

## **“Child Based Education Increasing Learner Participation in Creating Child Friendly Schools in the Rukungiri District”**

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Batch 7

### **Summary of the project**

The project is based in the Rukungiri District. It is being carried out in three schools: Nyakibale, Kyatoko and Kasorora. The schools are in the outskirts of the town of Rukungiri in South-western Uganda.

The project aims at increasing learners' participation in creating child friendly schools in order:

- To help children participate in the taking of major decisions affecting their learning.
- To raise the awareness of their rights and responsibilities and how to practice them.
- To help teachers, parents and other stakeholders to stop corporal punishment and look for alternatives like guidance and counselling for better schools.

### **Challenges on the organizational level**

Education system is examination oriented. School performance is judged according to grades in national examinations. School heads and teachers are preoccupied with curriculum coverage and extensive revisions, which allow little freedom of participation to the learners. There is less attention to other aspects of education like extracurricular activities, which provide opportunities for social interaction and life skills. At school the teacher pupil ratio is high (1:50 in Rukungiri). School supplies like textbooks, furniture and other materials are inadequate. Deployment of teachers is complicated due to the lack of housing for school staff and large classes and inappropriate environment make teaching difficult. The project activities require a lot of time and funding. Organizing meetings and holding radio programmes require funds that are not easily provided. We have depended on our own resources and this is rather constraining.

### **Challenges of social, cultural or religious nature**

Creating child friendly schools requires knowledge, understanding and application of the CRC. The application of the CRC in schools forces a challenge of negative culture (socio-religious) attitudes. Teachers and parents who are brought up under restrictive cultural norms find it difficult to avoid corporal punishments as way of enforcing discipline. The biblical adage “spare the rod and

spoil the child” is used to justify corporal punishment. The right to provision remains a big challenge because of poverty. Learners cannot get basic needs like proper clothing, adequate food and scholastic materials. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed to increase the poverty levels and created child headed families that cannot cater for the right to provision and protection. Parents and teachers still want to control children and this limits children participation in the decision making both at home and at school. It is fair to say that there have been a number of challenges we had to face while trying to disseminate child rights, classroom and school management in our area; however, despite of these obstacles, the project was received well and it is taking its course quickly. We hope for positive fruits soon