

WRITTEN SUBMISSION OF THE UGANDA COALITION ON  
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS TO THE 53<sup>RD</sup> SESSION  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL  
RIGHTS - PRE-SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON UGANDA

List of Issues in connection with the Initial Report of Uganda on Public  
Primary Education in Uganda



Gender Transformation & Empowerment



## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION AND ISSUES

### 1. General legal and Policy framework on primary education in Uganda

#### 1.1. Background

The right to education is guaranteed under article 30 of the 1995 Constitution.<sup>1</sup> Article 34 (2) of the Constitution also provides that a child is entitled to basic education which shall be the primary responsibility of the state and the parent of the child. Furthermore, the Constitution also has provisions on Equality and freedom from discrimination (cross cutting) Affirmative action in favour of marginalized groups including PWDs, Women, and minorities.<sup>2</sup> The Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act of 2008 also guarantees the right but restricts it only to “basic education”.<sup>3</sup> It is on the basis of this that Government has put in place several measures and adopted programmes to provide education. One such programme is universal primary (UPE) education and one which this report has chosen to focus on. This has been motivated by the fact that this level of education has many challenges affects the quality of other levels of education.

The Education Policy in Uganda is included in the Government White Paper on Education (1992). The 2008 Education Act, guides the development and regulation of education and training, and gives full effect to the government policy on education and the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy. Accordingly, the categories of education institutions in the country include public education institutions or Government founded institutions, Government grant-aided institutions, private institutions (profit and not profit making), as well as non-formal education centres.

However, The Ministry of Education and Sports has acknowledged that there are serious policy gaps that require urgent attention. To begin with, the Government White Paper of 1992 is the main policy document for the education sector, but it is now obsolete and cannot guide the growth of the sector. There is no Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, and this has led to creation of parallel systems that are not synergistic resulting in duplication of efforts. There is also no clear policy on quality assessment and therefore a lack of clear articulation of quality goals and targets to be achieved by the curriculum. As such, current assessment methods do not measure

---

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> See articles 21,35,33,and 36 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> See section 4 of the Act.

innovations and only require learners to reproduce what they have crammed.<sup>4</sup>

### Proposed Issue

**The Government could be requested to provide information on the measures it is taking to ensure that there are appropriate up-to-date policies to guide the education sector. Specifically, the state could be requested to provide information on plans to review the National Education Policy, and come up with policies on quality assessment and monitoring and evaluation for the sector.**

## **2. National implementation of the Right to Primary Education**

### **Background on Primary Education in Uganda**

In 1997, the government adopted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. Indeed, the UPE scheme has been hailed for promoting the right to education in the country and has indeed registered some successes over the years – including an increase in the education enrolment rates countrywide, and improving the number of girls and children from poor families acquiring education. There was a steady increase in enrolment for the period between 2000 and 2003 with absolute enrolment figures of 6,559,013, 6,900,916, 7,633,314 from 2001 respectively. In 2004, 2005 and 2006, minor reductions were realized with registered enrolments of 7,377,292, 7,223,879, 7,362,938 and 7,537,971 for the years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. However, beginning 2010/11, there has been inconsistency in the pupil enrolment figures from 7,171,690, 7,036,529, 7,051,790, 7,097,382 and 7,242,902 for the years 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15 respectively.<sup>5</sup> Over the same period, the proportion of enrolment in government -aided primary schools steadily rose from 82% in 2000 to 89% in 2002, then to 91% in 2004, then 90% in 2006 and 90% in 2007.<sup>6</sup>

However over the years, the UPE scheme has faced many challenges that affect the quality of education and threaten to erode the gains made if no remedial action is taken. The UPE emphasis is on enrolment, with little regard to quality, equality and non-discrimination, and pupil retention. Indeed the declining standards of public education have been a cause for concern for many stakeholders. In 2011, ANPPCAN Uganda chapter facilitated a process where over 4,000 Ugandan children collected signatures for a petition to the Ministry of Education and Sports over the gaps in the country's free education programme. The children identified the

---

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports, Annual Education Sector Performance Report 2012/2013, pgs. 46 – 47.

