



**ISER**

Facilitating Social Justice

INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

# GETTING CHILDREN

# BACK TO SCHOOL



**EMERGING HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES FROM THE  
NATIONWIDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS IN UGANDA**

# GETTING CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL

## A. Introduction

COVID-19 and the resultant measures that were instituted to control its wide spread has had a devastating impact on the right to education with many children at risk of never returning to school. In Uganda, schools were closed for close to two years which meant limited or no access to education for the majority of learners in the country. It is feared that many learners who were in school before the closure of schools as result of Covid are most likely not to return to school largely due to high cost of education, child labour, and teenage pregnancies.

## B. School closure and Re-opening in Uganda

Schools were first closed on March 20, 2020 following a presidential directive. This was during the first wave of the pandemic affecting more than 15million learners and 548,192 and 188,000 teaching and non – teaching staff respectively.<sup>1</sup> In October 2020, there was a phased reopening of schools for mainly learners in candidate classes and other upper classes. This was intended to enable those in candidate classes sit for their final examinations to avoid creating a clog in the education system. The decision to allow a few classes was also intended to ensure compliance with the Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). However, before all learners could report back to school, a second total closure of the education institutions was announced and implemented on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 following the second wave of Covid-19. Since then, schools remained closed until 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022, when all education institutions were reopened across the country.

With the closure of schools, 51% of learners across the entire education system stopped learning, majority of them (60%), being from the primary subsector.<sup>2</sup> The other negative implications include reduced school attendance, increased dropouts as a result of the rise in teenage pregnancies, child marriages and child labour. This has eroded the significant gains that had so far been attained by government towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on equitable access to quality education. From ISER's rapid assessment of school reopening in Uganda, there are a number of emerging human rights and policy issues of concern that need to be addressed to facilitate the return of all learners to school.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports (2020), Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19, P. 6, Available at <http://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Preparedness-and-Response-Plan-for-COVID19-MAY-2020.pdf> accessed on February 1, 2022

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Authority (NPA) 2021, Towards Safe Opening of The Education Sector in Covid-19 Times: Technical Note, at <http://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NPA-on-Reopening-of-Schools-AmidstCOVID19.pdf> accessed on February 1, 2022



## C. Emerging human rights issues following school re-opening in Uganda

### i. Increasing cost of education

As a result of the prolonged closure of education institutions, schools have sought to make up for the lost income for the period when they were under closure by increasing both the tuition and non – tuition fees despite the fact that many households are yet to recover economically from the economic recession of the COVID19 pandemic. The increase in fees can be largely attributed to two main factors. First, unregulated tuition and non – tuition fees in private, public and government aided schools as shown in the table below. Schools require parents, in addition to paying school fees to also pay in monetary terms for a list of requirements. Currently, over 30% of the households in Uganda have to borrow to meet the fees and school requirements for their children's education.<sup>3</sup> The second factor is the deliberate failure by the government to match public funding of education with enrolment rates.<sup>4</sup> The country's public expenditure on education as a percentage of the GDP is low, averaging at 2.8% and among the lowest in the Sub Saharan Africa region.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, household expenditure on education has increased from 53% to 69% over a decade ago, with 20% of the poorest households' expenditure on education growing by 11% over the last 15 years.<sup>6</sup> With the strain on the household incomes occasioned by loss of jobs and slowdown in economic activity, about 64.6% parents are either struggling or not in position to afford tuition and non – tuition fees for their children.<sup>7</sup> This has resulted in increase in cases of school dropouts. Currently, 6 out of 10 persons that dropout of schools is due to high cost of education.<sup>8</sup>

On a number of occasions, the Ministry of Education and Sports has issued circulars and guidelines halting schools from increasing fees without its permission. But these

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. 2021. Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2: Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses? Paris, UNESCO at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379875> accessed on February 10, 2022

<sup>4</sup> ISER (2020), supra, Due to low capitation grants (per pupil allocation as operation funds provided to UPE and USE for purposes of running the school) and infrastructure funding, schools implementing UPE and USE schools are charging non – tuition fees to compensate for the gap left by the limited government funding.

