



ADVOCATES COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (ACODE)  
CENTRE FOR BUDGET AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE (CBEG)

# ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE GOVERNANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN UGANDA



Susan Namirembe Kavuma | Kiran Cunningham | George Bogere | Richard Sebaggala

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**Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE)**

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P. O. Box 29836, Kampala

Email: [library@acode-u.org](mailto:library@acode-u.org),

[acode@acode-u.org](mailto:acode@acode-u.org)

Website: <http://www.acode-u.org>

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## Acronyms

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<b>ACODE</b>	-	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
<b>AGMs</b>	-	Annual General Meetings
<b>BOU</b>	-	Bank of Uganda
<b>CAO</b>	-	Chief Administrative Office
<b>CBEG</b>	-	Centre for Budget and Economic Governance
<b>CBOs</b>	-	Community Based Organisations
<b>CCTs</b>	-	Centre Coordinating Tutors
<b>CDOs</b>	-	Community Development Officers
<b>CG</b>	-	Capitation Grant
<b>CSOs</b>	-	Civil Society Organisations
<b>DDP</b>	-	District Development Plan
<b>DEC</b>	-	District Executive Committee
<b>DEO</b>	-	District Education Officer
<b>DIS</b>	-	District Inspector of Schools
<b>DSC</b>	-	District Service Commission
<b>EFA</b>	-	Education for All
<b>FGD</b>	-	Focus Group Discussions
<b>GDP</b>	-	Gross Domestic Product
<b>KIIs</b>	-	Key Informant Interviews
<b>LAP</b>	-	Local Action Plan
<b>LC1</b>	-	Local Council One
<b>LCV</b>	-	Chairman Local Council Five
<b>LGSCSI</b>	-	Local Government Councils Scorecard Initiative
<b>MoES</b>	-	Ministry of Education and Sports
<b>MoESTS</b>	-	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports
<b>MoFPED</b>	-	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
<b>NGOs</b>	-	Non- Governmental Organizations

<b>NUSAF</b>	-	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
<b>PAC</b>	-	Public Accounts Committee
<b>PAF</b>	-	Poverty Action Fund
<b>PEG</b>	-	Public Expenditure Governance
<b>PLE</b>	-	Primary Leaving Examination
<b>PTA</b>	-	Parents Teachers Association
<b>RDC</b>	-	Resident District Commissioner
<b>SACCOs</b>	-	Savings and Credit Cooperative Unions (SACCOs)
<b>SFG</b>	-	School Facilities Grant
<b>SMC</b>	-	School Management Committee
<b>TPC</b>	-	Technical Planning Committee
<b>UBoS</b>	-	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
<b>UNESCO</b>	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	-	United Nations international Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UPE</b>	-	Universal Primary Education
<b>UPPET</b>	-	Universal Post-primary Education Training
<b>WFP</b>	-	World Food Programme



## Executive Summary

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This study seeks to assess public expenditure governance of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in Uganda. UPE is a government programme that aims at providing basic education to school-going children aged six years and above. Established in 1997, its policy objectives include the equitable provision of education that is affordable to the majority of Ugandans. This study focuses on various dimensions of governance of the UPE program at the district level with emphasis on decision-making, effectiveness of the accountability framework and the interaction among the actors. The study was specifically designed to find out the Public Expenditure Governance (PEG) practices under UPE at district levels, document the perspectives on public expenditure governance of UPE of the actors at the district levels, and show the importance of specific public expenditure governance practices to sector outcomes.

The PEG assessment framework is grounded in a dynamic model of governance based on nine principles: strategic vision, participation, coordination, transparency, control of corruption, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness and equity. Each principle was clearly defined and indicators were developed for the assessment of public expenditure governance in UPE. The assessment is based on the action research methodological framework. As such, knowledge generation and action are tied together in ways that activate the supply and demand links in the accountability chain in governance. Data was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and content analysis of government documents. The thirteen districts included in the study were selected with a bias towards regional balance.

The assessment of PEG in UPE involved an examination of the nine PEG principles associated with the inputs, processes and outcomes of governance. While there were several recurring themes that arose in the findings, one that came up in the discussion of each of the nine principles is the discrepancy between knowledge of how the system is supposed to work and the actual practice. Stakeholders across the board were, for the most part, knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities with regard to UPE. However, for a variety of reasons, the actual implementation of the practices associated with those roles and responsibilities often fell short.

Within the PEG system, all principles are interconnected such that a malfunctioning of one interferes with the proper functioning of the rest of the system. Without the inputs in place, processes cannot work, and without the process working smoothly, the outputs are compromised. This interconnectivity between the principles is evident in the data. For example, the connection

between participation and accountability is revealed in the importance of parents' engagement with School Management Committees (SMC) meetings, given the role of SMCs in sensitising and providing information to parents about UPE programmes. When parents do not participate in these meetings, their ability to demand accountability for programme outcomes is greatly lessened, and the SMCs are also less able to perform their roles in the accountability chain. Similarly, the process of transparency is intricately intertwined with the output of responsiveness. When government officials do not maintain open channels for citizen input, their ability to respond is compromised. Indeed, there are many examples of citizen frustration with responsiveness, many of which relate to perceptions that the channels through which their complaints should flow are blocked. This frustration with the process also affects participation. For instance, many citizens held the view that attending meetings and providing input was futile lost interest in attending meetings. They felt that their concerns would never reach the decision-makers.

When it comes to UPE, there is indeed promise, although there is much to be done to achieve full functionality of the PEG system, there are some principles accomplished in the districts that deserve to be shared. In Hoima and Wakiso districts, for example, the training of SMCs and PTAs on how to set targets and monitor progress is working to bolster practices associated with the principle of strategic vision. In Mpigi district, the Annual Education Conference is an excellent example of a way to deeply and meaningfully engage citizens on UPE issues with regards to the principle of participation. In Nakapiripirit district, the district NGO forum has put the principle of coordination into practice by providing space for integrating and aligning the plans of NGOs working in the district with district plans. This has reduced duplication of efforts by ensuring that the work of the different NGOs is not overly concentrated in a few geographic areas within the district. In terms of accountability, Kamuli district's demonstrated practice of keeping an accessible trail of evidence from citizen complaint all the way through to ordering the offending teacher to appear before the PAC. the rewards and sanctions committee is commendable and in need of replication by other districts. Kabarole district is directly tackling the principle of effectiveness by taking necessary steps to improve school retention and performance. This has been done by revising the practice of automatic promotion whereby a student has to attend at least 90% of class time in order to be promoted to the next level. On the principle of equity, Gulu, Kabarole and Mpigi districts have used their district councils as tools for passing ordinances that demonstrate responsiveness to a more equitable education for girls (Gulu and Kabarole) and children with special needs (Mpigi). These practices are just a few of the many steps that political and technical leaders, often with the encouragement of parents and communities, have taken to improve the governance of public expenditures for UPE in their districts.

This study makes recommendations to the three levels of governance which, according to the policy of decentralisation, are charged with implementation of UPE: the school, district and central government. Overall, each level needs to enhance their degree of strategic planning on the key school indicators: enrolment, retention and performance. In particular, schools should adequately plan for the learner population considering the available resources, and communal and institutional factors. For example, schools should enrol pupils that correspond with the number of teachers and infrastructure. Similarly, districts or local governments should endeavour to use the available information on UPE, obtained from schools and central government to adequately plan for all primary school going-age children in the district. This will help to appropriately match resources with expected outcomes for UPE. For instance, local governments should be able to devise strategies to include pupils from unreached areas and the special needs children on the program.

Likewise, the central government should provide an enabling policy framework for the financing of UPE and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UPE schools. For instance, parents who have construed universal education as free education, which it is not, need public sensitization. Relatedly, government financing towards UPE needs to be increased from 2.2 percent of GDP to 4.0 percent of GDP, which is the average for sub-Saharan countries. The challenge of proper record keeping noticed at all levels, with some documents missing or information not appropriately captured or shared, is another area that requires attention. We, therefore, recommend that all players should make every effort to improve record keeping of important documents and information that should be shared among stakeholders. Since, some activities such as supervision of UPE schools are done at the three levels, there is need to promote coordination of these activities to harness the synergies of the players and to avoid wastage of resources. On the other hand, there should be regular coordination meetings to share information and harmonise strategies. Lastly, the study finds that some actors, such as members of the SMC, have skills gaps in the areas of planning and financial management, and would benefit from training to enhance their oversight role in the implementation of UPE.

## 1.0 Introduction

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The importance of governance in development discourse has taken centre stage because of the linkage between governance and development outcomes (Kaufmann et al, 2004; Glewwe and Kremer, 2006; Rajkumar and Swaroop, 2007). Governance plays a key role in promoting effective institutions. Systems that are responsive to citizens' needs also hold office bearers to account for their actions. Consequently, central governments increasingly share the responsibility of public service provision with local governments aiming at increasing their accountability and responsiveness in service delivery. It is important for existing governance systems in developing countries to deliver public services in a way that promotes inclusive development, targeting the vulnerable or minority groups in society. Equally important, the existing governance systems need to be responsive to the present and future needs of society.

