

Are Our Children Learning?

Annual Learning Assessment Report Uganda 2010



S U M M A R Y A N D K E Y F I N D I N G S

Introduction

In the last two decades, global education reforms have focused on getting children into school and providing them with decent education. The 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) called for increased access to education. The Dakar Framework of Action reinforced this point. These aspirations were assimilated in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Uganda is a signatory to the Jomtien and Dakar Declarations as well as the MDGs Declaration. To date Universal Primary Education (UPE) remains at the core of Uganda Government determination to achieve EFA. UPE was first introduced in Uganda in 1997 and enrolment shot up from 2.9 million in

1996 to over 7 million currently. In 2008 the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) stood at 93.3% in Uganda. These national figures confirm that Uganda is on course to attain EFA targets and MDG by 2015, though it masks disparities within districts and among certain groups.

This unprecedented growth, while celebrated, has not been matched by improvements in quality. Schools in Uganda still have to contend with insufficient and poorly trained under motivated teachers, overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of teaching/learning materials. We are now faced with a quality challenge and several policy initiatives are being developed.



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What is Uwezo?

Uwezo, meaning “capability” in Kiswahili, is a four year initiative to improve competencies in literacy and numeracy among children aged 6-16 years in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda through an innovative, civic-driven and public accountability approach to social change. In Uganda the initiative is hosted by the Uganda National NGO Forum.

Uwezo recognizes that the Ministry of Education and Sports has done a lot to improve quality on the policy front and through National Assessments of Progress in Education (NAPE), focusing on two classes - P3 and P6. Uwezo uses a P2 test and assesses all primary-school-going age children between 6-16 years. Uwezo seeks to complement existing educational assessments and to engender social change by generating new information on children’s literacy and numeracy across East Africa, in a manner that better informs the public, stimulates countrywide debate, and creates demand for policy change from the bottom-up.

What has been done so far?

In April 2010, Uwezo Uganda trained and worked with a team of 1,620 village-based volunteers and visited 16,200 households in 27 districts to administer a simple Primary Two test in Literacy and Numeracy to 34,752 children between the ages of 6-16 years. This is one of the biggest civil society led assessment in education that Uganda has ever undertaken.

What do the Tests look like?

Sample Reading test

Letter identification	Paragraph/sentence Level	Story Level													
<table border="1"><tr><td>i</td><td>o</td><td>w</td><td>y</td><td>s</td></tr><tr><td>h</td><td>a</td><td>c</td><td>b</td><td>u</td></tr></table>	i	o	w	y	s	h	a	c	b	u	<p>This is our goat. She has two kids. She likes her kids. She feeds them well.</p> <p>An eagle is a bird. It flies high. It eats small birds. It has a long beak. It lays eggs.</p>	<p>Tom is our best football player. He stays far away from school. One day we had a big match. Tom had not come to school that day. The teacher went to look for Tom. The teacher found Tom weeding cassava. The teacher called Tom from the garden. All pupils were happy when Tom came. Our School won the match. We danced the whole day.</p>			
i	o	w	y	s											
h	a	c	b	u											
<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Word level</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>cow</td><td>mat</td><td>car</td><td>sing</td><td>home</td></tr><tr><td>bus</td><td>leg</td><td>cup</td><td>milk</td><td>boy</td></tr></tbody></table>	Word level	cow	mat	car	sing	home	bus	leg	cup	milk	boy		<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Questions</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Where was Tom? Why were the children dancing?</td></tr></tbody></table>	Questions	Where was Tom? Why were the children dancing?
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Assessing Reading

- ➔ Letter Recognition
- ➔ Read words and sentences
- ➔ Read a short paragraph
- ➔ Read a story and answer questions about it.

Sample Mathematics test

Number recognition:				Addition		Subtraction		Multiplication	Division
9	5	1	3	$\begin{array}{r} 14 \\ + 12 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 88 \\ + 11 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 71 \\ - 60 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 46 \\ - 14 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$7 \times 3 = \underline{\quad}$	$2 \div 2 = \underline{\quad}$
4	7	8	6	$\begin{array}{r} 15 \\ + 13 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ + 14 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 66 \\ - 15 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 89 \\ - 14 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$3 \times 4 = \underline{\quad}$	$6 \div 2 = \underline{\quad}$
11	91	47	72					$5 \times 1 = \underline{\quad}$	$8 \div 2 = \underline{\quad}$
69	33	16	58	$\begin{array}{r} 77 \\ + 11 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 69 \\ + 10 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 44 \\ - 33 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 98 \\ - 63 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$8 \times 2 = \underline{\quad}$	$1 \div 1 = \underline{\quad}$
								$3 \times 6 = \underline{\quad}$	$12 \div 2 = \underline{\quad}$