<sup>5</sup> MOES EMIS for Enrollment, MOES Ministerial Policy Statements and National Budget Framework Papers

<sup>6</sup> Uganda Educational Statistics Abstract, Ministry of Education and Sports at xix and xx

lack of meals in schools leading to poor concentration in classes and school performance, teacher absenteeism, incomprehensive school inspections and lack of teachers' houses as some of the major problems with the system that were leading to poor quality education standards. The Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda (FENU) has also led campaigns aimed at improving the public education system.

Additionally, the inadequacies of UPE opened way for the proliferation of private schools since it led to increased enrolment of pupils at primary school level that could not be accommodated in the existing public schools that were overcrowded, understaffed and poorly equipped. Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in Uganda showed that in the entire country; private schools make up 37% and 9%; primary and secondary respectively (Government of Uganda, 2010).

## **2.1. The Quality of UPE Literacy and Numeracy Skills;**

### **2.1.1. Background**

There are concerns about the quality of primary education in Uganda as shown in various reports by both Government and Non-Government actors. Despite the increase in the numbers of children going to school, the comprehension and pass rate is still very low. Children are completing school without the basic and necessary competencies they need to be good citizens and help develop our country.<sup>7</sup> Only one out of every ten children assessed in primary 3 was able to read primary 2 level stories and correctly solve primary 2 level numeracy questions up to division level.<sup>8</sup> Overall, only 3 out of 10(27.6%) children assessed in Primary 1 up to Primary 7 were able to read a primary 2 level story. Of those in Primary 3 only 1 out of 10 (9.5%) children assessed were able to read a Primary 2 level story. Even by Primary 7, 1 out of 10 children still could not read a Primary 2 story.<sup>9</sup> Similarly according to the Government Annual Performance Report 2011/2012,<sup>10</sup> the percentage of pupils rated proficient at primary 3 fell from 57.6% in 2010/11 to 47.9%. There was also a decline in literacy rates at primary 6 from 50.2% in FY 2010/11 to 41.3% in FY 2011/12. Numeracy rates at primary 3 and primary 6 declined from 72.8% and 55% in FY 2010/11 to 63% and 45.6% in FY 2011/12 respectively.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> UWEZO Report (2012): Are our children learning? Annual learning assessment report

<sup>8</sup> Ibid pg 10

<sup>9</sup> Supra pg14

<sup>10</sup> Available at : [http://www.opm.go.ug/manage/pdfs2013/GAPR2011\\_12V1.pdf](http://www.opm.go.ug/manage/pdfs2013/GAPR2011_12V1.pdf) accessed on the 25/06/2014

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

Some of the factors contributing to the poor quality education in the country include:

#### Lack of a policy on quality assessment and inadequate school inspection services

The 2012/2013 Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report (ESSAPR) indicates that there is no clear policy on quality assessment at all education levels, and there is inadequate school inspection services in the country. This is despite the existence of a directorate for quality control within the Ministry of Education and Sports, and district school inspectors.

#### Inadequate Teacher training

Many teachers in Uganda lack the required professional skills and competencies to allow them to teach efficiently and effectively thus affecting the quality of education. According to a 2013 World Bank report, there are significant gaps in provider knowledge among both public and private providers in education. Less than 1 in 5 (19%) of public school teachers showed mastery of the curriculum they teach.<sup>12</sup> There is to date no institutionalized system for in service teacher education to enable teachers to improve their professional competencies, even at primary level despite the existence of the Teacher Development and Management Systems which was put in place to address gaps in primary teachers' competences.

#### Teacher absenteeism and low teacher motivation

According to the Annual Education Sector Performance Report,<sup>13</sup> there is unacceptably high head teacher and teachers' absenteeism estimated at 20%. On the average, a primary teacher is estimated to be absent for at least 2 days a week. This has been caused by a number of factors including inadequacy in inspection, low pay forcing teachers to look for other alternatives to supplement their income, lack of transport among others. According to ANPPCAN, transport was cited as yet another problem partly responsible for high teacher absenteeism in Iganga district. On average, only 3 out of 10 teachers are housed within schools.<sup>14</sup> In addition, 19.6% of the teachers walk for more than 5 hours, 7.6% more than 4 hours, 12.3% between 2 and 4 hours, 17.8% between 1&2 hours<sup>15</sup>. Uwezo has reported that 1 out of every 10 teachers was absent from school on the day of their assessment in 2012, and they

---

<sup>12</sup>Waly Wane, et al., Education and health services in Uganda. Data for results and accountability, 2013

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports, *Annual Education Sector Performance Report 2012/2013*.