Governance is a broad term encompassing the processes of decision-making and the processes by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. It is often viewed in terms of the principles that govern its practice and the actors responsible for the processes. These actors include the central government, local government and the private sector made up of corporate bodies and communities. In the development process, the onus is on government to provide public goods such as education, health, roads and security. Consequently, many governments including those in developing countries have made huge investments in education and health because of the potential impact these two have on many of the development goals. For instance, investment in education is likely to impact on many of the Sustainable Development Goals such as quality of education, reduction in poverty, reduced inequalities, improved health and wellbeing.

Education, a component of human capital, is a key determinant of economic growth and development and determines the pace of both (Barro, 1991, Hanushek, 2013). Hence, in order to spur growth and reduce poverty, many developing countries have invested heavily in the education sector, especially at the lower level. At an average of 18.3 per cent, the education sector in most developing countries is the largest recipient of total public expenditure in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2011). This is because many developing countries are increasingly committing themselves to the goal of universal education. Consequently, education systems in sub-Saharan Africa have expanded substantially, with enrolment at primary increasing 5.5 times from 23 million in 1970 to 129 million in 2008. However, in spite of the tremendous increase in pupil enrolment, the attainment of universal primary education or Education for All (EFA) remains a daunting challenge. This is so because it can only be achieved

when all school-aged children remain in school and complete the primary cycle. UNESCO also reports that the average primary school completion rate for sub-Saharan Africa is 69 per cent, which implies that these countries need to address factors that cause children to leave school in order to achieve the goal of universal education or Education for All.

In this study, we assess the governance of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in Uganda. UPE is a government program with the mandate of providing compulsory primary education to all school-going age Ugandans. The study uses a public expenditure governance assessment framework proposed by Bogere and Makaaru (2014) as adopted from Baez-Camargo and Jacobs (2011). In the framework, governance is defined as the manner in which decisions over public expenditure are made and implemented. It also shows how interactions among actors impact on the outcomes of public expenditure. This study focuses on various dimensions of governance of the UPE program at the district level with emphasis on decision-making, effectiveness of the accountability framework and the interaction among the actors. The study specifically seeks to:

1. Ascertain public expenditure governance practices under UPE at the district levels,
2. Document the perspectives of actors at the district levels on public expenditure governance of UPE.
3. Highlight the importance of specific public expenditure governance practices to sector outcomes.

## 1.1 Education Sector Funding and Performance

Uganda Budget allocation data shows that the education sector has over the last decade been among the top three most funded sectors in the national budget (Uganda Budget Database ). The data further shows that funding to the sector has been on the upward trend reaching UGX 3,553.44bn in 2013/14 before sliding to UGX 3,094.6 billion in 2014/15. This translates into 11.8 percent of government spending (WDI:2014). However, government expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP has declined from 3.7 percent in 2010 to 2.2 percent in 2014. The Table 1.1 below shows that Uganda's expenditure on education remains low compared to the neighbouring countries. Nonetheless, Uganda measures up to the neighbouring countries on key primary education indicators, such as enrolment, which has steadily increased to 8.77 million pupils in 2015<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> An online budget database managed by ACODE-www.budget-acode.org

<sup>2</sup> Annual report MoES 2014/15

**Table 1.1: Uganda's Key Education Indicators Compared to Neighbouring Countries**

Indicator	Uganda	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Burundi	SSA
Government Expenditure on Education (%GDP)	2.2	N/A	5.0	3.5	5.4	4.0
Government Expenditure on Education (% total expenditure)	11.8	N/A	16.6	17.3	17.2	16.6
Adjusted net enrolment, primary, male (%)	92	84	95	81	95	81
Adjusted net enrolment, primary, female (%)	95	88	97	82	97	76
Primary completion rate, male (%)	56	103	61	70	63	72
Primary completion rate, female (%)	55	104	72	77	70	66

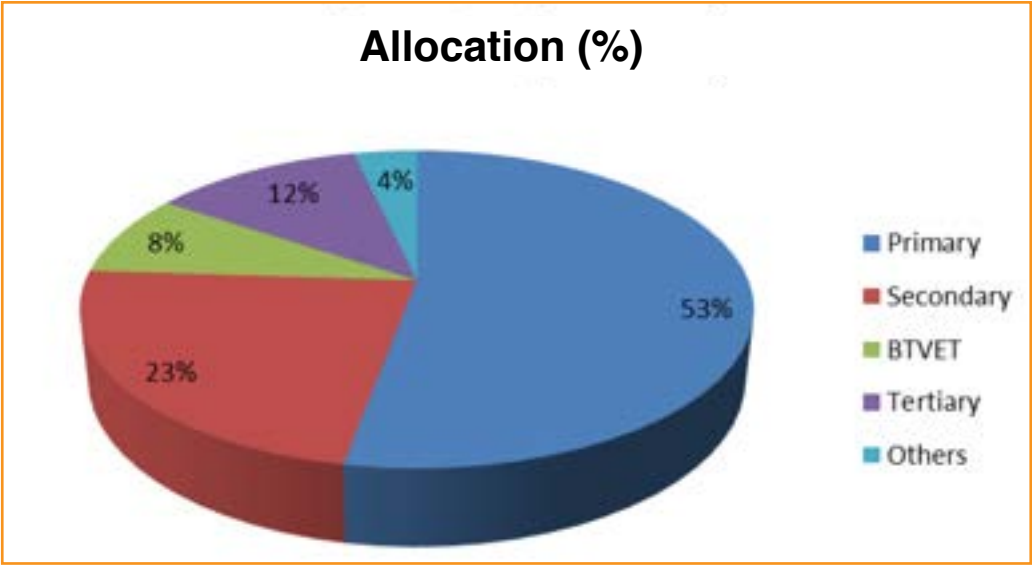
Source: World Development Indicators, 2014 (online version as viewed on December 14, 2016)

## 1.2 Intra-sector Budget Allocation

As shown in Figure 1.1, funding to the education sector is dominated by primary education, which accounts for 53 percent of the budget. Secondary education follows with a share of 23 percent, while tertiary institutions and Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) take 12 percent and 8 percent respectively<sup>3</sup>. Other areas share the remaining 4 percent. In terms of intergovernmental allocation, the share of local governments is about 33 percent. Teachers' salaries claim the largest share of the education grants to local governments as shown in Figure 1.2. Like most transfers to local governments, the transfers under education are largely conditional with little discretion left to the recipients.

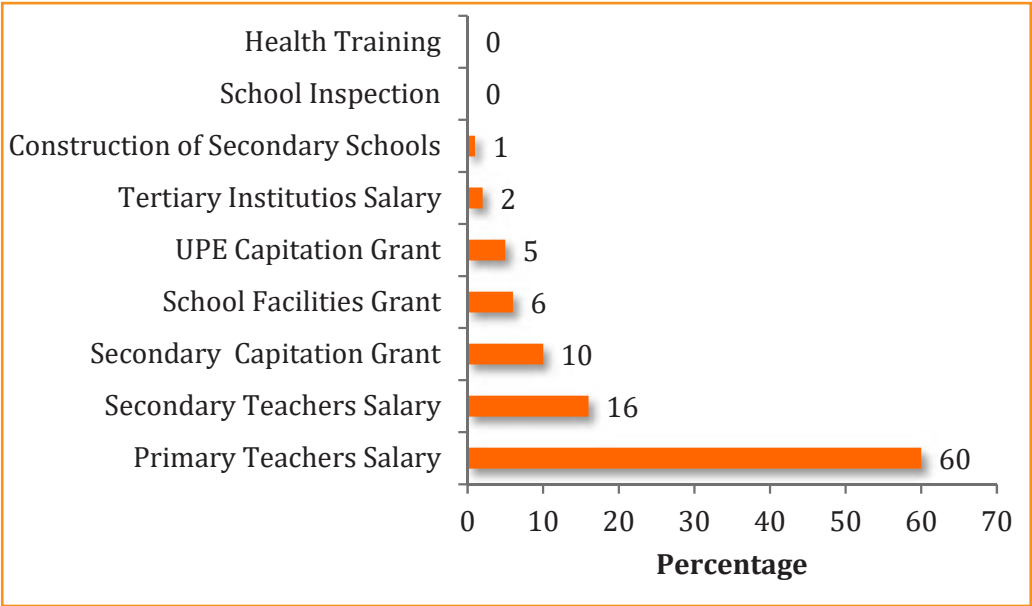
<sup>3</sup> Annual report MoES 2014/15

Figure 1.1: Intra-sector Allocations in the Education Sector



Source: 2014/15 Annual report MoES

Figure 1.2: Allocation of Education Grants to Local Governments



Source: MFPED Approved Estimates for Revenue and Expenditure FY 2010/11 to FY 2014/15