<sup>5</sup> National Planning Authority (2018), Comprehensive Evaluation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program: Financing and Costing of UPE, p. 39 at <http://npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Thematic-Report-5-Financing-and-Costing-of-UPE-080119.pdf> accessed on February 10, 2022

<sup>6</sup> National Planning Authority, Comprehensive Evaluation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program: Education modelling and Forecasting, Policy Brief, No.11 Quarter 2: 2019/20. Available at <http://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Policy-11-1.pdf> (accessed on February 10, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> NPA, 2021, supra, p. 12

<sup>8</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2021. Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020. Kampala, Uganda; UBOS, p. 29 at [https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09\\_2021Uganda-National-Survey-Report-2019-2020.pdf](https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09_2021Uganda-National-Survey-Report-2019-2020.pdf) accessed on February 10, 2022

guidelines are unenforced and schools have simply ignored them.<sup>9</sup> The weak regulation of school charges in USE and UPE schools is undermining the rationale and purpose for which the two programs were initiated – enabling access to education by vulnerable children.

**Table 1: Showing tuition and non – tuition fees in selected private primary and secondary schools in selected districts**

Sn	District	Primary school	Amount charged (Ushs)			
			Day		Boarding	
1	Kumi	Joy Christian Nursery and primary school	Class	Amount	Class	Amount
			1 - 2	275,000	1 - 2	275,000
			3 - 4	355,000	3 - 4	355,000
			5 - 7	485,000	5 - 7	485,000
		Nyero Primary School	145,000		360,000	
		Firm Foundation Primary School	60,000 - 75,000 <sup>10</sup>			
2	Namayingo	Ebenezer Nursery and Primary School	55,000 - 65,000 <sup>11</sup>			
		Good Will Nursery and Primary School	35,000 - 65,000 <sup>13</sup>			
		Shandrob Primary School	90,000			
		Marinath Primary School	40,000 - 60,000 <sup>14</sup>			
Sn	District	Secondary school	Amount charged (Ushs)			
			Day		Boarding	
1	Kumi	Star Light Secondary School	145,000		360,000	
		St. Judes College	118,000		236,000	
2	Namayingo	Dede Secondary School <sup>12</sup>	122,000 - 172,000			

**Source: Data collected by Community Advocates facilitated by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER)**

<sup>9</sup> For instance, in 2020, Mr. Alex Kakooza, then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports issued guidelines stopping schools from increasing fees without permission from the ministry but a number of schools did not comply.

<sup>10</sup> At Nursery level they charge UGX 50,000; Primary one to three – UGX 60,000 and Primary five and seven – UGX 70,000.

<sup>11</sup> Primary One to two – UGX 55,000; three to five – 60,000; six and seven – 65,000

<sup>12</sup> O and A level students on day program pay UGX 122,000 and 172,000 respectively and O and A – level students on day program pay UGX 282,000 and 320,000 respectively.

<sup>13</sup> Primary one to two – 35,000; three to four – 40, 000; five to six – 50,000; seven – 65,000

<sup>14</sup> Primary one to two – 40,000; three to seven – 60,000.

From table 1, the tuition and non – tuition fees charged by some of the private schools such as Joy Christian Nursey and Primary School and Nyero primary schools are high in the communities they are operating from. However, even the UPE and USE schools that are mandated to provide universal quality primary and secondary education are also charging school fees which in most cases is disguised as development fees as shown in table 2 below;