<sup>14</sup> UWEZO Report (2012): Are our children learning? Annual learning Assessment report (pg 26)

<sup>15</sup>ANPPCAN: Primary school absenteeism in Iganga district of Uganda (2009) available at: [http://www.anppcanug.org/wp-content/uploads/research\\_reports/ANPPCAN\\_Uganda\\_report\\_teacher\\_absenteeism.pdf](http://www.anppcanug.org/wp-content/uploads/research_reports/ANPPCAN_Uganda_report_teacher_absenteeism.pdf). Accessed on 24/06/2014

opine that the high prevalence of teachers' absenteeism has led to poor performance in UPE schools.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the World Bank has found that in public schools, roughly 1 in 4 (27%) teachers was absent from school, and of those present in school, 1 in 3 were not teaching. As a result, 40% of public school classrooms did not have a teacher teaching in them.<sup>17</sup>

### High Pupil-Teacher ratio

According to the UNESCO institute for statistics, the pupil-to-teacher ratio since 1998 has been high; 1998; 58.51, 1999 57.30, 2000 59.43, 2001 54.32, 2002 52.72, 2003 52.39, 2004 50.09, 2005 49.88, 2006 49.05, 2007 49.56, 2008 49.93, 2009 49.28, 2010 48.58, 2011 47.78.<sup>18</sup> Despite the *status quo*, the Ministry of Education and Sports has insisted on low staff ceiling limits per school even where a teacher on the staff is sick for a long term.<sup>19</sup> The recommended teacher to pupil ratio is 1:55 although in reality it is actually way higher than that. As a result of this, there has been understaffing which gives teachers a difficult challenge of handling many pupils.

### **Case study of Apac district<sup>20</sup>:**

In Alwala primary school for example there are only 6 teachers with a population of 735 pupils making the PTR 1:122; Amocal primary School on the other hand has a PTR of 1:120. The Pupil enrolment rate is way high compared to the recruitment rate of the teachers that is restricted. This greatly affects the quality of education given to the pupils as the teachers cannot reach each and every pupil to ensure that they have understood.

### 2.1.2. Proposed Issue

---

<sup>16</sup> UWEZO Report (2012): Are our children learning? Annual learning Assessment report (pg 27)

<sup>17</sup> World Bank Education and Health Services in Uganda: Service Delivery Indicators: Data for Results and Accountability, 2013 Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/11/19/quality-uganda-education-and-health-services-poses-serious-risk-long-term-economic-progress> accessed on the 09/07/2014

<sup>18</sup> Available at: <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/uganda/pupil-teacher-ratio>. Parliament of Uganda: Report of The Committee On Gender, Labour And Social Development on The Situation Of Children In Selected Districts Of Northern Uganda. Accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Interview held by ISER with Apac district Local council V/ Secretary for social services on the 11/07/2011

Government could be requested to provide information on the plan it has to improve the quality of primary education in the country? The state could further be requested to provide information on how it supervises, monitors and evaluates the implementation of public primary education in Uganda? And whether the Ministry of Education and Sports is well facilitated to carry out this function? The state could further be requested to provide information on how it is addressing the problem of low teacher motivation that is attributed to low salaries and lack of accommodation.

## **2.2. Stagnation/retrogression in Primary Education Financing (Capitation and School Facilitation Grants);**

### **2.2.1. Background**

Despite the fact that the general Education Sector takes up a sizeable portion of the national budget, UPE financing remains meagre, and grossly inadequate compared to the needs. Indeed the Ministry of Education and Sports has consistently mentioned inadequate financing among the key challenges for the sector. According the 2012/2013 Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report, the share of the Education and Sports Sector Budget as a proportion of the national budget has continued to decline despite increasing demand for education services and this has continued to critically impact on the implementation of various education policies.

