepting children with disability but do not know what to do, and don't have the resources to support such children. Creative use of the School Grant Programme would go some way towards promoting inclusiveness e.g. schools that have an affirmative action plan on special needs would have access to greater funds and rewards than schools that don't.

Regional strategies need to be developed and disseminated, and a monitoring system for implementation established. Regions need to provide advice on implementation of the national strategy on special needs to overcome the current ad hoc situation as well as to scale up training for special needs educators.

## **Policies and Programmes addressing equity constraints**

The study has revealed the complex issues faced by excluded children including the high opportunity costs of education - the need to work to meet their basic needs (shelter, food, and clothing) overrides any desire for education. ABECs are successful in extending access to education for hard to

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<sup>1</sup> Vulnerable children are children who migrate alone to towns, orphans and children affected by HIV and AIDS, children who live and/or work on the street, children who are trafficked internally within Ethiopia and across borders illegally, and children engaged in commercial sex work. They are to be found mainly in urban areas and are more likely than other children to be engaged in employment working as domestic workers, in the services and trade sectors, or work on the street.

reach groups but their limitation is quality and not being responsive enough to the demands of parents and students alike. While ABECs have been charged with the complex task of providing education to the excluded, they have the weakest tools – low quality teaching provided by unqualified, poorly resourced facilitators, and there is a risk that they become a parallel education system for the poorest groups. They are found to be insufficiently flexible and not targeted enough to meet the challenges – this comes at a high cost to the Government and to parents and children. Some ABECs focus on flexibility (not always very well) and on reducing distance that children travel to school but largely ignore some of the other constraints to access, such as early marriage, the needs of OVC, working children, trafficked or other traumatised children.

## Key Recommendations

**The ABE concept needs to be refocused away from being a ‘catch all’ solution** for excluded groups, to being more tightly oriented to the needs of clearly defined target groups. The concept needs to be redesigned from vision all the way down to activities to ensure that it is fit for purpose and can respond to local circumstances.

ABE should play different roles for different children. For one group it may present as a way to complete Basic Education that is compatible with their lifestyle and their choices (e.g. pastoralist children), for others it can help get them up to speed quickly so they can transition into formal education and complete further levels of education (e.g. dropout OVCs, working children), for others it may be a short term stop to enable them to move towards vocational education that will enable them to earn an income. Pilot projects where different ABECs target the needs of different children could be undertaken.

**The School Improvement Plan and the School Grant Programme are key tools** to be used strategically to encourage locally appropriate responses to inequity. Joint community/school projects based on a more holistic approach that combines food, shelter, psychosocial support along with education-specific interventions could be funded by the SGP. For example, the SGP could be weighted so that such projects receive a higher subvention for targeting OVC, special needs children, girls’ exclusion, other excluded groups than the current flat rate of Birr 15 per student in primary school and Birr 20 in high school<sup>2</sup>. A range of pilot projects could be undertaken e.g. to encourage working children, children with special needs, young mothers etc, to attend school. Other social protection measures, still under design, could be used to support vulnerable individual children.

**Addressing gender disparities** will involve a range of strategies, especially for the adolescent girl. On the demand side these include scholarships and stipends, transport and boarding schools, advocacy and community engagement in girls’ education, safety policies and training and codes of conduct. On the supply side it includes non-formal education programmes, recruitment and training of female teachers/facilitators, gender training for teachers, mentoring, tutoring and peer support, life skills, literacy training, family planning for young mothers, and livelihoods and vocational training.

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<sup>2</sup> These rates are currently under review.

**OVCs** A holistic approach to the needs of OVCs is necessary if they are to remain in school. For some groups, especially excluded and vulnerable children, a holistic approach needs to be developed that is coordinated with other partners/ministries e.g. Labour and Social Affairs and Women and Children. A joint commission could be developed at regional and district level to ensure coordination. Programmes may include food for education, conditional cash transfers, bursaries, or support through the Productive Safety Net Programme.

**Child labour is a major constraint to education;** the Labour Law does not envision employment under 14 years yet many children are working from a young age e.g. as farm help or domestic workers. There is no obligation on employers to educate staff and most are unwilling to give working children time off to attend school. This is a critical loophole in the system that needs to be redressed as it is in direct conflict with the Government's policy on education for all, as well as its international commitments on children rights, and parents and employers are taking advantage of this loophole.

**There is need to invest in infrastructure, facilities, teachers and supplies** as planned for in GEQIP – teacher training, classrooms especially for ABECs, papers, text books, teachers' guides, as well as water and sanitation.

**Greater engagement of communities and parents** is required (not only PTAs). Discussions on the value of an appropriate education for both boys and girls needs to be part of community dialogue. Greater involvement of the wider community including elders, women and men in awareness raising on early marriage and child labour is key (e.g. through community conversations). Strengthening community involvement in the preparation of the School Improvement Plan and in decisions on creative use of the School Grant Programme to address social constraints (as well as educational materials) is central to making education more responsive to community needs. Projects targeting early marriage in particular could be piloted.

**Capacity building of a number of critical groups is also needed.** This includes teachers who need to be sensitive to non-educational needs that impact schooling and to have the skills to talk to troubled or marginalised children. Technical capacity building for school authorities involved in OVC support should be developed to encourage a more holistic response to the needs of these (often traumatised) children, and not just a sectoral approach.

Investment in women's capacity to participate fully and to take leadership roles is important. This could include adult education opportunities, properly designed, staffed and resourced, for women to increase their literacy levels and confidence to participate in community decision-making forums.

**Local officials of all services and government agencies need to have the capacity to understand, analyse and respond to the needs of excluded and vulnerable children.** Their ability to interact with children and communities and to work in partnership with other services must be enhanced to ensure that children receive appropriate and coordinated services. This is particularly critical for high-risk groups of children, such as orphans, who need support from many services if they are to succeed. Furthermore, fiscal decentralisation to regions and woredas needs to be supported, along with adequate training to local officials if it is to succeed.

# 1. Introduction

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This chapter provides a brief overview of the rationale for the Social Assessment, its specific purpose and sets out the structure of the report.

## **Background to the Social Assessment**

The education sector in Ethiopia has undergone impressive expansion in recent years through the growth of both formal schools (primary and secondary) and through alternative routes to education (alternative basic education centres and non-formal and adult education). However, there remain significant challenges particularly in the areas of quality and equity. Dropout is a major issue with both human and economic costs. The *Education Public Expenditure Review (2010)* indicates that, based on the Coefficient of Efficiency, half the resources being deployed are on pupils who drop out before completing eight years of primary education. There are special concerns regarding girls' education at all levels, and increasing attention is being paid to the causes of drop out by adolescent girls.

The Government of Ethiopia is currently designing the fourth phase of the Education Sector Development Programme, and has launched a major, nationwide comprehensive reform programme to improve the quality of general education (grades 1-12) which runs until 2013 - the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP). These two programmes provide the framework and opportunity to strengthen both the quality of, and equity in access to education.

## **Purpose and Objectives**

The main objective of the Social Assessment of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) is *'to review and understand the social context for the implementation of general education (including GEQIP) and broader education policies in Ethiopia and to suggest how social impact could be improved'*. Specifically the terms of reference require the assessment to

- Identify/validate the broad social issues that pertain to the education sector.
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis.
- Carry out an assessment of user satisfaction.
- Identify equity constraints and develop innovative approaches to address these.
- Develop proposals for monitoring the main social impacts such that they can influence Government policy development.

The logic behind the assignment is to identify the issues that underpin exclusion from school and interrogate the assumptions that are implicit in the policy responses by Government. The purpose of the field research is to understand how context affects children's access to school and the responses that are being provided by the education and other non-state actors in order to identify ways of overcoming exclusion from education and strengthening equity measures. The findings of this report shed light on the underlying social constraints to education, the causes of dropout, as well on the dynamics that cause children not to attend school at all.

A review of the literature to identify the key social issues that affect equity in the education sector was undertaken, as was a review of the current social policies and strategies in relation to education

in Ethiopia, both of which have already been reported upon in the Inception Report (October 2010). This report builds on the Inception Report by providing information on the reality of what is happening on the ground – the challenges faced by children trying to get an education that equips them for their chosen lifestyle, the factors that underlie parents’ decisions on whether to send children to school and for how long, and the responses that are provided by the education sector.

### **Structure of the Report**

Section 2 sets out the methodology for the Social Assessment while Section 3 presents a review of social policy in the education sector and provides an overview of initiatives taken or planned to address social constraints in education. Section 4 provides an overview of the key social issues affecting education and equity namely, rural/urban disparities, the impact of poverty and food insecurity on equitable access to education, gender disparities, child labour, and factors affecting access to education by pastoralist groups. Section 5 discusses vulnerable groups that are particularly at risk of dropping out from school or not attending school at all. These include orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), children affected by migration and human trafficking, and girls engaged in commercial sex work. Section 6 presents a picture of how education policies and programmes are implemented and the specific initiatives being undertaken by school authorities and some non-state actors to address the social barriers to education. Section 7 provides conclusions and recommendations.

## 2. Social Assessment Methodology

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The main source of data for this study are a literature and social policy review conducted as part of the Inception Phase, and a qualitative survey carried out in four regions, the two emerging regions of Gambella, and Somali, and Amhara and SNNPR. The study was guided throughout by a Steering Committee under the auspices of the Planning and Resource Mobilisation Process of the Ministry of Education.

### Choice of Regions

The Inception Phase consisted of a literature and social policy review and a stakeholder analysis in Addis Ababa. This process indicated that the social problems affecting equity are well known and documented, and therefore that priority should be given to identifying examples of best practice that have practical potential for scaling up by government rather than focusing on locations that would facilitate an identification of socio-economic problems but not necessarily capture innovative responses to these problems<sup>3</sup>.

The Steering Committee chose the following four regions:

1. **Gambella** as an example of an emerging region where indigenous people are not accessing education to the same extent as the resettled population and where there is limited information available on the social issues that affect equity;
2. **Somali** as an example of an emerging region where pastoralism predominates;
3. **Amhara** was specifically chosen to fill gaps in information in two key areas affecting access to education and dropout, that of early marriage, and the difficulties encountered by poor urban children especially those migrating from rural areas, or those living on the streets from accessing education<sup>4</sup>.
4. **SSNPR** because of the diversity of its ethnicity and the opportunity it affords to study the remote pastoralist community in Hamar woreda, South Omo, the support provided to special needs children through a special needs school at Arbaminch, and similar to Amhara, poor urban children in Hawassa that have migrated from rural areas.

### Choice of Woredas and Kebeles

In each region, two woredas were surveyed, and within each woreda, two kebeles, providing a sample of eight woredas and sixteen kebeles. Purposive sampling was used to identify woredas and kebeles. Woredas were chosen in conjunction with Regional Education Bureaus and international organisations and NGOs working in the areas, as relevant. Kebeles were chosen on the advice of Woreda Education Offices. Table 1 sets of the regions, woredas, and kebeles visited and the stakeholders consulted.

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<sup>3</sup>For example, in most woredas in Gambella the population live along the banks of the river Baro which floods in the wet season causing households and schools to move temporarily to higher ground. On the advice of the REB it was decided to focus on schools that demonstrate particular issues related to the study rather than focusing on the issue of flooding and closure (see Table 1).

<sup>4</sup> Although quantitative data in the education sector indicates higher rates of enrolment in urban areas, it does not highlight the disparities within urban areas. For example, the education data provides no analysis of street-dwelling youth's access to education, a particularly vulnerable group in the Ethiopian context.

Table 1 Purposive Sampling of woredas and kebeles

| Region   | Woreda  | Kebeles   | Stakeholders Contacted  |
|----------|---|---|---|
| Gambella | Abobo: good experience of primary & secondary education for indigenous students<br><br>Lare: challenges and exclusion factors.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abobo primary &amp; secondary school with good educational achievements.</li> <li>Akuna Doy to explore ABE issues.</li> <li>Korgang elementary &amp; secondary schools.</li> <li>Lare woreda on exclusion issues.</li> </ul>   | Interviews/ focus group discussions with REB, WEO, BoFED, OFED, teachers, principals, deans, students, parents, PTA members. UNICEF NGOs, Catholic mission, Don Bosco institute. TVET & other colleges.   |
| Somali   | Awbare, Jijiga Zone<br>Denbel Woreda, Shinile zone. Both provided opportunity to understand issues of transfer between levels (ABE, formal primary school and secondary); rural-urban mix; school feeding programs; schools with NGO interventions and without; and distance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heragel, a rural Kebele</li> <li>Lafa Issa located <b>along</b> the main the Jijiga-Awbare road.</li> <li>Denbel, Araabi rural kebele (22 kms from the woreda capital)</li> <li>Denbel town</li> </ul>   | Students in formal primary & senior secondary schools; ABE facilitators; community members (PTA and CMC); school directors, teachers and cluster coordinators.<br><br>Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with officials in government offices of Education_at Regional and Woreda level; colleges (TVET and TTC); and, non-state actors.   |
| Amhara   | Bahir Dar town.<br>Mecha Woreda (Berhane Hewan)<br>Ambo Mesek Woreda – one of the 137 schools where REB/World Learning Ethiopia undertakes OVC programs in the Region - reaching 13,700 children.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shume Abo ABE Center Which targets OVCs.</li> <li>Dil Chebo Primary School (&amp; cluster center, &amp; accepts transfers of students from Shume Abo ABE;</li> <li>Sertise Dengel Primary school which serves students with visual impairments.</li> <li>Enashenefalen Kebele-Berhane Hewan Program aims to reduce early marriage.</li> <li>Ambo, Primary School in Ambo Mesek Keble. One of the 137 schools where Regional Education Bureau/World Learning Ethiopia undertakes OVC programs.</li> </ul> | Key informant interviews/focus group discussion with BOE, Women’s Affairs, Labor and Social Affairs, HAPCO, Bahir Dar City Administration OoE & Labor and Social Affairs; WEO WFED, kebele representatives, school authorities.<br><br>UNFPA/Bureau of Youth Sport (Berhane Hewan), World Learning Ethiopia; Forum on Sustainable Children Empowerment; Wabe Children Aid and Training; Organization for Prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children (OPRIFS). Children in schools (members of various clubs) and out of school (children in drop in centers and safe homes); parents and guardians. |
| SNNPR    | Hawassa City to explore situations in urban settings in the region.<br>Arbaminch Town<br>Chencha Woreda to explore child labor and Trafficking<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Hamar woreda, pastoralist community in South Omo.                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hawassa to explore migration to urban areas by poor children.</li> <li>Arba Minch to explore SNE &amp; boarding schools.</li> <li>Chencha woreda known for problems of child trafficking.</li> <li>In the woreda Dimeka town and Delmi Village.</li> </ul>   | Interviews & focus group discussions with school administration (primary, secondary, and preparatory, higher education institutions (Teacher Training College and TVET); parents, students, NGOs, Government officials.   |

## Survey Instrument

The survey collected data at regional, woreda and kebele levels, and included state and non-state actors as well as school, student, college/TVET and community respondents. The survey instrument was shared with the Steering Committee for comment in advance of the field work. The leading topics for interview were the following ten areas:

- i. profile of education at region/woreda/kebele level and access issues;
- ii. perception of equity constraints;
- iii. challenges in providing education to pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, different ethnic groups;
- iv. perceptions of change over time;
- v. gender equity issues;
- vi. strategies and resources provided for special needs and vulnerable groups;
- vii. quality initiatives for primary and secondary education and ABEs;
- viii. fiscal decentralization and ensuing gaps;
- ix. suggestions for improving access and equity;
- x. community involvement in the school/ABE (kebele level).

Similar questions are addressed, as relevant, to NGOs and to colleges and universities.

The survey Instrument was used in all locations with additional probing questions added, as relevant e.g. on urban-specific issues such as OVC and street children, child migration and trafficking, and commercial sex work. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with different stakeholders, key informants, and participants both in the education sector and more widely. Secondary information was also collected from Education Bureaus.

In order to explore the factors that underpin the exclusion of vulnerable groups from education, the methodology focused on certain case study areas in the urban areas of Bahir Dar, Amhara, and Hawassa in SNNPR. Interviews and focus group discussions were held with such children themselves and with service providers (outside of the education sector).

## Data Collection and analysis

The literature review commenced in September 2010 and a stakeholder analysis was carried out in early October 2010; this process informed the development of the survey instrument which was approved by the Steering Committee. Two research teams were mobilized, comprising a lead consultant and an assistant to help with documentation and facilitation. The field work commenced on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in Gambella and simultaneously in Somali for two weeks. Provisional findings were presented to the Steering Committee who requested that more time be allocated to exploring urban-related issues and to out-of-school children. The second round of fieldwork commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> November and concluded on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010 in Amhara and SNNPR, after which a progress report was submitted by the consultants to the Steering Committee. Field reports on each of the four regions were completed by 2nd January 2011. This report provides a synthesis and analysis of the main findings which emerged from the field studies and offers recommendations to strengthen processes with GEQIP.

# 3. Social Policy Review

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## 3.1. Overview of approaches to addressing social issues within the Education Sector

In order to translate the Education and Training Policy (1994) into action, a 20-year Education Sector Development Plan, with an overall aim of improving access, relevance, quality and equity in education, has been rolled out phase by phase since 1997. The fourth phase of the ESDP is currently under design, and many of the issues that impact on enrolment are analysed as part of its design e.g. regional disparities, rural/urban disparities, girls' education, and specific groups - pastoralist, semi-pastoralist and indigenous groups. There is a passing reference to children with special needs and vulnerabilities; the approach to addressing their needs is set out in a separate strategy and programme.

Both the draft Growth and Transformation Plan (2010/11-2014/15) and the draft ESDP IV (2010/11-2014/15) have placed emphasis on children who are still out of school, most of whom are in the emerging regions or belong to specific groups: the pastoralist, semi-pastoralist and indigenous groups, children with special needs and vulnerabilities. Accordingly, the draft ESDP IV adopts a two pronged strategy of further expansion of access to primary education, and an equity focused programme to decrease enrolment gaps between various groups:

- 1) **To further expansion of education services**, emphasis is placed on reducing distance between schools and pupils' homes, particularly at second cycle primary, transforming the existing ABECs to regular schools, and establishing more ABE centres as necessary.
- 2) **The equity-focused strategy** aims to promote multi-grade classes as a means of integrating and maintaining children of scarcely populated areas in school, provision of special support programmes, scholarships and school feeding. Moreover, alternative education service delivery through mobile schools, para-boarding schools for second cycle primary will be continued (these are discussed in more detail below). The Government will also continue to encourage non-state actors to support school feeding and special supports like financial and material provisions to children with vulnerabilities and special needs (though it is unlikely to adopt these mechanisms itself on a nationwide basis).

For secondary schools, a limited number of secondary boarding schools are to be set up; a scholarship scheme established for vulnerable children; a school-based accountability system for actions related to access, survival and performance of girls developed; and a commitment to increasing the number of teachers from emerging regions and disadvantaged groups (pastoralists and indigenous groups).

A Special Support programme for the Four Emerging Regions (Somali, Afar, Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz) is planned to extend equitable quality education services in the pastoral and semi-pastoral regions. The introduction of the ABE approach in the relatively settled pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of the country has played an important role in the increment of enrolments. The GER (grades 1-8) which was 23.3 % and 20.9 % in Somali and Afar in the year 2004 has grown,

according to the regional reports, to 58% and 63.8%, respectively in 2009, though the impact on girls enrolment is more limited where their rates of participation is low (e.g. Afar 34% and Gambella 39%).

High dropout rates are a major concern with half the resources being deployed on pupils who drop out before completing eight years (Education Public Expenditure Review, 2010). To redress the disparity in enrolment in emerging regions compared with other regions, new alternative modalities will be introduced and existing ones strengthened during the ESDP IV.

Boarding schools, low cost accommodation, and mobile schools are to be introduced and strengthened. Attention will be given to their design to facilitate the continuation of studies for learners who have completed ABE and find it difficult to join formal schools. Transforming the ABE centres to formal/regular schools in the areas where the communities are relatively settled, expanding and up-grading the existing formal schools, constructing new 1st and 2nd cycle primary schools, and providing the schools with basic facilities will also be given special attention. In addition, organizing different support mechanisms, such as tutorial programmes, school feeding programmes, material and financial support, scholarship programmes for indigenous children (both girls and boys) and the vulnerable will be emphasized in ESDP IV to strengthen the internal efficiency of the schools in the emerging regions.

All these various measures indicate that the Ministry of Education is well aware of the social barriers to education and is committed to redressing them. However, it states that there are pockets of children that are not benefiting from education, in particular those in the emerging regions, and in poor and isolated areas across the country. A number of other strategies have been developed to target these groups, which are now discussed.

### 3.2. Alternative Routes to Basic Education

Realizing the challenge of achieving universal primary education through formal schooling alone, the Government of Ethiopia has adopted “Alternative Routes to Basic Education”. Accordingly, alternative basic education and functional adult literacy programmes were expanded.