**Table 2: Showing tuition and non – tuition fees in selected UPE and USE schools and districts**

Sn	District	UPE school	Amount charged (Ushs)	
			Day	Boarding
1	Kayunga	Nkokonjeru Umea	82,000	
		Kimanya Islamic Primary School	20,000	
2	Kumi	Bazaar Primary School	35,000	
		Bisina Lake View Primary School	6,000	
		Asinge Primary School	10,000	
		Omatenga Primary School	6,000	
		Oogoria Primary School	5,000	
3	Namayingo	Kandege Primary School	10,000	
		Gorofa Primary School	7,000	
		Butanira Primary School	7,500	
		Lollwe Primary School	12,000	
		Bujwanga Primary School	7,000	
		Namadowa Primary School	10,000	
4	Buikwe	Buikwe C/U Primary School	50,000 - 80,000	
		St. Marys Malongwe Primary School	70,000 - 100,000	
Sn	District	USE school	Amount charged (Ushs)	
			Day	Boarding
1	Kayunga	Kangulumira Public Secondary School	120,000	400,000

		Busana Secondary School	Class	Amount	Class	Amount
			1 - 3	91,500	1 - 2	313,000
			4 - 6 (arts)	131,500	4	327,500
			5 (sciences)	136,500	5 & 6 (arts)	371,500
			6 (sciences)	161,500	5 & 6 (sciences)	401,500
2	Kumi	Mukongoro High School	100,000 - 141,000		262,500	
		Kanyum Comprehensive Senior Secondary School	110,000 - 130,000 <sup>15</sup>			
		Wiggins Secondary School	156,000		337,000	
3	Namayingo	Lwangosia Secondary School	80,000 <sup>16</sup>			
		Sigulu Senior Secondary School	83,000 - 140,000 <sup>17</sup>			

*Source: Data collected by Community Advocates facilitated by ISER in February 2022*

As shown in table 2 above, most of the schools especially those not charging more than UGX 10,000, it is for development fees. It is unfortunate that some UPE schools such as Buikwe C/U Primary School increased school charges from UGX 30,000 for primary one to three to UGX 50,000, the fees for primary four to five was also increased from UGX 60,000 to UGX 80,000. However, for St. Mary's Malongwe, the fees for primary one to three was reduced from UGX 100,000 to UGX 70,000 where that of primary four to Seven was also reduced from UGX 120,000 to 100,000. Both St Mary's Malongwe and Buikwe C/U primary schools are in Buikwe district and the fact that they are charging varying fees points to weakness in supervision and regulation of school charges in schools. In addition to school fees, parents are required to pay non – tuition fees. For instance, in Busana Secondary School in Kayunga District, learners pay for the following requirements and non – tuition fees; uniforms, hostels development, laboratory and ICT, dining hall, identity cards among others costs UGX 182,000. The cost is higher for learners in boarding programs. It is unjustifiable for school implementing the USE program to implement compulsory boarding policies and even charge tuition and non – tuition fees as if they are private schools.

<sup>15</sup> Senior one to four pay UGX 110,000; senior five 130,000 and senior six 120,000

<sup>16</sup> The non – USE students pay UGX 132,000

<sup>17</sup> For USE students pay 83,000 and for non – USE students – 140,000

## **ii. Influx of learners from private schools to public or government aided schools**

There has been a surge of learners shifting from private schools to public or government aided schools especially those implementing the Universal Primary and Secondary Education (UPE & USE) schools. This is mainly being experienced in urban areas. According to interviews conducted by ISER staff and reports from Community Advocates, the transfer of learners from private to public or government aided schools can be attributed to two main factors. First, the high cost of private education. Secondly, the indefinite closure or change of user of some of the private schools. Considering that private schools are a business just like any other, there has been instances of closure of private schools by their respective proprietors the moment they cease being profitable.<sup>18</sup> The new management of the school can either decide to continue with the school business or change into other ventures that he/she deems profitable. However, with the breakout of Covid19 and the resultant closure of education institutions, schools were not in operation and consequently missed out on school fees which is their main source of income.