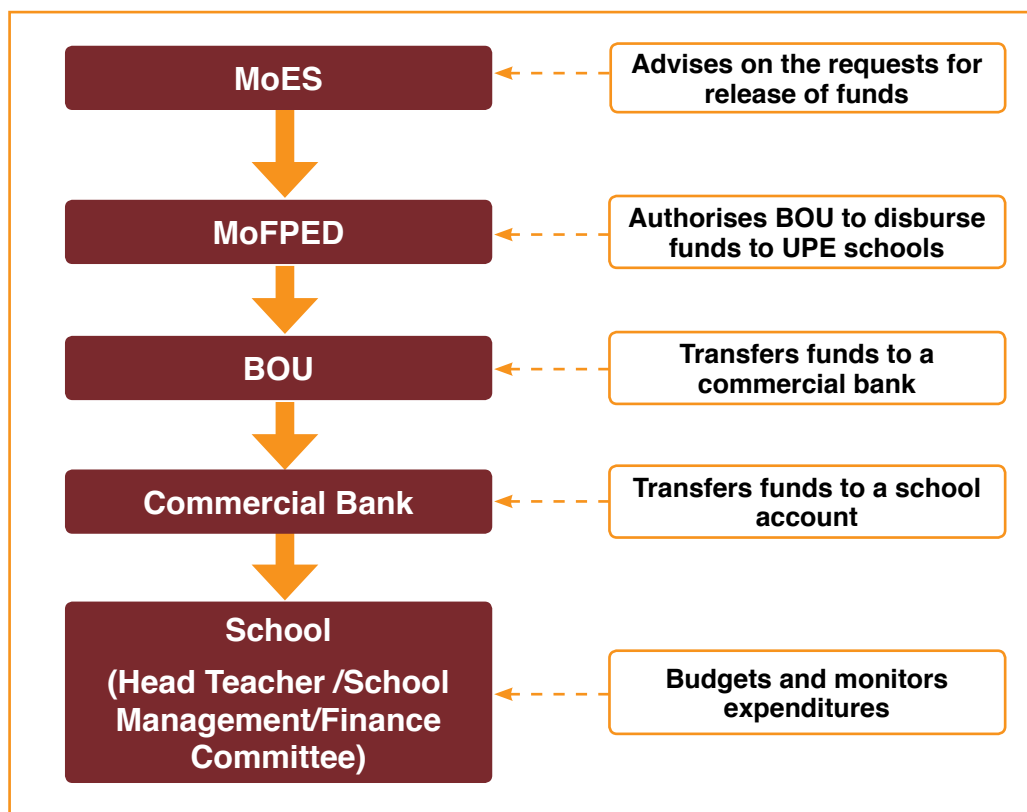
### 1.3 The Universal Primary Education Programme

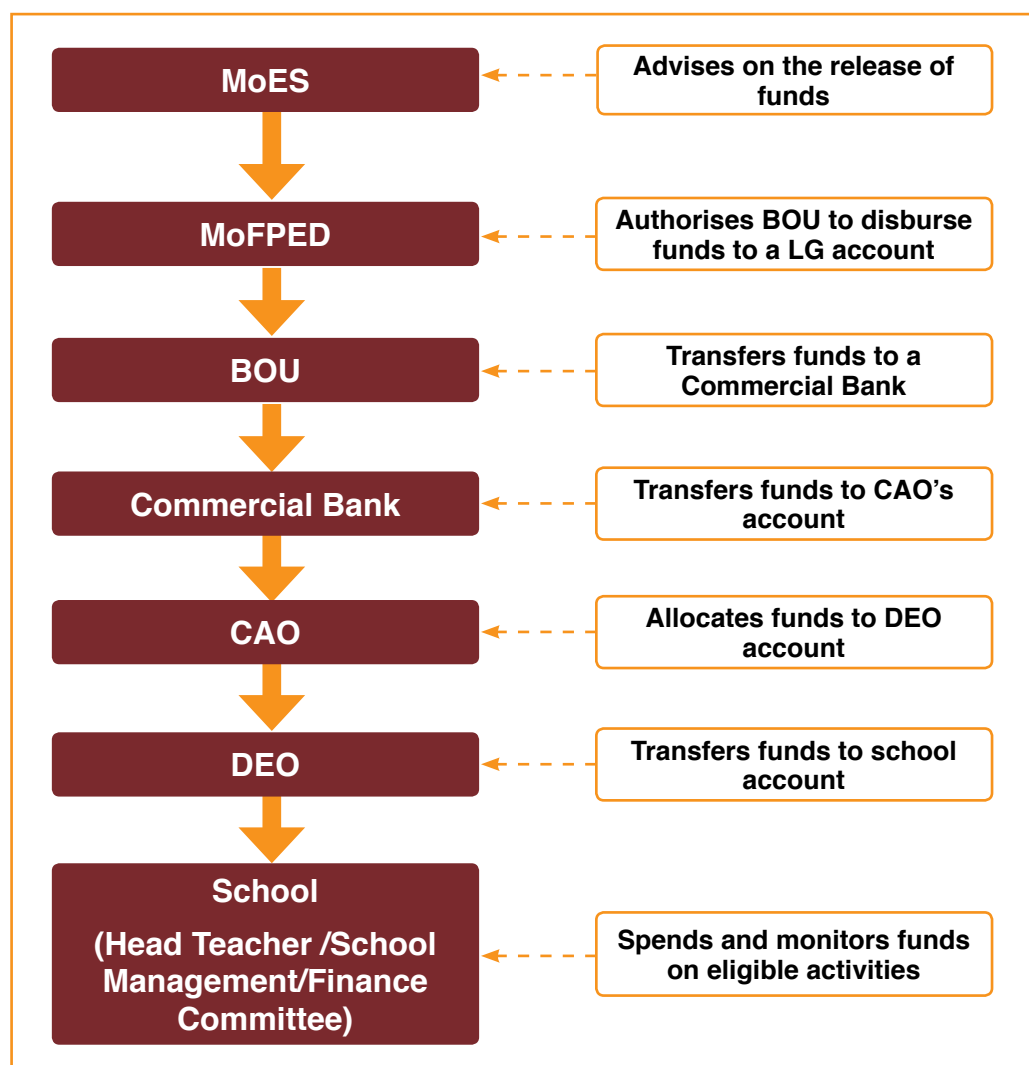
In 1997, the Government of Uganda implemented the Universal Primary Education programme. This was and remains a compulsory education programme aimed at providing basic education to school-going age children of six years and above. Under this programme, the government aims at increasing access to quality education and providing it equitably to the target children. Government pays the tuition fees for the pupils in government-aided schools and funds educational activities through i) the capitation grant (CG) paid based on the pupil population and level of education in each school and ii) the school facilities grant (SFG) through which government provides textbooks, constructs classrooms, teachers' houses and purchases furniture for the pupils. At its inception, government paid a capitation grant of UGX 5,000 per pupil in P.1-P.3 and UGX 8,100 per year for pupils in P.4-P.7. Over time, the grant has been revised to the current UGX 10,000 per child per year, paid regardless of class level. The CG is a conditional grant which schools have to spend on specific activities like instructional/scholastic materials (50%), co-curricular activities (30%), school management – 15% (e.g. maintenance of school, payment for utilities) and on administration (5%) (MoES UPE Handbook, 1998).

The UPE programme is implemented under the decentralisation program, which implies that local governments through the district administration are directly responsible for overseeing the implementation of UPE. In the current governance structure, schools are directly responsible for implementing UPE under the oversight of the School Management Committee (SMC) and the District Council. Therefore, schools through the district local government offices initiate the process by requesting for a UPE grant. The request is analysed by MoES in reference to the guidelines provided under the Poverty Action Fund (PAF), because UPE is a conditional grant financed under PAF. In the event that the requests conform to the PAF guidelines, MoES advises MoFPED on the release of funds which is effected by Bank of Uganda (BOU) which is the custodian of government funds working through commercial banks. In the case of CG, funds are transferred directly to school accounts and for the SFG, funds are disbursed through a local government account (i.e. CAO and DEO) as illustrated in Figures 1.2 and 1.3. It is noteworthy that prior to 2012, the capitation grant funds were transferred to schools by BOU through commercial banks where the district local government held an account, supervised by the CAO, who would consequently remit the funds to the account of the DEO as is the case for SFG. As noted, the flow of funds for CG has shortened and produced positive outcomes such as the reduction of leakages and delays in disbursement of funds. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 illustrate the flow of funds and the mandate of institutions involved in the management of UPE funds.



