

FULL-LENGTH ARTICLE

Education for Borena Pastoralist Community Children in Ethiopia: Practices and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The study attempted to examine the practices and challenges of education for Borena pastoralist communities' children. The theoretical conception of the study is rooted in 'education as a right for the children' and the 'indigenous epistemology' perspectives. The concurrent nested strategy of mixed research design with data collected from multiple sources using multiple tools has been used. Results of the study indicated that the pastoralist community members see schooling in terms of the livestock possession and herding: where schooling children means losing livestock and losing the livestock means losing the very self of the community. The community adopted various adult-centric solutions such as rotational enrollment and turn-based attendance which are not commensurate with the children's right concerns. The opportunity cost of schooling tended to define it all. Children's right to education is not even part of the discourse. The finding implicates that there is a need to diversify the education delivery approach and pay attention to the relevance of the system to the pastoralist community. Education development should be conceptualized within the broader pastoralist area development agenda. And children's right to education need to be popularized among the pastoralist community.

Keywords: Borena; Children; Curriculum; Pastoralist; Relevance of education; Rights to Education

INTRODUCTION

Education for all has been a vital agenda for Ethiopia since the 1963 Addis Ababa Conference of the then free African states. The conference decided the year 1980 to be a milestone to achieve universal primary education. However, Ethiopia's progress towards education for all lagged far behind by the target year, like most of the Sub-Saharan countries who signed the agreement. Ethiopia has re-committed itself to the 1990 Jomtien and the 2000 Dakar targets which declared education for all by 2015 as a principal agenda. Though official reports indicated good progress, global monitoring reports disclosed that Ethiopia has not achieved the target (UNESCO, 2015). The reality on the ground (beyond the official statistics) is more telling that the country is far behind when the educational situations of children in emerging regions (i.e. the low land peripheral areas); those with disabilities; the urban and rural poor are concerned. Even in the agricultural highlands (i.e. the center); the effort to achieve the target of education for all with limited resources and the challenging living situation for the children made it very difficult that schooling could not result in learning (MoE, 2016). Ethiopia has also committed itself to the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) - the fourth goal of which underscores equity: 'ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all.

One of the most important concerns with regards to the successful provision of schooling to all children is the issue of children's right to education and governments' obligations to realize that.

Regarding this, Tomasevski (2003) states, from the human rights perspectives, governments are obliged to make education available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable for the children (i.e. the 4A's scheme). This scheme covers the whole continuum of supply of and demand for education. It underscores that governments are obliged to construct a school and run them for free at least during the primary years. It is also concerned with governments' obligation to make sure that the kind of school program availed to children is that which they wish to be served (e.g. in terms of relevance to their life problems) and that it is appreciative of the children's identities; ways of life; values; etc. Masino and Nino-Zarazu'a (2016) strengthen the same when they write supply-side interventions (i.e. availing schools) alone are less effective than when complemented by community participation or incentives that shift preferences and behaviors (i.e. the demand for educational services). According to these researchers, supply-side interventions need to be supplemented by interventions that target improving demand for education including various incentive systems and (bottom-up) community participation. This has much to do with the supply of schools and improvement of the quality of children's learning among pastoralist communities where availability of educational services is a challenge and where it is equally challenging to get kids into schools. The issue of the relevance of the schools to the worldviews and knowledge systems of a community has also much to do with the meaning of school (and hence its acceptability) for that community. With this general understanding, this study deals with the issue of the educational situation of children of the Borena pastoralist communities in Ethiopia.

The Borena Oromo Community, a family of the Oromo population that constitutes over a third of the Ethiopian population, occupies Southern Ethiopia lowland bordering Northern Kenya. In fact, Northern Kenya is also occupied by the same community and "there is no such boundary" between Ethiopia and Kenya for the Borena Oromos. Named after the name of the particular Oromo family, Borana constitutes one of the 18 administrative zones in Oromia Regional State. The Zone occupies a total land area of about 63,939 km². Yabello Town, which is located 570 km away south of Addis Ababa, is the capital of Borana Zone. The Zone encompasses 13 districts. The most recent census estimates a total human population of Borena Zone to 480,000 and annual population growth rate of 2.5-3% (Homan, et al, 2003). Hence, the population estimate for 2019 is likely to be well over 700,000. The Borana Oromos are dominantly pastoralists. The livestock population in the Zone is composed of 1,771,588 cattle, 1,991,196 goats, 699,887 camels and 52,578 donkeys (CSA, 2008). The Borena cattle are more productive than other local cattle breeds, with quite high rates of reproduction, milk yield, and low mortality rate (Cossins and Upton, 1988). The Borena cattle are adapted to the arid and semiarid environment of East Africa (Haile et al., 2011); particularly the semiarid Borena rangelands (Homann et. al., 2008).