When the government announced the national wide reopening of education institutions, some schools had already closed and their proprietors changed into other businesses and others failed to open due to lack of operational funds yet the school fees was not also trickling in as expected. It is estimated that close to 3,507 primary and 832 secondary schools closed and failed to reopen.<sup>19</sup> Some schools even reopened only to close within a few days after receiving the full school fees payments. A case in point is East High School Ntinda. The school closed three days after reopening when some of the parents had already made full school fees payments.<sup>20</sup> This caused a lot of disorganization for parents as they had to find new schools for their children which comes with additional expenses of requirements and even school fees.

The closure of private schools has left the nearby public or government aided schools as the only option as established by ISER's field visits in various districts such as Kumi,

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, Najjera Progressive Secondary School though indefinitely closed immediately after government announcing national wide closure of education institution, the Directors of the school clearly indicated that after making comprehensive analysis of business viability, it was no longer profitable to continue operating the school. see Kisekka Christopher "Najjera Progressive School Closed after 32-years of Existence" July 21, 2020 at <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/najjera-progressive-school-closed-after-32-years-of-existence-> (accessed on February 10, 2022)

<sup>19</sup> NPA, 2021, supra

<sup>20</sup> URN "Tears, anguish as East High School Ntinda abruptly closes" The Observer, January 14, 2022 at <https://observer.ug/news/headlines/72456-tears-anguish-as-east-high-school-ntinda-abruptly-closes> (accessed on January 31, 2022). Other schools that closed include; Pentecostal Assembly of God School (PAG) in Kumi district; Junior Academy primary school in Namayingo district; Town Academy (secondary school), United Methodist School (Primary school), Five Star Primary and Nursery school and Green Acres College (Secondary School) in Mukono District Mukono. The number of schools that closed are many but this is just a highlight.

Kayunga, Mukono, Namayingo, Buikwe among others.<sup>21</sup> Although, UPE and USE schools are also not entirely free of charge, many parents find such schools to be less costly in comparison to the private schools or government aided schools that are non – UPE/USE.<sup>22</sup> For instance in Kampala, USE schools charge between UGX 150,000 to 200,000 per term for meals and administrative costs.<sup>23</sup>

### **iii. Forced compulsory boarding policies for learners in candidate classes**

There are schools that are implementing forced compulsory boarding policies for learners in candidate classes even when they are not licensed to operate boarding facilities. This is not only a disregard and abuse of the licensing authority but it is also contrary to MoES directive that required schools to operate as per their registration status.<sup>24</sup> Nyero primary school in Kumi district is requiring all learners in primary seven to join the boarding section. Parents have to part with UGX 185,000 per term. Also, Busana Secondary School in Kayunga District, learners in candidate classes are required to be in the boarding section. This comes at extra cost as those in boarding are required to pay UGX 371,500 and 401,500 for A – level arts and science students respectively as shown in table 3.

### **iv. Inconsistencies in management of teenage pregnancy in school setting**

With the prolonged closure of schools, several children fell victim to child abuse and domestic violence. As such, there was an increase in teenage pregnancy and early marriages. Approximately 67 districts registered increase in teenage pregnancies from 2019 to 2020, with the national rate hitting 290,219 teenage pregnancies in January to September 2021 that translates into 32,000 pregnancies monthly.<sup>25</sup> However, there are

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<sup>21</sup> Kampala Capital City Authority has confirmed that over 40 private schools have indefinitely closed in Kampala and premises turned into bars, restaurants, travelers' accommodation, and depots for beverages among others. See Alon Mwesigwa "Term starts in Uganda – but world's longest shutdown has left schools in crisis" The Guardian, January 14, 2022 at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jan/14/term-starts-in-uganda-but-worlds-longest-shutdown-has-left-schools-in-crisis> (accessed on January 31, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> This is attributed to the devastating impact that COVID19 had dealt the economy with many people losing jobs and other business closed. Although almost all business have been fully opened, there is slowness in business activity. The loss in household incomes has forced many families to undertake prioritization.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Mayanja "Parents Rush Children to Government Schools" New Visions January 19, 2022