**Figure 1.3: Flow of Funds for the Capitation Grant (CG)**



**Figure 1.4: Flow of Funds for the School Facilities Grant (SFG)**

## 1.4 Legal, Policy and Institutional Framework

The implementation of the UPE programme is governed by different legal and policy documents which include the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, Education Act of 2008, the UPE Policy document of 2008 and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2007-2015). The Government of Uganda recognises that access to education as a fundamental right. The 1995 constitution commits to providing compulsory basic education. The two legal and policy documents, that is, the Education Act and the UPE Policy document clearly stipulate the roles and responsibilities of major actors in the implementation of UPE. For instance, the Education Act clearly defines the provision of education and training as a joint responsibility of the state, parent, guardian and other stakeholders. The

Act specifically defines government responsibilities which include: setting educational policies, providing learning and instructional materials, catering for teacher's welfare, recruitment of teachers, equitable distribution of education institutions, determining the medium of instruction, monitoring and supervision of teachers and pupils among others. The parents, according to the Act, are required to register their children in school, provide food, clothing, shelter, medical and transport to the children. They also participate in the community support efforts to the school and provide parental guidance to the child.

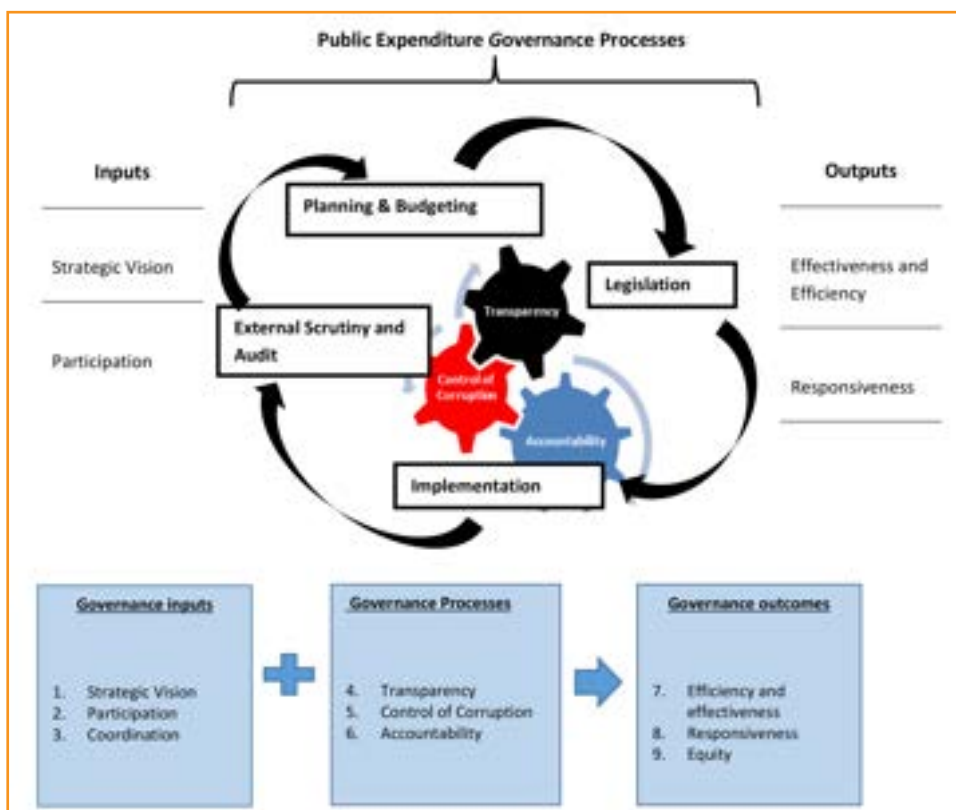
The Act further recognises the role of the founding bodies such as the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church of Uganda, Uganda Orthodox Church, and Muslim Community. The founding bodies are also expected to be involved in the management of the schools, setting of policies and the monitoring and evaluation of educational services. Clearly stipulated in the Act is the prohibition of charging for educational services, particularly for the UPE and Universal Post-primary Education Training (UPPET), though the Act accepts voluntary contributions from parents or well wishers for a state of emergency or urgent matter concerning the school. The UPE policy also specifically allows for the levy of a charge for mid-day meals as required by the SMC, but only in consultation with the district council. It, however, warns that no child should be sent away from school for non-payment for such meals. The roles and powers of major actors such as the Head-Teacher, the Education Officer, Inspectors of the district council's standing committee on education, the SMC, and the directorate of education standards are clearly outlined. In particular, the Inspector of Schools is expected to inspect a school and submit a report to the DEO and the relevant founding body. The political wing through the District Council standing committee responsible for education, and the technical wing represented by the SMC oversee implementation of UPE at school level.

## 2.0 Description of the Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 The Public Expenditure Governance Model

The PEG assessment framework as developed by Bogere and Maakaru (2104) is grounded in a dynamic model of governance (Baez-Camargo & Jacobs 2011) grounded in nine principles grouped into inputs, processes and outcomes. As shown in Figure 2.1, Inputs are the laws, policies, guidelines, plans, goals, strategies, budgets and priorities that govern actions and decision making. The assessment principles associated with the input side of PEG are strategic vision, participation and coordination. Processes are associated with ensuring that the delivery of the service – in this case, primary education – occurs in accordance with the plans, budgets and strategies and without undue political interference. The assessment principles focusing on the process are accountability, transparency, and control of corruption, all of which are essential for the desired outcomes to be attained. The desired outcomes of PEG are associated with service delivery that responds to the needs of the citizens, and that is equitably, efficiently and effectively delivered. Thus, the assessment principles associated with outcomes are efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness, and equity.

**Figure 2.1: Public Expenditure Governance in Education Model**



The nine principles upon which the assessment of public expenditure governance is based, while distinct, are clearly intertwined. Holding government officials accountable for delivery of UPE services depends on transparency in the decision-making process. In addition, determining effectiveness and efficiency of UPE programs can only be done when goals and objectives associated with the strategic vision are clear. As shown in Figure 2.1, governance is a system of interlocking and interdependent parts, all of which need to be functioning well enough at all times. This assessment examines each of the nine principles to determine the degree to which it is functioning, and identifies obstacles interfering with each measure thus hindering or facilitating the system as a whole when operating at maximum capacity.

## 2.2 Principles, Definitions and Indicators

Effective and sound assessment is grounded in well-articulated principles, definitions and indicators of assessment targets, as shown in Table 2.1. In the table, each principle is defined and a set of indicators are defined for the assessment of PEG in UPE.

**Strategic Vision:** Strategic vision establishes the direction for achieving UPE goals and objectives. It guides the development of plans, strategies and budgets connected to the utilization of UPE resources. In the context of PEG, all expenditure ought to be premised on the long term vision of the nation, sector, level of government and institution. Moreover, the strategic visions of each level need to be coherent and consistent with the other levels. In this study, which focuses primarily on the governance of public expenditure for UPE at the district level, District Development Plans (DDPs) were examined for evidence of progressive improvements in district targets for the enrolment, retention and performance of pupils. The District Work Plans (DDPs) were also examined for evidence of the strategies for achieving the desired targets, and the budgeted activities associated with these strategies.

**Participation:** Participation is the involvement of non-government stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the UPE program. Participation is an essential component of the governance of public expenditures in primary education. The involvement of parents, community leaders, CBOs and NGOs in decision-making and resource mobilization is invaluable to the accumulation of resources. It also enhances local ownership of educational services. When parents and communities are closely involved in their children's education, children are more likely to succeed and remain engaged in and committed to schooling. The links between participation and UPE enrolment, retention and performance cannot be overstated. The indicators for assessing the governance of UPE public expenditures at the district level are focused on

**Table 2.1: Principles, Definitions and Indicators for the Assessment of PEG in UPE**

PEG Principle & Definition	Indicators
<p><b>1. Strategic Vision:</b> Strategic vision establishes the direction for achieving UPE goals and objectives. It guides the development of plans, strategies and budgets connected to the utilization of UPE resources.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of progressively improving targets on the district enrolment of pupils in UPE.</li> <li>2. Evidence of progressively improving targets on the district retention of pupils in UPE schools.</li> <li>3. Evidence of progressively improving targets on district PLE results.</li> <li>4. Evidence of strategies to achieve the district targets on increasing school enrolment.</li> <li>5. Evidence of strategies to achieve the district targets on increasing retention of pupils in UPE schools.</li> <li>6. Evidence of strategies to achieve the district targets on improving PLE results.</li> <li>7. Costing of UPE activities in the 5 year District Development plan</li> </ol>
<p><b>2. Participation:</b> Participation is the involvement of non-government stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the UPE program. These stakeholders include parents, community leaders, citizens, CBOs, and NGOs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Evidence of district meetings held at least once a year to solicit views of non-government actors (e.g. CBOs/NGOs, citizens etc.) on the planning and evaluation of UPE in the district.</li> <li>9. Evidence of capturing education issues discussed in the district meetings e.g. budget conference reports, Barazas, public hearing etc.</li> <li>10. Allocation of resources in the annual district budget for holding meetings with citizens, CSOs and other non-government stakeholders to discuss UPE issues</li> <li>11. Evidence of expenditure on meetings with citizens to discuss UPE issues</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. Coordination:</b> Coordination is effective communication and coordinated action between the key stakeholders involved in the funding, planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the UPE program. These stakeholders include those providing funding for UPE services as well as those connected to UPE in the secondary, vocational, and tertiary education sectors.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Evidence of a joint meeting between the District Executive Committee and Heads of Departments discussing UPE issues.</li> <li>13. Evidence of the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting discussing UPE issues at least three times a year.</li> <li>14. Evidence of an annual joint sector review meeting (between district officials and other stake holders) on UPE.</li> <li>15. Evidence of a meeting between the DEO, Inspector of schools, CAO and Planner to plan the implementation and evaluation of UPE.</li> </ol>