Ethno mathematics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If a ball costs 50 shillings, how many coins of 50 shillings do you need to buy one ball? If your father gives you 200 shillings and your mother gives you 150 shillings, how much money will you have all together? Jane wants a rope which costs 250 shillings. John gives Jane 300 shillings. How much money will Jane remain with after buying the rope? Isa had 900 shillings. He bought a loaf of bread which cost 500 shillings. How much money did he get back?

Assessing Mathematics

- ➔ Number recognition
- ➔ Operation of whole numbers (Add, Subtract, Multiply, Divide)
- ➔ Ethno-Mathematics (Addition and Subtraction from real)

Why do we assess using a Primary Two test?

Internationally it is recognized that after attaining two complete years of primary school, school going children are expected to have acquired basic numeracy and literacy skills.

Why is the assessment conducted at household level?

Instant feedback on the child's ability is given to the parent/guardians as well as the community in order to stimulate debate and motivate them to take action on learning. Citizens engage with the outcomes of education when they interact with their child's ability. "What to do" indicative posters are distributed in households to motivate parents to reflect, take practical action and participate in improving learning levels of the children in their household and communities.

Eleven facts from the Uwezo 2010 Assessment: Are our children learning?

Fact 1: Up to 85% of all children sampled in class P7 in the 27 districts surveyed across the country could solve at least two numerical written division sums of P2 level difficulty correctly.

Fact 2: About three quarters (72%) of all the class P7 children sampled in the 27 districts surveyed across the country could read and understand a 'story' text of P2 level difficulty. While as 28% could not.

Fact 3: In P7 there were almost no differences between private and government-aided schools in terms of mathematics competencies. 85% of children sampled in P7 in government-aided primary schools could solve at least two numerical written division sums of P2 level difficulty correctly in any category (1 and 2), compared to only 83% in private primary schools.

Fact 4: 98% children among all P3 children sampled, could not read and understand a 'story' text of P2 level difficulty, and 80% could not solve at least two numerical written division sums of P2 level difficulty correctly.

Fact 5: There were ten times more (20%) children among all P3 children sampled, who could solve at least two numerical written division sums of P2 level difficulty correctly, compared to those (only 2%) who could read and understand a 'story' text of P2 level difficulty.

Fact 6: There were considerable regional and district variations in reading and mathematics ability among all children sampled in the 27 districts surveyed across the country. The Eastern region was comparatively worst Performing in terms of proportion of children in classes P3-P7 who could solve at least two numerical written division sums of P2 level difficulty correctly, and who could read and understand a 'story' text of P2 level difficulty.

Fact 7: There were no major gender differences in reading at P3-P5 level. Among all children sampled in classes P3-P5 slightly more girls (11.4%) could not even recognize letters of the alphabet, compared to 10.9% boys. More boys (10.1%) among all children sampled in classes P3-P5 could read and understand a 'story' text of P2 level difficulty, compared to 9.8% girls.

Fact 8: Gender differences in reading are skewed in favor of boys in the upper classes (P6-P7). Considerably more boys (59.5%) among all children sampled in classes P6-P7 could read and understand a 'story' text of P2 level difficulty, compared to about 53.3% girls.

Fact 9: Up to 85% of the schools visited at least had some instructional materials for math and English in P1-P3, although only 38% of the schools visited were also found to have a library.

Fact 10: Up to 65% of the schools visited reported organizing "class days", however only 31% of the parents/guardians interviewed reported that they visited the school over the past year to talk to teachers about their child's learning. Nevertheless, 84% of the parents/guardians interviewed reported visiting the school (regardless of reason) over the past year.

Fact 11: 90% of the households sampled reported that they provide some from of mid-day meal for school-going children.

Action Time!

Governments have the most important role in reforming education; and they need to be held accountable by citizens to perform well. However, neither educational assessments nor technocratic policy reform processes alone will bring about the policy and service delivery changes necessary to improve children's learning. All of us need to **TAKE ACTION** as citizens interested in the learning of our children. Our actions must be locally-driven, and by everyone, focusing on accountability and bringing about and sustaining better education service delivery. While we demand better responsiveness and answerability from all duty bearers - as responsible citizens we **MUST PLAY OUR PART**.