#### **Alternative Basic Education (ABE): a key strategy for primary education**

A national strategy for alternative basic education (ABE) has been in place since September 2006. The Strategy aims to develop a well planned, organised and coordinated alternative basic education system that will provide opportunities for out-of-school children, especially those between the age of 7 and 14, to have access to good quality basic education and opportunities for further education and development (ABE Strategy, 2006).

ABE has increased enrolment in less than three years (2003/04-2005/06) to over 800,000 contributing an additional 5-6 percent coverage to the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for primary education (Education Statistics Annual Abstract). In 2007 a study conducted on ABEs, indicated that the strategy was implemented in all regions except in Harari; amongst its findings were as follows:

- that ABE had great potential for reaching the out of school children ages 7-14 particularly girls;

- the time-tables were developed in consultation with communities which allowed flexibility to satisfy the communities' demand for child labour and observance of religious days (closed on Fridays).
- the guideline on transfer of students from ABE centres to formal primary schools, and from formal to the ABE centres was widely used in all regions.
- Some coordination between ABE centres and the nearest formal primary schools was observed in almost all the regions. In some instances, ABE centres were attached to cluster resource centres and beginner facilitators were assigned for induction training.
- Students completing level III in ABE centres were able to join grade five in the nearest formal primary school in all regions. The one exception is in Tigray where children join grade four (Shibeshi, Ayalew et al, 2007).

The study has raised a number of challenges, also:

- Low retention rate of students during the dry session in low land areas due to demand for child labor, mobility of pastoral groups, and lack of water in some ABE centres.
- Qualification of ABE facilitators in pastoral communities was below the required standard of grade eight completion due to low level of education.
- The number of female facilitators was lower than desired due to fewer women meeting the standard (though lowered up to grade 6) and lack of interest to work in remote areas (Ibid).

Other studies indicate that the quality of education is lower than in formal schools and the level of performance is low. For example, based on standardized scaled scores of the average score, students in one study were categorized into four as 'Advanced', 'Proficient', 'Basic' and 'Below Basic'. The proportion achieving each level in the average score were: 3.3% Advanced, 12.0% Proficient, 34.9% Basic *and*, 49.9% Below Basic (Gebrekedian, 2009). The same study found that in all subjects, pupils in the formal schools performed better than in the non-formal ones, and that the differences were statistically significant. In the average score of the four subjects, the formal school students performed by 10.2 points higher than those in the non-formal.

The government's view is that ABE is a temporary, transitional approach and that ABECs should be upgraded to formal schools as soon as is feasible. Expenditure on ABEs is aggregated with overall primary school expenditure and hence there are no separate figures on ABE expenditure at the national level. Neither is there any data on the numbers graduating from ABECs to formal schools

The analysis of the statistics for the Inception Report indicates that enrolment has been highest in Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR. Although ABE is an effective 'outreach' tool, its ability to engage girls is mixed across regions, with females making up 46% of all learners enrolled but only 34% of learners in Afar and 39% in Gambella (there was no data for Somali, and Dire Dawa). Similarly the number of female facilitators varies significantly by region, ranging from 63% in Addis Ababa and just 9% in Afar.

Further, discussion with some stakeholders during the Inception Phase of this study indicates that there is concern that ABE risks becoming a low cost, low quality education system for the poorest communities with low levels of education facilities. Some ABECs are deemed to only be open for a short number of hours daily, follow the formal school holidays (which are often at odds with the agricultural cycle when child labour is required by families to support livelihoods). There is also concern that while enrolment is improving, dropout rates are significant, especially of girls. Parents

are deemed to weigh up the opportunity costs of children in a poor quality ABEC compared with the value of their labour at home; for some households, a rota system appears to apply whereby some children will attend school for a year and then be absent the subsequent year while their siblings attend. Moreover, the literature review, as well as discussion with stakeholders, indicate that in some locations children from ABECs did not graduate to formal schools or were not welcomed and were seen to have a lower level of education (Tigray is seen as an exception where graduation is more common but the ABE cycle is four years compared with three years elsewhere).

Some stakeholders consider that the alternative basic education system as currently applied is not responding to the needs and should be revised. For example, that alternative basic education should be an 'umbrella' concept that can be adapted in different contexts, that the interpretation of 'flexibility' needs to be broadened, opening hours and seasonality to be in tune with the agricultural cycle or the movement of pastoralists (not the formal school cycle), and could include mobile schools, distance learning etc.

### 3.3. Adult and Non-Formal Education

In 2008, the MoE adopted a National Adult Education Strategy with the objectives of establishing a well planned, organized and coordinated adult education system for youth and adults with a focus on access, quality, and relevant learning program. Adults and youth 15 years and above who did not get chance to go into regular programs are targets of the strategy. The major policy provisions in the strategy can be summarized as follows (more detail is provided in Annex 1):

- i) Increase coverage equitably: expand adult education for peasants, pastoralist, women, and citizens with special needs through a modular approach.
- ii) Address quality and relevance.
- iii) Create an institutional system and capacity for continuous adult education: management and organization of adult education (coordination among agriculture and rural development, health, women's affairs, youth and sports, labour and social affairs); and creation of a national adult education management body at federal level that provides guidance and supports to regions.
- iv) Create an effective network and partnership between government and nongovernmental organizations.

The strategy is assumed to enable the education sector play its role as a tool for development and contribute to the MDG of reducing literacy by 50%<sup>5</sup>. The draft ESDP IV emphasizes that increasing adult literacy rates supports other development goals and growth in both economic output and GDP. The document also highlights the relationship between literacy and positive impacts on children's education and health - children with literate parents stay in school longer and achieve more; each extra year of mothers' education is associated with a significant decline in infant mortality and improved child health; and, adult literacy programmes contribute to reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS.

The forthcoming ESDP IV foresees a major programme in adult education that will allow all adult illiterates, with particular focus on women, to participate in a two year Functional Adult Literacy

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<sup>5</sup> The consultants have not been able to identify any documentation that focuses on the implementation of the policy.

(FAL) course. A Master Plan for Adult Education has been drafted and it is expected to guide efforts in this sub-sector. The government intends to put more efforts in mobilizing resources and developing partnerships necessary for a sustained adult literacy campaign. FAL programmes are considered as vehicles for a newly literate population to engage into social and economic development of the country (Draft ESDP IV).

### 3.4. Promoting Primary and Secondary Education in Pastoralist Areas

In recognition of the special livelihood patterns and life style of pastoralist groups living in 7 regions (12-15 million people) of the country<sup>6</sup>, the PASDEP provides for tailored programmes that aim to improve pastoral livelihoods and asset bases and, basic social services. Structures have been established at various levels to respond to the needs of pastoralists residing in the emerging regions of Afar, Somali, Gambella and Benishagul-Gumuz: a Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee in the Parliament, a Pastoralist Area Development Department (PADD) and an Inter-Ministerial Board under the Ministry of Federal Affairs<sup>7</sup>.

The emerging regions lag behind other regions in terms of access to education and school enrolment. Accordingly a Special Support programme has been developed with the aim of a) increasing educational access, especially of indigenous children, to primary education; b) reducing the gap access and quality between the emerging regions and other regions; and c) strengthening capacity of educational managers.

#### *Policy measures*

The ETP of 1994 committed special support to marginalized areas and promoting girls' enrolment. Subsequent ESDPs have made some efforts to address the needs of pastoralist children and ESDP III emphasized commitment to mainstream pastoralist education in all sub-sectors of education system. **Alternative basic education is a central platform** to provide educational access for the emerging regions, and a Task Force was established in the MoE to assume the responsibility of introducing the ABE package in the education system particularly in the pastoralist and semi-agriculturalist areas, which includes Borena and South Omo zones in addition to the four emerging regions. To this effect, the MoE has developed a National Strategy for Alternative Basic Education (ABE) in 2006, a Guideline for implementing ABE (1-4) in pastoral and agro pastoral communities (March 1996 EC, MoE), a Guideline on Boarding Schools in Pastoral and Agro Pastoral Areas<sup>8</sup>(Amharic, Feb 1997 E.C, MoE), and a Strategy for Promoting Primary and Secondary Education in Pastoralist Areas (MoE 2008).

To **expand access** to primary education the following strategies have been adopted as follows:

#### *Formal Primary Schools*

Low-cost formal primary schools are to be built in areas where settlement is sedentary and the size of population is sufficiently large, while additional classrooms and facilities in existing primary

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<sup>6</sup> Pastoral regions comprise of approximately 12-15 million people that belong to 29 nationalities/ethnic groups. They inhabit 61% of the country's landmass. Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia, <http://www.pfe-ethiopia.org/about.html>

<sup>7</sup> Source: Mr. Shanko, at the Ministry of Federal Affairs.

<sup>8</sup>Distance Education is one of the strategies for expanding access to secondary education for youth and adults who could not continue their education through conventional schooling.

schools are to be built to accommodate new entrants. Enrolment in existing primary schools that are working below their capacity (low students population) is to be increased by introducing more flexible delivery schedules that can accommodate local objective realities and sensitizing the community to send its children to school. A “multi-grade” teaching approach is to be used in areas where the number of students in a grade level is too small to form a class, and training provided on the approach to teachers accordingly.

ABE graduates are to be mainstreamed into near-by formal second-cycle primary schools, and in cases where such schools are not found in close proximity, they should be placed in low-cost boarding schools, or raise a centrally-located ABE Center to second-cycle primary school level with the participation of beneficiary communities so that it can serve students coming from surrounding ABE centres. Adequate numbers of formal teachers for primary education are to be produced.

### *Alternative Basic Education*

Alternative Basic Education has been discussed in the previous section. With regard to the emerging regions ABE is to be mainstreamed as an integral part of the education system. Low-cost village schools are to be built in areas where the community is settled permanently or for at least 8 consecutive months in a year while Koranic Schools, which are found in most villages of pastoralist areas, are to be used as venues for alternative basic education with the permission of the community and religious leaders<sup>9</sup>. Flexible learning is to be adopted by letting the beneficiary community decide the time of learning and create a child friendly teaching – learning environment.

### *Mobile education*

Mobile education is a strategy to provide basic education to communities that are mobile for more than 4 months in a year (mobile schools include tents easily moveable and simple structures that can provide shelter, flexible black boards, mat, etc). Semi-mobile education or on- site- schools in areas where mobile communities make a short stay are mechanisms used for ensuring continuity of education offered in permanent villages. A guideline on mobile education had been developed (April 2002).

### *Para-boarding Schools and Hostels*

Low-cost para-boarding schools are to be established that are in harmony with the life of pastoralists and in which the community actively participates in terms of providing locally available building materials and labour as well as managing the schools, for second-cycle of primary education (priority to be given to females students in case of capacity limitation for admission). Strategies are to be developed that would enable both formal and para-boarding schools to generate their own income so that they can share the cost of education. To enable pastoralist children and youth who reside in areas where there are no second-cycle primary schools to continue their education, the building of low-cost hostels is envisaged in areas where the schools are available.

Amongst some stakeholders there is concern that while boarding schools and hostels may solve the problem of access, they do not address the other issues that prevent children from attending school - though it is acknowledged that they may be the only option in some contexts. Concerns relate to

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<sup>9</sup> ABE offered in Koranic Schools is secular and distinct from the religious education given by the institutions.

factors such as that boarding schools will not reach the hardest to reach groups who will be constrained from sending their children to boarding schools by cost and the need for child labour at home. Moreover, child protection is deemed weak and there is a need for knowledge and skills in relation to protecting the rights of children. The risk of gender based violence is a particular concern of parents wishing to send their daughters to secondary school, and this risk is perceived increase when girls are living away from home. Boarding schools are also seen to be at odds with the pastoralist way of life and may undermine such life style in the longer term.

**To improve quality and relevance**, relevant ABE curriculum is developed; mother tongue is used as medium of instruction; efforts are made to upgrade professional competence of ABE facilitators and formal primary school teachers (through distance education, evening classes or formal schools<sup>10</sup>); improve educational planning and management; and, community leaders are engaged in teaching learning process.

The policy also highlights strategies for

1. addressing cultural barriers and attitudes (gender roles, harmful traditional practices, early marriage, value of secular education);
2. elimination of child labor (flexible education delivery and protection of rights of children);
3. addressing environmental and economic concerns: make water resource available at school/center, separate latrines for boys and girls, provision of various support (stationery, text books, clothing etc.) to students, particularly girls who have difficulty in pursuing education, and a school feeding programme in areas of acute food shortage promoting conflict resolution and peace education.

### 3.5. Conclusion

This review of social policy in education illustrates that Government is well aware of the issues and that initiatives are planned under ESDP IV to address social constraints. In the following sections we highlight key social constraints and successes in addressing them that will help fine tune policies and programmes.

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<sup>10</sup> The Policy provides for creating favorable conditions for Teachers Education Collages to Institutionalize training of ABE facilitators; provide courses in socio-economic and cultural realities of pastoralist population; build capacity of supervisors; upgrading teachers' qualification (certificate-diploma-first degree) and produce more female teachers.

## 4. Key Social Issues Affecting Education and Equity

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The Government of Ethiopia has launched a major, nationwide comprehensive reform programme to improve the quality of general education but is aware that equity remains an issue, and that there are many hard-to-reach groups outside the education system.

This section begins with some ‘highlight’ quantitative data that sets the scene, and thereafter discuss the different social issues drawing on both the Inception Report and the findings from the fieldwork across the four regional field studies. The literature review highlighted the gap in information on children that migrate to urban areas and the issues underpinning dropout including drivers of migration, child labour both at home and when children leave home, children living and/or working on the streets, and those who are orphaned and vulnerable. It also highlighted the dearth of information available on boys’ access to education. The social assessment fieldwork explored each of the issues identified in the Inception Report to provide greater understanding of the drivers of inequity and exclusion from education, and the responses and strategies that have been developed (or not) to redress such exclusion. In particular, it offers new insights for the education sector into issues of child labour, the survival challenges of orphans and vulnerable children, especially those in urban areas and those vulnerable to child trafficking.

### 4.1 Key social Issues affecting access to education

Recent education expenditure figures indicate that education has maintained its share at about 21% of total government expenditure in a period of high inflation and declining aggregate public expenditure. During the period from 2003-2008, Ethiopia spent around 5% of GDP on education (Ethiopia Public Expenditure Review, 2010). This is relatively high – a similar level to South Africa, whose per-capita income is more than 14 times that of Ethiopia (Ethiopia Education Public Expenditure Review, 2010). However, although the total education budget is increasing, the share of recurring expenditure spent on education has fallen across Ethiopia, with the exception of Afar and Oromiya (see Figure D below) (Ethiopia Education Public Expenditure Review, 2010).

- Most impact is seen in the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in Primary 1-4, which increased for boys from 69.9% in 2004-2005 to 90.3% in 2008-2009 and for girls from 65.1% in 2004-2005 to 87.0% in 2008-2009 (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09), though there are significant regional disparities which are discussed below.
- The challenge ahead and the more limited progress made in the second cycle of primary school illustrates the emphasis on early-year basic education in both policy and in the decisions of households. The NER in Primary 5-8 stood at 38.3% for boys in 2004-2005, rising to 44.0% in 2008-2009. The NER for girls increased relatively more in the same period, from 29.4% to 44.0% (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09).
- Although the gap between the enrolment rates of boys and girls is narrowing, the drop-out rate for girls remains a concern. In 2004-2005 the drop-out rate for girls was 13.6% while by 2008-2009 the rate was 13.2%, with little progress made towards the target of a rate of 5.3% by 2008-2009 (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09).

- Overall, completion of primary school beyond Grade 5 continues to be low for male and female students. However, the improvement between 2004-05 and 2008-09 in female Grade 5 completion rates is noted, rising from 49.5% to 78.4%, just one percentage point lower than the male figure.
- A good improvement is also seen, from 26.3% female completion of Grade 8 in 2004-05 to 40.5% completion in 2008-09. This is slightly less close to the figure of 48.4% for male completions. What is striking, looking at Grade 8 completions is the lack of progress in retaining boys to Grade 8, with an increase in completions for boys from just 42.1% in 2004-05 to 48.4% in 2008-09.

The literature review undertaken as part of the Inception Phase to identified/validated broad social issues as they pertain to the education sector in Ethiopia. It indicated the following as major social issues<sup>11</sup>:

- regional disparities**, emerging regions are particularly disadvantaged in terms of enrolment though most progress has been made in recent years in those regions where there was lowest participation (Afar and Somali);
- rural/urban location**, primary school gross enrolment rates in urban areas are double the rate of rural areas, distance is a key issue especially in accessing secondary school – 59% of households area at least 10 kms from secondary school;
- gender disparities** are many and includes parental attitudes to girls education, household responsibilities, fear of gender based violence, early marriage, inadequate sanitation and other schools facilities, low self-esteem and predominance of male teachers;
- child labour** activities are influenced by family economic status; such factors include work within the home, work outside the home for income generation, abuse of girls brought to the cities, attractions of working in the Middle East, and the problems of OVC;
- pastoralist areas** are the least served with basic services, and early marriage as a key constraints to girls' education;
- special needs children** are amongst the most marginalised.

#### 4.1.1. Regional disparities

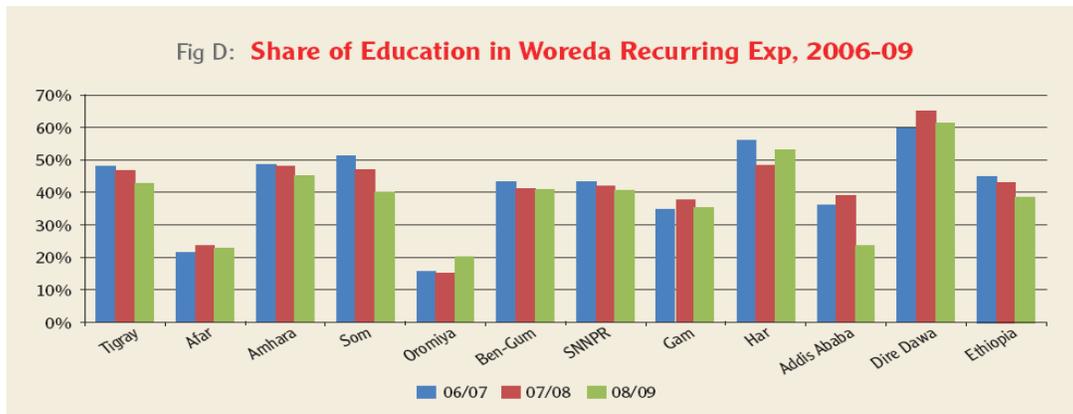
The regional disparity data is drawn from the Inception Report. The figure below, from the Public Expenditure Review, shows considerable variation in the pattern of recurring education expenditure by region. The proportion of recurring expenditure is particularly low in Oromiya and Afar, at around 20%, while expenditure in Dire Dawa is considerably higher at around 60%. Having said this, Oromiya and Afar are the only two areas showing an increase in overall recurring expenditure in education, while the rest of Ethiopia and Addis Ababa in particular, has cut back.

Data on access to services more generally shows significant regional differences, with Addis Ababa generally performing better than other regions. The CSA Welfare Monitoring Survey (2004) found

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<sup>11</sup> It is noted that many of these are also the main drivers of social exclusion more generally that were identified in the *Protection of Basic Services, Social Exclusion and Gender Equality Assessment* - gender, place of residence (rural/urban, regional differences), a pastoralist way of life and disability (Hughes et al, 2008).

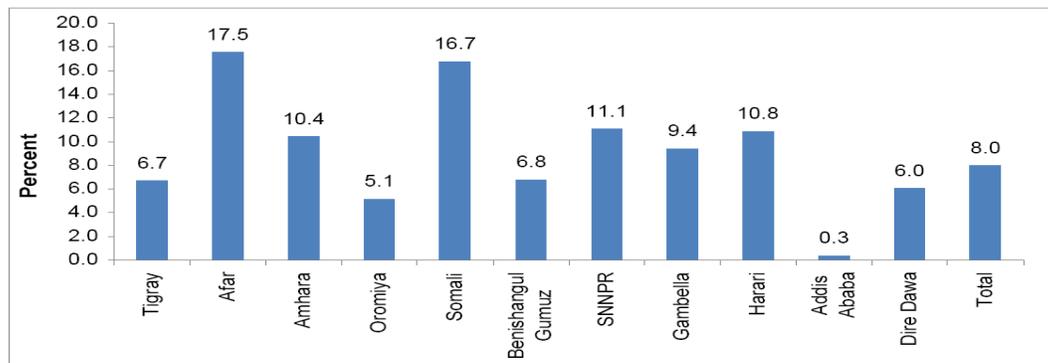
that those in the lowland regions, particularly Afar, Somali, some woredas in SNNPR, Gambella and Benshangul-Gumuz, were less able to access basic services.



Source: Ethiopia Education Public Expenditure Review, 2010<sup>12</sup>.

**The lowest literacy rates, highest school dropout rates and furthest distance to schools were found in Somali, SNNPR and Benshangul-Gumuz** (Welfare Monitoring Survey 2004, cited in Hughes et al, 2008). The chart below from the Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09 shows the average annual growth rate in primary enrolment by region.

