

Chronological account of the REPLICA program

1. Program development (2005-2006)

The REPLICA project is grounded in the 2002 GOU policy response to the educational challenges of the protracted violence in Northern Uganda. Government recognized those challenges as major constraints to its ambitious UPE policy pursuit Nationally, but more specifically in Northern and Eastern Uganda. UPE had progressed for 10 years and yet the North was embroiled in vicious conflict that had disrupted all essential social services. To effectively respond, the policy on education for all in conflict areas was enacted. REPLICA was a programmatic actualization of this policy. Project conceptualization kicked off under MoES/BEPS III Project in a participatory process involving several local and international partners.

The effort was led by the SNE Department of MoES under the leadership of Commissioner Martin Loichan Omagor. The program envisaged specialized set of interventions that would support the teaching and learning of the core examinable subjects. Peace Education was proposed as a primary prevention to the pervasive culture of violence that had been entrenched in the region because of the prolonged exposure to violence and Psychosocial support as a rehabilitative response to the wide spread psycho-trauma in the communities. Given the weak state of the mental health services, it was necessary to make basic services available within the schools and learning centers to fast track a population wide effect. Peace materials were sourced by MoES from partners and subjected to a competitive review process. The materials were then standardized by the MoES for National use. Other dimensions deemed critical were leadership, community participation, special interest groups and use of performing arts or both instruction and therapeutic purposes. In a meeting in Lira, discussed the proposed intervention and coined the acronym "REPLICA", which was to become the defining feature of the first GoU response to the educational malaise in Northern Uganda.

Before the program could be approved for wide implementation, it had to meet basic efficacy and effectiveness tests and was therefore subjected to pilot testing. The pilot focused on feasibility, prospects of integration within the crowded school programs, community interest, acceptability by implementers, user friendliness of the upgraded training materials and readers, and other dimensions. MoES, Local Governments and PTCs selected 30 schools to pilot the program. The pilot schools included the best, worst and displaced primary schools from the original 10 participating districts. The pilot run from July 2005 to July 2006, commencing with a baseline study and sub regional trainings running concurrently, over a month, with school level support by selected IPs including Pincer, FAWE (for Promoting Girls' Education), Sharon Cox (for Community Integration), and Teamline (for Performing Arts in Learning).

The immediate program success in terms of the evident transformation inspired the MoES decision to scale it up to all the war affected and government aided schools in Northern Uganda. USAID/Uganda through BEPS III commissioned an evaluation by Dr. Mark Lynd¹ in order to prepare for expansion to 1,700 schools in 2007. He recommended scale up through TDMS after amendments to books, M&E culture, coverage, baseline, DEO involvement, review of School Based Training, mechanism for evaluating subcontractor capacity etc.

¹ http://www.sts-international.org%2FResearch_reports_instl_mats%2FSTS_report_REPLICA-Uganda_evaluation_Creative_Associates_final.pdf

2. Scale up (2007-2011)

Preliminary phase (January-June 2007)

Following the successful 2005/6 piloting of REPLICA program and subsequent scale up decision, a three year \$1.2 m contract was signed between CAII and Pincer (in Nov 2006) for series of activities in the key dimensions of the REPLICA intervention. Among them were, training master trainers, training teachers to teach peace education, establish psychosocial support/G & C services in 2000 schools, strengthening leadership and governance structures and practices in targeted schools; strengthening community participation in education services and use of performing arts in learning. At the same time, 18 months contracts were signed between CAII and FAWE, and CAII and EUPEC of Aga Khan. The promotion of Girls' Education in all districts and schools excluding 48 schools in Kitgum was assigned to FAWE-Uganda while EUPEC tested ECD materials in 48 schools in Kitgum district.

Prior to the signing of the contract, TPGIL was subjected to a systems review by CAII; this was undertaken by Mr. Alain Leca. The systems review was followed by an iterated process of development of the core project documents including the REPLICA work plan, PMP, log frame, school review tools, data collection formats, M & E framework and tools, team building, development of an overall education strategy for the North and systematic policy review. MoES/UNITY vetted and approved these documents, and officially introduced Pincer Group to the 13 beneficiary districts of Northern and Eastern Uganda.

In December 2007, as part of the preparatory phase, MoES, UNITY, Pincer and FAWE reviewed and upgraded all the REPLICA books and training guides to prepare them for printing and distribution in beneficiary schools. The review aimed at making the content easier and more accessible to pupils; error free and acceptable to the key stakeholders including agreement on the color code. Pincer developed the Master Facilitators Guide and overhauled the PALS resource book. In January 2007, the books were field-tested in schools in the North, field experiences were documented and comments used for further review of the REPLICA materials. MoES/UNITY printed the REPLICA books and mandated Pincer to work with PTCs to distribute them to all schools in Northern Uganda. In Feb 2007, Pincer briefed MoES/SNE about the progress of the program. UNITY led a baseline study covering 13 districts, four (4) core PTCs, and 101 CC schools. Staffs of MoES, UNITY, Pincer, FAWE and EUPEC participated in the study. Pincer carried out a baseline survey for an additional 690 schools selected by MoES in conjunction with PTCs and districts.