Pastoralism is an economic activity, a land-use system and a way of life for people who derive most of their income from keeping domestic livestock using feeds available in the natural environment. According to Berman (2002), pastoral communities inhabit all the habitable continents or zones of the world. In Ethiopia, pastoralists occupy the arid and semi-arid regions of the country located in lowland areas in the East, North-east, West, and South of the country. Pastoralism, as an economic activity, supports 12-15% of the over one hundred million human population of the country. As reported by Coppock (1994 cited in Desta, 2006) and REGLAP Secretariat (2012) reported, of the total livestock in the country, it is estimated that the pastoral sector raises 40% of the cattle, 75% of the goats, 25% of the sheep, 20% of the equines, and 100% of the camels. With this proportion, it is obvious that pastoralism makes a significant contribution to the national economy, employment, agricultural production, and food demand of people in Ethiopia. REGLAP Secretariat (2012) also reveals that pastoral livestock are important as a source of revenue and export earnings to support the national economy.

Despite the visible and significant role of pastoralism in the national and regional economies in Ethiopia, the sector was among the most marginalized, in terms of availability and access to public services, and development opportunities. Consequently, REGLAP Secretariat' (2012) depicts, the sector used to receive the least attention in government development programs. And, it can be

presumed, that education is one of the underdeveloped services in the pastoralist areas. There are some indicators for that including low enrollment rate; high dropout rate; and very weak completion rate (OEB, 2013/14; MoE, 2014). The few project-based efforts (e.g. through the Pastoral Community Development Project) have been trying to improve the supply side of schooling by constructing schools and providing some educational inputs, though that is far from adequate. Where supply is an outstanding problem; the demand side of schooling among these communities seems an equally important and worrying challenge. Thus, the study attempted to examine the situation of pastoralist communities' children education by taking the Borena Oromo community as a case. In so doing it (i) assessed the status of children's schooling among the case community, and (ii) identified the principal setbacks and challenges to children's schooling among the case community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

As stated earlier, this study was planned to understand the status of and the factors that impinge upon educational provision for the pastoralist community children. The concurrent nested strategy of mixed research (Creswell, 2003) was believed to be most appropriate to the very purpose of the study. According to this strategy, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected at a single-phase; yet there is one dominant method and the other method is embedded within the dominant method. Hence, in this study, the qualitative data was a dominant one with quantitative data as an embedded one. In other words, the quantitative data was used in a few cases to further substantiate data garnered through qualitative means. In the pastoralists' context education is highly interlinked with other aspects of the public life: livelihood, social activities and expectations; value for children and childrearing practices; among others. Therefore, it was felt that a mixed research design of this kind, which involves a thorough understanding of the whole research setting (and not just educational situation), is believed to be a desirable method for the study. Accordingly, data was collected from multiple sources using multiple tools, namely individual interview, group interview and three weeks of direct observation staying among the community. Documents (i.e. attendance registers) were also reviewed to get additional pieces of evidence.

Sources of data and sampling

The sources of data included leaders of the pastoralist community, primary school children, teachers and principals, education experts at District and Zone, pastoralist area education experts at Region and Federal level. Since the principal strategy of the study is qualitative and given the very nature of the quantitative data sought, no random sampling procedure was used. Instead, sources which are thought to provide rich information were taken (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Besides, accessibility was considered to select 12 primary schools (three from each of the selected Districts - Dilo, Moyale and Yaballo - of the zone) for the school visits. Accordingly, nine pastoralist leaders; six Gada officials; 12 groups of primary school children (each group having eight to ten members); 12 primary school teachers; and 12 primary school principals were taken. Besides, three education experts (i.e. one from each of the Districts); one Zonal Education Expert; and a pastoralist area education expert both at Regional and Federal level were used as sources of data. Attendance registers at the 12 schools were also reviewed to generate quantitative information on the situation of school attendance of the children.

Instruments of data collection

Individual interviews were conducted with community leaders, Gada officials, education experts, teachers and school principals. Group interviews were conducted with school children. Since the data collection process for qualitative data is expected to be flexible and emerging (Creswell, 2003) generic interview guides were prepared to facilitate the interviews. Three experts in the field of education and community development were consulted regarding the content validity of the generic interview guides. Quantitative data were used to verify two important concerns: the situation of students' attendance and the proportion of children a household sends to school. Where the first one used school attendance (i.e. kind of document analysis), the second one emerged in the interview process whereby the children and community leaders who took part in the group interviews were asked about their household members who got an opportunity for schooling. Therefore, there was no separate instrument developed for quantitative data collection.

Data analysis

Field notes were taken during all the interviews and observations (i.e. school visits). Themes emerged out of reading and re-reading of the thick notes taken during the data collection process. Themes that are said to have a meaningful connection with the objectives of the study were taken to structure the result section. Both the raw number and percentages were used to report on the quantitative results. The raw numbers were used to see the number expected (i.e. the number of pupils in the list) and the number of pupils counted in class during the school/classroom visits. Then, the two type of data (qualitative, which is a great bulk) and the quantitative data were integrated and reported.

Ethical considerations

All informants participated in the study through informed consent. No informant was persuaded or pushed, in any form, to take part in the study. Every effort was made not to expose the identity of the informants while reporting results. For these, pseudonyms were used throughout the results section. Every possible effort has been made to carefully document and objectively report the data obtained from the informants as well as from documentary sources. All sources whose ideas taken were duly acknowledged using the proper format.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented under three major themes: the principal economic activities, childhood and childhood responsibilities, and the status of children's schooling.