**Chart 4.6 Average Annual Growth Rate**



Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09

Most progress in primary school enrolment has been made in recent years in the areas where participation is lowest – Afar and Somali – while least progress has been made in Addis Ababa. However, as the following table shows, **there are still very low enrolment rates among boys and girls in Afar and Somali.**

<sup>12</sup> This graph shows 40% for Somali but in the text of the EPED (page 7) it refers to 21% in Somali.

**Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at Primary Level by Region and Gender Parity Index of female to male enrolment**

|                   | Male   | Female | Total  | GPI  |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Tigray            | 95.6%  | 98.1%  | 96.9%  | 1.00 |
| Afar              | 25.3%  | 23.2%  | 24.4%  | 0.86 |
| Amhara            | 101.4% | 103.1% | 102.2% | 0.98 |
| Oromiya           | 80.9%  | 74.8%  | 77.9%  | 0.88 |
| Somali            | 33.3%  | 29.4%  | 31.6%  | 0.84 |
| Benishangul-Gumuz | 97.0%  | 80.1%  | 88.6%  | 0.76 |
| SNNPR             | 94.3%  | 84.5%  | 84.5%  | 0.87 |
| Gambella          | 80.2%  | 69.7%  | 69.7%  | 0.84 |
| Harari            | 100.2% | 83.6%  | 83.6%  | 0.82 |
| Addis Ababa       | 78.2%  | 74.4%  | 74.4%  | 1.03 |
| Dire Dawa         | 76.5%  | 70.2%  | 70.2%  | 0.89 |
| Total             | 84.6%  | 81.3%  | 81.3%  | 0.93 |

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09 (Based on Table 4.4 & Chart 4.7)

The Gender Parity Index is the ratio of female to male enrolment at all levels, which would ideally be close to 1.0. Primary school GPI is markedly lower in Afar, Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz than in other regions, while a higher female to male index is observed in Tigray, Gambella and Addis Ababa. Gender parity is lowest by far in Benishangul-Gumuz, perhaps surprising as it is not among the worst in terms of overall female enrolment. However, male levels of enrolment are relatively higher there.

In contrast, Tigray and Amhara exhibit very high enrolment among both males and females and a high ratio of female to male enrolment, with more females enrolled than males. Afar also stands out as having a GPI similar to some better-off regions, with very low enrolment among both males and females.

The current enrolment figures for Alternative Basic Education, by region, are shown in the table below. Data is missing from Somali, Harari and Dire Dawa. There is also concern about under-reporting in Oromiya and Addis Ababa.

**Table 4. 14 Characteristics of ABE by Region and Gender**

| Region            | Pupils Enrolled |                |                | Number of Facilitators |             |              | Number of Centers |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
|                   | Male            | Female         | Total          | Male                   | Female      | Total        |                   |
| Tigray            | 3,025           | 2,724          | 5,749          | 59                     | 58          | 117          | 42                |
| Afar              | 17,582          | 9,175          | 26,757         | 365                    | 35          | 400          | 265               |
| Amhara            | 210,567         | 180,875        | 391,442        | 3766                   | 3488        | 7254         | 3431              |
| Oromiya*          | 106,416         | 84,202         | 190,618        | 10506                  | 4010        | 14516        | 3885              |
| Benishangul-Gumuz | 13,569          | 10,177         | 23,746         | 496                    | 82          | 578          | 253               |
| SNNP              | 58,738          | 50,206         | 108,944        | 1645                   | 357         | 2002         | 1035              |
| Gambella          | 4,184           | 2,631          | 6,815          | 94                     | 39          | 133          | 60                |
| Addis Ababa*      | 8,431           | 17,840         | 26,271         | 406                    | 679         | 1085         | 264               |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>422,512</b>  | <b>357,830</b> | <b>780,342</b> | <b>17341</b>           | <b>8749</b> | <b>26090</b> | <b>9,235</b>      |

\* Underreporting

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09

ABE enrolment has been greatest in Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR. Although an effective ‘outreach’ tool, its ability to engage female learners is mixed, with females making up 46% of all learners enrolled but just 34% of learners in Afar and 39% in Gambella; females make up 68% of ABE enrolment in Addis Ababa (though this last figure may be subject to measurement error due to missing data).

The average number of learners per centre is 84, ranging from 137 learners per centre in Tigray to just 49 in Oromiya (again, this figure may be subject to measurement error). The proportion of female facilitators being used for ABE also varies significantly by area, ranging from just 9% of facilitators in Afar to 63% in Addis Ababa.

## 4.2 Rural/Urban Disparities

The literature review indicates that in the education sector, primary school gross enrolment rates in urban areas are double the rate in rural areas (CSA, Welfare Monitoring Survey 2004<sup>13</sup>). Whilst almost all urban residents can access a primary school within 5km, around 30% of those in rural areas have to travel 5-10km or more (Welfare Monitoring Survey 2004 cited in Hughes et al). The most recent government statistics for 2008-09 suggest that rural enrolment makes up 80% of primary enrolment but just 11% of the first level of secondary school (S1) and just 4% of the second cycle of secondary school (S2).

**Table 4.6 Urban/Rural Enrollment by Level**

| Level             | Urban Enrollment |           |       |         |         | Rural Enrollment |           |       |         |         |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-------|---------|---------|------------------|-----------|-------|---------|---------|
|                   | Male             | Female    | %Male | %Female | % Urban | Male             | Female    | %Male | %Female | % Rural |
| Primary (1-8)     | 1,543,770        | 1,565,386 | 49.7  | 50.3    | 19.8    | 6,748,162        | 5,850,135 | 53.6  | 46.4    | 80.2    |
| Secondary (9-10)  | 708,900          | 521,538   | 57.6  | 42.4    | 89.4    | 91,357           | 54,386    | 62.7  | 37.3    | 10.6    |
| Secondary (11-12) | 140,520          | 56,736    | 66.6  | 33.4    | 96.2    | 5,898            | 1,919     | 75.5  | 24.5    | 3.8     |

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09

While females make up 50% of urban primary enrolment, they are 46% of rural enrolment, suggesting more gender disparity in rural areas. This is compounded over time, with females accounting for 42% of urban Secondary 1 enrolment but only 37% of rural Secondary 1 enrolment. For S2, females are 33% of all enrolments in urban and 26% in rural areas (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09).

The progress between 2004-05 and 2008-09 in the secondary school NER has been marginal, with an increase of just 2% (Table 4.18). Understandably, the focus of energy, activity and impact has been on primary enrolment. The available data shows that not all Ethiopian children are equally served with education opportunities. Children living in urban areas have an advantage over children living in rural areas particularly in accessing secondary education, and boys have an advantage over girls, particularly in rural areas and at the level of secondary education.

<sup>13</sup> CSA: WMS (2004). “Central Statistical Authority, Welfare Monitoring Survey: analytical Report”. Addis Ababa: CSA.

**Table 4.18 Net Enrollment Rate at Secondary First Cycle (9-10)**

| Year              | NER      |           |             |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
|                   | Boys (%) | Girls (%) | Total (%)   |
| 1997 E.C. 2004/05 | 14.2     | 9.3       | <b>11.8</b> |
| 1998 E.C. 2005/06 | 15.5     | 10.7      | <b>13.2</b> |
| 1999 E.C. 2006/07 | 16.8     | 12.6      | <b>14.7</b> |
| 2000 E.C. 2007/08 | 15.4     | 12.2      | <b>13.8</b> |
| 2001 E.C. 2008/09 | 15.0     | 11.9      | <b>13.5</b> |

Source: (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2008-09)

Distance from schools is the major factor prohibiting parents from sending children to school, boys or girls. The establishment of ABE centres in villages has been the major driving force behind parents' decision to send children to school.

Distance to second cycle primary, and especially secondary school, is a crucial deterrent for children to continue their education. The national picture shows that progress between 2004-05 and 2008-09 in the secondary school NER has been marginal, with an increase of just 2%. Secondary schools are available within a 5 kilometre radius for only 27% of total households in the country. The condition in rural areas is worse; for 68% of the households, the closest secondary school is located at least 10 kilometres away. Only 32% of the rural households have secondary school within 10 kilometres distance (CSA: WMS, 2004). Box 1 provides an example of such distances in one woreda participating in the field study for this report in Somali.

**Box 1. Distances to secondary school in Somali**

From Araabi, a -rural kebele

1. Denbel (22 km), the woreda capital;
2. Hamukale (60 km);
3. Semeka (23 km);
4. Hader Weyni (42 kms),
5. Heregel (35 kms)
6. Jijiga (87)
7. Dire Dawa (115 kms)

Source: Somali Field Study Report for the Social Assessment Report, Dec 2010.

The findings from all the field studies indicate that lack of local secondary school accounts for numerous dropouts, and places a significant burden on those families who send their children to towns for further education. A minority of parents are capable of financing the accommodation, food and costs associated with educating their children in towns while many parents question the value of producing children who cannot get jobs/employment. For example, in SNNPR large numbers of students from grade 5 upwards go to towns for education, hence town schools have more rural than urban students. These children rent accommodation, either paid for by rural relatives or they work; even if they stay with relatives they must engage in labour activities within the household and are often forced to stay at home, be late to school, or discontinue education.

In addition to distance and the lack of education facilities locally, there are many factors that interplay with rural/urban disparities that lead to exclusion from education. These challenges are summarised in the following table and are subsequently discussed in the document.

**Table 2. Rural/urban exclusionary factors affecting children's access to education**

|                         | <b>Rural settings</b>   | <b>Urban settings</b>  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Context                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally most woredas have primary schools (ABEC or first cycle schools in almost all woredas)</li> <li>• There are highly remote woredas where most of the population is illiterate and often place little value on education.</li> <li>• Mobility of pastoralist communities, and slash and burn practices of agro-pastoralists makes education service delivery very difficult.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools (primary to higher education, SNE, adult boarding, colleges) are concentrated mostly in urban centres.</li> <li>• Students from rural areas may constitute more than the average of all school attendants e.g. SNNPR.</li> <li>• Students from rural areas must rent rooms or live with relatives to attend schools.</li> <li>• Although overall access to education is much higher in towns, this masks the differentials in access within towns (not captured in government data).</li> </ul> |
| Exclusion factors       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early marriage for both girls &amp; boys.</li> <li>• Need for child labour in household.</li> <li>• Household poverty (inability to afford materials, food, clothes); requires income from child labour.</li> <li>• Trafficking of children and migration for employment.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OVC and street children (due to loss of parents, conflicts in the family, corporal punishment by parents/step parent, insufficient resources in some households, especially polygamous households).</li> <li>• Children working on the street, in commercial sex work.</li> </ul>   |
| Challenges for students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early marriage (related to bride wealth, and associated rituals).</li> <li>• Household poverty and food insecurity.</li> <li>• Distance from schools (for second cycle primary and above).</li> <li>• Need for labour at households or children are contracted out.</li> <li>• Household poverty (inability to support children attending schools in towns financially).</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death of parents &amp; hence children must work.</li> <li>• Migrate to towns (driven by poverty &amp; other social issues).</li> <li>• Labour 'exploitation' (by relatives &amp; in commercial sector e.g. weaving, restaurants, domestic work)</li> </ul>  |
| Gender specific issues  | <p>Girls affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early marriage (source of income for the family through bride wealth).</li> <li>• Labour involvement (girls perform majority of the household work).</li> <li>• Low value placed on girls' education.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household labour 'exploitation' (involved in all labour activities in households, or in relatives' houses).</li> <li>• Risk of violence (sexual violence) when renting accommodation.</li> <li>• Engagement in commercial sex.</li> </ul>   |

### 4.3 Income Disparities: the impact of poverty and food insecurity on equitable access to education

The Ethiopian Demographic Household Survey identified a strong relationship between household economic status and schooling both at the primary and secondary levels and among males and females. For example, net enrolment ratio increases from 25% among students from poorer households (the lowest wealth quintile) in primary school to 68% among students from richer households from the highest wealth quintile. Similarly, the rate rises from 4% among secondary school attendees in the lowest wealth quintile to 38% among those in the highest wealth quintile (2005). A study of five regions found that household wealth, cognitive social capital, adult education and land ownership has a positive impact on whether the target children (8 year olds) were attending school (Woldehanna et al, 2005) – there is a deficit of these assets in poor households.

The field research across all regions reaffirms that household poverty is a major factor affecting the enrolment of children in schools in the regions. This is manifested through the inability of the households and families to provide children with clothing, educational materials, food and other items. While the issue of household poverty is prevalent throughout, rural children are especially affected. In Gambella, where more than half the indigenous population lives in absolute poverty, food insecurity is a critical issue for many households who face food shortages for more than six months of the year driven by flooding and subsistence methods of cultivation. There is a high dependence on social capital and the social network is an important safety net in that those who have food share with relatives.

In SNNPR, contributory factors to poverty include, for example, population pressure on land providing low yields (highlands of SNNPR), drought affecting animal herds, polygamy where few assets of households are further divided among several wives and their children, death of a parent/s leading to the dissolution of the household and children who are unable to support themselves. For instance, in the rural highlands of Chench, in Gamo-Gofa zone, and in Hamar, children lack adequate food and are not only discouraged from attending school, but also are observed by school teachers to sleep or be unable to pay attention. Girls interviewed in Dimeka town, in Hamar woreda, also indicated that they have discontinued their education because they couldn't afford food and clothes.

In such situations parents' perception of the value of education is a critical factor hindering children's attendance at school. Parents in Gambella explained how they perceive the choices open to them:

- Some are so pre-occupied with the challenges of attaining food security that they prefer to send their children into productive work and earn an immediate income rather than investing in long-term education that may prove unproductive in terms of gaining a job.
- Education is not perceived to bring immediate relief to food insecurity whereas 'marriage', especially of girls, offers instant benefits such as ties with other families who will provide help in times of food shortage.
- In some remote rural areas, marriage is considered much more valuable than education.

These issues of child labour and early marriage are discussed in some detail below.

For those parents who wish to send their children to secondary school, in SNNPR, a majority of rural students must rent rooms in towns to attend secondary level and hence economic poverty of households poses severe challenges on the students and their parents to be able to afford the cost of accommodation, clothing and school materials. A similar situation applies in Somali also. In such circumstances there is a strong preference for boarding schools (for example, higher education institutes) which provide accommodation and food compared with institutions which do not provide these facilities. Furthermore, the field research found from discussions with parents that in Gambella, students, especially those from poor households, are interested in short courses that will enable them to get employment quickly rather than completing the full secondary cycle.

#### 4.4 Equity in education for pastoralist communities

Pastoralism constitutes a unique way of life for some 12-15 million agro-pastoralists<sup>14</sup>, living in 7 regions. It is extensively practiced in the Somali and Afar regional states, in the Borana Zone of the Oromiya region, and in the South Omo zone of the SNNPR region. Pastoralists are also found in areas of Tigray, Benshangul Gumuz and Gambella regions (MoFED, 2006; Ministry of Agriculture, 2001)<sup>15</sup>. Pastoralist areas tend to be the least served with basic services such as schools (and health centres) and education indicators for pastoralist areas are among the lowest in the country. For instance, the average primary Gross Enrolment Ratio for the country in 2005-06 (1998 E.C) grew to 91.3% but the average primary GER for Afar and Somali regions in the same year was merely 21.9% and 30.3% respectively.

With regard to educational service delivery, the field research in Gambella, Somali and South Omo in SNNPR undertaken for this study confirms the findings of the literature which identified a number of socioeconomic and cultural factors contributing to low levels of education and inequitable distribution of services in the emerging regions. These include:

- A scattered and low population, and a mobile population which makes it difficult to provide infrastructure and social services (road, water, education, health);
- low level of awareness on the importance of education, and reluctance to send girls to school, and the practice of early marriage;
- occasional conflicts among different clans and subsequent displacement of families and children dropping out of schools;
- vulnerability to repeated drought and food shortage resulting in drop outs;
- demand for child labour for economic activities and household chores.

The limited capacity of the education sector to deliver quality and relevant education responsive to the needs of pastoral children is a considerable challenge - weak technical capacity of officials and ABE facilitators and teachers; shortage of qualified manpower; shortage of teaching learning materials and teaching aids; improper utilization of scarce resources; weak supervision, planning monitoring and evaluation at various levels.

In Gambella, for example, education officials and teachers indicate that educational enrolment is relatively lower among indigenous communities (the Nuer, Anuah, Majangar, Komo and Oppo) than among the settled community. This is due to the scattered nature of indigenous settlements, exacerbated by the mobility attached to their economic subsistence, the distance of schools from some villages, early marriage of the indigenous girls as early as age 13-15 and dropout, lack of attractive learning atmosphere - learning under shade of trees, sharing a single class for two grade because of classroom shortage and lack of school facilities. By contrast, settled communities are concentrated in villages which, as part of the resettlement programme, have been provided with social services.

The mobility attached to 'slash and burn' agricultural practices, is a further factor which makes service provision difficult when the scattered nature of their settlement patterns can mean that rural

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<sup>14</sup>Pastoral regions comprise of approximately 12-15 million people that belong to 29 nationalities/ethnic groups. They inhabit 61% of the country's landmass. Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia, <http://www.pfe-ethiopia.org/about.html>

<sup>15</sup> Historically, pastoralists have been sidelined (Mussa, 2004). Until the early 1990's, the GoE had no policies or programmes specifically targeting pastoralists.

indigenous households are 3-7 kilometers from ABE centres. Most of the indigenous people are not settled farmers but live around the banks of Baro river, which when it floods, causes them to move to safer locations. It is for this reason that the regional government wants to carry on re-villagization program with the consent of the people and the support of the federal government which makes the provision of social services (school, health center, electricity and tap water etc.)<sup>16</sup>.

Language also plays a role. The regional government is trying to ensure that small children are taught in their mother tongue but a budget shortage to publish books in different indigenous languages spoken in the region is a constraint. Besides this many parents prefer that their children learn in Amharic language which they think is widely spoken and may provide their children with more opportunities.

Education officials indicate that because they have little experience of education, indigenous communities are not active in the development of education centres. In contrast, settled communities are located adjacent to roads, schools and towns, have previous knowledge and experience of education, are active in the development of education centres, and have better access to schools - at least partly because they were provided as part of the resettlement programme. In addition, in Somali, inter-clan and cross border conflicts inherent among indigenous communities causes instability in households' economic status and is a barrier to children's education (looting and raiding of cattle and other belongings).

#### **4.5 Gender disparities in access to education**

There are numerous factors which serve to exclude, or undermine, girls and boys' access to, and performance at school. While girls are particularly affected, boys are not unscathed. This section explores the impact of such factors as early marriage, parents' need for labour and income, and the low value put on girls' education.

##### ***Early marriage***

Early marriage is one of the most significant factors in low female enrolment and in causing the drop out of girls from school in all of the four regions. In Gambella, low education levels among indigenous girls is strongly associated with economic factors and early marriage whereby girls are married between the ages of 13-15 years. Households can benefit significantly from the bride-wealth that accompanies marriage – often exceeding 15-25 cattle. Once married, a girl will have the work burden of household chores and caring for her own children and may rapidly discontinue her education.

In South Omo, early marriage is practiced from the age of five years, and has a negative impact on the education of both boys and girls. The boy's family pays bride wealth<sup>17</sup> 'koyta' to the girl's family over an extended period. The boy is expected to work to pay the bride wealth through engagement in all types of farming, bee keeping, cattle herding, which halts his participation in school. Once the

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<sup>16</sup> Source: ABE centers coordinators and facilitators and woreda education officials.

<sup>17</sup> The bride wealth may consist of a combination of cattle, honey, fire arms and other items of value.

arrangement is agreed, the girl's family is obliged to keep girl safe and away from 'modernity' – this can be up to 7 year – hence she doesn't attend school.

If a girl is sent to school the boy's family may not pay 'koyta'. Furthermore, boys tend to drop out when rituals associated with marriage are performed<sup>18</sup>.

In Amhara, despite constitutional provision and legal protection against early marriage, girls are married from the age of five years, the region has one of the highest rates of child marriages in the world, and over half the girls are married by age 15 years<sup>19</sup>. Parents (particularly fathers) decide on the engagement and sources of livelihood for the prospective couple. Marriage usually takes place with families of similar economic status. In addition to social prestige, parents of the girl get some money as a token of appreciation (in Gonder) and clothing (in Kemise area).

Marriage to a much older person (by minimum 10 years) is perceived good for the marriage in Amhara. Consensus is made between the two families regarding the time when sexual intercourse is permissible. The girl is brought up by both families living interchangeably with her parents and in-laws until she reaches the agreed age limit when they are wedded. Once a girl is engaged to a man, she cannot continue her education without her husband's permission. In rare cases, when marriage takes place between children of similar ages, both may continue their education provided they get support from families (with farming and house work), otherwise they both drop out.

### **Box 2. Berhane Hewan Project, Amhara**

In 2005, in collaboration with the Nike Foundation, Berhane Hewan, a [UN Population Fund](#) (UNFPA) and Population Council project was started to keep girls in school, delay early marriage, and address the social isolation of adolescent unmarried and married girls.