PEG Principle & Definition	Indicators
<p>4. <b>Transparency:</b> Transparency is the accessibility of information about UPE budgets, performance and decision-making to citizens, and the existence of open channels for input and feedback from citizens to decision-makers.</p>	<p>16. Display of information on grants related to UPE (Q1 FY 2016/17) at district head quarters</p> <p>17. Display of current information on the number of teachers and their salaries in UPE schools under UPE on the public notice board at the district offices.</p> <p>18. Display of current information on the enrolment of pupils in UPE schools on the public notice board at the district offices.</p> <p>19. Evidence of communication from the DEO's office on the guidelines of publically displaying information on UPE schools' noticeboards.</p> <p>20. Existence of clear procedures of requesting for information on UPE from district offices by the public.</p>
<p>5. <b>Control of Corruption:</b> Controlling corruption involves having bureaucratic and administrative systems and practices in place that prohibit the use of one's position for private gain. It includes controlling both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as the 'capture' of the state by elites.</p>	<p>21. Evidence of UPE funds being captured in district quarterly internal auditing exercises</p> <p>22. Evidence of the district PAC discussing issues related to UPE from either the Internal Audit or Auditor General's report.</p> <p>23. Evidence of a Council meeting discussing a PAC report raising issues related to UPE.</p> <p>24. Evidence of administrative actions taken (e.g. introduction of new rules, procedures to control corruption) in response to queries raised by the Office of the Auditor General/ district PAC.</p>
<p>6. <b>Accountability</b> Accountability means holding governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the education sector responsible for UPE results. It has three primary dimensions: bureaucratic, consequential, and financial.</p>	<p>25. Evidence of discussion of UPE issues in an accountability forum e.g. Barazas, District Budget Conference, accountability meetings, meetings called by the DEO (any of these meetings considered as evidence)</p> <p>26. Existence of at least two quarterly monitoring and supervision reports by the District Inspection office.</p> <p>27. Existence of submission of four quarterly monitoring and supervision reports to the central government.</p> <p>28. Evidence of sanctions enforced against any office bearer for non-compliance with accountability guidelines for implementing UPE e.g. dismissal, suspension, disciplinary action, refund etc.</p> <p>29. Evidence of use of locally generated funds to monitor UPE in the district</p>

PEG Principle & Definition	Indicators
<p><b>7. Effectiveness and Efficiency</b></p> <p>Effectiveness is about the ability to achieve stated UPE goals, while efficiency is about obtaining the maximum possible outcome with the resources available. Assessment of both performance and resource allocation is critical to determining effectiveness and efficiency.</p>	<p>30. Ranking of district performance on enrolment rates for UPE by the MoES Annual Sector Performance report.</p> <p>31. Ranking of district performance on retention rates in UPE schools by the MoES Annual Sector Performance report.</p> <p>32. Ranking of district performance on PLE pass rates in UPE schools by the MoES Annual Sector Performance report.</p> <p>33. Evidence of review of the district performance on targets for primary education.</p> <p>34. Evidence of a Council meeting discussing district UPE enrolment, retention and PLE results.</p> <p>35. Level of utilisation of funds transferred to the district for UPE as indicated by un-spent balances</p> <p>36. Evidence of utilisation of locally generated funds to finance UPE related activities besides monitoring and supervision</p>
<p><b>8. Responsiveness</b></p> <p>Responsiveness refers to government response to issues and concerns raised by citizens. It includes having mechanisms in place for providing information on UPE budget and performance, receiving feedback on UPE-related policies and practices, and taking action that resolves the issues raised.</p>	<p>37. Evidence of resolutions taken by Council on issues raised by citizens on UPE (through petitions, letters, complaints etc.).</p> <p>38. Evidence of the implementation of resolutions on UPE passed by Council.</p> <p>39. Existence of a clear feedback procedure for citizens to raise issues on UPE.</p> <p>40. Evidence of DEO's office receiving citizens' complaints on UPE related issues.</p> <p>41. Evidence of DEO's office responding to citizens' complaints on UPE related issues.</p>
<p><b>9. Equity</b></p> <p>Equity is about ensuring that the education system is structured to ensure that every child irrespective of their personal, social and economic circumstances can achieve their educational potential. Vulnerable populations like the girl child, disabled children, and children from hard to reach areas, and children with special needs are especially targeted when ensuring equity.</p>	<p>42. Evidence of up-to date disaggregation of UPE performance information on PLE results by vulnerability (including disabled, girls, children in hard-to-reach communities, special needs children).</p> <p>43. Evidence of up-to date disaggregation of UPE performance information on enrolment by vulnerability.</p> <p>44. Evidence of up-to date disaggregation of UPE performance information on retention by vulnerability.</p> <p>45. Evidence of strategies and plans to improve equity in enrolment of pupils in UPE schools.</p> <p>46. Evidence of strategies and plans to improve equity in PLE performance in UPE schools.</p> <p>47. Evidence of implementation of strategies and plans to improve equity in the retention of pupils in UPE schools.</p>



these different factors. Documents were examined for evidence of allocating and spending resources on meetings with citizens, and integrating the perspectives and experiences of non-governmental stakeholders into district deliberations about UPE.

**Coordination:** Coordination is effective communication and coordinated action between the key stakeholders involved in the funding, planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the UPE program. The stakeholders include those providing funding for UPE services as well as those connected to UPE in the secondary, vocational, and tertiary education sectors. The delivery of the UPE program involves a broad range of government and non-government actors whose goals, plans and strategies should be coordinated in order to optimize effectiveness and efficiency. Coordinating efforts requires regular communication and meetings between the stakeholders. The assessment of coordination involves finding evidence of stakeholder meetings that happened.

**Transparency:** Transparency is having information on UPE funds and pupil performance easily accessible to citizens, and open channels for input and feedback from citizens to decision-makers. Transparency is fundamental to accountability and controlling corruption. Without transparency, citizens do not have access to the information they need to hold their leaders accountable, nor do they have mechanisms for doing so. The indicators for this principle focus on whether or not information is displayed, and whether or not written guidelines and procedures for displaying and requesting information about UPE exist.

**Control of Corruption:** Controlling corruption involves having in place bureaucratic and administrative systems and practices that prohibit the use of one's position for private gain. It includes controlling both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as the 'capture' of the state by elites. In the context of UPE, controlling corruption is done through internal audits at the district level and audits by the Auditor General at the national level. Indicators for this principle focus on evidence of UPE issues being incorporated into the district and national audits; and evidence that such issues raised by the audits are tabled for discussion and appropriately addressed in the Council meetings.

**Accountability:** Accountability means holding governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the education sector responsible for UPE results. It has three primary dimensions: bureaucratic, consequential, and financial. Bureaucratic accountability involves adherence to regulations, sanctions and rewards. The Education Act defines the roles and responsibilities of the actors and other stakeholders at each level, from the Ministry to the service delivery unit. The Act also defines the reporting channels and the mode of reporting. Fully functional bureaucratic accountability means that the mandates are clearly defined and funded, and there is an absence of overlaps between actors' roles and institutional responsibilities. Consequential accountability emphasizes

accountability to the general public. Indicators for accountability in UPE focus on engaging citizens in discussions about UPE, putting in place mechanisms to receive citizens' complaints about UPE-related issues, regularly monitoring UPE activities, and enforcing sanctions for non-compliance with accountability guidelines.

**Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Effectiveness is about the ability to achieve stated UPE goals, while efficiency is about obtaining the maximum possible outcome with the resources available. Within UPE, effectiveness and efficiency rest on tracking data about pupil performance, retention, and enrolment. Using this information in regular reviews of district performance in connection to the goals and strategies set is important. It also involves utilizing all funds allocated from the central government and all funds raised through local revenue. Thus, indicators for this principle point to district UPE rankings, evidence of discussing and regularly taking stock of progress being made on UPE targets, and fully utilizing funds available for UPE.