In 2002, the Government of Uganda abolished tuition fees in UPE schools and introduced the Capitation Grant from which it pays annual tuition fees for all pupils in public schools and grant-aided schools through local governments under the decentralization system. School expenditures that are eligible for UPE capitation grant include: instructional and scholastic materials (35%), co-curricular activities (20%), school management (15%), and administration (10%). UPE per Capita has not been increased over the years despite the annual inflation rates. A 10- year analysis of the capitation grant per capita indicates that there has been stagnation and retrogression in financing for this grant, especially when one considers the annual inflation rates. Parliament and the Ministry of Education and Sports have recommended that the Capitation Grant per capita be increased to at least uShs.10,000/=, but the recommendation has not been taken up by the Executive. Instead, the Government has effected a further reduction for the Financial year 204/2015 to 6,860 per capita.

**UPE EDUCATION GRANT TO DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
OVER 10 YEARS PERIOD<sup>21</sup>**

<b>FY</b>	<b>PUPIL ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>UPE PER CAPITA</b>	<b>ANNUAL ALLOCATION Ushs. Bn</b>
2003/04	6,835,325	6,076	41.530
2004/05	6,707,845	4,993	33.490
2005/06	6,609,677	5,067	33.490
2006/07	6,668,931	4,923	32.830
2007/08	6,777,675	4,941	33.490
2008/09	6,871,588	5,968	41.010
2009/10	7,185,584	5,707	41.010
2010/11	7,171,690	5,718	41.010
2011/12	7,036,529	6,183	43.510
2012/13	7,051,790	7,045	49.683
2013/14	7,097,382	7,000	49.683
2014/15	7,242,902	6,860	49.683

Furthermore, the School Facilitation Grant that cater for school infrastructure, including classrooms, teachers' houses, toilets and furniture has also reduced. In 2012/2013, the MoES reported that there were inadequate funds allocated under the School Facilitation Grant for construction of classrooms, teachers' houses, and pit latrines. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Ministerial Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2014/2015, initially the SFG had a budget of UGX. 48 billion for classroom construction, but has been reduced to UGX 27 billion.

Another challenge to implementation of the UPE programme is the late or partial disbursement of UPE capitation funds. Many UPE schools fail to receive money on time, which forces them to pass on the budgetary shortfall to their students through School Development fees or reduce spending on essential services and supplies. The majority of UPE schools already suffer from severe budget deficits every term and delays in receipt of capitation grants render schools' daily survival even more precarious. UPE schools are frequently forced to go into debt with service providers while waiting for the disbursements. Forcing schools in to debt not only

---

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) EMIS for Enrolment, MOES Ministerial Policy Statements and National Budget Framework Papers. There is an additional fixed grant of Ushs 300,000 per term that every school is entitled to regardless of enrolment, but this is still negligible.



results in a reduction in quality and quantity of services but also limits schools ability to organize and track their spending. Sometimes the grant for the first term of the year is received during the second term. Olelpek Primary School in Apac district cited lack of scholastic materials like chalk and teaching aids as some of the negative impacts of delays in disbursement of the capitation grant that affected the smooth running of the school during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of 2014.<sup>22</sup> The second term opened on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and officially closed on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014, but majority of UPE schools were yet to receive the capitation grant.

As a result, schools pass on the fiscal burden to pupils through illegal school development fees, yet poverty inhibits families from contributing to schools budgets through development fees, despite the existence of section 9 of the Education Act that prohibits public schools from charging fees. Schools are also charging for meals, with the resultant risk of low class-participation especially during afternoon lessons by the children from poor families who cannot afford lunch. Hunger also affects the learning abilities of pupils and hence the quality of education. Teachers have also indicated that it is hard to teach a hungry child.<sup>23</sup> Notably, many children who cannot afford to pay end up dropping out of school.

#### **Cases of school drop outs resulting from imposition of fees<sup>24</sup>**

DN (17), NS (10) and BN (12) dropped out of Lwanyonyi Primary school after failing to pay a development and lunch fee of Ug.sh.20,000/= Per term. The school denied sending home pupils who had not paid development fees, but admitted to isolating them by asking them to sit under a tree while their colleagues are having lessons in the classrooms.