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports, 2022, Guidelines for Reopening of Education Standards and Implementation of COVID19 Standard Operating Procedures, 2021 at <https://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/guidelines-for-reopening-of-schools.pdf> (accessed on March 7, 2022)

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Population Fund Factsheet on Teenage Pregnancy 2021 at [https://uganda.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/teenpregnancy\\_factsheet\\_3.pdf](https://uganda.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/teenpregnancy_factsheet_3.pdf) (accessed on February 10, 2022)



six regions that recorded the highest number of teenage pregnancies as shown in table 3 below ;

**Table 3: Showing Teenage Pregnancy in some of the sub regions and districts of Uganda**

SN	Sub regions	District	No. of teenage Pregnancies
1	Busoga	Kamuli	6,535
		Mayuge	6,205
2	Buganda	Mukono	5,535
		Wakiso	10,439
		Rakai	2,711
		Luwero	4,545
		Kampala	8,460
3	Lango	Oyam	6,449
		Lira	4,697
4	West Nile	Arua	4,705
		Yumbe	3,973
5	Tooro/ Rwenzori	Kasese	7,319
		Kyenjojo	4,341

**Source: United Nations Population Fund Factsheet on Teenage Pregnancy 2021**

Other regions were left out by UNFPA but this does not suggest that they do not have incidents of teenage pregnancy, they may be just slightly lower than the ones provided.<sup>26</sup> It is this alarming rate of teenage pregnancies that prompted the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop and issue Revised Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Setting. However, the guidelines require the learner who is pregnant to leave schools when the pregnancy is three months and return when the born baby is six months old and where the person responsible for the pregnancy is also a fellow learner he will also be required to stay away from school for the same time but in case of promotional examinations, the learners will be allowed to come back and sit the exams before the elapse of the period they are required to be out of school. In their current form, the guidelines are almost not allowing pregnant girls to be in school.

<sup>26</sup> Statement on the National Campaign Against Defilement, Early Marriages and Failed Parenthood Presented to Parliament of Uganda by the H.E the Vice President (Unpublished).

Although the President has also made statements indicating that he is agreeable to having pregnant girls in school,<sup>27</sup> it is not clear whether pregnant girls will only be allowed to be in school for three months as per the guidelines or for a longer period beyond the one stipulated in the guidelines. However, it is important to note that a number of schools are being progressive in managing the issue of teenage pregnancy and nursing teenage mothers by allowing them to return to school. In Namayingo district, there are nursing mothers in Buhobi, Buduma, and Bugana Primary Schools. Also, Kifuyo Secondary School in the same district has seven nursing teenage mothers and two pregnant learners. Wiggins Secondary School in Kumi district also has five pregnant learners and five nursing teenage mothers. It has also been noted that some pregnant learners have opted to change school and abandon their former schools for new ones as a way of fighting stigma and exclusion by their friends in their former schools. The action of schools allowing pregnant learners and nursing teenage mothers back to school is a demonstration of respect and protection of their right to education by ensuring continued access to education.

## **v. Increase in school dropout**

The National Planning Authority approximated that 30% of the learners who were in school before Covid-19 are most likely not to return to schools due to similar factors of; child labour, teenage pregnancies and child marriages.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the National Assessment of Progress in Education; 2021 Covid-19 Pandemic Report by the Uganda National Examination Board established that 40.7% learners did not report back to school due to lack of tuition fees; 30.5% - teenage pregnancy; 22.9% - early marriages among others. These findings corroborate the earlier report published in 2020, by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) that undertook a rapid assessment of the rate of return to school of learners in candidate classes.<sup>29</sup> This was upon the government's announcement and implementation of the phased reopening of schools in October 2020 starting with learners in candidate classes. It was found out that a number of learners were not in position to return to school due to the high cost of education, teenage pregnancies and early marriages. From ISER's monitoring of the recent reopening of