**Responsiveness:** Responsiveness refers to government response to issues and concerns raised by citizens. It includes having mechanisms in place for providing information on UPE budget and performance, receiving feedback on UPE-related policies and practices, and taking action that resolves the issues raised. In addition to having the components of responsiveness in place, there needs to be a well-functioning system with channels of communication open so that information flows. Without open channels, the process is irresponsible. Thus, the indicators for responsiveness include having the procedures for citizen engagement and input in place, and also evidence of political and technical leaders having taken up those issues and responded to them.

**Equity:** Equity is about ensuring that the education system is structured to ensure that every child, irrespective of their personal, social and economic circumstances can achieve their educational potential. Vulnerable populations such as girl children, disabled children, children from hard to reach areas, and children with special needs are especially targeted when ensuring equity. Designing and implementing programs that enhance the equitable delivery of primary education depends on having a clear understanding of the needs of the populations targeted, and a set of strategies for addressing those needs, and the policy and monetary resources needed to implement the strategies in place. Indicators for this PEG principle include evidence of having current data on UPE performance, retention and enrolment that are disaggregated by gender, location, and ability/disability, and the evidence of such data put to use to improve equity in UPE.

## 3.0 Methodology

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The study uses qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, along with content analysis of government documents to assess the governance of UPE in selected districts. The qualitative data was collected using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The content analysis, interviews and FGDs were benchmarked on the nine principles of governance suggested by Bogere and Makaaru (2014): strategic vision, participation, coordination, transparency, control of corruption, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness and equity. The KII and FGD data was analysed using Atlas.ti, a software packing for managing and analysing qualitative data. The analysis of government documents involved two rounds of content analysis grounded in a carefully designed procedure based on the indicators for each principle.

### 3.1 Action Research

This PEG assessment tool for the UPE program is based on the action research methodological framework. As such, knowledge generation and action are tied together in such a way as to activate the supply and demand links in the governance accountability chain. The assessment tool itself is not designed to cast scorn on local governments which “score” low on the indicators. Rather, it is designed to be a capacity building tool wherein districts and officials involved in the delivery of primary education are encouraged to improve and document the important work done. Similarly, the focus groups with citizens are designed not just to gather their opinions, but to provide an opportunity for all involved to co-generate the knowledge base and a set of practices. In this way, they could become more effective and expeditious in holding their leaders accountable for providing universal primary education to their children. Indeed, the focus group guide used with the community ends with a brainstorming discussion about actions participants can take. In that regard, it builds upon the knowledge generated in the overall discussion. The components of this study are also interweaved in the broader action research agenda governing ACODE's Center for Budget and Economic Governance, and changes in citizen engagement, government responsiveness, and service delivery that will be tracked through the broader initiative.

### 3.2 Selection Criteria

We used four criteria to select the districts to cover in this study. First, we considered the 26<sup>4</sup> districts where ACODE was already implementing the Local Government Councils' Score Card Initiative (LGCSCI). LGCSCI is an action research project that aims at assessing the extent to which district political leaders perform their mandate. It also aims at enhancing civic engagement of citizens to demand for accountability from their leaders (Bainomugisha et al, 2015). The purpose for this criterion was to allow us select districts where ACODE had an existing working relationship with the political leadership through the LGCSCI, making it easier for the researchers to interface with the political leaders and the technocrats in the district. Second, we used regional balance by selecting three districts from each geographical region except the north where we picked four districts given the low intensity of UPE schools. Thirdly, we selected the districts that could be covered with the available time, personnel and financial resources. Lastly, we selected the best, worst and middle level performers in the rankings of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoES) referring to the Sector Annual Performance Report (2015) in the UPE program in each region. The MoES annually assesses districts on their performance in the UPE programme using three measures: the enrolment, completion and PLE pass rate. Consequently, the following districts were selected: Central region – Mpigi (best), Wakiso (Middle) and Mukono (worst); Eastern – Mbale (best), Kamuli (middle) and Amuria (worst); Western – Mbarara (best), Kabarole (middle) and Hoima (worst) and Northern – Gulu (best), Nebbi (middle), Nakapiripirit (middle) and Amuru (worst).

### 3.3 Data Collection Process

The Primary data was collected from the 13 districts using KIIs, FGDs and content analysis of government documents. We targeted respondents from the district because the UPE programme is being implemented by local governments under the decentralisation system.

#### 3.3.1 Key Informant Interviews

The KIIs were administered to both district political leaders, such as, the Chairperson Local Council Five (LCV) and Resident District Commissioner (RDC), and district technocrats including the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), District Education Officer (DEO), District Inspector of Schools (DIS) and the Chairman for District Service Commission (DSC). So, in each district we conducted a total of six KIIs. During the interviews, both the district political

<sup>4</sup> These districts include: Agago, Amuru, Amulia, Bududa, Buliisa, Gulu, Hoima, Jinja, Kabarole, Kamuli, Kanungu, Lira, Luweero, Mbale, Mbarara, Moyo, Moroto, Mpigi, Mukono, Nakapiripirit, Nebbi, Ntungamo, Rukungiri, Soroti, Tororo, and Wakiso

leaders and the technocrats were asked questions related to the governance of UPE based on the nine principles of governance. The questions asked sought to gather information on the perspectives and practices of officials responsible for implementing and supervising the UPE programme. In addition, the interview guides had questions eliciting responses on the supply and demand for accountability on UPE, which is the emphasis of the Centre for Budget and Economic Governance (CBEG) at ACODE.

### **3.3.2 Focus Group Discussions**

Four FGDs were conducted in each district: one for head-teachers in the district, another for the chairpersons of the School Management Committees (SMC) in the district, and two community FGDs. The community FGDs, which took place at the school level, were comprised of parents, community leaders and other interested citizens. The aim of collecting information using FDGs was to gather perspectives and practices from key non-government stakeholders about the mechanisms and practices associated with the governance of UPE.

### **3.3.3 Content Analysis of Government Documents**

Content analysis of government documents was an essential component of the assessment exercise. In order to assess the governance of the UPE program, we designed an assessment tool with measurable indicators for each of the nine principles. The aim was to specifically evaluate the performance of each district in the governance of UPE. This was intended to reveal levels of performance and to stimulate positive competition among districts with regards to the governance of UPE. The Research Assistants were required to score each district on each indicator using authentic official documents such as the District Development Plan, Annual Work Plan, Education sector reports, Council minutes, Budget Conference reports, Technical Planning Committee reports, and observation of public notice boards. We used symbols to indicate the availability or not, of the relevant documents and evidence of the practice for the indicator. A tick (√) was used to show the availability of the document and evidence of the indicator, while a cross (X) was used to indicate availability of the document but lack of evidence for the indicator. An empty box (□) was used to show the lack of document and, therefore, evidence for the indicator. The assessment tool was subjected to a validation exercise by the ACODE Research team which had to verify the assessment based on the available evidence in the source documents.

### 3.4 Study Processes

A number of processes were put in place to enhance the reliability and validity of the research, including pre-field consultations with key stakeholders, pre-testing of data collection tools, and instituting a range of quality control mechanisms.

#### 3.4.1 Pre-field Consultations

Consistent with the action research methodology, key stakeholders at the national, district and community levels were engaged in the development of the research tools at pivotal points in the process. The researchers interacted with stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and Sports and in Local Government, who provided valuable information on the governance structure of UPE and the documents that should be available at the district. In addition, a field visit to Jinja, which was not one of the study districts, enabled the researchers to review relevant documents, such as the DIS and DEO reports, in order to gain familiarity with the kinds of documents that would be assessed. These consultations were invaluable in designing the research tools.

#### 3.4.2 Pre-testing of Tools

After developing the key informant interview guides for each government leader, and the focus group guide for each stakeholder group, the tools were pre-tested in a district outside the study sample. This process included soliciting feedback from the participants on the content and flow of the interview. As a result, adjustments were made to the content of the tools so that they precisely matched the language used by the interviewees and the roles of each stakeholder group.

#### 3.4.3 Quality Control Mechanisms

Numerous quality control measures were put in place to ensure the validity and integrity of the data collected. The interviews, focus groups and content analysis were conducted by seasoned teams of ACODE district-level researchers, all of whom worked with the Local Government Councils Scorecard Initiative (LGCSCI). As such, these researchers already had an established rapport with the district officials and were familiar to the communities in the district. Having worked with LGCSCI also provided them with detailed knowledge about the documents to be analysed. In addition, the researchers are well trained in research ethics and experienced interviewers and facilitators of focus groups. Also, the research teams were supervised, in the field during the data collection process, by senior ACODE researchers. This on-site supervision included daily field meetings and assistance with trouble-shooting where needed. The senior staff also checked the quality of fieldnotes and interview transcriptions, reviewing them as they were submitted by the field researchers and returning the same for corrections where they were deemed to be incomplete or lacking in detail.