The Economic Context: herding-more than sources of livelihood

While herding is the principal economic activity for the pastoralist Borana population (Homann, 2005), livestock are more than just sources of livelihood. As the informants attested, it is equally a source of the community's identity. Here is a comment of an elder from Moyale District who said '*For the Borena herding is not just an economic activity. It is a matter of identity. We value our livestock more than any other thing on earth*' (Yali, a Community Leader from Dilo District). This situation indicates that it may be difficult to stop the Borena from herding by a sheer supply of alternative sources of livelihood (if at all that is possible in present-day Ethiopia). Another elder from Dilo District strengthened the same when asked about the impact of schooling on the livelihood. He said;

When there are children, they keep livestock. When there are no children, then there will be no livestock. When there is no livestock; there will be no Borena because Borena is a herder. Without our livestock, we are a different community (Jatani, a community leader from Moyale District).

Imagine how strong the feeling these two elders hold towards their livestock. These are not just the opinions of two persons; they are rather opinions of community elders through whom the prevailing attitudes of the community get an expression. Therefore, it is possible to presume that these opinions represent the dominant discourse in the community. And that schooling is felt as losing the livestock. The effort at expanding educational opportunity for pastoralist community children should start with unravelling such beliefs.

Herd mobility characterizes the dominant economic activity of this pastoralist population. Then there can be several questions including the following: where do they move? Who moves with the livestock? Are there family members who stay behind? How far do they move from the base camp (if at all there is one)? How long should they stay away from their base camp? These and similar questions were points of discussion during the fieldwork. The reason for mobility was found to be almost the same across the Borena Zone: drought, suitability for reproduction (from indigenous knowledge), and giving time for the pasture around the base camp to mature. A respondent opined that '*Livestock mobility is often in search of pasture and water. Hence, the main seasons of mobility are the extreme dry seasons and at the beginning of the main rainy time*' (Gemechis, a primary school principal from Moyale District). Therefore, in April (beginning of the major rainy season) and during any dry season mobility of the livestock is expected. This is shared by almost all respondents. Mobility does not involve the

whole households and the whole neighborhoods, however. The respondents unanimously affirmed that herd mobility is common, yet it is only some family members (including children who are capable to keep the livestock) who move. The direction of movement is mainly determined by the availability of water, pasture, and the situation of security. Duration at a place of mobility (called satellite camp) usually ranges from three to six months. When the situation at the base camp is not very harsh, some animals such as the lactating and young ones stay with the other household members (i.e. they do not move) for two reasons: one, they may need more care and two, they are sources of food for those who stay behind. Then they will be under the care of the household members (mothers and younger children) who often do not move to the satellite camps. This, added to other supplementary activities such as the small farming and in some cases, petty trade would make those who stay at base camp (home) busy throughout the year.

From discussions of the opinions of the respondents presented here, two important issues can be identified regarding the education of the pastoralist community children: one is that herding is connected to the Borena identity and schooling is seen as contradicting this. The other is the mandatory herd mobility which again does not fit with the idea of schooling in its most traditional sense. The next sub-section will take care of how this situation impact upon schooling of the pastoralist community children.

Childhood, Children's responsibilities and Schooling

Children are said to be sources of rest for their parents: the father gets rest due to his son (s), and the mother gets rest due to her daughter (s). The other is that children (particularly boys) are believed to ensure continuity of the generation. An elder said, *'If you don't have children your name will not be there after you. If you have one then you will continue to be there'* (Bedru, a Community Leader from Yaballo District). Another elder similarly opined, *'If you don't have children there will be no one who would support you during old age and no one to inherit you when you finish your days'* (Dano, a Community Leader from Moyale District). Such adult- and community-centric values emanate from the need to ensure continuity and, according to Amayo (1985), this is quite a common situation in most traditional African societies. The elders communicated a clear preference for boys particularly because boys are expected to make sure continuity of the generation. However, they still value having girl children because they support their mothers during childhood and, they are believed to bring son-in-law.

Like most African traditional societies (Amayo, 1985; Kenea, et al, 2016), Borena has its own ways of educating its offspring. The Borena elders see childhood as a time when children prepare for adult responsibilities while also taking important economic roles. Elders (fathers and mothers included) are expected to educate the children through traditional educational approaches. Asked about the reasons for traditional education the elders noted that *'We educate not to keep them deaf, it is our responsibility, so that they will not spoil or misuse resources.'* The conviction to educate their children in the traditional means is expressed in many sayings. One such saying is this: *Jibichi yeroon qabamte hin diddu!* This roughly means *a bull trained at the right time, would pull the beam of plough well (Beam of plough is a tool tied to the yolk and pulled by two oxen and used for tilling the land. It is part of the traditional farming system widely used in smallholding farms in Ethiopia)*. The traditional education the Borena parents provide their children with encompasses broad topics of economic engagement, cultural involvement and other social activities which are thought to ensure the continuity of the community's traditions and values. Here are some representative opinions on the contents of traditional education:

