

Elyce Hornor
Marketing and Communication Officer/ Eco-Tourism Project Officer
Lake Bunyonyi Development Company, Uganda
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YVID Assignment #2

Goal Four: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

1. What do you think are the entry points for achieving this goal in your host country?
2. What recommendations would you make for achieving this goal in your host country?
3. How do you believe that goal four relates to goal five, "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"?

Education in Uganda/ Summary of the Goal and Targets

Education is one of the clearest signs of moving beyond poverty. It is one of the first steps we take when we want to change our role in society and when we want to improve our own lives. The average Canadian, if she was not content with her life would most likely seek higher education. If you don't like your job or if you want something better in life, more education is what you naturally lean towards. But what if higher education isn't an option? What if 'lower' education isn't even an option? That is the case for many people all over the world and it needs to be addressed.

Goal four of the SDG's is to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." In Uganda there is free primary education. In theory any student can attend the equivalent of elementary school for free. Unfortunately, free doesn't mean that students can always attend school. Going to school often requires a school uniform, food, and transportation. Many families do not have the disposable income to purchase these things and other families live beyond walking distance from these 'free' schools. Free secondary education is even harder to find here. As important as primary education is, it is not really until secondary school that students really begin to learn the skills that allow them to enter a highly competitive job market. All the targets of Goal four have yet to be reached here. Therefore, it is important to consider entry points for improving the education system in Uganda.

Entry Points in Uganda and Recommendations:

Improvement of the primary education system is the first entry point I see in Uganda. It is important that uniforms, food and transportation are accessible to all students. I would recommend that more funding be put towards primary education so that schools are able to provide nutritious meals for students, as well as uniforms and transportation to and from school. I recently visited a school with 600 students and met fewer than 15 teachers. In order to improve primary education there must also be an increase in number of schools and an increase in the number of teachers per student. Many of my co-workers here spend the majority of their monthly salary on their children's education. Quality education is something that Ugandan's truly want and know they need. This provides an accessible entry point for achieving Goal Four.

A second potential entry point here would be related to vocational training schools. There is a need for an increase in the number of vocational training schools and an increase in the number of topics that are taught at these schools. It seems that most vocational schools teach only simple carpentry, tailoring and occasionally tourism/ guiding. There is a need for more complex skills to be taught, even at this basic level. I

would recommend that partnership is built up between universities and colleges in the more developed world. This would potentially improve the quality of education in Uganda while simultaneously improving the quality of education elsewhere.

The third key entry point I see is with the expectation held for teachers here. I would recommend putting in place a more stringent set of expectations for teachers as well as creating opportunities for teachers to have further training free of charge. One of my Ugandan friends suggested that this was highly important as his friends who did not even graduate were now teachers. If students are going to truly learn it is necessary that people who have a certain level of knowledge and education are teaching them. Putting funding towards teaching schools and short term learning opportunities for teachers has potential to massively impact the quality of education in Uganda.

Goal Four in relation to Goal Five:

While visiting a nearby school we asked students what their career ambitions were. While they were all quite ambitious, one wanting to be a doctor, another wanting to be president of Uganda, the majority of the girls stated that they wanted to be tailors. It was the boys who had highly ambitious plans, who wanted to go to university. Meanwhile the girls seemed content to become their village's tailor, maybe attending a local vocational school if the opportunity arose. This, to me, is a major sign that there is gender equality ingrained in Uganda's education system. Boys, from a young age are empowered to go further in their education and aim for higher paying jobs and careers that give them more freedom. Changes in the education system are a key way that goal five can be achieved. The world is interconnected. Inclusive and equitable education cannot exist without gender equality.