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<sup>27</sup> Kazibwe Keneth "Museveni speaks out on keeping pregnant girls in school" Nile Post, January 27, 2022 at <http://nilepost.co.ug/2022/01/27/museveni-speaks-out-on-keeping-pregnant-girls-in-school/> (accessed on February 7, 2022)

<sup>28</sup> National Planning Authority (NPA) 2021, *supra*

<sup>29</sup> See Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER, 2020), "Leaving No One Behind: Barriers to Continuity of Education for Vulnerable Children Impacted by Covid-19 in Uganda," Available at: [https://www.iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/Barriers\\_to\\_Continuity\\_of\\_Education\\_for\\_Vulnerable\\_Children\\_Impacted\\_by\\_Covid-19\\_in\\_Uganda.pdf](https://www.iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/Barriers_to_Continuity_of_Education_for_Vulnerable_Children_Impacted_by_Covid-19_in_Uganda.pdf) (accessed on February 10, 2022)

schools, a number of learners are yet to report back to school as shown in table 4 below;.

**Table 4: Showing rate of return in selected schools and districts**

Sn	District	Primary School	Enrollment before closure (January to March 2020)			Enrollment after reopening (2022)		
			M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1	Kayunga	Nabuganyi RC primary school	350	480	758	322	419	731
		Kitimbwa Light SDA primary school	-	-	816	444	534	978
		Nakyesa Primary School	373	382	755	409	441	850
2	Kumi	Agule Primary School	401	404	805	386	380	766
		Bazaar Primary School	562	639	1,201	601	699	1,300
		Okuba Primary School	289	280	569	302	347	649
		Omatenga Primary School	253	271	524	254	237	491
		Kumi girls Primary School	-	515	515	-	609	609
3	Namayingo	Gorofa Primary School	-	-	403	-	-	222
		Bujwanga Primary School	248	219	467	420	383	803
		Kandege Primary School	259	273	532	158	129	287
4	Buikwe	Buikwe C/U Primary School	-	-	700	-	-	600
		St. Mary's Malongwe Primary School	-	-	387	-	-	300
		Nkokonjeru UMEA Primary School	193	217	410	104	115	219
Sn	District	Secondary School	Enrollment before closure (January to March 2020)			Enrollment after reopening (2022)		
			M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1	Kayunga	Busana Senior Secondary School	-	-	-	668	559	1,267
		Kangulumira Public secondary school	505	479	984	492	553	1,045
2	Namayingo	Kifuyo Secondary School	400	280	680	600	500	1,100
		Lwangosia Senior Secondary School	567	210	777	489	226	715

*Source: Data collected by Community Advocates facilitated by ISER in February 2022*

Generally, the rate of return to school remains low for a number of schools. The rate of low return is mainly prevalent in the schools in Buikwe and Namayingo districts for instance in Nkokonjeru UMEA, out of the 410 learners enrolled before COVID19, only 219 learners have so far reported back to school. However, from table 4 above, some schools are registering an increment in enrolment such as Kifuyo Secondary School where enrolment has increased from 680 to 1,100 learners. The schools registering increment in enrolment are mainly UPE and USE schools which are taking on learners from private schools that failed to reopen.<sup>30</sup>

## **D. Factors affecting access to quality primary and secondary education following School Reopening**

### **i. Social distance rules vis –a – vis overcrowding in UPE and USE schools**

In its guidelines on reopening of schools, the Ministry of Education and Sports emphasized compliance to Standard Operating procedures by all schools which includes social distancing. However, the shifting of learners from private to UPE and USE schools has caused overcrowding. It is important to note that as the parents shift their children to public and government aided schools (implementing UPE and USE), majority of them are operating with inadequate infrastructure, dilapidated facilities and limited teaching staff as indicated in table 5 below. The increase in enrolment in such schools is causing a strain on the available limited infrastructure and teaching staff, which is undermining compliance to the Standard Operating Procedures that were put in place to control the spread of the COVID19 pandemic. Much as the country is currently out of the third wave of the pandemic, the current overcrowding especially in government aided and public schools is fertile ground for a fourth wave in the country and the Ministry of Health has accordingly cautioned the population to strictly observe the SOPs.