Herding, culture, and respecting elders for the core contents of informal family education for their children. Educators are fathers and brothers for male children and mothers for female children. (Yadeta, a former Gada Official from Yaballo District)

Contents of what families teach their children at home include good habits, respect, culture, herding, watering, and milking, among others. Educators for boys are fathers and for girls are mothers (Jabal, a former Gada Official from Moyale District)

Among the Borena such methods as showing (demonstration), advising, counselling, punishing (reprimanding), controlling, and evaluation are used to educate the children. Based on these traditional educational experiences, Borena fathers can easily identify the strengths and weaknesses of their children. Accordingly, when the local administration (i.e. the Ganda) asks them to send their children to school (by also allowing them to keep some for herding) they know whom to send to school.

Children's responsibilities

Pastoralists' economy is built on the contribution of all household members everywhere (Kratli and Dyer, 2009). This has been attested from the discussions made with the data sources: that every household member in the pastoralist community of Borena, including young children, is busy right from the day he/she starts 'walking upright.' For this, there is a clear division of responsibility for a typical household. However, depending on the size of the household and the amount of livestock they own (which is also a sign of social status), there can be some variations. Here are some typical roles for the members of households as reported by the elders as well as community leaders. The Father (or head of household) is responsible for the coordination and guiding the major economic work. For instance, he oversees the animals at the place where they are, deals with access to water points, and coordinates the whole activity. Where the elder son is matured enough (e.g. over 20 years of age), he will take this responsibility from the father - now it will be time for the father to rest. Children are also expected to take part in the activity. If the family has a good number of animals, at least three children are required: for cattle, for camel and goats, and newly born animals. These are not expected to graze together (in a field). Some children need to travel between the satellite camp and the base camp to take milk to the family at the base camp (and to take "cooked food" for those at the satellite camp). The minor economic activities (e.g. small farming near the base camp), as noted above, involve some members of the household (particularly those who stay at the base camp or home). Wives (or mothers) are normally responsible for the activities at the base camp.

Such division of labor indicates that all the members of the household of the pastoral community are fully occupied. As will be discussed in the subsequent sections, this situation will have observable repercussions on the education of children including poor enrolment, weak (inconsistent) school attendance, or early dropout.

The status of children's schooling among the case community

The Ethiopian Government takes 2.5 - 3 KM home-school distance as a standard target for the optimum physical access of schools, particularly in rural areas (MoE, 2008). In the pastoralist community that is very difficult due to the sparse settlement pattern. So, to get a reasonable number of populations to be served by a school, the schools need to be constructed at locations far apart. Regarding this, an officer at the Borena Zonal Education Department reported that the school catchment area is currently 8-10 KM in the pastoralist districts of the Zone. That means some children use the schools from a distance as far as 10 KM. Therefore, unless they stay near the schools, the children have to travel about 20 KM every day. This situation limits school attendance, particularly for younger children.

From the school observations, it was learned that both enrollment and attendance are important problems. Twelve primary schools (Grades 1-8) were visited. All of them have one section per Grade. There was a school (Bilal Primary school) where the first Grade (with 12 children) is under tree shade due to lack of classroom. A random check of attendance registers for three Grades (2nd, 4th and 6th) against the number of children in the class was made at the schools and here is the result (Table 1).

Table 1. The situation of school attendance -results from a classroom observation

Schools	Grade 2: number:		Grade 4: number:		Grade 6: number:	
	on the list	in the class	on the List	in the class	on the list	in the class
School A	21	10	19	11	16	9
School B	32	14	23	14	15	10
School C	24	13	22	10	16	7
School D	18	11	17	12	17	8
School E	26	13	16	12	22	11
School F	17	8	25	11	19	10
School G	30	17	22	8	22	8
School H	20	12	17	12	18	9
School I	19	9	25	13	17	11
School J	32	18	18	13	21	10
School K	29	17	27	9	20	9
School L	22	12	20	12	18	8

In Ethiopia, 50 children per class is considered to be the “optimum class-size” the Government has targeted to achieve (MoE, 2002). This comes from the fact that the number of children per class is exceedingly high, sometimes it is not uncommon to see 80-100 children packed into one class in schools found in sub-urban or densely populated areas. Against that, the number of children enrolled at the schools visited which was almost less than 30 per class indicates the enrollment is very low by Ethiopian standard. The data presented in Table 1 revealed high absenteeism (big gap between the number on the list and number available in a class by the time of the visit). Dropout from the system seems high because the number of children in class decreases as the Grade level increases. In fact, in one of the schools the data collectors witnessed that there was only one student in Grade 8 who was preparing to take the regional examination. This shows a very weak state of the internal efficiency of the system. The subsequent section will try to provide some explanations for this situation.