For the project, participants and community members are urged to take part in community-wide conversations on early marriage and sexual and reproductive health issues affecting girls. Community mentors teach the young girls literacy, life skills, health and HIV education, and how to save money. Participants also receive support to stay in school through involvement in "girls' groups," which convene outside of school, and are provided with school materials such as notebooks, pens, and pencils.

Girls who are not enrolled in school are encouraged to learn how to read and write by participating in non-formal education clubs that teach subjects such as the Amharic alphabet, simple arithmetic, and environmental science. After 18 months of participation, these girls are eligible to go to school.

To empower the girls and address the economic factors that influence child marriage, the program provides an economic incentive – such as a \$25 sheep or two hens – to girls who complete two years of the program and delay marriage. The project also constructs community water points to improve access to water, reduce the time girls spend fetching water for their families, and improve community health.

More than 12,000 girls are part of the program. Girls who have participated in the program are more likely than other girls in their communities to remain in school, be unmarried and be better educated about sexual and reproductive health. It has also spawned a sister activity for married girls, who meet once a week to obtain health information, peer interaction and social support. Among married girls, girls living in the project site were nearly three times more likely to use family planning methods.

Source: UN Foundation website, [www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org)

<sup>18</sup> A Hamar boy is expected to go through initiation which takes up to 12 weeks and includes a 'bull jumping' ritual which cleanses him from all childhood deeds, makes him a man and ready for marriage. Several boys indicated that they leave school to undertake this ritual and do not return thereafter. Bull jumping involves running over twelve bulls which are side by side without staggering or falling.

<sup>19</sup> UN Foundation website.

Mothers and girls in Berhane Hewan project<sup>20</sup> indicated that the major drivers of early marriage are:

- low value on education;
- maintaining virginity of girls;
- parental wish to see the generation continue and have children live close by;
- access to labour (couple's) by the family of the bride groom;
- to get a 'pay-back' from financial and material contributions rendered from other families who wed their children;
- having married sons and daughters a sign of status; and,
- security through having a large family.

Coordinated efforts between teachers and kebele administrators are made to try to prevent early marriage and to encourage married female students and mothers to continue their education, though few do. The Berhan Hewan Project in Amhara seeks to address barriers to girls education through a broad range of integrated initiatives including:

- counseling;
- family planning information and planning for married children;
- income generating schemes;
- provision of free learning materials;
- construction of water supply facilities; and
- challenging deep rooted cultural attitudes and practices through community conversations, and involving men and elders in project activities – every 2 weeks carried out in 24 centres sometimes in collaboration with health (issue specific).

Innovative approaches to reduce early marriage through working with key community stakeholders (married women, married men, and influential people) have proved successful in Amhara. Discussions with girls in Berhane Hewan project site revealed the positive impact of having educated and enlightened mothers on girls' education. Many girls attend high school in Merawi town on week days staying in groups in rented accommodation (funded by parents) and return on weekends to their families. Girls spoke of the preparation their mothers had given them to meet life challenges and the girls presented as assertive and informed of their rights.

There is evidence that the various initiatives being undertaken is yielding results e.g. the female participation rate in Grade 11-12 has increased from 27.9% in 2008/2009 to 36.04% 2009/2010<sup>21</sup>. The numbers of female students performing well in national level examinations in grade 8, 10 and 12 is also on the increase.

A review of international experience of seeking to reduce early marriage points to five main types of responses including<sup>22</sup>:

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<sup>20</sup> Berhane Hewan (meaning "Light for Eve" in Amharic) is a project underway in Amhara designed to assist unmarried girls by imparting the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to avoid child marriage.

<sup>21</sup> Source: Amhara Bureau of Education

<sup>22</sup> Helpdesk Research Report, March 2011: Evidence-based strategies for preventing child/early marriage <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=672>

1. **educating families and communities** and include community sensitization/awareness raising and social marketing efforts
2. **girls' education**, including life skills, formal and nonformal education, and livelihood/vocational skills.
3. **law and policy initiatives**, including legal mechanisms, advocacy, community mobilization, and policy.
4. **providing economic opportunities** and includes income-generation for girls and monetary incentives for parents.
5. **safeguarding rights** and creating safe social spaces, keeping official birth and marriage records, and enforcing other rights of girls.

Lessons learnt around what works include the advantages of multi-sectoral approaches, of involving the community in all stages of the project, of awareness-raising on age gaps between partners, targeting efforts at regions with higher rates of child marriage, public declaration in favour of delaying marriage, and of supporting girls who have had marriages 'stopped'. The benefits of tailoring programmes for young girls approaching the 'tipping-point' age (usually 13 or 14) have also been noted.

### *Violence against girls and sexual harassment*

Despite its emergence in the literature review as a critical issue, gender based violence did not emerge strongly from the field work. The literature review identified the issues of violence as corporal punishment by teachers, verbal abuse, threats, sexual violence and abuse, abduction, child and forced marriages as well as excessive workloads. In the field research the issues which emerged were primarily early marriage and work burdens though in Amhara sexual violence is one of the issues addressed by the Berhane Hewan project (above). This is likely to be a reflection of the sensitivity of the issue of sexual harassment and abuse rather than an indication that it does not exist, and that it would be preferable to investigate it in a more discrete study, perhaps implemented by local women's organisations.

In Somali, an Islamic society that follows Sharia law, a radical form of female genital mutilation is practiced which can have serious implications for girls' health but there is little known about its impact on absenteeism and dropout. In Amhara, due to early marriage, girls are effectively forced into having unwanted and uninformed sexual relations with a relative stranger. In a survey conducted by the Berhane Hewan project ninety-five percent of the girls surveyed did not know their husband before marriage, and 85 percent were given no forewarning that they were going to be married. More than two-thirds of married girls reported that they had not started menstruating when they had sex for the first time; 12 percent of girls in Amhara aged 10–19 are already divorced<sup>23</sup>. It is very likely that such girls are traumatised, dropout from school, and some will flee to urban areas and engage in commercial sex work. These examples point to the need for schools to take a more holistic approach to girls' needs, not only education.

The safety of girls walking long distances to school is a concern of parents (e.g. in SNNPR and Somali), or where they leave home to attend secondary school. For example, a high proportion of students in SNNPR come to towns to attend the second cycle primary and secondary and are vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence, especially when they rent rooms in towns.

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<sup>23</sup> Source: website of the Population Council,  
[http://www.popcouncil.org/projects/100\\_BerhaneHewanEthiopia.asp](http://www.popcouncil.org/projects/100_BerhaneHewanEthiopia.asp)

Anecdotal evidence indicated that sexual abuse of boys is on the increase in urban areas but during the field research the consultants were unable to find any informants that were willing to discuss the issue, reflecting the sensitivity of the issue. It further suggests the need for a separate, discrete study undertaken by an appropriate local organisation.

**Value placed on girls' education** The importance of education, and especially that of girls, is not generally recognized among indigenous communities in Gambella. Women and girls have a low status, their income earning potential is given low priority, and families may not be willing to cover girls' education expenses. It is less likely that families will invest in sending girls to secondary school or a higher education centre, compared with boys<sup>24</sup>. When asked about the social impact of girl's education, parents in Somali were more encouraging, mothers stated that girls would only become less marriageable when they reach 20 -25 years, and that by then they can complete college and have secured job. However, they also stated that men are threatened by educated women and are reluctant to marry educated girls unless they are educated themselves, hence the chance of girls' continuing education after marriage is limited<sup>25</sup>.

**Single sex schools** The debate on the value of single sex schools in Africa is inconclusive, mainly because there is insufficient research. They can play an important role in situations where there is a risk of physical safety, and are widely used in response to religious sensitivities about mixing with boys (e.g. Northern Nigeria, Pakistan, Yemen). This is especially so at secondary level and in boarding schools e.g. Zimbabwe. But single sex schools for girls have also been the target of attack and rape e.g. in Kenya and South Africa. On the other hand, mixed schools can be the genesis of change in relationships<sup>26</sup>.

Many of the issues that relate to boys access to education is discussed in the next section on child labour.

#### 4.6. Child labour

The field research in all four regions indicate that households' need for child labour is a major driver of late arrival at school, absenteeism and dropout from school at all levels, and drop out amongst girls is highest. There is high demand for boys' and girls' labour for cattle herding and child labour to support household income. Girls engage in several aspects of work in the household (cooking, fetching water and fire wood, childcare) as well as going to market. Boys help with animals, farming (sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, storing) or income generation activities such as fishing, and shoe shining, the construction sector, service sector, petty trade (in towns), which gives little time to concentrate on studies. Participation in handcrafts and cottage industry (hand weaving) and traditional artefacts also contribute to absence from school.

Child labour is extensively practiced throughout SNNPR. Highland girls fetch wood, water, marketing, head-load heavy loads, and carryout household chores. Among the lowland pastoralists, boys, especially the first born, are often withheld from school for cattle herding from 8 year upwards – one

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<sup>24</sup> Source: Lare Woreda Education Bureau Head.

<sup>25</sup> Focus Group Discussion with mothers in Heragel Keble, Somali Region.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Morrell, *Single Sex Schools in South Africa*, *McGill Journal of Education*, Vol 35, No 3, Fall 2000

boy spoke of his ambition for education but because he was the oldest boy he was withdrawn from school permanently to help with the cattle.

In Amhara in particular (which is non-pastoralist) children are sent to work in other kebeles and regions, and across the border:

- Families with low income may arrange paid work for boys seven years and above (a pattern observed in Somali also), to work for others on a contract basis.
- In rural areas of Amhara, boys 8-15 of ages are hired as cattle herders at a live-in job where the employer provides food and shelter. During peak agricultural seasons, boys from poor households are hired at Birr 15 per day.

Girls are commonly employed as domestic workers (cooking, cleaning barn, baby-sitting) or for income generation activities such as making local drinks, marketing, etc. and are paid a monthly salary of Birr 40-50 in rural areas and up to Birr 100 in urban areas. In any case, children have no control over the fruit of their labour and parents receive the children's salaries. Girls may experience sexual exploitation while working in urban areas. These children miss out when campaigns for registration of school age children are carried out at the kebele level as employers are not required to send hired labourers to school. Girls as young as 8 years of age migrate to urban centres to work as domestic workers; these are usually children from poor households, female headed households and OVC.

Interviews with teachers, head masters, educational authorities at woreda and regional level point to the high demand for child labour in rural areas in Amhara to the point that parents manipulate information provided to authorities:

- Instead of enrolling all their children they enroll few children and send others for paid work outside their kebele to avoid detection by the task force mobilizing children's enrolment (Kebele administration, PTA members and education and training board);
- register their own children as hired help - as they are not obliged to allow hired help to go to school;
- provide incorrect information on the number and age of children, or change the children's names to avoid registration and that children comply for fear of exposing parents.

Interviewees also contend that PTA members may be reluctant to challenge such parents. Where the demand for child labour is high, children may be absent for several days a week and may actively seek opportunities for dismissal from schools.

Key informants indicate that migration/emigration of girls after completing grade 8 (age 15 and above) is an increasing trend, and they are encouraged by parents who are attracted by the potential remittances received e.g. in Somali to Djibouti, Boroma and Somaliland in search of employment.

Children migrate to different destinations including surrounding towns and to participate in contraband trades originating from border towns (Somali), work in weaving (SNNPR), and on commercial farms in the surrounding areas (Amhara). Such children are at risk to child trafficking (see next section).

#### 4.7. Conclusion

Concerning equity issues in access to education, the field research confirms the findings of the literature review that the main determinants of exclusion from education are poverty and food insecurity, child labour both at home and commercially, distance especially to second level school, gender disparities especially early marriage, and a pastoralist way of life. The extent of poverty, food insecurity, child labour, and the economic links between early marriage and bride wealth and /or the social capital accruing from links with another family, point to the need for economic incentives to keep all children but especially girls in school. Greater attention needs to be given to the design and monitoring of the national Productive Safety Net Programme, and perhaps consider cash transfers.

The findings also indicate the need for greater engagement of parents (not only PTAs) in discussions on the value of an appropriate education supported by the involvement of the wider community including elders, women and men in awareness raising on early marriage and child labour (e.g. through community conversations). Mechanisms that facilitate access to secondary schools is crucial, as it the need to focus on non-formal education for mothers.

## 5. Vulnerable Groups

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An important priority for the Government of Ethiopia is not only to increase equity and quality for children already enrolled in school but also to address the barriers that exclude some children from participating in education at all. Consequently this section examines vulnerable groups of children and the factors that cause them to permanently drop out. Because information is not readily accessible in the education sector, the methodology used was to focus on certain case study areas, mainly in Bahir Dar and Hawassa towns. Data was obtained from state and non-state actors working with specific vulnerable groups, and with the children themselves.

### 5.1 Educational access of Orphans and Vulnerable Children<sup>27</sup>

According to UNICEF, Ethiopia has one of the largest populations of orphans in the world, 5.4 million Ethiopian children (out of whom 898,000 were orphaned by HIV/AIDS) or a full 13% of Ethiopian children are missing one or both parents (2006). They are amongst the most excluded groups in relation to access to schooling and they are to be found in significant numbers, mainly in towns where they have migrated from rural areas. Many live on the streets and work to earn a living; few are found in schools unless services are provided (usually by NGOs), and such children are not reflected in education data. The data provided in this section seeks to bridge this gap and provides insights into the lives and challenges of this significant group of children.

Discussions with World Learning, an NGO that runs a programme with the Bureau of Education *School community partnership serving HIV/AIDS affected and infected OVC* that provides support to 13,700 OVC in Amhara (in 137 schools), indicates that the drivers of OVC include the following:

- death of parents due to HIV and AIDS or natural causes;
- abandonment of children due to poverty;
- early age migration of children to towns;
- children where the mother has died.
- households, and especially polygamous households, where children are treated harshly at home (e.g. corporal punishment by fathers or step-parents);
- insufficient resources to support all the children;
- excessive exploitation of their labour;
- limited access to and control over inheritance (land) and abuse by relatives/care givers.

OVC are more likely to be in employment than children from other poor households, making access to education particularly difficult. Migrant children from rural areas and urban children who live on their own earn a living through employment as domestic workers, in the service sector (bar, hotels, cafeteria, shops, garages, mill houses, carpentry, etc.), employment in the construction sector; self-

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<sup>27</sup> The term 'vulnerable' is used to describe children who are at risk because they have very little capacity to cope with external threats. In the study different stakeholders apply a broad definition of OVC which includes single orphans, double orphans, domestic workers, street children; children with jobless parents, children with elderly heads of HH, and children living with HIV/AIDS.

employed petty trade (sugar cane and lottery by boys – fruits, bread/*injera*, oil by girls), shoe shining, and other routine activities; commercial sex work, and stealing.

Amongst this group, children who are interested to pursue their education attend evening classes in formal schools and ABE centres or day schools that run a shift system. Domestic workers have limited opportunity as employers are not willing to give them time off. However, the study has also found that increasing shortage of house helps in the labour market has been instrumental in forcing employers to allow domestic workers attend education.

Children who make a living by working on the street have the opportunity to attend evening classes or day school where shift systems are in place<sup>28</sup>. Interviews with non-state actors working with such children indicate that social perceptions towards these children are negative as they are considered a bad influence on other children. Key informant interviews at the Organization for Prevention, Rehabilitation, Reintegration of Female Street Children (OPRIFS) in Amhara, revealed a number of factors that cause girls to come to the street: poverty, parents' refusal to send children to school, fear of or running away from early marriage, disagreement with parents, abuse (verbal and physical) by care givers (step fathers, step mothers, sister in laws and father in laws), family disturbance, and peer pressure. The majority of the girls come from South Gonder – a very food insecure woreda about 100 kms from Bahir Dar suggesting that poverty and food insecurity are major contributory factors.

**Box 3. Ethiopia Tikdem School, Hawassa City Administration**

Close to half the total student population (2118) of the school are reported as being orphans or children in severe poverty. With the assistance from the NGO, Mary Joy, Ethiopia, the school provides uniforms, all necessary stationery, counselling support and free education (exemptions from all payments - contributions, registration fees, or other fees) for street children. However the different bodies concerned with OVC indicate that many are unable to stay on in school because they struggle to fulfil their basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing).

The field research found that the social support system in Somali culture is strong and OVC tend to be catered for within their community. This means that the number of street children or homeless children is much less than other regions. OVC enrolled in schools are supported by students/teachers in terms of meeting their need for exercise books, pens, pencil etc. In some schools OVC are exempted from wearing uniforms though this resulted in further marginalization and some dropped out when teased by students. In other schools, the school community contributes funds for uniforms for OVC. However, as the number of OVC increases, supporting them becomes increasingly difficult. In many instances, school administrations seeks support from UNICEF and NGOs (SC UK, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, Food for the Hungry (FHI) etc).

The situation in Amhara contrasts significantly with Somali. It is estimated that there are 68,000 OVC in the region mainly due to HIV/AIDS and poverty. Many suffer discrimination and school children are advised by parents not to play with orphans. Within the educational sector, two strategies are adopted to address the special needs of OVC:

<sup>28</sup> There are 51 formal primary schools (29 public, 8 ABEs and 12 secondary schools in Bahir Dar. Most schools run evening classes though fees are applied - depending on the school OVC might be exempted from paying.

- internally schools establish clubs on issues of HIV/AIDS, disability and child rights to create awareness through drama and poetry, and in some schools club members contribute money;
- externally, schools work in collaboration with non-state actors to cater for the needs of OVC.

There are coordinated screening processes to identify OVC in need of support involving school authorities, PTAs, community based social institutions (*Idir*) and NGOs. World Learning emphasises the need for confidentiality in identifying OVC, especially those affected by HIV and AIDS, to avoid stigmatisation. Its' programme is linked to schools, is run by a voluntary committee, and provides a package of support in the home to avoid stigma.

There is also a concern among service providers that schools do not maintain adequate profiles of OVC but are only interested in their status (single, or double orphan) and have a sectoral focus on attendance, absenteeism, and drop out, and lack a holistic approach to the child's needs; and that many schools rely on NGOs and faith based organisations to provide interventions and services for OVC and do not adequately engage in developing strategies to support OCV.

Amhara provides some examples of actors and coordination mechanisms that can be mobilised to support OVC, though there is also the need to avoid overlapping services. These mechanisms include:

- establishment of OVC school committees;
- kebele administrations work with *Idirs/ coalition of Idirs* and schools,
- volunteers (high-school drop outs and university graduates) linking NGOs, schools and kebele administration in urban areas;
- establishment of inter-sectoral forums consisting of representatives from the Bureaus of Women Affairs, Education, Labour and Social Affairs, Justice and Police, and NGOs working on OVC.

***Box 4. Case study: Shume Abo ABE center, in Bahir Dar city targeting OVC***

Shume Abo is one of six ABECs established by various NGOs to target orphans and vulnerable children. It caters to children ages 7-14 years from low economic households that cannot afford to pay for schools and uniforms. A committee oversees admission where the criteria include: orphan (single or double); children with jobless parents, pensioners or with elderly heads of households, children living with the HIV&AIDS virus.

During the day time, the school runs two alternating shifts (morning and afternoon) with a fixed schedule running 12 months of the year to ensure that children attend for the required number of days to progress to the next level.

The school offers evening classes for children ages 11 and above who cannot attend schools during the day time due to their engagement in child labour. The ABE curriculum is used in all the shifts. Children who completed Level 3 have joined the neighbouring primary school in Del Chebo. Six children with special education needs (partial visual impairment, mental retardation and speech impairment) are enrolled.

Specific support initiatives at community level are being implemented by NGOs in collaboration with the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs. These include provision of support to OVC living with relatives and/or care givers as well as children living in the street with a range of different types of interventions including provision of school materials, food packages, support to parents, sanitary materials, drop-in centres, safe homes for street girls and sex workers; organising revolving fund for income generating activities; legal support for children in conflict with law; and support from faith based organisations.

Despite such initiatives, the challenges of retaining OVC in school is significant and many come to school without having taken food and drop out because they need to earn an income. Respondents indicate that support is required in terms of food and a means to earn an income. One NGO provides individual supports (e.g. shoe shine boxes, petty trades with mobile shops) and support to group-venture hair saloons e.g. for female (2 hair driers for 3 girls, other equipment, men's saloon are provided with equipment essential for the job.) In addition the organization pays house rent for 3 months. Where OVC must work, schools that offer half-day shifts implicitly assist such children to combine child work and learning.

## 5.2 Out of School Children and Child Trafficking<sup>29</sup>

Data on children who are out of school because of child trafficking is sparse and such children fall within the remit of the Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs (not Education). To try to understand both the drivers and nature of trafficking and responses in terms of service delivery the field research explicitly sought out respondents who seeking to assist such children in the urban areas of Bahir Dar in Amhara and Hawassa in SNNPR. The study found that there is trafficking both within Ethiopia and illegal trafficking across borders and overseas. The latter is an emerging phenomenon in Amhara<sup>30</sup> while in SNNPR trafficking is primarily within Ethiopia.