During the same period, a number of [national, regional, sub-regional and district level] consultations were held with key stakeholders to standardize expectations and define the scope of the project. The implementation framework, mechanisms, and arrangements were discussed and stakeholder roles and responsibilities were also clarified before onset of field activities. During the same process, the implementation plans were discussed, regional and district specific targets were refined and implementation teams and modalities were also agreed upon.

As part of the formal scientific evaluation process, Pincer carried out a baseline survey of 690 pre-selected schools. The pre-selection was done by the MoES in conjunction with PTCs and respective districts. This data was to be used to facilitate measurement of change and transformation over the project life.

After the completion of the baseline survey, Pincer proceeded to train 172 Master Trainers who included DEOs, DIS, DPOs, CCTs, selected pre-service tutors, and selected Head teachers. This activity was by design to institutionalize the training capacity within TDMS. The master trainers were made aware of and equipped with knowledge and skills concerning the program design, content and delivery. At the end of this training, teams were constituted along with plans of cascading the training to school level under supervision of the Pincer trainers. In addition to the master trainers, Pincer also trained 1700 head teachers, creating awareness about the program, its expectations and their roll in the rollout and implementation.

Roll out/initiation

When capacity for rollout was built and the necessary logistical frame work was put in place, 8500 teachers (five (5) teachers per school from each of the 1700 schools) were trained. The teachers learnt how to be leaders; teach peace education in an integrated manner; provide psychosocial care to pupils; involve, sensitize, and reach out to parents and community members; create and demonstrate gender sensitive learning environments, and use memorable, entertainment to communicate REPLICA program content. This training was led by the master trainers was support of the Pincer Team. The training spanned a period of 3 months.

Consolidation

After successful completion of the school level training, Pincer and CCTs supported head teachers and teachers to introduce the REPLICA components within their schools. The process would begin with a participatory school wide audit, followed by action planning for school level implementation and follow up. Participants of the schools audits included, parents, teachers, the CCT, SMCs and other relevant actors within the school catchment. The audits focused on the current status of the school in the six areas of interest.

In the last quarter of 2007, Uganda hosted the Common Wealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Public institutions would not be accessible to Pincer. Consequently, Pincer developed and adopted a community engagement model incorporating regional, sub regional, district, CC and school level engagement and applicable at any time of the year, independent of systemic constraints. MoES approved the concept.

The community engagements generated commitment to action from stakeholders following presentation of statistics using MoES League Tables with implications pointed at enrolment, attendance, completion, performance and Girls' Education.

In Koch Goma, Amuru District then the communities spawned the idea of an Education Charter. They demanded to have laws in place to tackle adverse human behavior in the delivery of education services.

In the same year TPGI began to involve community members in school audits aimed at exposing reality of the school setting and causing change. The school audits covered nine (9) dimensions including the Head Teachers office, the administration records, classrooms, G&C service, compound, thematic curriculum implementation, library space, pupil involvement and staffroom. The REPLICA components were thread through the nine aspects and tracked accordingly.

During school visits, Pincer staffs involved pupils in reflective practice using a three question guide:

- What do you want to be in future?
- What causes war?
- What keeps children out of school?

During the school visits, girls of P5-P7 were engaged on issues related to their education and general growth. In 2008, all head teachers were retrained because the routine staff transfers by districts had disorganized the smooth implementation of the planned project activities. The trainings were done during the monthly meetings of the head teachers. UNITY required that REPLICA focuses on 707 model schools. CCT were facilitated to follow up the implementation of REPLICA in schools, identifying gaps in professionalism and work with school heads and teachers to fix them. Each CCT wrote a report to the DPO who gave a copy to Pincer. The M&E department of Pincer followed up the work of CCTs in schools.

Pincer focused on engagements at sub regional and CC level. Based on the issues raised, Pincer drafted the first bill for the Committees on Social Services to discuss and engaged the district local governments to discuss it and enact laws. At the same time Pincer wrote, from the field point of view, the 8-step process for developing the education ordinances. Arua district, outside of the REPLICA catchments heard about the ordinance development process, adopted it, requested technical support and finalized theirs in record time.

In June 2008, 340 Local Government leaders and staffs, convened and attended the first ever Gulu Education Summit and developed the Costed Education Blueprint, which contains the priorities of the local governments, UN agencies and NGOs. The 40 leaders of the PRDP region which includes the REPLICA catchments, signed the Education Charter. The President of Uganda promised a national response in two (2) months. As a first step to affirm their commitment to education, all the districts have increased their local budgetary allocations to the education sector.

As part of promoting psychosocial healing and restoration of regional pride, Pincer inaugurated the first ever Hall of Fame for pioneer achievers and trailblazers in education during the Summit. This was an extension of the psychosocial support dimension of the REPLICA program. Plaques were given to the identified persons as educational models and mentors for the region. From the Summit, Local Governments began to demand for the scale up of REPLICA to 40 districts as the software of choice for the educational rehabilitation of the PRDP region. This choice was predicated on the previous experiences and success of the project.