Another attempt made to understand the extent to which children got the opportunity for schooling was by asking the respondents what proportion of children in their household were schooled. The interviewed children were asked about the number of school-age brothers and sisters they have and the number of those sent to school out of the reported number of brothers/sisters. In total, 108 children who took part in the group interviews from the 12 schools responded to this question as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The reported number of brothers/sisters vs. number attended school

Number of children in the household	Number of Children who attended school per household (i.e. frequencies)								Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Four (4) per household	1	4	1						6
Five (5) per household	6	3	5	1					15
Six (6) per household	8	4	6	5					23
Seven (7) per household	4	5	6	6	3	3	1		28
Eight (8) per household	5	1	6	4	1	1			18
Nine (9) per household				5	1	1		1	8
Ten (10) per household				3	1			1	5
Eleven (11) per household	1			1					2
Twelve (12) per household	1		1						2
Thirteen (13) per household					1				1
Total	26	17	25	25	7	5	1	2	108

The result indicates that in most cases the number of brothers/sisters reported having got the opportunity to be enrolled at school is less than half. For instance, out of the six (6) households that

were reported to have four (4) school-age children each, one (1) of them sent only one (1), four(4) of them sent only two(2) and the other one(1) sent one child to school. That means none of them sent all their school-age children to school. In general, while the reported number of school-age children in the households ranged from four to thirteen; about 86% (i.e. 93 of the 108 households) of them sent four (4) or fewer children to school. In fact, the worst scenario is a situation where out of 13 brothers/sisters only one (1) has been allowed to go to school. Self-report from the local elders and community leaders (i.e. the key informants) also affirm the same. Here is a result organized from data obtained from nine (9) of the key informants (Table 3):

Table 3. Key informants' (community leaders') self-report on the number of children sent to school

Key Informant	District	Number of children	Number sent to school	Percent	Grade level Achieved (relative to 'number sent to school')
Dano	Moyale	4	2	50	Grades 4 & 7
Jatani	Moyale	5	3	60	Grades 4 & 12, BSc
Dafa	Moyale	6	1	17	Grade 3
Jallan	Dilo	6	1	17	Grade 4
Yali	Dilo	7	2	28	Grade 10, Diploma (10+3)
Nuru	Dilo	7	2	28	Grades & 4
Toltu	Yaballo	8	3	37	Diploma, BSc.
Bedri	Yaballo	10	4	40	Grades 4, 5, 6 & 10
Yaya	Yaballo	16	4	25	Grade 10, Diploma, BSc.

Elders and community leaders are considered the most informed members of the community. Even with them (as reported in Table 3) it is only two out of nine of them who sent 50% (or above) of their children to school. The worst scenario reported here is a situation in which only 1 out of 6 children has got the opportunity to be enrolled at school. An expert from Moyale District (Dandena) attributes this mainly to the economic activity of the pastoralists which is labor-intensive. He opined; *'There is no means for our pastoralist community to send all its children to school unless we pay attention to running stronger alternative basic education programs'* (Guyo, then Education Expert at Moyale Education Office). The Grade level achieved also indicates that the completion rate is very weak: only a few of them could proceed to higher education.

Interventions made to improve access to schooling for pastoralist community children

The District education offices (with the Zone Education Department) use multiple education delivery approaches. These are formal schools, satellite schools (affiliated with a formal school), alternative basic education centers, and adult education delivery.

- Alternative basic education (ABE) is mainly for out of school children who can attend class only during the evening (and in exceptional cases during weekends). These are conducted (run) in formal schools or huts built by the community for the same purpose. As the children pass the day at faraway places, ABE classes likely start at about eight PM in the evening. It is possible to imagine how difficult this arrangement would be for the working children.
- Satellite schools are the ones meant to bring early Grade classes closer to the community. Managerially, they are supported by and affiliated to a formal school. The teachers are either formally trained teachers or paraprofessionals hired from among the community.
- Adult education is for adults who want to study on their initiative. These are facilitated either by teachers of formal schools or by facilitators hired for the same purpose or even volunteer literates from among the community.

The Districts and the Zone education experts reported that both the ABE and the adult education programs in the pastoralist communities are not as strong as those in highland (or settled farming) communities of the Zone. For instance, the ABE program lacks any clear guidelines and there are no textbooks and reference materials to be used for the same. Satellite schools are very weak mainly because of a lack of students as well as a lack of clear mode of operation. Innovations such as mobile schools and mediated distance education programs, which are used in many countries to increase

access among pastoral communities (Downie, 2011), are not among the mechanisms used to improve access to education to pastoralists in Borena Zone.

Determinants of schooling among the case community

There is a push (supply-related) and pull (demand-related) factors that deter schooling among the particular pastoralist community. According to Masino and Nino-Zarazu´a (2016), improving the supply alone cannot make an observable difference in schooling. There has to be equal attention to improving the demand for schooling. This part of the paper considered determinants of schooling among the particular pastoralist community from the viewpoint of both supply and demand variables.