- i. **Internal Child trafficking**<sup>31</sup> Small children, mostly boys, are trafficked from Bahir Dar to other rural locations (*Zegie, Jawe settlement area, Metema*) to work on farms and to herd cattle within the Region (intra-regional). Children earn Birr 2,000 per annum excluding food and shelter. Inter-Regional trafficking has also become common whereby children are trafficked mainly to Addis Ababa and other parts of the country. Such children are forced (persuaded, lured, abducted by a third party who does not have legal standing as an employment agency) to work.

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<sup>29</sup> Child Trafficking is defined as the requirement, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children through threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for a purpose of exploitation.

<sup>30</sup> Much of the data on trafficking has been obtained from the Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs.

<sup>31</sup> The term is used to define children who are forced to go somewhere for work. It can be with the knowledge of parents (support household income), children going without the knowledge of the parents, may be orphans or child headed. However a third party is involved who make money on the transfer of children.

In SNNPR, child trafficking for labour purposes is common in a number of zones<sup>32</sup> and is significant in relation to children's exclusion from school. Children are trafficked illegally to urban centres to work in cafes, beauty salons, garages, hotels, households, cottage industries. The children are exploited and forced to work long hours (e.g. weaving cottage industry), sometimes without payment or share incomes with employers. The factors underlying the trafficking of children in SNNPR is poverty related to high population density in the highland areas where much land is degraded or too small to support families. NGOs working in this area affirm that child trafficking is a serious problem throughout the country and especially in SNNPR. For instance, the Mission for Community Development Program (MCDP), an NGO working on the intercepting and rehabilitating trafficked children, indicated that it has intercepted more than 500 children and helped other 1400 children who were in danger of being trafficked.

- ii. **Illegal movement across borders:** Human trafficking has become a pronounced problem among neighbouring regions of Amhara, Afar and Tigray. According to a preliminary assessment on the illegal transfer of people across borders carried out by the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, between 10-80 people leave the country via Afar on a daily basis, mostly from Amhara and Tigray. The major reasons for migration is in search of better job opportunities and economic betterment. Of these youth, females comprise the majority and the preferred countries of destination are Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Abu Dabi. The human trafficking is facilitated by a network of brokers – local brokers residing in major towns; middle level brokers, otherwise known as 'recipient brokers' who reside in border towns (Mile, Logia, Asayta) and who facilitate exit; and guides (Afar person) who show the way for border crossing. Parents, friends, and relatives residing in the county and outside the country play a major role in this. Government authorities are aware of the problem and have put police on alert to watch for such trafficking at border crossings.

A key informant from the NGO sector pointed out that an estimated 100 children ages 18 and below leave the county per day for the Sudan, Libya and to Italy (Sicily) as final destination<sup>33</sup>. Of these, 90 per cent are estimated to be school drop outs (and 85 per cent are estimated as female). Those who leave the country pays Birr 3,000–4,000 to traffickers. Brokers in the Sudan take an equivalent of 3-5 months' salary from the immigrants. The journey takes five days on foot and they experience physical and sexual harassment and some may die of hardship.

Economic factors and self-betterment are ascribed as the major causes of emigration. Girls migrate from other parts of the country (e.g. Jima and Bale, Oromia Region) to Bahir Dar and are then trafficked out of the country into the Sudan; costs are up to 3,000 Birr per person.

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<sup>32</sup> Child trafficking is widely practiced in Gamo-Gofa zone, Wolayita Zone (i.e., Soddo Town, Damot Gale Woreda and Boloso Sore Woreda), Hadiya Zone (i.e., Hosana Town, Misha Woreda and Soro Woreda), Kembata Tambaro Zone (i.e., Durame Town, Doyo –Gena Woreda and Hadero Tunto Woreda), Bench Maji Zone (i.e., Mizan Town, Mizan Aman Woreda, and South Bench Woreda).

<sup>33</sup> Source: Key informant from Forum for Sustainable Child Empowerment. Many of the children are from Metema, Gondar in Amhara, and while no study has been done on this the trafficking, it is likely that specific data is available e.g. form Metema Police Station.

An incident that involved the killing of 300 trafficked children by the *Salete* tribe in the Sudan was mentioned as dreadful experience which deterred child trafficking for a while.

The Organisation for Prevention, Rehabilitation, Reintegration of Female Street Children (OPRIFS) targets girls between ages 7 and 18 who are at the risk of becoming a street child and exposed to trafficking. The organization runs a safe home in Bahir Dar town whereby girls are rehabilitated through psychosocial support, undertake training on life skills, are reunified with families and/or organized into self- help groups (applicable for girls who do not have parents or care givers)<sup>34</sup>. OPRIFS works closely with the Child Protection Unit in the Police, Offices of Women’s Affairs, Education, Health and community members (street children, elders, priests and sheiks) and the committee is chaired by the kebele chairman.

### 5.3 Out of school girls and commercial sex work

Girls who drop out of school and migrate to towns in search of work are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual abuse. Focus group discussions with drop out girls in Bahir Dar revealed a number of causes for migration to urban areas:

- family disintegration;
- divorcees from early marriage;
- children who run away from early marriage;
- children who experienced rape;
- children who experienced labour exploitation;
- orphaned children particularly those who lost their mothers;
- children who fail to achieve academically due to absenteeism, hard nature of child labour, and those who have given up hope of succeeding;
- children who lack support to attend high school which is located some distance away; and
- negative ‘role models’, for example high school and university graduates who do not get jobs, and the impact of stigma attached on ‘educated unemployed’.

According to OPRIFS, girls who migrate to Bahir Dar are awaited by brokers at bus stations or terminals who arrange accommodation until they get employment opportunities as domestic workers or in bars (as sex workers). This is the time when girls are particularly vulnerable and may experience sexual abuse by brokers or others. Brokers charge exorbitant fees for job placements and to pay off the debt, girls are obliged to engage in commercial sex work and to split their earning equally with their ‘employers’. For this reason girls remain indebted or under ‘bondage’ in the business for some time.

A focus group discussion with commercial sex workers revealed various forms of exploitation whereby girls have to pay the house owners whenever they make money from sale of sex. Girls report experiencing various forms of abuse – physical violence, refusal to use condoms, refusal to pay for sex, and live in fear of contracting HIV/AIDS, STDs and unwanted pregnancies.

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<sup>34</sup> The organization serves 280 children; of these 264 have been reunified with their families while the remaining 16 children are in safe homes.

Significantly, they point out that their vision of financing their education by working as domestic workers and in construction sites is disappearing as such jobs are physically challenging and pay less than commercial sex work. Only two discussants out of twelve have managed to continue education.

Other informants pointed out that some female university students are also involved in commercial sex work. Explanations for this includes lack of financial support, a sense of 'freedom' from parental control, peer pressure, the desire for luxurious personal items, a wish to be seen by peers to be 'well-off', and the fact that large urban areas such as Bahir Dar and Hawassa offer opportunities to associate with rich business people and tourists.

A few NGOs, such as the Forum for Sustainable Child Empowerment have established support systems for commercial sex workers:

- drop-in-centres for girls who are at risk of HIV infection where they are offered psychosocial support and other skills training;
- safe homes where training is provided on life skills to enable them engage in income generating activities;
- the girls are organized into associations with a legal entity in order to access grants for income generating activities. In collaboration with non-state actors, the Labour and Social Affairs Offices provide a 'revolving fund' for income generating purposes. Such associations are instrumental in providing information on HIV/AIDS for their members.

## 5.4 Educational access for children with Special Needs Education

The policy of the Government is 'education for all' including children with special needs – not education for children with special needs. The intention is to meet the diverse needs of children at schools within an inclusive environment, and to support schools and teachers to retain all learners and to decrease the number of dropouts and repeaters. Special needs education is taken as an integral part of early education, primary education, secondary education, technical and vocational education, higher education, and alternative basic education. It is the responsibility of the regional education bureau to ensure that SNE issues are included in all education programme activities (e.g. alternative basic education, formal and non-formal education).

However, both the literature review and the field research indicate that there is little, if any, consideration given to the education of children with special needs, and that such children are amongst the most marginalized in all four regions, and are deprived of their rights.

The main social blockages to accessing education for children with special needs include:

- negative social perceptions;
- a view by parents that they are incapable of learning;
- parental concern about the safety of daughters; and
- lack of readiness and support by schools (finance, teaching, materials and facilities as well as human support) and services.

Children with disabilities are usually excluded from the community and hidden at home, parents are ashamed of them, and disability is considered as 'misfortune'<sup>35</sup> or a curse from God (Amhara and Somali), though disability may also be caused through accidents on the farm, fights and poor health. Some children are abandoned while other may be chained at home (Amhara). In some cases parents warn their children not to mix with children who are visually impaired for risk of contagion, denying them opportunities for socializing (Amhara).

In Somali, key informants indicate that when parents anticipate gaining access to aid/donations for children with special needs they will bring them into the open.

NGOs play an important role in service provision both in terms of technical support and service provision. They are also active in coordinating services for children with special needs. However, the limitation is that their coverage is small and services are largely urban based.

*Box 5. Hussein Geri Primary School, Jijiga.*

The school has 35 children with hearing impediments enrolled supported by a team of six trained special needs teachers who provide special classes up to grade six; the children are mainstreamed in grade 7. Another school enrolled 10 students with mixed abilities but few were able to continue due to lack of support.

There is little data available on the number and nature of special needs children, though the focus in ESDP IV on special needs is prompting Regional Bureaus to improve services. The Regional Education Bureau in Amhara indicates that there are 10,900 (4,802 females) children with special needs, and sixty six special classes, though there is no SNE unit in the Bureau. In Somali region<sup>36</sup> in 2009/10 a number of small scale assessments were carried out in the capital town of Jijiga, and a similar exercise was undertaken in Denbel woreda, and one was underway in Mencha Woreda but such examples are isolated.

In Gambella respondents indicate that no children with hearing or sight difficulties attend school though children with physical disabilities may be able to attend mainstream school.

In Amhara, girls with disability, particularly with hearing and speech impediments remain in rural areas and help their family with domestic chores and farming activities. Men do not marry such girls, though they may be taken as mistresses in situations where wives fail to conceive. Visually impaired boys on the other hand may migrate to attend religious education schools with the hope of getting job as religious teachers.

Experience in Somali Region suggests that there are disparities in acceptance of disability and the social exclusion of children with special needs. In urban areas parents of children that have intellectual disabilities tend to prefer that they are institutionalized rather than attend day centres. This is because parents do not perceive that children are capable of learning, there are a shortage of such centres (two in Somali region), mothers have limited time to bring the children to and from the

<sup>35</sup> Source: UNICEF regional education coordinator in Gambella.

<sup>36</sup> The Regional Bureau of Education has a special needs unit employing seven teachers (two females) trained in SNE. One male teacher is enrolled in a degree programme.

centres; this is compounded by the fact that classes are run on a half day basis which makes it inconvenient for mothers who travel from far places to make round trips<sup>37</sup>.

In the rural areas, by contrast, children with special needs (both boys and girls) seem to be less excluded. In the schools visited during the study, children with special needs were attending school and parents are willing to send them to school. Both mentally and physically challenged children were attending school in Heragel and Araabi primary schools and were socially supported by the other school children. The school principal indicates that the main constraint is not social but lies in the capacity of facilitators' and teachers to teach children with special needs; there were also problems of the physical layout of schools placing constraints on the participation of physically disabled children.

In terms of capacity, teachers have no experience of identifying and screening the nature of disability, or in teaching children with special needs. They indicate that they need more guidance on 'what to do' when mainstreaming children into the class. Currently they are adopting a common sense approach such as bringing children with visual impairment to sit in front rows, speaking slowly to help those with hearing difficulty, giving priority to children with physical difficulty to enter/leave the class room, and allowing children with intellectual disabilities to attend class even if they do not learn anything as a form of psychosocial therapy.

Efforts have been made in Amhara to strengthen capacity in special needs teaching e.g. the Debre Berhan Teachers Training Collage offers a diploma course in SNE, 5 persons per woreda (around 170 people) attended SNE awareness raising workshops in four centers (Dessie, Gonder, Debre Birhan and Sekota).

In terms of access to services and education, children with special needs in major urban areas have better opportunities of attending schools (ABE and primary schools). For example, in Amhara as SNE classes are available only in few urban centres such as Debr Markos, Bahir Dar, children with different types of disability (intellectual disability/slow learners with speech difficulty, children with hearing and visual impairment) are enrolled in inclusive schools. In Bahir Dar schools seem to have a division of labour between them, most of the visually impaired students are enrolled in one school, children with hearing impairment in another, and children with intellectual disabilities in yet another which is a way of maximising limited resources. Children with physical disability attend any schools and are not perceived as 'disabled'.

Access to education for special needs children in rural Amhara is very different; in the schools visited during the research no children with special needs were encountered and the Mecha woreda education office indicated that there are no special classes for such children (out of a total of 98 primary schools, 6 high schools, 58 ABEs and 1 preparatory school). During the field work, the woreda was in the process of carrying out an assessment of children with special needs.

Visually impaired children suffer from a lack of Braille materials and hence have to rely on memory; where Braille materials are available they tend to be provided by NGOs. In Amhara, the government provides Birr 240 per month as a stipend and Birr 380 per year for clothing for visually impaired students. In addition, the Cheshire Foundation pays for the service of students who read to the

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<sup>37</sup> Head of International Aid Service Centre, Jijiga, Somali.

visually impaired and provided them with Braille materials. However, the anomaly is that while this support is welcome it is insufficient to meet their needs, and yet such students are excluded from other supports by NGOs (e.g. purchase of uniform and packages provided to OVC). Because of the high cost of living in Bahir Dar, these students supplement their livelihood by begging and eating left-over food from Bahir Dar University and hotels.

Discrimination is a problem, for example, special needs teachers indicate that children with special needs are ridiculed, their money stolen, or they are perceived to be practicing witchcraft and sorcery. For those visually impaired students from rural areas that wish to study in urban centres, renting accommodation can be difficult as landowners do not want them as tenants for fear of accidents. Because of such discrimination, combined with high costs of rent, some are exposed to living on the street or church compounds. Children with intellectual disabilities are at risk of sexual violence. The existence of clubs in schools that address disability and child protection are seen by teachers to play a role in creating awareness of respect for and promoting respect for the rights of people with disabilities.

A focus group discussion with teachers (SNE) raised a number of challenges that schools face in delivering inclusive education for children with special needs. These include:

- limited technical support from the Special Needs Units in REBs;
- lack of systematic coordination between the state and non-state actors;
- low priority given to SNE by school authorities and reallocation of SNE facilities for other purposes (e.g. SN room allocated as a kindergarten);
- lack of support for graduates who have special needs;
- no clear plan/policy on whether children with intellectual disabilities should graduate from special classes and/or integration into mainstream education.
- schools lack budgets to plan and execute programmes for children with special needs – seen as a key barrier to tackling the challenge of SNE.

In SNNPR, Arba Minch has had a Special Needs Education Centre since 1993 targeting children with hearing and intellectual disabilities spanning the range from pre-school to grade 8; it has a reasonably good gender balance. Those with sight and physical disabilities are considered to be able to access mainstream schools so are not eligible for the centre. Grades 9 and 10 are mainstreamed in formal secondary schools and are supported by the SNE centre. The children are engaged in clubs focused on encouraging students, research, drop-out, HIV, civics etc. There is no accommodation provided so students must either stay with relatives, or rent a room locally which increases the risk of drop out.

Lessons to learn from the experience in Arba Minch include the following:

- Educating parents about the need to educate children with disabilities and disseminating information about the rights of persons with disability has helped in the increasing number of children being sent to school.
- The majority of children with disabilities in rural and urban areas who don't have access to education are from "economically poor" families. Therefore incentives such as boarding, dormitories, school feeding, pocket money, or material assistance (educational materials stationeries and uniforms) help in encouraging families to send their children to school.

- Quality facilities are also important in attracting the children to the schools (infrastructure at the school matters a lot).
- SNE centers in towns are usually dominated by children from the urban areas; this points to the need to promote awareness and the opportunities available to parents and communities in rural areas.
- There is need to plan for the full cycle of education for children with disability – not just the first few years.
- The SNE centre has had a positive impact on changing the attitude of the community towards Persons with Disabilities.

In terms of supporting the sector, higher education and teachers training institutes indicate that they provide ‘Special needs psychology and learning’ as a common course for all students and programmes though it is theoretical, not practical in nature. In Gambella, there are no schools or colleges providing training in special needs education though the educational bureau is planning to launch such training for SNE professionals and teachers and assign them in schools where children have special requirements. There is one instructor who has graduated in special needs in Somali, though there are plans to develop a laboratory for special needs education in the department of psychology.

### 5.5. Conclusion

If OVC are to gain an education they need responses that are based on their needs. In the short term they need food, clothing and shelter, while the education response is one that equips them for the life ahead of them. The ability to care for themselves, overcome the traumas that have caused their vulnerabilities, and earn an income, are essentials. Some may require short-term interventions that would enable them to catch up and resume mainstream education while others will need an alternative type of education that could be provided by schools or ABECs that specifically offer integrated approaches.

To have inclusive education for children with special needs requires initiatives at various levels – regional/woreda level that have overall responsibility, at school level to make arrangements and prepare the school, teachers and students, and at community and household level in terms of awareness of children with disability right to an education. Integration of special needs in to the School Improvement Plan, supported financially through a revised School Grant Programme offers potential and an incentive to those schools/communities that are positively disposed to having special needs children.

# 6. Policy and Programmes addressing Equity Constraints

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In this section we review how the social policy responses of the Education Sector to address inequity and exclusion are operationalised, and the initiatives and services that are being undertaken by stakeholders. It begins with alternative routes to education and explores the effectiveness of measures taken to provide access to formal schools and especially to respond to the issue of girls' education and dropout, and finally concludes by discussing quality issues.

## 6.1. Alternative Basic Education

Alternative Basic Education Centres (ABECs) have been central to the government policy of extending education in the emerging regions and to hard-to-reach groups and the introduction of the ABE approach in the relatively settled pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of the country has played an important role in the increment of enrolments. The GER (grades 1-8) which was 23.3 % and 20.9 % in Somali and Afar in the year 2004 has grown, according to the regional reports, to 58% and 63.8%, respectively in 2009, though the impact on girls enrolment is more limited where their rates of participation is low (e.g. Afar 34% and Gambella 39%). The achievements have been significant, for example, in Somali Region some 1902 centres across the region (and 229 primary schools) have been established.

### *Flexibility in ABECs*

While a key element of the ABE approach is that school hours are flexible and should be adapted to take account of local circumstances, the study found that flexibility is mixed.

Lack of flexibility was pointed out by respondents as one of the contributing factors for dropout, and parents complained that ABECs are not responsive to meet the demand for child labour.

- Some follow the formal school calendar and school hours are only between 7:00 and 9:00 or 10:00 am. This is a very short instruction period, but also can conflict with the demand by parents for child labour when children are required for herding cattle around the homestead, fetching water and grazing animals.
- In the evenings, some ABE centres run programs between 6:00 and 8:00 pm which can also be problematic as this is closer to the time when cattle are herded back to the homestead; it is also dark hence shortening the time for study.
- On the other hand, some ABECs (and schools) run two shifts which facilitate parents to allow some of their children to go to school in the morning and others in the afternoon while balancing the need for child labour. In Somali, formal schools run for half day. Primary schools with a big student population operate on rotating shift systems (Grades 1-4 morning and 5-8 in the afternoon). This arrangement is appreciated by parents as children will only be in school for few hours.

Reasons given for limited flexibility in Somali include insufficient consultation with parents; not all facilitators reside in the locality and sessions are planned around their availability; limited capacity to deliver quality education in a creative manner.

The shift system gives flexibility but its availability depends on whether there is adequate demand in terms of the numbers of students for two shifts. Where facilitators are from the community (who are known/selected by parents) it has facilitated decision making suitable to parental demand for child labour. As facilitators live in the village, there are less problems of teacher's absenteeism. It should be noted that lack of flexibility in both ABCs and formal schools was reported in Amhara also.

### *Success of ABE in extending education*

The Somali Region provides an example of where, despite of many limitations, ABE centres have increased under-served children's, including girls', access to education. There is a great demand for education by most parents, and this is reinforced by the drive by government to meet the MDG goal. Parents report that a majority of children of all school ages are enrolled because of closer proximity of ABECs to homes. For example, before the Hajin Goble ABE centre was opened, children used to go to the surrounding primary schools in Beredo and Hajiweyne schools located two and three kilometres away respectively. As a result, only older and stronger children were able to attend school whereas now all can participate.

Communities engaged in 'slash and burn' cultivation may be a considerable distance from ABE centres (Gambella). It is common for students from remote villages to be absent, late and miss several classes.