### **ii. Limited infrastructure and human resource in UPE schools**

Access to quality education is hinged on the availability of essential facilities and teaching staff in sufficient terms. The increase in enrolment has also resulted in increase in pupil to

<sup>30</sup> Abet Tonny “What to expect as third wave of Covid-19 ends” Daily Monitor, February 17, 2022 at <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/what-to-expect-as-third-wave-of-covid-19-ends-3720474> accessed on February 19, 2022.



schools as shown in table 5 below. However, the increment in enrolment has not been matched up with the necessary infrastructure and human resource needs to support the delivery of quality education.

**Table 5: Showing the current state of infrastructure and teaching staff in selected UPE schools in Kumi and Namayingo districts**

Standard	National Minimum Standard of Service Delivery	UPE Primary School							
		Namayingo district				Kumi district			
		Budidi	Bulamba	Buchwera	Bugoma	Koidike	Agule	Okouba	Nyero
Total enrolment		795	511	1,269	253	740	1,016	649	1,507
Teacher Pupil ratio	1:55	1:88	1:58	1:127	1:36	1:57	1:73	1:54	1:116
Classroom Pupil ratio	1:55	1:88	1:58	1:127	1:36	1:57	1:73	1:54	1:116
Desk Pupil ratio	1:3	1:9	1:5	1:9	1:3	1:9	1:12	1:4	1:5
Latrine stance pupil ratio	1:40	1:53	1:64	1:254	1:25	1:123	1:203	1:93	1:188

**Source: ISER's compilation based on data collected by Community Advocates in March 2022**

As shown table 5 above, majority of the schools can hardly meet the minimum standards. A case in point is Buchwera primary school, Namayingo District, where there was an increase in enrolment of learners from 855 to 1003. The primary one class alone has 260 learners and they all sit on the floor due to lack of desks. Primary three has 193 learners with insufficient desks to accommodate all the learners and as a result, other learners have to stand while in class. The same school is also operating with limited teaching staff. Equally, the rest of other schools are also operating below the minimum standards in a number of aspects. The influx of learners from private schools to UPE and USE schools demonstrate that public education is the only viable and sustainable option for delivery of education. It therefore offers an opportunity to the government to commit sufficient resources towards establishing a resilient and strong public education system that offers equitable and quality education for all.

## **E. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The protracted closure of schools had a devastating impact on the education sector. Consequently, a number of children have not returned to school, while there are challenges to attaining quality education for those who have returned. A number of children resorted to child labour and accordingly lost interest in education. The plans to mobilise them to return to school should address barriers that may hinder the learners' access to education. The Ministry of Education and Sports should therefore undertake the following;

### **In the short term:**

- i. In line with S. 57 of the Education Act, the Minister for Education and Sport should issue a statutory instrument regulating both tuition and non – tuition fees in all schools.
- ii. The Directorate of Education Standards and Districts Inspector of Schools should undertake nationwide situational analysis of all schools to establish the status of those that require additional human resource and infrastructure and secure and allocate funds to respond to the two challenges.
- iii. Consider taking on some of the struggling community schools in communities that are underserved. This will be through coding and grant aiding of such community schools to offer universal primary and secondary education.
- iv. In line with the statements made by President, the Ministry of Education and Sports should explicitly pronounce itself on the policy of allowing pregnant girls back in school unconditionally.
- v. Abolish compulsory boarding policies for all classes in USE and UPE schools across the country.

### **In the medium term:**

- i. Develop a unit cost required to educate learners in both primary and secondary schools. This will offer appropriate benchmark for financing UPE and USE programs and also regulate tuition and non – tuition fees in all schools.
- ii. Ensure that all schools comply with the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards.



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