(i) Supply-related factors

In Ethiopia, there is an understanding that primary schools belong to the host community and the Government's role is largely hiring teachers and providing some basic facilities - like textbooks, tool kits, in-service training of teachers, and the like. While there is an allocation of some recurrent budget, the expectation is that the local community needs to support the operation of the school from its means; without charging the child anything. So, it is possible to say, in Ethiopia primary school is free for the child but not for the community. That is why communities are expected to make in cash and in-kind contributions to run the primary schools. That means schools in an economically better neighborhood are more likely to be better than schools in impoverished neighborhoods. Pastoralist communities are highly challenged in terms of maintaining their livelihoods let alone supporting the operation of schools. As a result, the pastoralist community schools we visited were unattractive. The water they harvest during the short rainy season does not last more than three months; toilets are not separate for boys and girls in most cases; no library (or reading room); no laboratory for the higher Grades; no fence for the school compounds; classroom walls were dilapidated; seats were uncomfortable (sometimes stones are used), and the compounds were exposed to wind (i.e. no trees). Reports (as well as discussions with teachers) indicated that textbooks were in noticeably short supply. There were subjects for which textbooks were not available during the school visit. These subjects were Afaan Oromoo (the mother tongues) and Amharic (the federal working language). In seven of the twelve schools, environmental science textbooks were also not available. So, added to the home-school distance; this situation is one of the possible push factors for the attendance problem mentioned above. It also severely affects the quality of education available to children.

The other supply-related factors which significantly condition the success of schooling in a community are the curriculum and school calendar. Therefore, it is very legitimate to ask whether the school curriculum is relevant to the situation of the Borena pastoralist community. The other issue worth considering is whether the school calendar is flexible enough to fit well with the situation of the particular community discussed above. The assessment involved an examination of the times of the wet and dry seasons and appraisal of the opinions of the relevant stakeholders on what they feel about the curriculum.

Given the very distinctive nature of the situation of the pastoral communities described above, the need for adaptation of the mainstream curricula is obvious. This has been underscored by Oxfam GB (2005) that there is a need to assess what the pastoralists want to learn or what kind of education they wish to have for their children rather than imposing a curriculum designed along with the urban and settled agricultural area model. The community's ways of knowing, i.e. the indigenous epistemology (Kovach, 2005), should get space in the ways the schools organize their everyday process of teaching and learning. For Kovach, indigenous epistemology includes a way of knowing that is fluid and experiential, derived from teachings transmitted from generation to generation by storytelling. This writer stated that the indigenous way of knowing is characterized by the collectivity, reciprocity, and respect. Discussions with the education experts, the community leaders and local elders have affirmed the same. Particularly, the education officers and the community leaders unanimously indicated that the existing curriculum lacks the very attributes of the pastoralists. For instance, education experts from Moyale District Education office identified the following as realities of pastoralist children which makes adaptation a necessity: *no pre-school, no home-support, no literacy culture, and in most cases, no literacy practice at home* (Guyo, then an Education Expert at Moyale District Education Office).

Contrary to this, references in textbooks (e.g. lifestyle) reflect that of mainstream highland. Hence, they strongly recommended a need for doing some kind of adaptation on content, methods, and timing. Similarly, an expert of the Zonal Education Office who took part in the group interview stated:

There is nothing specifically meant for pastoralists. The starting point of the curriculum has very little to do with the attributes of pastoralist children. It is too theoretical and does not address the practical life of pastoralists. The educational approach (method) does not take into consideration the situation of the home environment of pastoralist children. In their environment, the children can listen when elders talk (discuss), they can intervene, and they can even propose opinions. The school education approach, as it is practiced now in the pastoral areas, does not embrace this. Hence, the curriculum is not attractive to our pastoralist children (Melka, then Education Expert at Yaballo District Education Office).

Concerns over what schools provide children in terms of content, methods, and timing have been voiced throughout the fieldwork time by the community leaders, local elders, and by the education experts. At the center of the concerns (particularly from community leaders and elders) are the issues of “continuity” of “the Borena” and the usability of what schools teach in the livestock sector. By continuity, they mean for the on-coming generation to maintain the cultural identity and “ways of life” of Borena; particularly in terms of the high regard they have for their livestock. Hence, a need to adapt the school to the community has been identified to be a priority by all respondents. This is where what Muchenje (2017) referred to as an epistemological mismatch between the school and the community observed. It is therefore very essential to consider how a school curriculum that helps Borena pastoralist children go back home with skills that support the improvisation of the livestock sector and maintain Borena identity.

The other very important supply-side factor which determines school attendance of pastoralist community children is the school calendar. As learned from the elders, Gada officials, education experts, and school children; Borena pastoralists commonly experience two extreme dry seasons: the long dry season of December, January, and February and the short dry season of August. These are the months when herds split into various groups (Camel and Goat; Cattle; sheep and younger animals) and move to satellite camps. Thus, children's labor is most needed both at base camp and at satellite locations. Contrary to that, the school calendar for pastoralist districts of Borena Zone is almost the same as that of the highland districts near Addis Ababa - a very rigid timetable and practically unfit for the pastoralist environment. In general, the respondents (and particularly the education experts) believed that flexibility is a desirable situation in pastoralist education. Besides, not everything is predictable in the pastoralist environment. Draught, conflict, cross-border disease, etc. can happen at any time (Ngugi, 2017). These also need to be addressed as they occur, and flexibility should be taken as a mental frame in managing school programs in such a community.