Transfer of ABE students to formal primary schools after three years of ABE is happening routinely in line with government policy. However the policy does not imply that children pass without achieving the required level of learning. Teachers are expected to provide continuous assessment and help them learn or achieve but frequently large class size and heavy workloads of teachers militates against this happening. In Somali Region, there is a policy of automatic transfer though in some schools if children are not performing well they are required to repeat the year. Formal school teachers point out that, in general, ABE graduates who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle face difficulty in both Amharic and English language but tend to perform well in mathematics. However, a few were found no better than a G1 student in a formal school. Tutorial classes are organized to support weak performing students.

#### ***Box 7. Successful Transfer from ABEC to Formal School***

One example of a successful transfer programme is Sheik Musse/Lafa Issa primary school which accepts students from ABE centres who complete level 3, typically 7/8 kms away. Students stay with relatives during the week and go back on weekends to their families. School records over the past seven years show an increasing rate of enrollment among boys and girls and minimal drop out. Enrolment is enhanced due to the overall increase in number of students transferring from ABECs (as well as an overall population increase). Low drop out and higher levels of retention are facilitated through the location of the school in a small town offering relatively good quality education, with qualified and experienced teachers, good leadership and active involvement of the PTA.

**Some good practice examples** being piloted to strengthen the ABE approach include the following:

- i. **Networking strategies** are being piloted by SC UK in the Somali Region to facilitate the continued education for children whose families move in search of water and grazing. This involves the provision of introductory letters by the head of the ABE center and the cluster coordinator to ABE centres at the temporary destinations (18 ABECs are participating). The letter explains that the child has been enrolled and the grade level attained. SC UK is now developing formats to systematize the process of networking to facilitate exchange of information about children as they move from one ABEC to another. Formats for documenting the profile of each student (areas of strengths, weakness, student behavior, etc) are also being developed.
- ii. **Traditional weather forecasters** are being involved in ABEC community management committees. They identify migration/settlement patterns so that continuity of education delivery can be planned e.g. teachers either migrate with students or ensure that children are enrolled in ABECs at destinations.
- iii. **Mobile libraries** are being piloted by SC UK in 3 cluster resource centres in Somali which is being implemented and monitored by the local NGO, ACPA. A teacher (better qualified than ABE facilitators) travels with two camel load of books comprising about 200 books which includes reference and other reading materials on issues such as harmful traditional practices, children's stories, child rights and protection issues, peace building. Formats for documenting books borrowed and read by children are being developed. SC believes that Woreda Offices of Education can easily replicate and implement this approach which can be monitored by supervisors and CMC members.
- iv. **Mainstreaming Peace Building Approaches.** As the Region encounters conflicts (clan, boarder, etc), understanding the root causes of conflict is a major strategy adopted across all SC UK's projects. In the education sector, through understanding the underlying triggers of conflict, SC UK makes sure that all stakeholders are involved in the project design, site selection and management (CMC/PTA) and promotes tolerance among different groups. It seeks to strengthen relations through cluster centres and the networking strategy.

## 6.2. Adult Education Strategy

In 2008, the MoE adopted a National Adult Education Strategy with the objectives of establishing a well planned, organized and coordinated adult education system for youth and adults with a focus on access, quality, and relevant learning program. Adults and youth 15 years and above who did not get chance to go into regular school programmes are targets of the strategy. The major policy provisions in the strategy can be summarized as follows:

- v) Increase coverage equitably by expanding adult education for peasants, pastoralist, women, and citizens with special needs through a modular approach.
- vi) Address quality and relevance.
- vii) Create an institutional system and capacity for continuous adult education.
- viii) Create an effective network and partnership between government and nongovernmental organizations.

The strategy is assumed to enable the education sector play its role as a tool for development and contribute to the MDG of reducing literacy by 50%<sup>38</sup> and emphasizes that increasing adult literacy rates supports other development goals and growth in both economic output and GDP e.g. positive impacts on children's education and health - children with literate parents stay in school longer and achieve more. In keeping with international thinking which advocates for much greater investment in adolescent girls because of the longer-term benefits to girls themselves and their families, the strategy points to the links between mothers' education and a decline in infant mortality and improved child health. Adult literacy programmes contribute to reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS.

The forthcoming ESDP IV foresees a major programme in adult education that will allow all adult illiterates, with particular focus on women, to participate in a two year Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) course. A Master Plan for Adult Education has been drafted and it is expected to guide efforts in this sub-sector. The government intends to put more efforts in mobilizing resources and developing partnerships necessary for a sustained adult literacy campaign. FAL programmes are considered as vehicles for a newly literate population to engage into social and economic development of the country (Draft ESDP IV).

At field level, the Adult Education Strategy has yet to take root. For example, in Gambella the REB has indicated that it is yet to train facilitators and launch the Adult Education Programme. However, the experience in Somali indicates that there is demand, especially by young women, and that there is the opportunity to capitalise on such demand. Adult education has been implemented in 6 primary schools in Denbel Woreda for the past 3 years where mothers comprise more than 80% of students enrolled. Demand was initially very high (783 adults of whom 561 females were registered) but the schools were unable to meet such demand due to a shortage of teachers and no light (electricity or solar) and 316 are participating. This points to the need for regional and woreda levels to adequately plan for adult education and put the resources in place to meet demand.

### **6.3 Increasing Equity in Accessing Formal School**

There is a growing demand for education in all regions mostly driven by the strong campaign led by government to achieve one hundred percent enrolment. As already highlighted, the review of equity issues point to lack of schools locally and distance to second cycle primary and secondary schools as critical issues. They also point to the numerous challenges of enrolling and retaining girls at school. In this section, some of the strategies being deployed to address these constraints are discussed.

#### ***Food for Education Programme***

Within the education sector, school feeding programmes provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and NGOs are the main response to food insecurity. In the Somali Region, WFP has been implementing a school feeding programme since 1999 on the basis of almost continuous drought for the past 10 years which has caused chronic food insecurity. Since the beginning of 2010 it is working in 229 schools across all 52 woredas providing school meals on a daily basis to 80,911 children (33,476 girls)<sup>39</sup>. The bureau of education is responsible for selecting eligible schools based on the

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<sup>38</sup> The consultants have not been able to identify any documentation that focuses on the implementation of the policy.

<sup>39</sup> WFP provides corn Soya bean (blended food), oil, salts, and lately, dates.

criteria of: high gender disparity, low enrolment and severe food insecurity. Very recently, a school feeding programme is also being implemented in a few ABE centres. WFP believes that the programme has contributed towards increasing enrolment, stabilizing student's attendance and reduction of gender disparity in education. Since 2007/2008 WFP has also introduced the Girls Initiative Program whereby any girl who attends at least 17 days per month receives 2 litres of oil per month.

While the programme provides a definite incentive to parents to send their children to school a number of challenges also emerged. It promotes migration from the local ABE centre to the primary school with a feeding programme resulting in the closure of some ABEs due to their reduced size. There are also reputedly some problems related to untimely delivery, and products being close to expiry dates, and the programme makes demands on an already poor community (to finance construction of a kitchen, provide wood for cooking, salary payment for cooks, cost of sugar, etc.). Woreda education officials in Somali recommend increasing the number of beneficiary schools as currently the coverage is low (e.g. only 15 out of 242 schools in Awbare woreda, Somali benefit), the food package should be extended, more long-lasting vessels provided, the amount of oil ration for girls increased, and that the school feeding programme be extended to ABE centres on the rationale that smaller children need nutritious food.

***Box 8. Awbare Woreda, Somali Region, School Feeding Programme .***

In 2010/2011, a total of 15 schools out of 242 are benefiting from school feeding program. Criteria for school selection

- schools located in drought prone areas;
- areas with low enrolment;
- low participation by girls;
- affected by high dropout rate;
- students travelling long distances;
- good community participation;
- availability of water.

Five schools were targeted with the aim of reducing migration of children to Somaliland - 'not to lose our children'.

While there is an important role for Food for Education programmes to encourage children from poor and vulnerable households to have access to education, it is not a programme that is institutionalised within the Education system and it is unlikely that it is feasible to have school feeding programmes in all woredas. The other social policy in place to combat food insecurity is the national Productive Safety Net Programme which operates in food insecure woredas<sup>40</sup>. While it is beyond the scope of this study to review this programme, other studies have shown that PSNP transfers have a positive impact on children's food consumption and school attendance i.e. that the income effect of PSNP was apparent in helping children to continue their schooling. The PSNP evaluation (2008) showed that in 2006, 49.7% of respondents stated that they kept their children in school longer than in the previous year, and 43% attributed this to the PSNP. Additionally, 38.8% of respondents said that they had enrolled more children than in the previous year, and 32.6% attributed this to the PSNP.

On the other hand, there are concerns about some negative impacts especially with regard to increasing child labour. Children may either directly engage in public work or their work at home increase through transfer of household responsibilities to children by parents who are engaged in public works (Woldehanna, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> The PSNP is discussed in the Inception Report for the Social Assessment for the Education Sector, Ethiopia, Oct 2010.

Undoubtedly there is a case for strengthening dialogue between the education sector and the PSNP to ensure positive impact on school attendance on indicators and to ensure that such impact is captured in the monitoring framework for PSNP. In terms of policy development, the study argues that children of school-going age should be direct beneficiaries of the PSNP. This implies that a household could have direct beneficiaries (school going children), and able bodied parents who are earning an income through participation in public works. Secondly, that the amount of support needs to go beyond food consumption to include children’s schooling. Thirdly, that child labour should be regulated e.g. parents commitment to children at school, schools discouraging children from going to work during school time and public works programme stakeholders ensuring that children are not engaging in public work. In summary, the study argued that PSNP needs to look beyond short term food security to long term development.

### *Para-boarding Schools and Scholarships*

*Accommodation and scholarships* are deemed to be “extremely important” in increasing retention of students from remote villages in three of the four regions, Gambella, Somali and SNNPR; there are no government run boarding schools in Amhara though there is one in Bahir Dar run by SOS Children Village. For example, institutions like the Catholic church in Lare woreda in Gambella provides ‘scholarships’ of accommodation and food for students from remote rural areas to the only government run high school in the woreda. Such initiatives are deemed to have yielded improvement in achievements and retention of students in the high school.

In Somali region, the establishment of boarding schools is a strategy for expanding access of excluded children such as children from areas of high mobility, students from economically poor families, and orphan and vulnerable children who do not have families to support them. There are only two boarding schools in the region, a primary school in Shegosh and a secondary school in Gashemo. Two other boarding schools are under construction in Jijiga and Fik.

In SNNPR, a boarding school has been established in Arbaminch aimed at challenging remoteness, giving access for excluded groups, and it accepts students aged 10-35 years from

all remote woredas; pastoralists are especially targeted. It provides a combination of accommodation, food, clothing, stationary and health care, all of which are seen as critical to their retention. Reputedly this effort has enabled remote zones such as Hamar to have educated women working in administration areas. The school accepts students from Konso, Basketo, Bench Maji, Gamo Gofa, Konta, Keffa, Sheka, Dawaro and South Omo on the basis of quotas. It has a capacity of 200-400 students a year (depending on the course) and rapid progression is facilitated through a 6-month cycle for each grade.

#### *Box 9. Catholic Church Hostel in Lare woreda, Gambella*

The Catholic Church provides hostel and tutorial services (separate for male and female) for students coming to schools in Lare town from remote areas, and for students whose families were “troubled” by inter-clan conflicts and natural disasters such as floods. Some of the results achieved by the hostel service in 2008-2010 include:

- 30 students attending teachers Education College in Gambella town.
- Many graduates work in GOs and NGOs.
- Many girls are able to attend Nursing College in Gambella town.

Perceptions of boarding schools by officials, school administration and parents in Somali Region indicate their value:

- as a vehicle for students who complete level 3 in ABE and grade 8 to continue their education;
- are especially helpful in enabling vulnerable children to continue their education, for example children from poor households, orphans, children from border areas who are affected by war and conflict.
- many parents perceive sending their daughters to boarding school under the protection of government as a better option than sending children to live with relatives where there is a financial burden and a risk of abuse and exploitation of labour.

Based on the experience in Gambella wherever special support is provided there is a greater chance that students will pursue their education. For example, in Lare School hostel accommodation was provided along with tutorial services for male and female students from remote areas and those whose families were “troubled” by inter-clan conflicts and natural disasters. Some of the results achieved due to these supports include thirty students are attending the Teachers Education College in Gambella town, many graduates supported by this programme work in government and NGOs, and many girls have joined the Nursing college in Gambella town.

Re-villagization is underway in Gambella which will bring highly scattered communities closer together in order to ease service delivery, including increasing access to schools. It is anticipated that this will increase the enrolment of indigenous communities in formal education centres.

**Non-Governmental Organisations** In line with government policy to encourage NGOs to support vulnerable groups participate in education, there are many NGOs that work to alleviate the underlying challenges to education and to intervene with assisting in the provision of facilities and amenities in order to assist in supporting the retention of students in schools. While NGOs like SC UK is heavily engaged in supporting all aspects of the ABE system in Somali others are more small scale and focus on key thematic areas, and NGOs are an important part of the landscape of education in Ethiopia. They provide a range of assistance including:

- local and international work to stop child trafficking and child labour;
- direct assistance to the education sector through assisting school structures, material support, training for teachers;
- assistance to children (financially, materially, and with uniforms);
- establishing hostels and school feeding programmes;
- provision of wheelchairs and other supporting materials for the children with disabilities;
- training on HIV and AIDS, peer education and resources;
- support for Orphan and Vulnerable Children; and
- support to early childhood development.

#### **6.4. Strategies used to improve girls’ retention and performance**

In terms of response by the education sector, significant efforts are being made in terms of addressing gender concerns and encouraging girl’s education in all four regions. All government policies anticipate inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration but in practice this is constrained by

of lack of official structures/mechanisms, defined leadership role, accountability and lack of commitment, and, high staff turnover in government office.

The following are the main initiatives being taken by schools to support girls' retention:

- i. **After-class tutorials** are commonly provided by teachers to build girls' capacity and improve their performance. On occasions tutorials may also be provided on Saturdays and Sundays. Uptake is mixed depending on proximity of the school to home, child labour responsibilities, parental interest and children's motivation. Some girls expressed satisfaction with girl-only tutorials as it gave them space to interact with the teacher more freely without the presence of boys.
- ii. **Addressing social barriers through girls' clubs** which are established in every school. They are mandated to create awareness of the value of educating girls in schools and in the community, the negative effects of harmful traditional practices, gender based violence, HIV/AIDS and discrimination; and promote the rights of children and persons with disability. The clubs are found to be effective in assessing and discussing with girls various problems which they face either at the household or community level.
- iii. **Dropout returning committees** are established with representation from students, a teacher or member of administration of the school, representative of the Parent Teacher Association, kebele representative and a teacher that is born in the community. The committee discusses the challenges faced by the student, and visits the parents and student to try to solve the dropout problem to secure the return of the student back to school. This approach has assisted in enabling girls to return to school after childbirth or because of poverty-related issues (Gambella).
- iv. **Address economic barriers.** Incentives, feeding programmes, and pocket money for school uniforms and materials is provided by some organizations to overcome constraints on girls' participation caused by household poverty and food insecurity. For example, in Amhara, a total of 125 female students (one per woreda) enrolled in high schools are given a stipend of Birr 150 per month. These students are selected from amongst the poorest of the poor and are rewarded for their performance<sup>41</sup>.
- v. **Incentives/rewards for girls.** In Amhara, collaboration with the Bureau of Women's Affairs, the Bureau of Education provides financial and material assistance and certificates of appreciation for female students that perform well. NGOs also reward performing girls with cash and/or supplementary reading materials.
- vi. **General awareness raising with parents** on the importance of girls education is seen by delivers of education as essential, and this is a major area of focus (performance, absenteeism, time for study, etc). In Gambella, this is done through dramas in schools, kebele announcements and on billboards. In Amhara, the NGO, Wabi, holds monthly meetings with parents/care givers of OVC to discuss girls' performance, and there is public acknowledgement to those whose children perform well.
- vii. **Exercising leadership** whereby students are encouraged to serve as class monitors responsible for ensuring good conduct in class.

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<sup>41</sup> This is part of the Fere Addis Ethiopian Women's Fund established by Prime Minister Melese Zenawi. The fund covers 550 woredas throughout the country. Selection criteria include: girls promoted to 9<sup>th</sup> grade; girls promoted to 5<sup>th</sup> grade in pastoral areas; OVC; children from poor households.

- viii. *Improving the school environment* through improved fencing which increases security and provision of separate school latrines for girls and boys.
- ix. *Establishment of special libraries for girls* (in SNNPR), though utilization is said to be low, affected by girls' engagement in labour activities for parents or relatives (household work, petty trade).
- x. *Involving mothers* to deal with problems faced by girls such as dropouts, labour abuse at home, low achievement etc. Girls spoke of the value of having literate mothers to help them.
- xi. *Peer study groups* for low achievers.
- xii. *School feeding programmes in many rural schools* in Somali with evidence of encouraging enrolment and reducing absenteeism.
- xiii. *Purchase uniforms* for poor children (teachers/students contribute).
- xiv. *Supporting OVC* in Amhara where the BoE has established a fund to support 5 primary school female students to finish their education up to college level. The fund is established through voluntary contributions of staff members and is deducted from salary on monthly basis.

***Box 10. Good practices adopted by primary schools in Somali to encourage girls to continue their education.***

- persuading girls that education will enable them to avoid the fate of working as maids for educated women in Boroma;
- encouraging girls to continue education when they migrate; having female teachers served as role models (employment opportunities);
- establishing girls' clubs and counseling committees to create awareness on issues of early marriage, FGM, harmful traditional practice, HIV and AIDS;
- discussing with parents the economic return from children's education and in cases of early marriage negotiation with parents of the spouse to allow married girls to continue education after giving birth (and become role models);
- provision of food aid as incentives to parents who send their children to schools (given a little more than allocated amount 9 kg per person – food provided by WFP);
- flexibility for married women when they are absent from school due to household responsibilities
- supporting mothers continue schooling while on maternity leave – friends and siblings copy/write down lessons and teachers tutor;
- allowing time for breastfeeding and infant care;
- weekend tutorial for girls creates space to ask questions they would not ask in front of boys. Schedules for tutorial support (physics, math, English, chemistry and natural science) are posted in bulletin board and students choose which class to attend;
- girls' committee convinces parents to allow girls attend tutorials on weekends);
- lobby mothers to attend adult and non-formal education ( PTA members as role models).
- Girls Education Advisory Committee is established to provide guidance to girls;
- purchase uniforms (through contributions) for poor children/girls to prevent girls' drop out;
- home to home follow up of girls to prevent them from dropping out;
- construction of separate latrines for girls;
- community members participating in mobilization committees; school hours and contributions are agreed with them.

## 6.5. Improving the Supply of Quality Education

### *Fiscal decentralisation and ensuing gaps*

At the national level, education accounts for about one-fifth of total government expenditure during 2003-08 reflecting the high priority at all levels of government – federal, regional and woreda levels<sup>42</sup>. The share of education in woreda level recurrent spend is higher than at regional and federal levels, but is estimated to have declined from 46% in 2006/07 to 40% in 2008/09. General education's share (ABEs, primary and secondary schools) rose from 48% to 56% in nominal terms and 62% in real terms. Recurrent expenditure, mainly salaries, on general education nearly doubled in real terms during 2003-08 reflecting the efforts made to reduce pupil-teacher ratio from 67 to 61 in primary and from 52 to 43 in secondary schools<sup>43</sup>.

However these aggregate figures mask considerable regional variation as was evident from the field work. Pupil-teacher ratios have not kept pace with enrolment<sup>44</sup> and virtually all recurrent expenditure is spent on salaries with little available for text books and operating costs. For example, education takes the majority of budget allocations in Gambella but most is consumed by salaries of teachers and education officials, with no capital or operating expenses being allocated.

*The School Grants Programme* was introduced in Ethiopia 2009/10 to improve the quality of education. It is used in many countries as a way of channelling funding to the school level when school fees have been abolished. However, increased funding does not necessarily result in better education outcomes and hence by promoting the involvement of stakeholders (parents, communities) in school activities it improves the management and supervision of the school and its performance. By focusing at the school level it also helps to tackle the increase in enrollment.

On the basis of the guidelines (see Box 11), Birr 15 is provided for each child in primary school and Birr 20 for each secondary school student. School administrators and PTA members prepare a School Improvement Plan, decide on the use of the School Grant, and implement and report accordingly.

Some of the challenges faced when administering the grant identified during the fieldwork include:

#### **Box 11. GEQIP School Grant Program**

The School Grant Program is designed to support the allocation of capitation grants to schools. It is intended to support non salary recurrent expenditure at the school level to improve the quality of education at ABE Centers and Government and Public primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia.

Parents and community members, through PTAs, have a vital role to play in deciding how the School Grant will be used to improve the quality of education children receive, and in performance monitoring.

Each school or ABE Centre is to use their grant to implement their School Improvement Plan (SIP) and improve their school performance, with a special focus on improving the quality of education.

School Grant funds will be disbursed to all schools and ABE Centers once in the first year, i.e. 2001 (2008/09) school year, and twice a year in the following school years, i.e. around August/September and January/February for the next five years, and possibly longer.