### 3.5 Data Management and Analysis

Key informant interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed, and detailed notes were taken for each focus group discussion. The qualitative data obtained from these key informant interviews and focus group discussions was then coded and analysed using the Atlas.ti software package. In Atlas.ti parlance, each of the transcripts and FGD notes constituted a “primary document.” A total of 119 primary documents (transcripts from 71 KIIs and 48 FGD notes) made up the database for the analysis in this report.

The data analysis involved a rigorous process that began with developing a set of codes. The codes were derived from the principles, definitions and indicators described in Chapter 2, and emerged from the data themselves. As recurring themes were identified in the primary documents, codes were added to the code list that were not previously identified by the researchers. For example, the set of codes associated with the assessment principle of Equity included such deductively-generated codes as Equity Girls, Equity Special Needs, and Equity Regional Location, and such inductively-generated codes as Equity Food and Equity Child Labour as researchers noted the prevalence of issues of food and child labour emerging in the KII and FGD data.

Once the list of codes and accompanying codebook containing definitions were finalized, the team of researchers involved in coding the data underwent a thorough process of establishing inter-coder reliability. This began with the entire team coding the same document in order to identify codes and coding practices that were applied inconsistently. This led to refining and clarifying the definitions of each code in order to ensure that all researchers would be using the same principles for coding the documents. A second layer of reliability was added when each document underwent secondary coding by another researcher as a check on the coding of the primary coder. By the end of this process, a list of 99 codes had been used to code the 118 documents.

The analysis of the data involved using Atlas.ti to retrieve segments of the documents (“quotes”) coded with the same codes, and analysing the retrieved data for patterns. In order to understand the perspectives and practices of the different stakeholders, retrievals were often done for specific “families” of documents – e.g. KII interviews with CAOs, FGDs with School Management Committees, etc. Quotes from one set of stakeholders were then compared to those from another set of stakeholders to understand the ways that perspectives and practices of these various groups varied and/or were consistent across stakeholder groups and across districts. Chapter 4 contains the findings from this analysis.



### 3.6 Limitations of the Assessment

The process of assessing the performance of districts on the governance of UPE, had some limitations. First, it was difficult to obtain all necessary source documents that contained the evidence required to score the districts. This meant that districts that lacked evidence on an indicator were awarded a score of zero, which implied that some districts could score poorly, not because they did not have the practice (indicator), but because they didn't have the required evidence to earn a mark. For example, Mbarara district did not provide the quarterly inspection reports and proof of submitting them to central government, but it was stated in a report to the Executive Committee dated 19/02/2015 on page 2-3 that these reports had been submitted. We presumed that the lack of source documents was due to poor record keeping practices of local governments, such as failure to document practices, keeping documents and files manually and a lack of a central registry to keep all important documents. For example, most districts were unable to provide budget conference reports, PLE analysis reports, reports for the Technical Planning Committee and District Executive Committee (DEC). These are very important documents which should be readily available and kept in a central registry or library for easy retrieval and future reference. Second, some of the documents availed had narrow information in the sense that it was too general and incoherent. For example, Mbarara district proposed to mobilise key stakeholders as a strategy of increasing pupil enrolment, and included this strategy in the DEO's report to the Social Services committee dated 27th May 2015. However, it did not specify the stakeholders. Third, the scoring method for the indicators was restrictive, since it was binary and therefore giving the assessor less flexibility to evaluate the magnitude of the district's performance on each indicator. Thus creating a scenario where there was a small difference between best and worst performers.



## 4.0 Findings

In this section, we present the research findings for each of the nine principles, namely, strategic vision, participation, coordination, transparency, control of corruption, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness and equity. For each principle, we begin with a presentation of the results from the content analysis of district government documents, followed by data from the key informant interviews and focus group discussions. This provides a good basis for the discussion of the practices and challenges associated with a particular principle of governance. The perspectives of the various stakeholders associated with UPE are also highlighted in the discussion.

### 4.1 Strategic Vision

Strategic vision establishes the direction for achieving UPE goals and objectives. It guides the development of plans, strategies and budgets related to the utilization of UPE resources. The findings from the content analysis of government documents show that only Gulu, Amuru, Kabarole, Hoima Wakiso and Nebbi. had clear targets on UPE enrolment, retention and PLE performance in their District Development Plans. However, most districts had strategies for increasing enrolment and improvement of PLE performance, with the exception of Kamuli and Mbarara, that did not have strategies for increasing enrolment and improvement of PLE performance respectively. Similarly, only Amuru district

**Table 4.1: Evidence of Strategic Vision**

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Evidence of progressively improving targets on the district UPE enrolment of pupils.	☑	☑	☑	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑
Evidence of progressively improving targets on the district UPE retention of pupils in school.	☑	☑	☑	☒	☒	☒	☑	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑
Evidence of progressively improving targets on district PLE results.	☒	☑	☑	☒	☒	☒	☑	☒	☑	☑	☒	☑
Evidence of strategies to achieve the district targets on increasing enrolment.	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☒	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Evidence of strategies to achieve the district targets on increasing retention of pupils in school.	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Evidence of strategies to achieve the district targets on improving PLE results.	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☒	☑	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑
Costing of UPE activities in the 5 year District Development plan	☑	☑	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑

Key: ☑ Evidence seen

☒ No evidence seen

☐ Documents not accessed

did not indicate cost projections of UPE activities for a five-year time horizon. The table below summarises the findings of the review of District Development Plans (DDPs) on the principle of strategic vision.

### **Strategies to improve UPE outcomes at district level**

Officials from the districts mentioned a myriad of strategies for improving performance of UPE. The most common strategy was sensitisation of the masses in a bid to change the unfavourable attitudes of parents towards education. The attitudinal challenges identified include: refusal to contribute towards school meals, limited involvement in their children's learning, prioritisation of other activities over schooling and failure to attend meetings at schools. A respondent from Gulu district stated that,

*A lot of sensitisation targeting parents has been done so that they appreciate their role in ensuring that children come to school instead of staying at home doing house chores. Absenteeism of children is one of the causes of poor performance.*

A respondent from Kabarole district reported that,

*The district leadership participates in Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and with the help of UNICEF under the back to school campaign conducts 'barazas' to encourage parents to take their children to school.*

In some districts where children were reported to have abandoned school to engage in economic activities, the districts had embarked on programs to sensitize and mobilize parents against this vile practice. A respondent in one district stated, *"The district initiated a program to mobilize parents whose children go to sugar cane plantations during school hours."* In Mukono district, sensitisation campaigns were reportedly being carried out to discourage children from fishing and chasing birds from rice fields during school time.

A respondent from the pastoralist district of Nakapiripirit stated that,

*The district is using radios and community meetings to sensitize communities about the importance of sending their children to school as opposed to sending them to tend to livestock.*

There were other strategies to strengthen supervision and monitoring of teachers in the schools. This had taken several forms including peer support supervision in Gulu, which involved head-teachers in a sub-county carrying out support supervision in other schools in the sub-county. In Mukono district, mid-term and termly visits were introduced to curb absenteeism of head teachers. While Hoima and Wakiso districts the School Management Committees (SMCs) and PTAs were reportedly being empowered through training on how to set targets and monitor progress. A respondent from Gulu stated that, *"we ensure that*

*there are functional SMCs in all our schools to see to it that learning goes on well.*" Yet another strategy used in Gulu district was to increase in the number of associate assessors to augment the school inspectors.

Performance reviews were cited as another strategy of improving learning and performance. Gulu district was outstanding in its use of assessments to improve performance on the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). Gulu implemented strategies such as learner assessment for Primary Four to Primary Six where exams were set centrally at district level and the schools were encouraged to focus on literacy and numeracy in lower primary levels. There were plans to introduce school performance reviews where the school and PTA reviewed performance of the school against the annual school improvement plan.

Several districts were reportedly in the process of passing bylaws and ordinances to ensure that children were enrolled and retained in schools, and the parents were encouraged to contribute towards the children's meals. In such instances where bylaws and ordinances were made, it was to deter those who did not comply or where the strategy was not in line with government policy and pronouncements. For example, it was reported that Kamuli District was in the process of passing ordinances to curb early marriages while Mpigi was enacting one to ensure that all children of school going age were in school. A respondent from Mpigi stated that,

*The district passed an ordinance to retain pupils in school and reduce early drop out especially by girls but the district failed to move it to conclusion due to lack of facilitation.*

Gulu District also passed an ordinance to improve performance of UPE, however, it was inadequate because it did not specify the sanctions for non-compliance. A respondent from the district stated that,

*You can't put a law without stating what happens if somebody does not comply. It becomes something not implementable because if you found a parent or a teacher not doing something which is in line with the ordinance; where are you going to take the culprit and what punishment? So we have decided that the law committee of the district has to cause a review. The current ordinance is silent on sanctions which was an oversight by the office of the Attorney General. They should have taken note of this weakness. But we have also learnt something from this experience and that is why when you see the ordinance on alcohol it is much better now because it sets out everything clearly.*

Gulu district had also taken steps to ascertain how many children of school going age were not in school and why. A respondent from the district stated that,

*Right now we are battling with dropout. We have distributed what we call village registers to villages in the district to record details of every child of school going age and whether they are in school, out of school and why.*

Sanctions targeting the children were also being used as strategies for enrolment retention and performance. A respondent in Hoima stated that, *“the district has started apprehending school dropouts who hang around Kigorobya sub-county market during school hours.”* Similarly, Kabarole district had abolished automatic promotion as a means of improving performance. A respondent from Kabarole district stated that, *“abolishment of automatic promotion has improved the performance. A pupil has to attend of at least 90% of the school days in a year to be promoted.”*

Respondents mentioned building teachers' capacity through training and workshops as a means of improving learning and performance under UPE. The District Education Officer (DEO) Kamuli district stated that, *“we have been organizing capacity building conferences for teachers and head teachers to discuss challenges they face.”* Gulu District also employed similar strategies as indicated by response from the District Inspector of Schools (DIS) in the district.