#### 2.2.2. Proposed Issue

**The Committee could request Government to elaborate the steps that are being taken to progressively increase financial resources towards public primary education to match the increasing enrolment in public schools, develop infrastructure, and train and motivate teachers. The state could also be requested to provide an explanation on why it has proposed to reduce the capitation and school facilitation grants for the Financial year 2014/2015.**

---

<sup>22</sup> Interview held by ISER with head teacher of Olelpek Primary School on the 10/07/2014

<sup>23</sup> Interview held by ISER with the Local Council V chairman/ secretary for social services, Apac district on the 11/07/2014

<sup>24</sup> Findings from ISER's Right to Education Monitoring Work

## **2.3. Inadequate infrastructure affecting delivery of free, quality and compulsory Primary Education including (insufficient classrooms, teacher residences, furniture and poor sanitation and hygiene);**

### **2.3.1. Background**

As noted earlier, the School Facilitation Grant (SFG) that is meant to cater for infrastructure is not adequate to effectively run schools. As such, the public education system suffers classroom deficiency, shortage of furniture, inadequate toilet facilities, and poor sanitation.<sup>25</sup>

According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Ministerial Policy Statement for FY2014/15, as of August 2012 the national classroom deficit stood at 39,788. The pupil-classroom ratios especially in rural districts are far higher than the corresponding pupil-teacher ratios. There are many classes that take place in non-classroom environments. ISER's monitoring visits to Apac district revealed that Awir Primary school with a population of 1584 pupils only has 9 classrooms that can each accommodate not more than 50 pupils. Majority of the pupils study and write exams on the school compound under trees. Alwala Primary school also has limited classrooms as a result of a heavy storm that blew off the roof tops of three of their classrooms in 2010 and have never been replaced. This inconveniences both teachers and pupils especially during bad weather conditions.

Furthermore, there is acute shortage of furniture with most pupils sitting on the floor. For example at Alwala Primary school with a population of 735 pupils only had 35 desks; Awir Primary school with a student population of 1584 pupils only had 70 desks; Abalokweri Primary School with a student population of 1196 only has 150 desks each sitting 3 pupils. Ariet primary school in Kapujan sub-county in Teso was found with a total of 777 pupils but with only 10 desks in use and 140 piled.<sup>26</sup>

Additionally, poor sanitation in Primary schools is still a big challenge, with disproportionate negative impact on the girl child. The existing facilities are barely enough for the numbers in schools. There are inadequate latrines, lack of soap to wash hands after visiting the toilets, and lack of sanitary pads among others. In Masindi District for example, many schools have filled up latrines or lack latrines completely. However, both the schools and the local government do not have the

---

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports, *Annual Education Sector Performance Report 2012/2013*.

<sup>26</sup>New Vision Report: 'Thirteen Years of UPE Success but Daunting Challenges Remain' available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/633092-13-years-of-upe-success-but-daunting-challenges-remain.html> . Accessed on the 23/06/2014

budget to solve these problems.”<sup>27</sup> Lack of toilet facilities has also been reported to result in school closures that interrupt learning.

#### **800 pupils stranded after school is closed over toilets<sup>28</sup>**

More than 900 pupils of Nakyesa Bright Future Primary School in Kayonza Sub-county, Kayunga District are stranded after their school was closed following the collapse of the only pit-latrine at the school. The government-aided school has more than 900 pupils and 12 teachers. Mr Anthony Gabunga, the school’s headteacher, told the Daily Monitor on Wednesday that pupils had been sent home after the school’s pit latrine curved in. “I called a school management meeting after the incident which resolved that I close the school as it was difficult to keep more than 900 pupils at school without a pit-latrine,” Mr Gabunga said. He added: “The pupils had started using nearby bushes, which could cause more danger in terms of bringing diseases.”