The grant cannot be used for: 'new classrooms or buildings but new toilets are allowed, teacher salaries & per diems, PTA member payments TVs and DVD players, fuel or weapons'.

<sup>42</sup> Education Public Expenditure Review, June 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> According to the *Education Public Expenditure Review*, 2010, three large regions – Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR – account for over 90% of the roughly 200,000 additional teachers required to achieve the official norm for pupil-teacher ratios.

- a budget deficit due to increase in student population between registration and actual implementation;
- delay in transfer of money – finance is needed most at the beginning of the year;
- the amount is perceived as too little to meet huge demands in schools and considering the ever increasing cost of materials; and
- the criteria are disadvantageous for ABE centres that have a small number of students but potentially need the grant the most.

The school grant came late in the year (2009/2010); for example, in Gambella schools were given only a week to spend and report on its use which resulted in rushed decisions; much of it was used for stationary which is a major gap in school material. In Somali region, the SGP was used to finance rehabilitation and maintenance of roof and floors desks, doors, windows; purchase of doors and windows for latrines; purchase of stationary, students roaster and report cards; purchase of uniforms/gowns for teachers; connecting to water supply system, fencing schools compounds; constructing additional class rooms of mud blocks, maps, and microphones.

How the SGP interacts with other existing revenue streams to support recurrent expenditures by schools and/or Woreda Education Offices and community contribution remains to be investigated. In Denbel Primary School, in Somali, SC UK financed the installation of school water supply (through connection from the main town supply system) and construction of separate latrines for girls and boys with hand washing facilities. Prior to this investment the Education Office provided funds to cover a flat rate of Birr 400 per month for water in the school. Since the introduction of the SGP, a water meter was installed and a tariff of Birr 12.50 per cubic meter was set by the Water Office and the fee was to be covered from the SGP. Water supply to the school was disconnected because of failure to pay utility fee. The school has requested a budget allocation from the Education Office and appealed to the Water Office for a lower tariff. In the interim until the issue is resolved children bring water from home for cooking related to the school feeding programme and for personal hygiene which has a high time and energy cost for children.

Education policy states that education is free yet community involvement in resource mobilization is explicitly stated in almost all government policies. An insufficient operational budget means that schools are reliant on community contributions to fund infrastructure and learning materials. In Amhara (and Oromiya) a system is in place whereby every household in the community (parent or not) contributes a flat rate per year towards the costs of education, though this mechanism is not in place in the emerging states of Gambella and Somali. In addition, some schools own land for income generation purposes. Cash contributions and income are managed by the PTA for school improvement. Some communities build new schools and request the education authorities to assign qualified teachers.

***Box 12. Community contributions become child labour to pay school costs***

In Gambella, most materials are provided by NGOs and international relief organizations throughout the region, but parents and the community also contribute to the upgrade of quality in the school system. The decision on the modality of contribution is left for each community to decide – cash, local material etc. In some locations, funds are obtained by children working on nearby commercial farms (cotton collection) with the agreement of the school administration and parent/teacher associations. This raises concerns about official endorsement of child labour, but without such contributions, respondents say that the schools would not be able to stay open.

## 6.6. Facilities at Schools and ABE centres

The Education Public Expenditure Review (2010) draws attention to the recurrent budget which is largely consumed by salaries which have squeezed the space for text books and other non-salary operating costs. It found that teacher-pupil ratios were decreasing but that this general finding did not reflect regional and sub-regional disparities. This picture is strongly reflected in the findings of the field studies. For example, in general in Somali, the ABE centres are in poor condition many lacking a building, furniture, water, toilets, textbooks, teachers' guides/ syllabi, teaching aids, supplementary reading materials, playgrounds or sports facilities.

The situation in primary schools reflects a shortage of facilities also. Schools report overcrowding and class size of 100 students, shortage of desks and text books for students in English and Amharic language, civic education, environmental science and Math (books only available for teachers); teachers' guides for all subjects were lacking. Some examples are:

- a shortage of class rooms (90/95 students per class), shortage of latrine blocks (only 6 stances were available for 2220 students), lack of library facilities and photocopier (for duplicating exam papers, etc)<sup>45</sup>; parents complained about poor construction quality of ABE centres, lack/shortage of water and latrine facilities, and shortage of books in both ABECs and formal primary schools.
- overcrowding results in schools running two shifts, often under trees; in Amhara parents stated that teachers urge them to enroll 5 years olds to boost enrolment figures but then are unable to deal with big class size;
- a shortage of English, Amharic and social science teachers, and a shortage of teachers are the higher levels.
- stationary and paper for children is a significant problem – one school with 727 students reported not having 'a single paper'<sup>46</sup>;
- eight of the twenty two schools in Lare woreda have classroom buildings in Gambella.

The challenges facing secondary schools are similar and are reflected in those of Denbel Secondary School which commenced operation in September 2010 and serves six other kebeles at distances of Araabi (22 km); Semeka (23 km); Heregel (35 kms) Hader Weyni (42 kms), and Hamukale (60 km) respectively. The school has no compound of its own and shares resources with the local primary school; there is a shortage of text books for all (10) subjects, a lack of laboratory and library, a shortage of office furniture and desks, no teacher's guides except civic education, no budgetary allocation for recurrent expenditures - only salaries of teachers is covered by the Education Office. The school is expected to become fully operational in the next academic year (2011/2012) and problems related to budget should be reduced. In the meantime, the school raises money through levying Birr 10 for registration and charging school fees for ABE facilitators who are up-grading their skills.

A lack of water and sanitation results in children going to nearest water point or home (up to 3 kms. Away) to fetch drinking water or to go to the toilet; in most instances the children do not return to

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<sup>45</sup> Sheik Musse/Lafa Issa primary school. In the current academic year (2010/2011), there are 2220 (800 female) students enrolled; the school operates a shift system, morning and afternoon, and rotates these monthly.

<sup>46</sup> Araabi School, Somali Region.

school for the rest of the day. Many schools/ABEs do not have latrines at all, and those that do have very few. The situation is more complicated in Gambella where girls will not use latrines on the school compound and go outside to the toilet – in practice they go home and do not return for the rest of the day pointing to the need to engage parents in resolving the issue. It is noted that the only construction permitted by the School Grant Programme is for the construction of toilets, a very positive initiative though the amount provided may not be sufficient to build toilets to a safe standard as required by government. The availability of water and latrines in Araabi School in Somali was pointed out by girls as very helpful, especially the facility for washing during menstruation, and that this has helped to reduce absenteeism.

Respondents say it is vital to address the shortage of educational materials such as text books and teachers guides, which mostly arise due to problems of distribution. It is also vital to improve school facilities such as water, latrine, and fencing.

### ***Box 13. Parents in Somali take the Initiative to open a Secondary School***

The experience of Sheik Tahir Omer Senior Secondary School, set up by parents and which started operation in 2010, suggests that parents are demanding access to secondary school for their children but that the official response could be more rapid. The school emanated from advocacy work of parents and is located 86 kms from Jijiga and 22 kms from the woreda capital, Denbel in a very rural area. It has one class room and a teacher's room hosted by the health post. Prior to the opening of the school, only a few students could join secondary school in Denbel, for example, in 2005/2006 only 20 students out of 40 continued secondary education. The opening of the school has enabled all students (boys and girls) who completed grade 8 continue secondary education; there are now 72 students enrolled in grade 9 out of which 42 are full time day students (only 9 are female as these are the only girls who completed grade 8). The remaining 30 include ABE facilitators and others attending evening classes (known as extension students). As opening this school was not part of the government plan for EFY 2003 (2010/2011), no teachers or learning materials were made available<sup>1</sup>. Teachers from the primary school share the responsibility of teaching and have lent some furniture (12 desks, a table and a chair) for the teacher. The school teaches 10 subjects using text books borrowed from other high school in the Woreda. Teachers' guides were only available for one subject.

## **6.7. Quality of teachers/ABE facilitators**

Quality of teaching, level of support provided to children and the commitment and motivation of facilitators/teachers is crucial to student learning.

In the Somali region, in the kebeles visited by the research team, all ABE facilitators are male with educational qualifications of between Grades 7- 10 and are paid Birr 464 gross plus 20% hardship allowance in remote woredas, but they have received no salary increments. All have undergone short term (15 days to 1 month) pre-service training but have received no refresher training except support from cluster centres; they have weak capacity in the use of teaching aids; preparing teaching sessions, or lesson planning. Lack of incentives for ABE teachers (salary increment, transport, skill upgrading, housing) are a deterrent to their motivation and performance, as is the lack of opportunities for career development. However, there is also the issue of a poor selection process of facilitators in some instances (false certificates of teachers; no entrance examination; favouritism based on clan affiliation - not merit, etc);

During the research, parents expressed concern about teacher absenteeism especially where teachers/facilitators do not live in the kebele resulting in short periods or no classes; teachers do not make up this lost time and children sometimes have not completed the curriculum before taking exams. They also stated that poor quality of education causes them to remove children from school. Parents' demand for children to repeat a class or be demoted to a lower grade level when they believe that children have not achieved sufficient knowledge to progress to the next level is frequently not complied with as it would reflect poorly on the performance of the school.

Efforts are being made to upgrade the qualifications of ABE facilitators in Somali by enrolling them in upgrading classes to enable them to complete level 10 and graduate to an accelerated one year teacher training course. The dilemma is that the upgrading classes are provided by local high schools in the afternoon, a time that sometimes conflicts with hours that are suitable for children to attend ABE. A Distance Learning Package has also been developed by the Teacher Training College. A further complication is that once they upgrade, ABE facilitators seek to move to work as teachers in the formal education system where they are paid higher salaries.

The Cluster Resource Centre is part of the government strategy for improving the quality of education through training, resource sharing (materials and skills, etc.) and experience sharing among schools. A primary school that is performing well, and located at a reasonable distance, is selected as a cluster centre for supporting ABECs as well as other primary schools. A Cluster coordinator is responsible for follow up and support of ABE facilitators and teachers and serves as a liaison between the woreda and ABE centres and reports to the woreda cluster coordinator. Most are male as the job demands extensive travel on foot. There is little additional funding provided to cluster centres as education officials argue that much can be done without finance – teachers' willingness, creativity, use available materials. There is evidence that where NGOs support such centres they tend to function well but where the amount of support decreases, so does the quality<sup>47</sup>.

The type of support received from a cluster centre includes how to prepare lesson plans and a time table; preparation of teaching aid materials, complete student rosters and other statistics on attendance and drop out; manage class rooms; form a committee (CMC); solve problem between teachers and student or teachers and parents; how to write reports; experience sharing among ABECs, and, some material supports (poster, canvas, pen, markers, etc). ABE facilitators meet at the center every 15 days to share experiences and receive some guidance and training. Major issues discussed include problems of high rates of drop out and absenteeism due to lack/shortage of water; lack of furniture and place to keep documents and records where ABECs are run under trees or in dilapidated rooms; lack of stationary and teaching materials (chalk, blackboard, teacher guide, students text books).

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<sup>47</sup> Where SC UK operates, cluster school teachers were trained on how to prepare teaching aid materials from locally available materials – preparing markers of different colours by using local colouring materials (as used in basket making - less than one Birr) and making colour from used up battery cell, making canvas out of old cloths; how to make glue (herbal glue, ash and flour), making abacus from bottles, beads, stone, etc.. Teachers have undertaken training on 17 topics. Cluster Resource Centres are equipped with solar panel, mobile teaching aid kit (flash cards, petri dish, etc), motorbikes are provided for woreda supervisors, etc.

The transfer of responsibilities to supporting ABEs to the cluster school and coordinator, and away from the Education Office, increases their workload without increasing resources to enable them function better. Challenges reported by cluster coordinators include:

- ABE facilitator absenteeism if not recruited from the locality;
- the hardship of walking long distances responsible for supervising 11 - 34 schools,(ideally 10 under a cluster);
- no per diem – financial bureaucracy is a bottleneck when schools are willing to pay per diem;
- low qualification of ABE facilitators and a huge need for support in English language, time table preparation, planning for use of school grant. Bi-weekly meetings for two hours are not considered adequate.

According to school principals and kebele representatives, challenges faced by a cluster school include extra work load for teachers at the cluster centre (voluntary basis); shortage of raw materials for teaching aid preparation; weak capacity of facilitators as they have had no training since initial pre service training of 45 days; and weak attendance by ABE facilitators because of distance from ABECs.

Respondents suggest that if centres and coordinators had more resources, this would facilitate better support to schools/ABECs and reliable documentation of activities carried out at the grass root level.

In keeping with government policy of transforming ABE centres to formal/regular schools in the areas where the communities are relatively settled, in Amhara, the process of phasing out ABECs and upgrading them to formal schools has commenced in the year 2010/2011<sup>48</sup>. Poor quality educational service delivery in ABE centres is perceived as a key factor driving the shift in policy. There were concerns that the selection of facilitators from the community was in conflict with the need to have qualified teachers; flexible schooling time resulted in lack of control; the ABE curriculum was not compatible with the education curriculum, and facilitators did not have capacity to teach such a curriculum. This reflects the concerns of committed education officials but it is a supply-side perspective which may not adequately take account of the concept and rationale for alternative education.

In Somali Region where the government is upgrading ABECs, SC UK is piloting a strategy of class room expansion, upgrading qualification of teachers, and provision of adequate supplies of teaching and learning materials. To date, three batches of students have sat for national examination (G8) and have performed well.

### **Teachers' education and TVET**

As part of wider education policy, there is a major thrust underway to have qualified teachers in schools. For example, under the direction of the regional education bureau in Gambella which has provided quotas to each school for skill up-grading, teachers are taking steps to improve their qualifications. They are participating in courses and training offered by educational institutions.

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<sup>48</sup> A total of 30,612 children (15,361 females) were transferred from ABE Centres to formal schools in 2009/2010. Source: Regional Bureau of Education, November 2010.

Teachers that have ‘Certificates’ are upgrading their qualifications to diploma and degree level, while those with ‘degree’ level are upgrading to ‘Masters’ levels.

The teacher training colleges in Somali are responding through the provision of various courses. For example, Dr. Abdul Mejid Hussien Teacher Training College in Somali is supporting classroom training, self-learning, and two months summer training for formal school teachers. Last year (2009/2010), 1852 teachers out of the planned 2000 graduated from the college – which increases GER of teachers from 47% to 63%. The college is also adopting a more systematic approach to upgrading ABE facilitators through more rigorous recruitment of candidates, curriculum development, and distance learning, as well as a system of support for ABE facilitators to graduate grade 10 (provided by high schools that operate as resource centres).

### 6.8. Strategies to improve girls’ retention in higher level institutions

The number of female students in teacher training colleges and TVET is low reflecting the low participation of females in the school system. For example, the Dr. Abdul Hussein Teacher Training College in Jijiga has 156 females out of a student population of 935 reflecting the low number of girls completing grade 10.

- i. **Higher quotas for girls and lower entrance requirements** are practiced in some higher level institutions (Gambella, Somali regions). For example, in TVET colleges where the minimum point requirement is 2.0 in the national exam this is lowered to 1.75 (or lower) to facilitate girls’ entrance whereas the level for boys is 1.85. Similarly, a 20% quota has been allocated to girls while they may also compete with boys for the remaining 80% of places (Gambella).
- ii. **Measures for specific indigenous groups** are provided for in some contexts. In Gambella, participation by the Oppo and Komo (smallest indigenous groups) is low at all levels of education. Accordingly, higher education institutes have a strategy to enroll girls (and boys) from these communities even if they have not reached the minimum enrolment requirements.
- iii. **Supplementary training and tutorials** are offered to girls to increase their performance and the number of female graduates.
- iv. **Awareness raising** is organised for teachers and education officials on the gender-specific challenges faced by female students, while counseling is provided to girls to encourage them to complete training and to redress the tendency for girls to want short-term courses to enable them to earn an income quickly.
- v. **Girls’ Units** have been established in some colleges and training centres as a strategy to support female students. The units consist of female teachers who function as focal persons in initiating, discussing and resolving issues faced by female students within the institutions e.g. economic difficulties, low grade achievement, conflicts with peers. They may also facilitate separate study locations for girls.
- vi. **Encouraging female students to take maths and science** as there is a tendency for females to choose social science and language subjects, and there is flexibility for female students to change subjects/streams.

**Box 14. Girls' Perception of Education System, Somali.**

A focus group discussion with a group of girls in Araabi in Somali provides insights into girls' perception of the education system and the overall school environment. They appreciate the good quality of education and the delivery by teachers in spite of a shortage of books; the special support given to female students (when sick, when they become mothers) by students and teachers; special tutorial for girls; girls incentives (oil and dates as part of the school feeding program); information about HIV/AIDS, early marriage and environmental sanitation; availability of school within the kebele and no need to travel long distances; a large school compound and clean environment; the availability of water and latrine facilities - separate latrines for girls with water for washing during menstruation (no absenteeism for this reason); and well-disciplined students.

On the negative side, girls mentioned the poor quality of fence (bushes) which barely keep animals out); overcrowded class rooms; quality of blackboards; shortage of chalk, desks and student text books (3 or 4 children share a book); no desks for teachers; shortage of materials (dishes, spoon) in school feeding, and, shortage of water and the need for additional water tanker for drinking and cleaning (class room cleaning, hand washing, cooking food) purposes; and, have difficulty with English, Amharic and math subjects.

Children themselves expressed concerns about their reluctance to continue education fearing that they will fail to complete grade 10 (low self-esteem). Contributing factors include shortage of committed and qualified teachers (perceived as no better than their students and can have the same poor teacher for four years) – they believe that less qualified teachers are assigned to rural schools; teacher absenteeism with no alternative arrangements for teaching; shortage of student text books; poor English language capacity due to late introduction of English as a medium of instruction.

## **6.9. Community participation: Parent Teacher Associations**

There is an increasing trend for parents and communities to be involved in the education sector, and school. The most common is through community contributions to building classrooms in which all or most materials are provided by the community. However, they are also involved in issues of dropout reduction and other school decision making. Although this change is indicated to be a general trend, education officials in Gambella indicate that indigenous communities still show much lesser participation and involvement in the school system and the education sector than other communities.

Institutionally, education policy provides for the involvement of the community in education. In primary schools parents are active in Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), while in ABECs the equivalent is called the Center Management Committee (CMC), the purpose of which is to be a bridge between the community and the school. The committee comprises seven members, five from the community (usually, Kebele Chair Person, elders, parents and anyone respected by the community). Efforts are made to ensure female participation (in some areas a quota is allocated). The remaining two are assigned by the school (usually the Head teacher and another teacher to work as chair and secretary) but are non-voting members. The strengths of the PTAs/CMC is that members are elected by the community indicating social responsibility combined with the individual commitments of members; the committees bring together the benefits of having influential people with those of government representatives, while Kebele Chairpersons are political appointees and have the power to enforce collective agreement.

A focus group discussion with PTA members in Araabi Primary School in Somali, pointed to some of the successes of the PTA i) mobilization of resources (many of the blocks were constructed by the community); ii) advocating for opening up of a senior high school whereby, the REB promised to allocate budget for EFY 2004; iii) organize a one-class high school in shared accommodation with the health post and borrowed teaching and learning materials; and, iv) reassign one of the existing teachers to work as a director.

For example, senior management and kebele representatives in Araabi primary school in Somali indicate that increased motivation of school authorities results from the support they receive from the committees. PTA members point out the following perceived achievements<sup>49</sup>:

- teachers have become more serious on their responsibilities (prepare well for class, better quality of teaching, less absenteeism);
- students are better behaved (no fighting with each other or teachers, respect one another);
- parents no longer fight with teacher over issue of disciplining children;
- teachers do not use corporal punishment;
- parental demand for, and taking initiatives to establish secondary schools is reducing drop out from grade 8 and eliminates issues of safety of children who reside with families living in towns as well as financial burden, and all children of school age are in school;
- quality of education has improved (teachers follow up on student homework and performances).
- children gained access to high school which avoids drop outs from grade 8, which in turn, reduces parents economic and emotional concerns over safety of children attending high school in town.

These achievements are the result of coordinated efforts of committed individuals and sense of social responsibility by the various stakeholders. The composition of the PTA which includes influential people (in own capacity and/or as government representatives) enables enforcement of collective agreements. In addition, the impact of role models (female teachers, Somalis in decision making positions at woreda, regional and federal level) has been a driving force for educating children. This in turn has increased motivation of school authorities to do their best.

## 6.10. Conclusion

This analysis reveals the need for education programmes and policies in Ethiopia to better respond to the needs of children, particularly vulnerable and excluded children. The educational and social needs of vulnerable children, especially girls and orphans, in Ethiopia are not being met by the policies and programmes in place. This exclusion affects a large proportion of children in the country, particularly in the key regions explored by this study, and is placing them at greater risk. The study has revealed the complex issues faced by excluded children, such as the high opportunity costs of education for families that cannot cope without their children's labour and the failure of ABECs to be flexible or targeted enough to meet the challenges. Girls emerge as a key group who require greater policy attention across all the areas, with, for example, opportunity and other educational costs, low

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<sup>49</sup> Araabi PS, Somali Region.

quality education and lack of safe and secure access to schools, affecting them disproportionately. Within this group, pastoralist girls, working girls and former sex workers, as well as married girls require more attention in education policies.