Teacher preparation, teacher in-service development, and retention are the other supply-related factors that significantly affect the attractiveness of schools to a community. If teachers are not well prepared to teach in the pastoralist setting, if they are not regularly available on duty, if they wish to leave the area as soon as possible and if they don't demonstrate a commitment to educating the children; it is unlikely that the school will be attractive to children and their parents. The education experts (Namo and Melka) sensed that there is a gap between the situation under which (and for which) teachers trained and the practical situation of the pastoralist communities and their children. Hence, they strongly recommend a different type of teacher training for the pastoral community alone. It was learned that most teachers start their very career with confusion due to poor knowledge of local culture, accent, and the situation of the pastoralist community (and its children). Such initial concerns, if not resolved through careful on-the-job support (which is always not there in Borena), would result in burn-out. This calls for a much-customized approach to teacher preparation for pastoralist schools. The unfortunate thing is that other than improving teacher recruitment (which takes candidates from pastoral communities with some points less), nothing has been done. The worst thing, so to mention here, is that the candidates from the zone may not come back to the Zone since they are assigned to various zones of the region on lottery, as reported by experts of one of the District Education Offices (Guyo, Melka). According to the education experts (e.g. Dida, then Education Expert at Dilo District

Education Office and Melka), those who got the assignment to the zone (who are not originally from Borena) come thinking to go back or leave the Zone as soon as possible. It was noted that there is no means to keep them, and keeping them does not help much. Such teachers lack the endurance which teaching in the harsh environment of the pastoralists involves.

(ii) Demand-related factors

For Borena's pastoralist parents, schooling is seen in terms of the role of the children in the herding business. For them, schooling means taking children away from herding. So, the opportunity cost of schooling is a very essential explanatory variable for the demand for schooling among the Borena pastoralists. By opportunity cost, it is to mean the value of a foregone activity (herding in this case) or alternative when another item or activity is chosen (schooling in the present case). The pastoralists give high value to what they lose by sending a child to school, as clearly stated earlier. Therefore, both enrollment and attendance have been challenged. This section presents how this situation shapes the responses of pastoralist parents to the need for the schooling of their children.

The Ethiopian Government, generally, pushes for the education of children at every corner of the country due to its commitment to both the "Education for All" and the "Sustainable Development Goals"; if not due to the need to pursue children's right to education. Therefore, the local administrations (i.e. the Ganda) encourage community members in their administration to enlist their children at school. They use home-visits (sometimes with teachers) to register the school-age children. At the same time, the local leadership in the pastoralist communities recognizes that the community members' economic situation and the fact that herding is a labor-intensive business. The Aba Gadas (i.e. the Traditional Leaders) who are very well recognized and respected by the community members encourage the community to send their children to school because the formal leadership tries to influence the community through them. Under this context, discussion with the respondents about the education of their children revealed very interesting stories:

Whom the community sends to school

As mentioned above, fitness for herding makes a kid "less qualified" for schooling. If a father has to choose between his two sons, for instance, he chooses the one he sees as stronger for herding and the other one (the one thought to be weaker for herding) for schooling. Similarly, there are preferences based on birth order and gender. Regarding birth order, an expert from Yaballo (Melka) opined that *"Families prefer to send later-born sons over firstborn ones because the later-borne are believed to be better for livestock and thought to be successors of their fathers in the household and community."* This is an idea that most participants in the interviews agreed to. For instance, the District Education Experts (Namo, Guyo, and Dida) expressed their opinions in almost the same way. Regarding gender preference for schooling, Moti, a Gada Official from Dilo District, depicted that *"Recently, parents tend to prefer girls for schooling than boys because boys are believed to be better for livestock than girls."* Contrary to this, the situation observed in the classrooms visited demonstrates that the proportion of girls decrease as the Grade level increases. This may implicate that the fact that girls are recently preferred for schooling cannot be taken as a genuine concern for girls' education. The opinion obtained from an expert from Yaballo District (Melka) matches this. He said, *"The girls are visible in good number only in Early Grades. That means it is in fact until they are capable enough to support their mothers and start preparation for wifehood that they are allowed to attend school."* In general, it is possible to conclude that in terms of birth order and gender preference the decision to send children to school is adult-centric and gives priority to the principal economic activity (herding) and the local tradition (elder sons inheriting the fathers' position and girls preparing for good wifehood). One should note that while this can be a general trend, there can be exceptions. For instance, a family can have only girls or boys may only come later in the birth order. Such exceptions may call for further scrutiny.

Rotational enrolment

This is a situation where children are divided into two and one group goes to school this year and the other group goes for herding. They exchange roles next year or maybe in two years. That seems why in Borena's pastoralist schools it is very common to see older boys in early grades. Some fathers (it is the father who decides about this) wait for the role exchange period until the ones in school complete Grade 4 so that they come out with basic skills of reading and writing - imagine how old the other

groups would be when they join Grade one. A variation of this has been expressed by a group of discussants as follows:

When a previously admitted child is mature enough for herding, the parents force him to drop out of school and, in replacement, send another younger child - just to fill the Ganda requirement (Ahmed, a Primary School Principal from Dilo District).