#### **2.3.2. Proposed Issue**

**The Committee could request Government to provide information on the measures it has adopted to ensure that primary schools around the country have adequate infrastructure and sanitation. Specifically, the state could be requested to provide information on how the various line Ministries including the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Water and Environment are working together to improve sanitation in schools.**

### **2.4. The Right to Education is not enjoyed equally by all Ugandans;**

#### **2.4.1. Background**

There are some vulnerable and marginalized groups that are not equally benefiting from the public primary education system. This is the case for some indigenous groups in the in Uganda. One such group is the indigenous group called the Batwa (found in the extreme south west of Uganda) and the Basongora. Children in this group, unlike dominant groups, are not accessing UPE. This is among others because of extreme poverty that makes it hard for these children to exercise their right to education since their parents are unable to provide them with all the necessities including fees, scholastic materials, advice and lack of educational icons in their communities. In 2013, out of 27 Batwa children (18M & 9F), 8 children sat for Uganda National Examination Board exams at different levels whereby; 3 children sat for Primary Leaving Exams (2M

---

<sup>27</sup> Available at <http://watertrust.org/completed-school-projects/wash-in-schools-masindi/> accessed on the 08/07/2014

<sup>28</sup> Daily Monitor Newspaper, June 27, 2014.

& 1F), 2 Males sat for Uganda certificate of Education (UCE) and 3 children (2M &1F) sat for Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE).<sup>29</sup>

### **Case 1. Batwa: the most Marginalised people in Uganda<sup>30</sup>**

The Batwa suffer from extremely limited access to education. According to United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) coordinator Zaninka Penninah, only 10 Batwa children in the Kisoro district have completed their A-Levels. "Even if the Batwa children go to school other children discriminate them and they perform very poorly. There are very few that succeed in finishing school," says Neza. One success story, however, is [Alice Nyamihanda](#). Born to a poor family, the 26-year-old is one of only three Batwa nationally to have been to university in the Kisoro District. She now works as a Tourism Officer in Kisoro and encourages young Batwa children to study hard for a better future. "It was very difficult for me at the beginning; children didn't want to sit with me, they didn't talk to me, but I was strong and convinced them that I am as normal as they are," she says.

### **Case 2: The Basongora and the Right to Education<sup>31</sup>**

Access to education is highly inadequate among the Basongora; most of their communities do not have schools both at Primary and secondary levels. For example, in Nyakakindo and kayanja sub-counties, there is no single school at all. Schools are located in a distance of five- six kilometers in the neighboring sub county of Hima, while In Nyakatonzi, the whole sub county has one universal primary school which is so congested, the pupil- teacher racial is 1-80, and the facilities such as text books, chalk, are highly inadequate. With 66 secondary schools in the district (18 government Grant aided and 52private), there is no single Secondary school in the whole sub county and according to information gathered from parents, majority of the children in Nyakatonzi do not go beyond primary seven.

Access to education for children with special needs also remains a daunting challenge under Uganda's education system. Despite the progress made, the education system is not all inclusive and discriminates against children with disabilities (CWDs).

---

<sup>29</sup> Available at <http://uobdu.wordpress.com/read-our-blog/page/2/> accessed on 20/06/2014

<sup>30</sup> Batwa: The most Marginalised people in Uganda Available at <http://www.equaltimes.org/batwa-the-most-marginalised-people#.U6Lo3-LLmZE> accessed on 19/06/2014

<sup>31</sup> Source: The Most Vulnerable Among the Vulnerable; Exploring the Case of Select Minority Populations' Access to ESCR'S in Uganda, a study by HURINET-U, November 2011, at 19

**Case study of the deaf/hard of hearing in Uganda (As per research by ISER & UNAD, 2012)<sup>32</sup>**

According to the Global Survey Report of the World Federation for the Deaf (WFD) Regional Secretariat for Southern and Eastern Africa, 60% of the deaf population in Uganda are illiterate. The enrolment levels of deaf children is still very low, their quality of education under the UPE and USE schemes remains very poor and is characterized by high dropout and failure rates. This is despite the fact that the Disability Act of 2006 under section 5 states that government shall promote the educational development of persons with disabilities, and one of the policy objectives of providing UPE is to making basic education equitable, accessible and relevant to the nation.