The draft ESDP IV seeks to address a number of policy issues, particularly distance to school and equity issues. The plans outlined in that strategy have the potential to meet a number of the challenges seen through this study as well. It is hoped that the recommendations in the next section complement the ESDP and will highlight key priorities and strategies for policy planners.

If the social challenges are not addressed and innovative strategies are not employed to reach the most vulnerable children, a generation of children will be lost to the education system, the millennium development goals will not be met, and new social challenges will emerge.

## Section 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

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The findings of this social assessment indicate that if schools or ABECs are to be inclusive, reach hard-to-reach groups, and address parental concerns, they need to adopt an integrated set of initiatives. A key issue we bring forward in our recommendations is how, in the next phase, vulnerable and excluded children can be given greater attention and reached more systematically.

The recommendations below address the key areas of policy and practice through which Ethiopia can see greater gains in access by the most vulnerable children in this next phase of its education sector plans.

### **Extending education to hard-to-reach and vulnerable children**

#### *Re-imagining ABE and with tighter targeting*

ABECs have seen great success in extending access to education for hard to reach groups. As detailed above, they have been at the forefront of some significant gains for children across Ethiopia. Their greatest limitations though are quality of services and not being responsive enough to the demands of parents and students alike.

While ABECs have been charged with the complex task of providing education to the hardest to reach groups, they have in many cases been trying to do so with the weakest tools: low quality teaching provided by unqualified, poorly resourced facilitators. As a result of the perceived (and real) limitations of the ABE strategy, and to avoid the risk of creating a low cost, low quality, parallel education system for the poorest groups, Government is moving towards transforming some of these centres into formal schools (Amhara region). While this may be appropriate in some contexts, it may be too drastic a response in others. ABE has the potential to continue to play a key role for many children.

ABE needs to move away from being a ‘catch-all’ solution trying to do too much, and become a well-focused and targeted programme for priority at risk groups of children. The concept of ABE needs to be redesigned from vision all the way down to activities to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

It may play different roles in different communities and areas and for different target groups, but each of those groups need to be identified, their needs and constraints analysed and the centres strengthened to meet these needs. For one group it may offer a way to complete Basic Education that is compatible with their lifestyle and their choices (e.g. pastoralist children), for others it can enable them to get up to speed quickly so they can transition into formal education and complete further levels of education (e.g. dropout OVCs, working children), for still others it may be a short-term stop gap to ensure that they do not permanently fall out of the education system (e.g. newly married girls or new mothers).

There needs to be disaggregation of the different ‘hard-to-reach’ groups, and an analysis of their education needs. Goals could then be established that can be achieved with each group in the short-term with an ABE intervention (not one size fits all), and reflected in programming. A number of innovative pilots could be launched relatively quickly to test the ability of ABE to meet the specific needs of critical groups.

A specific form of ABE is used in India for example to help older girls who dropped out of school to attend an intensive three-month residential course to get them immediately back into formal education. This is an expensive and high quality, but also very effective intervention. Other alternative routes can be designed to particularly meet the needs of OVCs to recover from the trauma of losing their parents or find suitable ways to care for siblings before transitioning back into basic education.

### *Improving measures of success*

For ABE, a key question is how incentives and success are measured? When rates of enrolment (quantitative) is a key goal, it risks causing local schools to skew enrolment figures, disregarding issues of quality of services delivered in favour of numbers reached, in order to comply.

Especially in ABE, it is necessary to design a set of measures of success that encourage reaching hard to reach children and that reflect the realities of their populations. An effective ABE solution that delivered a high quality service to a smaller number of children will have greater impact in the medium- to long-term than a solution that is aimed at targeting large numbers without meeting the needs of the children.

Measures of success need to be more closely linked to the objective and intended outcomes of the interventions targeting different groups of hard to reach children, including the long term benefits to the children reached.

## **Measures to address gender disparities and dropout**

*Increasing girls' participation* International experience, including from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania, points to a balance or mixture of supply and demand side strategies and a strong element of community participation in schools. A number of strategies for encouraging girls' enrolment and transition in school have been identified<sup>50</sup>:

**Demand Side** strategies to support the adolescent girl in schools

- 1) Scholarships and stipends
- 2) Transport & boarding facilities
- 3) Advocacy or community engagement in girls' education
- 4) Safety policies and training and codes of conduct

A fifth demand side strategy - toilets and provision of sanitary protection - feature in many girls' education programmes, but it is noted that the research does not support the effectiveness of this approach.

**Supply Side** to enhance educational access, the learning environment and curricular relevance for adolescent girls:

- 1) Creation of non-formal education programmes, either complementary or alternative
- 2) Recruiting and training female teachers, para-teachers and other educators
- 3) Gender training for teachers
- 4) Mentoring, tutoring and peer support
- 5) Life skills and literacy training

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<sup>50</sup> Cynthia Lloyd, *New Lessons The Power of Educating Adolescent Girls*, Population Council, 2009, p. 52.

## 6) Livelihoods and vocational training.

**Reducing Early Marriage** International experience of seeking to reduce early marriage identifies five main types of responses including:

1. **educating families and communities** and include community sensitization/awareness raising and social marketing efforts
2. **girls' education**, including life skills, formal and non-formal education, and livelihood/vocational skills.
3. **law and policy initiatives**, including legal mechanisms, advocacy, community mobilization, and policy e.g. the Re-entry Policy whereby young mothers return to school after giving birth has yielded benefits in Zambia.
4. **providing economic opportunities** and includes income-generation for girls and monetary incentives for parents.
5. **safeguarding rights** and creating safe social spaces, keeping official birth and marriage records, and enforcing other rights of girls.

In addition to these, the experience of the Berhane Hewan project in Amhara points to the need to address the water fetching workload of girls, to integrating family planning information and planning for young mothers, and the positive impact of having educated and enlightened mothers on girls' education..

Other lessons learnt around what works include the advantages of multi-sectoral approaches, of involving the community in all stages of the project, of awareness-raising on age gaps between partners, targeting efforts at regions with higher rates of child marriage, public declaration in favour of delaying marriage, and of supporting girls who have had marriages 'stopped'. The benefits of tailoring programmes for young girls approaching the 'tipping-point' age (usually 13 or 14) have also been noted.

**Harmful traditional practices and their impacts** More work needs to be done to understand the constraints harmful traditional practices, such as FGM, early marriage and gender-based violence, are placing on girls (and boys) access to education. FGM is widely practiced in different part of Ethiopia and the numbers of children affected is high. The difficulty in gaining much information on this during the field research reflects the sensitivity of the issue.

A study that works closely with indigenous women's groups and CSOs to examine the issues and their particular role in access to education should be undertaken.

## Measures to increase equity of access

**School Grant Programme Target excluded groups by differentiating the grant amounts (girls, orphans, poorer children, poorer/remote schools and/or communities)**

The School Grant Programme is an effective approach to further equity and quality in education. It helps to bridge financing gaps in resources and is designed to promote effectiveness in learning and teaching, school administration, in creating a suitable environment for learning, and community participation. It also has the potential to be a key instrument to tackle social problems that hinder children from learning. As such it could be the central plank in the policy to provide an incentive for schools and ABECs to seek out and reach excluded groups by releasing better targeted and more flexible funding when and where it is needed, supporting at-risk children, school development, teacher initiative, and community-school linkages. It is also a crucial way of promoting and ensuring community participation in the school which aids improved management.

As currently structured, the school grant programme (SGP) is a blunt tool for supporting schools – those with a higher number of students get higher grants. The SGP could be strengthened as a way of delivering resources where they are needed most and to the children who need them. For example, the grants could be graduated so that schools receive more money for the harder to reach children, those in remote locations, those reaching pastoralist or indigenous children. Schools or community groups could also receive rewards for good community-led initiatives that are supporting the school or teacher such as weekend tutoring or community mobilisation that are deemed to be particularly effective. It could also be used to give incentives to schools implementing targeted initiatives for orphans, disabled children or married girls.

School improvement grants should also be extended to ABECs, many of which are very poorly resourced. The process of developing a school improvement plan would encourage greater community participation in ensuring that improvements respond to local needs, and a greater sense of ownership.

### **Measures to address the impact of poverty, child labour and food security on equitable access to education**

**Holistic approach** For some groups of particularly vulnerable children, such as orphans, street children or sex workers, a holistic approach needs to be developed that is coordinated with other departments and partners. The barriers to education for these children reach beyond the remit of the school system or the Ministry of Education to address; they need support from the **Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs, Women and Children** and often from specialised NGOs at the regional and woreda level as well. To avoid ineffective responses and duplication of efforts, a joint commission on vulnerable children, perhaps with a focus on orphans, domestic workers, pastoralists and other working children, should be developed across all relevant services to develop coordinated responses that are jointly monitored to address the needs of these particularly vulnerable groups of children.

**Food for Education Programme:** Continue incentives in primary schools to encourage children from poor households to enrol and reduce dropouts (e.g. as per the draft ESDP IV). **WFP** may consider expanding the programme to cover secondary school for children from targeted poor households: OVC, children with disabilities, pastoralists and other vulnerable groups. There is also need to strengthen school feeding programmes in drought susceptible areas. Consideration should be given to varying the implementation modality (cash, food, rent, etc) and schools and communities as appropriate should determine which is most appropriate. In addition, WFP may consider working with the Women and Children’s Bureau that has representatives at levels including the kebele in order to assist in targeting girls.

**Conditional Cash Transfers:** Designed as scholarships or as cash transfers to parents, CCTs can be an effective way of designing cash incentives for education and are in use in many other African countries.<sup>51</sup> CCTs can help families meet the various formal and informal costs of education while ensuring that the ‘conditions,’ if well designed, ensure that children attend and progress in school.

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<sup>51</sup> The World Bank is piloting a large programme in Nigeria and in other parts of Africa and Camfed has a long running programme in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania.

CCT at the secondary level can create incentives for children at the primary level to strive to complete basic education if they know they have an opportunity to access higher levels of education. CCTs should be designed to target particularly vulnerable children, for whom costs associated with education are a particular challenge, such as orphans and girls.

**Bursaries** Bursaries are widely used in other countries (e.g. Zambia). One model involves provision of holistic bursaries for vulnerable children which are managed and monitored by community involvement in schools. After completion of school, students are linked with Peer Associations in entrepreneurship to run small businesses and to participate in some traditional savings schemes<sup>52</sup>. Another model includes a multi-level bursary scheme where the scholarship package extends from Basic through to High School and tertiary level and includes fees, uniform, sanitary and personal hygiene, comfort kits, Study Groups, club experience, and where necessary, safe accommodation.

**Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)** **The Ministry of Education could explore with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Food Security Directorate** the potential for fine tuning the PSNP so that children of school-going age could be direct beneficiaries of the PSNP. This implies firstly that a household would have direct beneficiaries (school going children), and able bodied parents who are engaged on public works. Secondly, that the amount of support provided by PSNP goes beyond food consumption to include children's schooling. Thirdly, that child labour should be regulated e.g. parents obliged to send children at school, schools actively discourage children from going to work during school time, and public works programme stakeholders ensuring that children are not engaging in public work, and this needs to be actively monitored. In summary, the PSNP needs to look beyond short term food security to long term development.

### **Other measures to reduce dropout**

Girls, across all categories, are excluded or dropping out at higher rates than boys. A number of tried and tested strategies are available and need to be better explored in key areas for girls at particular risk. Supply side strategies which were found to be effective include clubs, support systems such as girls' advisory committee, counselling committee and tutorial support for female students. In addition, different approaches are being tested which provide incentives for girls (financial, material and certificates of appreciation for well performing female students, cash and/or supplementary reading material) by the Bureau of Education in collaboration with Women's Affairs, NGOs, the Prime Minister's Fund, etc. Overall there is a need for greater coordination and for impact to be measured and documented. Girls' inclusion needs to be a priority and should be reinforced by the ESDP IV.

Pastoral support and peer-to-peer mentoring in schools can help to reduce drop out and increase retention of both girls and boys. Support to children in schools to help them cope with the challenges of school, both academic and social, is critical. Tutoring and mentoring, and especially access to female mentors where possible, should be looked at systematically.

Internally, school clubs play a critical role in enabling children to learn from each other and share lessons or challenges with peers e.g. on issues of HIV/AIDS, disability and child rights to create

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<sup>52</sup> This model is used by CAMFED in Zambia.

awareness through drama and poetry. To be as effective as possible clubs need to be small and well moderated and funded. In some instances, clubs that are currently funded by parental contributions may need additional support to achieve their objectives; some clubs are moving towards giving support to OVCs, the cost of which is beyond such voluntary contributions and risks rendering these clubs unsustainable.

### **Other Incentives for parents and children to continue education post-basic**

Without a reason to complete basic education, the barrier to dropping out of school is low, especially for vulnerable children, such as girls who can easily be married early or may be more 'valuable' working at home, or boys who are sent to work on farms/with animals. A critical way to increase the perceived (and real) value of basic education is to improve children's chances of seeing that education as a critical building block to a better life, greater income generation options or education. As such, improving opportunities for children to access secondary education or gain skills after completion of basic education will create greater incentives for them to stay in basic education and complete it. One example is multi-level scholarship scheme that sees vulnerable students supported throughout the education cycle from basic to high school and tertiary level<sup>53</sup>. The provision of loans and training to start businesses on completion of basic school is also a growing area of focus, particularly for adolescent girls.

### **Measures to address distance to secondary school**

The findings indicate that for many children the only way they can access secondary school (and sometimes second cycle primary) is to move in to towns and stay in rented accommodation or boarding schools where they exist. However, many parents cannot afford the costs involved, and they are concerned about the safety and security of their children, especially girls. One obvious route is to upgrade primary schools to include secondary level also. Target areas where there is particularly high dropout, or where there are known groups of vulnerable children.

**School- and community-run hostels** Where children have to stay in towns, the issue has been successfully addressed in other countries through upgrading schools to include a second cycle and through school- and community-run hostels.<sup>54</sup> The key is to put child protection at the centre of the design and execution. These small hostels would provide safe, low-cost accommodation for girls or boys near schools (particularly secondary schools). Cheaper, more flexible and more socially acceptable than boarding schools or renting a room in a house, they can present a better option for families who are keen for their children to go to secondary school but cannot afford the other options.

A pilot programme to this end could be undertaken to see how pastoralist communities respond to the intervention and to find mechanisms to ensure sustainability by encouraging community ownership and management of the hostels.

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<sup>53</sup> The Forum for African Women educationalists in Zambia (FAWEZA) recognises the cost of education as a barrier to girls education. Since 2005, it has been implementing a multi-level scholarship scheme that is interlinked from basic to high school and to tertiary level. A total of 23,693 scholarships at all three levels were awarded between 2005-2009. The scholarship package at Basic and High School levels include fees, uniform, sanitary and personal hygiene, comfort kits, Study Groups, club experience, and where necessary, safe accommodation.

<sup>54</sup> In parts of Southern Africa (e.g Zimbabwe and Zambia) through UNICEF, SCFUK and Camfed. They are reputedly very effective.

## Special Needs Education

Despite a government policy of inclusive education for children with special needs, they remain amongst the most marginalised, and inclusiveness is still at an embryonic stage. To a large extent, activities, services and interventions are left to NGOs and church groups to provide.

There is considerable variation in approach, which needs to be made more uniform. For example, in SNNPR children with sight and hearing impairments are not considered disabled and are supposed to be in mainstream schools, in Gambella there are virtually no facilities for special needs, while in rural Somali where there is greater acceptance of disability, parents bring children to school, and schools accept them into mainstream classes.

On the demand side, there is need for greater awareness and incentives for parents to bring special needs children to school, while on the supply side, schools need to make arrangements and prepare the school, teachers and students to accept such children. On the supply side there is evidence that some schools are open to accepting children with disability but do not know what to do, and don't have the resources to support such children. Creative use of the School Grant Programme would go some way towards promoting inclusiveness e.g. schools that implemented affirmative action plans on special needs would have access to greater funds and rewards than schools that don't.

A pilot project that could be developed is the placement of a trained teacher in SNE at a cluster school to help the rest of the teachers and ABE facilitators under the cluster to get awareness on SNE and how to approach the children with special needs.

There is need for regional strategies to be developed and disseminated, and a monitoring system for its implementation established. Regions need to provide advice on implementation of the National strategy on special needs to overcome the current ad hoc situation.

## Supply side Issues

None of the other incentives discussed above will amount to much if quality and child protection are not at the centre. The findings of the study indicate that there are pockets of demand and commitment to education even amongst hardest to reach children, such as pastoralists, working children and orphans. But if their children are not receiving any measurable benefit from their time in school, most parents will quickly make the cost-benefit decision to withdraw them and seek marriage or income generation/work, from which the returns are more immediate and easier to quantify.

Quality education does not necessarily require high levels of investment in infrastructure, though this can also be important, especially in remote and historically underserved areas. School supplies and teacher training are critical (which GEQIP seeks to address). Access to local and female teachers is also critical, though often unattainable in the short term.

More investment needs to be made in what communities and children define as quality education and what results they seek. This will vary depending on the context and the circumstances of the children and the needs could be met by either formal schools or ABECs.

**Improving infrastructure, facilities and supplies** Supply side issues such as school supplies (papers, text books, guide books for teachers, materials), absence of

teachers, quality of education, class size, or indeed, poor or no buildings/furniture are commonplace and need to be continuously addressed by GEQIP. In some instances communities and schools are trying to address these issues within their means (borrowing books, teacher guides, teaching under trees in Somali). In Amhara however, overcrowding is a factor influencing poor learning by children and as a result parents ask that children repeat classes, or withdraw children from schools, or children themselves drop out fearing failures at higher grades. These issues, which are a key aspect of GEQIP, need continuous support along with access to sanitation, toilets and water is also a factor needing attention.

### **Building critical capacity**

#### ***In schools and ABECs***

Teachers need to be sensitive to non-educational needs that impact schooling and to have the skills to talk to troubled or marginalised children. The Induction Programme for teachers, which is part of the continuous professional development (CPD), should be strengthened to incorporate awareness of teachers on other needs (food, shelter, health, family conditions, etc.) of children and available means of supporting them.

Technical capacity building for school authorities involved in OVC support should be developed to encourage a more holistic response to the needs of these (often traumatised) children, and not just a sectoral approach. Where they exist (such as urban areas) schools need to be actively engaged with a network of support agencies. Where other services are not available (many rural areas) there will be need to develop initiatives that may be funded through other available sources or the School Grant Programme.

#### ***Of local officials***

Local officials of all services and government agencies need to have the capacity to understand, analyse and respond to the needs of vulnerable children. Their ability to interact with children and communities and to work in partnership with other services must be enhanced to ensure that children receive appropriate and coordinated services. This is particularly critical for high-risk groups of children, such as orphans, who need support from many services if they are to succeed. Furthermore, fiscal decentralisation needs to be supported with adequate training to local officials if it is to succeed. The support of the Ministry of Women and Children at regional and woreda level may also be engaged.

### **Community groups and participation**

While PTAs and other community-school linkages feature in a number of areas and NGO-led programmes, they need to be a more systematic feature of the school system. Community involvement in ABECs also needs to be enhanced. Experience shows that it is critical to involve parents in formal and State schools such that they feel a strong sense of trust and ownership of these schools<sup>55</sup>. Complementary to this is to engage local women in the process both to encourage greater participation by women in schools and in communities, but also to tap into their knowledge

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<sup>55</sup> Experience from northern Nigeria where girls attend some form of education but more often it is Islamic or community based education, points to the sense of ownership parents' feel for the schools as a key feature. They understand what their daughters are learning and believe that it will reinforce community ethics and mores.

about the issues girls' face in their communities. Community participation also enhances accountability, transparency and responsiveness to communities.

Community groups have a particularly important role to play in helping schools and ABECs reach vulnerable children, identifying those children in greatest need (e.g. candidates for bursaries) and by ensuring that those children are monitored and supported in and around the school or centre.

If community-school linkages are to improve and if community groups are to support inclusion and the education of children generally, then there must investment in building the capacity of community groups to participate in decision making and in representing the needs of children in the community.

In particular, investment in women's capacity to participate fully in these groups and to take leadership roles is important. This could include adult education opportunities, properly designed, staffed and resourced, for women to increase their literacy levels and confidence to participate in community decision-making forums.

## **Conclusion**

The draft ESDP IV seeks to address a number of policy issues, particularly distance to school and equity issues. The plans outlined in that strategy have the potential to meet a number of the challenges seen through this study and combined with the above recommendations should go a considerable way towards greater inclusion in education. If the social challenges are not addressed and innovative strategies are not employed to reach the most vulnerable children, a generation of children will be lost to the education system, the millennium development goals will not be met, and new social challenges will emerge.

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