USAID and other development partners supported the model of the Education Blueprint as the approach to support programs. In Q4 of 2008, UNITY and Pincer carried out a strategic review of the REPLICA program with the different partners. The SWOT analysis of program was conducted with the view of making the program even better. The S08 evaluation² by USAID and UMEMS recommended that REPLICA is evaluated separately before scale up to 40 districts.

In the same time, Pincer begun working on the Exit Strategy for the REPLICA program. In 2009, with guidance from UNITY, the program focus was concentrated on 202 schools that were the first batch to be trained by the master trainers. During the same time Pincer continued with CC level engagements.

² http://www.pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACO346.pdf

Pincer developed and applied the District-wide Education Strategy (DWES) and tested it in Amuru district in April 2009. It involved a one-week long engagement of district politicians and technocrats, head teachers and PTC staffs in topical discussion concerning “what we did well in the previous year”, “what we did not do well in the previous year” and “what we shall do to improve”. It involved fact-finding school visits and leaders’ assurance of support to head teachers and teachers. The climactic event was at Amuru Alero P/S which NUTI has renovated. From that event annual target setting for PLE performance in all districts started in earnest. Schools received the target and proposed improvement strategies and implemented them. PLE first grade scores for Amuru rose from 1 in 2008 to 25 in 2009. The model was applied in all other REPLCA Program Districts with resounding success in PLE in 2010

REPLICA program files were distributed to all schools as part of documenting at school level the memory of the program. The files contained key program documents and the commitments from the District-wide Education Strategy reviews. Pincer also participated in the regional Consolidation Workshops organized by UNITY and commenced the development of the Concept for the REPLICA Option Period.

Requests to UNITY to authorize the evaluate the status of the schools in 2009 in comparison to the baseline were denied. The program continued to run in the field on its own momentum from October 2009 to March 2010 as Pincer was out of a formal contract. Pincer continued to engage with UNITY on refining the REPLICA Option Period Concept. In March 2010, Pincer signed the contract for the activated REPLICA Option Period worth \$0.85m to consolidate the gains of the REPLICA program from the first three years. Program retained components but with approval of CAII, focus shifted to quality of learning and participation by all stakeholders in the framework of the six components.

Pincer deployed seven Education Advisors salaried by REPLICA Program to support schools and their surrounding communities directly on a daily basis by Core PTC catchment. Adopted and introduced reflective thinking for teachers. Carried out CC-level community engagements in Bududa and Bukedea to generate data for the Education Bills for the districts. This was to aid the education ordinance formulation process. Tracked the deliberations, perusal, signing, gazetting and dissemination concerning Education Ordinances in other districts. Continued with community engagements at district, CC, and school level. Conducted M&E visits to schools, PTCs and districts

Worked with UNITY IPs (Madarasa Resource Centre, Uganda National Teachers Union, Straight Talk Foundation and Link Community Development) in coordinating activities to be carried out through PTCs. In 2011, continued with the strategies of 2011 and activated Sub regional Forums for Acholi, Lango and Teso who’s Interim Committees were elected and are functional. Mr. Uma Charles, ACAO Gulu; Mr. Billy Okunyu, DEO Apac, and Mr. Etoy Michael, DEO Soroti are the respective Chairpersons of the Interim Committees. Disseminate the Gulu, Apac, Kaberamaido and Soroti Education Ordinances. Will disseminate the Education Ordinances for Kitgum, Pader, Dokolo, Amuru, Oyam, Amuria, Bududa and Bukedea in August 2011

Close out

Carried out REPLICA closeout events for Acholi and Lango. The closeout in Teso will happen on Monday August 7th, 2011. Coordinated the USAID/REPLICA-TDY visit.

Summary of Key outputs

#	Area	Outputs	Number
1	Policy	Adopted Education strategy for the North	1
		Disseminated compendium of key education policies and laws	40
		Drafted ordinances	15
		Gazetted education ordinances	9
		Blueprint for education recovery of Northern and eastern Uganda	1
		Education Charter	1
		District wide education improvement model	1
		School wide model	1
		Community engagement model	1
		Trained education officials	2,398
		Trained DEOs/DISs	40
2	Training capacity	Master trainers	208
		Teachers trained in REPLICA	11,866
		Teachers trained at school level in Reflective practice	12,460
		REPLICA Trainer manual	1
		Teachers followed in thematic curriculum & child friendly approaches	4,383
3	Learning teaching materials	Revised teaching/learning material	
		Peace education	4
		Leadership and governance	1
		Community resource	1
		PALs book	1
		Girls education book	1
		Psychosocial support guide	1
		Master trainer guide	1
		Schools supplied with REPLICA books	1,886
		Books given out	At least 100,000
4	Community dialogue	Education task forces	101
		Community meetings	At least 500
		Parents directly reached and engaged under REPLICA	
		SMCs directly reached under REPLICA	
		Schools demonstrating community support	1551
		Schools with functional SMCs	
5	Schools level support	Schools reached with hands on support	1746
		Pupils directly reached with REPLICA	1,766,976