**Enrollment in schools:** It is estimated that there are about 300,000 deaf/ hard of hearing children in Uganda. The national enrolment level for UPE is 94% (UNICEF 2012) and 91% for boys,<sup>33</sup> but only 10% of the hearing impaired children are enrolled for UPE. There is no system for early identification of hearing impairment in children, which results in late enrolment in appropriate school programmes. The deaf children who enroll very late stages and find it difficult to use the sign language that has been taught to their counterparts who joined school earlier. Early enrollment in school positively impacts on the language and communication of a child with hearing impairment.

**School dropout rates:** The 2007 Education Statistical abstract indicated that the number of children with disabilities attending primary school significantly dwindles as they move into higher classes. For example there were 11,567 children with hearing impairment at enrolment in primary one, but only 2902 reached primary seven. The same trend was reflected in the 2012 Uganda Bureau of Statistical abstract. The statistics indicate that whereas initial enrolment in Primary one stands at 10%, only 2% complete primary seven. According to the 2009/2010 Uganda National Household Survey, disability was one of the reasons that respondents gave for one not attending school.

**Lack of sign language teachers:** The Ministry of Education statistics indicate that out of the 122,904 teachers on government payroll for Primary education, only 1050 teachers have been trained to work with children with disabilities. However, the special needs education training runs on a curriculum that introduces teachers to generally handle all students with special needs. Therefore sign language is only a small component of what is taught. Accordingly, majority of special needs education teachers are not fluent in sign language and cannot effectively handle deaf children. Government has not facilitated the regular schools to give quality education to the deaf children and they are reluctant to take on deaf students.

---

<sup>32</sup> See *Reasonable Accommodation for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children in Uganda's Education System*: ISER Policy Advocacy Brief No. 2, 201

<sup>33</sup> *Keeping Children Alive, Safe, Learning*: UNICEF Uganda Fast Facts 2012

**Performance in examinations:** Under the Ugandan education system, one must pass Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) to be able to continue with secondary education. The current National PLE grading system demands that the Deaf be fluent in English before they are graded in a given subject - a situation which ignores the fact that learning any second language is influenced by one's mother tongue. The end result is significant failure rates and eventual drop out from formal schooling for the majority of deaf children. For example for the year 2012, out of 28 students who sat for PLE at Ntinda School for the Deaf, only one student passed in Division 2, while the rest failed. In some instances, school authorities have denied the deaf children the opportunity to sit for national exams because they have pre-determined that they will fail. In October 2010, it was reported that the academic committee of St Mark VI primary school in Kalungu District blocked 14 pupils from sitting their Primary Leaving Examinations because they are deaf. According to the report, the head teacher of the school said that the school academic committee decided to disqualify the pupils after determining that they would not pass.

Furthermore, Country statistics indicate that there are big disparities between regions in terms of quality of education, yet pupils compete to pass the same exams. The table below for example indicates that Eastern and Northern Uganda pass rates are far below their counterparts in central and western regions.

**Passrates across the country: Ranking of top and bottom 10 districts by combined passes.<sup>34</sup>**

<b>(d) Uganda</b>			
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Pass rate</b>
1	Central	Kampala	64.1
2	Central	Wakiso	62.8
3	Eastern	Jinja	54.2
4	Western	Mbarara	54.1
5	Western	Bushenyi	53.5
6	Central	Mukono	50.7
7	Central	Luwero	49.3
8	Central	Kalangala	49.1
9	Central	Mityana	47.1
10	Western	Masindi	46.9
71	Eastern	Budaka	25.9
72	Eastern	Kaliro	25.8
73	Northern	Lira	25.5
74	Northern	Apac	25.3
75	Northern	Yumbe	25.0
76	Eastern	Kamuli	24.8
77	Eastern	Butaleja	23.4
78	Northern	Nakapiripirit	23.3
79	Northern	Kotido	16.8
80	Northern	Moroto	15.4

<sup>34</sup> UWEZO Report(2014): Are our children learning? Literacy and Numeracy Across East Africa

#### 2.4.2. Proposed Issue

**The Committee could request Government to give more information on the measures it has taken to ensure equality and non-discrimination in access to education. The State can also be requested to provide information on how it will ensure reduce the gap in performance across regions in the country.**