This is a situation where the parent has no purpose in children's schooling and only wants to silence the "nagging" *Ganda* or local administrators.

Turn-based attendance

This is a situation where all children get enrolled yet take a turn to attend school. This could be in response to a push from local administration to enroll all children. When that happens, the children take a turn to go to school - maybe every other day or every other week so that both herding and the "forced schooling" go hand in hand. Imagine what this means to the quality of the children's learning.

Assigning some children for herding and others for education right from the beginning

This may appear an aspect of the 'rotational enrollment' described above. However, it is different in the sense that there is no exchange of role here for an important reason: those who go to school are thought to be no more useful for herding. They have missed important socialization to the herding business. In fact, the initial selection, as described above, took cognizance of the potential of the child with due priority to herding. An alternative explanation for such a clear assignment for herding and schooling is based on the premise that without some children doing the herding, there is no means to support the education of those who have to go to school. That means those "herder-children" forfeit their childhood, their rights, and their opportunities for the good of their brothers and sisters. This is a common phenomenon in many communities in rural Ethiopia, and not restricted to pastoralist communities.

From the discussions in the preceding sections, it has been noted that the particular pastoralist community does not outright reject formal education. The elders and community leaders opine that education is important if the children can climb up the ladder. They at the same time doubt the value that years of formal education add to the herding economic activity; an activity they see not just as a source of livelihood but also an expression of their identity - the Borena identity. They tend to think that the traditional education they provide is sufficient for the purpose they want to prepare the children for. The pastoralist community members see schooling in terms of livestock possession and herding; either to send children to school and lose the livestock or to keep children away from school and maintain their livestock. Unfortunately, today they are not free to make this adult-centric decision in full like the earlier days. There is a third body - the Government that pushes for the education of the children. This forced them to adapt some erroneous solutions: the rotational enrollment, turn-based attendance; selection of the "less able" child for schooling, and division of roles between herding and schooling. None of these artificial solutions is commensurate with the best interest of the child. In fact, in all cases the children are losers and these are adult-centric solutions. This situation teaches us that in the case of the particular pastoralist community the opportunity cost of schooling explains the access to education and quality of children's learning. Children's right to education is not even part of the discourse. There are no promising strategies used to improve the community's demand for the education of their children. The mismatch between the Borena community's indigenous epistemology and the epistemic approach the school promotes is the other supply-related factor that constrains schooling for Borena children.

CONCLUSION

The study indicated that the case community holds an ambivalent view towards educating its children. On one hand, there is a tendency to value education in terms of access to a more modern world and getting literate leaders. On the other hand, there is a view that schooling means taking away children from herding, which is an essential activity for the community. The strength of the attitude the community holds towards the livestock is identified to be an essential deterrent to schooling. Added to this is concern over the relevance of school to the community: the fact that there are educated

unemployed who are not fit for the herding economy because they missed critical socialization and that the school did nothing to make them better herders if they fail to advance through their education. The issue of children's right to education has never come into the discourses when the community members discuss the educational situation of the children. Hence, an adult-centric decision, which often takes the opportunity cost of schooling as a central defining factor, was very prevalent. Institutionally, there is a tendency to focus on the supply-side of schooling without adequate demand creation work. It was learned that the modalities of education delivery which mostly followed a uniform approach do not seem to have taken into account the community's situation (e.g. the ecological challenge under which the members lead their lives). The school calendar and the curriculum can be good examples of this. As a result, the community adapted solutions such as 'rotational enrolment' and 'turn-based attendance' when asked to enroll its children in school. Such solutions are adult-centric and not commensurate with the very ideals of children's right to education.

The current 'Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education for All' global initiative cannot be ensured in Ethiopia without addressing the educational problems of pastoralist children. As concluded above, dilemmas are surrounding the education of pastoralist children. A locally relevant and comprehensive approach to address the dilemmas seems a very appropriate way to the solution. Therefore, children's rights to education must become the central agenda in discussions about the education of the pastoralist community children. A strategy needs to be devised to popularize the same among the community.

Education development should be conceptualized within the broader pastoralist area to develop an agenda. In such an agenda, one important area to consider is reducing the labor intensiveness of the economic activities (e.g. through herd specialization) which may somehow reduce the labor expectation on children. Similarly, education development programs need to be comprehensive enough in the sense that they should consider not only supply but also demand creation strategies - e.g. devising incentive systems for those who could bear the challenges of educating their children.

Also, diversify the education delivery approach and pay attention to the relevance of the system to the pastoralist community. The Borena indigenous ways of educating its children need to inform the design and practice of formal education programs. Education should make its starting point modernizing and improvising the herding economic activity so that the people could sense the value of education in their lives. Hence, at least to start with, education should be shaped in a way that years of formal schooling bring a difference in how those who drop out of school handle the herding business.

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