*We work closely with Centre Coordinating Tutors (CCTs) -who are also in charge of providing continuous professional development of teachers through seminars conducted at school level to discuss problems and challenges faced by teachers.*

There were also strategies to improve infrastructure in schools, which were viewed as a big challenge especially with inadequate infrastructure for classroom space and housing for teachers. Gulu district was reportedly planning to build more classrooms, latrines and teachers' quarters using funds from NUSAF III program, which is expected to start soon. Respondents from Wakiso and Kamuli also mentioned construction of more classrooms as a strategy for reducing the pupil-classroom ratio.

Other interesting innovations to improve learning and retention of pupils included income-generating activities for teachers, food production and partnering with civil society organisation (CSOs). A respondent from Kamuli district stated that,

*The district is encouraging schools to get involved in the income generating project dubbed 'Embooli dha Kipaapaali' – meaning 'orange sweet potatoes'. This project is expected to supplement the school feeding program and it is expected to encourage homes to grow the highly nutritious potatoes and pawpaw, which will increase household incomes. The teachers are encouraged to join teacher's Savings and Credit Cooperative unions (SACCOs) and also to start businesses to supplement their salaries.*

Districts are working with CSOs in a number of areas. Respondents from Mukono and Kamuli districts, for example, mentioned initiatives by NGOs under which girls are trained to make sanitary pads. Respondents from Wakiso also mentioned how Nurture Africa, an NGO, had worked with the district leadership to implement an outreach program for vulnerable children.

### **Strategies to improve UPE outcomes at school level**

Some strategies used by schools in a bid to improve retention and performance under UPE mirrored those mentioned by respondents at the district level, including sensitisation of parents, and application of sanctions and rewards for good performance. A head teacher from Kamuli stated that, *“we urge parents to support their children’s education and ask them to contribute towards lunch and scholastic materials.”* Respondents from Mpigi and Hoima districts also mentioned the use of PTA meetings to mobilize parents to provide lunch for their children especially those in Primary Seven. In Mukono District, several head teachers had introduced ‘check-on-progress’ days where parents visit and check how their children are performing in class.

Head teachers from Hoima stated that, *“teachers and pupils who do well are appreciated by recognizing the teacher at PTA meetings and providing pupils with mathematical sets.”* Head teachers from Kamuli explained some of the rewards given to pupils. One head teacher said,

*In Kadungu Primary school, children who perform well are exempted from contributing towards meals. Sometimes best performers are given exercise books or a bar of soap.*

There were also incidents where incentives were given across the board. A head teacher from a school in Kabarole district mentioned the abolishment of corporal punishment as a strategy to increase enrolment and retention in their school.

As part of the efforts to support the school feeding program, some schools had introduced cultivation of maize, as stated by a head teacher from Mpigi district that, *“I introduced school projects and we cultivate maize which lasts only one term given the weather.”*

### **Conclusion**

Analysis of the data from the content analysis, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders suggests that while there were strategies in place to improve UPE enrolment, retention and performance at the district, school and community levels, a *strategic vision* was less apparent. There was little evidence pointing to a clear vision and coherent set of strategies being implemented at any district. The innovative actions taken by various stakeholders were certainly commendable, and there was room for stakeholders

in the various districts to learn from each other. However, the impact of each individual strategy could be greater and more efficiently implemented when guided by a clearly articulated vision and coordinated set of strategies for bringing that vision to fruition.

## 4.2 Participation

The principle of participation focuses on the involvement of non-government stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the UPE program. This aspect of public expenditure governance of UPE is assessed by looking for evidence of district meetings held to solicit views of the stakeholders, evidence of discussing citizens' views in district meetings, and allocating and spending resources on meetings with citizens.

This section presents findings from the content analysis of government documents and information from the interviews and focus group discussions on the participation practices and perspectives. The review of documents sought evidence of specific practices related to involvement of non-state actors in decision making, planning, implementation, and monitoring of the UPE program at district levels. The documents reviewed under participation were largely minutes and reports of the District budget conference, Barazas, community meetings, the annual district budget, and performance reports. The table below summarises the findings of this review.

As shown in Table 4.2, only three districts – Nakapiripirit, Mpigi and Kabarole – produced evidence in the form of reports and minutes of a budget conference or other type of meeting held to solicit views of non-government actors on UPE. While this does not necessarily mean that the conference or other meetings did not take place in the other districts, it does raise issues of either poor record

**Table 4.2: Evidence of Participation**

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Evidence of District meetings (at least once a year) to solicit views of non-government actors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of capturing education issues discussed at meetings including budget conference, <i>Barazas</i> , community meetings, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allocation of resources in the district annual budget for holding meetings to discuss UPE issues with citizens, CSOs and other non-government stake holders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of expenditure on meetings to discuss UPE issues with citizens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen

☒ No evidence seen

☐ Documents not accessed

keeping or difficulties related to access to information in the target districts. The DEOs of Amuria, Mpigi, Mukono, Kamuli, Kabarole and Wakiso captured some education issues discussed at various meetings while the others could not provide any record of capturing education issues from any meetings as evidence.

A review of the annual district budgets and performance reports revealed that most districts, save for Nakapiripirit, Gulu and Kabarole, did not explicitly budget for meetings with the community under their education department budget. This is of concern because the budget conference alone may not be sufficient to get views and participation of stakeholders beyond those that are in position to attend the conference. Furthermore, the meeting could not allow for in-depth discussion of UPE and education issues given that it brought together all departments. However, it was important to note that there was no evidence of expenditure on meetings with citizens by districts of Nakapiripirit, Gulu and Kamuli despite allocating funds for this purpose. Kabarole and Kamuli districts were the only ones with such evidence showing that funds had been expended to organize meetings with citizens to discuss education issues.

### **Participation practices**

The data from interviews and focus groups with government and non-government stakeholders provided a broader picture of the dynamics of participation in the districts under study. Participants cited multiple mechanisms used by non-state actors to take part in decision making and monitoring of the UPE programs. This ranged from attending scheduled meetings such as budget conferences and PTA meetings to writing letters to political leaders, scrutinizing UPE funding and performance. In the interviews and focus group discussions with UPE stakeholders, knowledge of all of these forms of participation – and others not mentioned – was evident. However, the way they actually worked in practice as effective and meaningful forms of participation was not clear.

Public forums such as Barazas and radio shows were also important mechanisms of participation. District-level government stakeholders frequently included these when listing the mechanisms citizens could use to provide information to and receive information from government officials about UPE. Specific examples were mentioned less frequently. In Kamuli, however, the LCV Chair had a weekly radio program called, “*Agafa ewa Chairman*” (News from the Chairman) that she used to communicate with citizens on matters related to service delivery, including UPE. Technical leaders in Kamuli also frequently made use of radio shows in this way. The Kamuli DIS singled out Barazas as important vehicles for engaging with citizens, and noted how the district had partnered with UNICEF to sponsor the occurrence of barazas. The use of radio shows was specifically mentioned by the LCV Chairs of Gulu, Wakiso, and Hoima. Interestingly, the use of Barazas and radio shows to communicate with



duty-bearers about UPE rarely came up in the focus group discussions with communities.

Consistent with the assessment findings, evidence of formal meetings organized by district leaders to solicit citizens' inputs on UPE was infrequent. Officials in Hoima and Wakiso mentioned holding a budget conference to receive citizens' input, and the LCV Chairman in Mpigi talked about the importance of Mpigi's annual education conference as a mechanism for engaging with citizens on important UPE issues. Of these three, only Mpigi produced evidence of their meeting in the document review process. Indeed, Mpigi's report from the annual education conference was the source of evidence for both of the first two indicators. LCV Chairs in several districts, however, spoke of the importance of holding less formal community meetings with their constituents. In Gulu, for example, the Chairman talked about the importance of "*going down there talking with the people,*" and the LCV Chairman in Amuria reported that he "*takes advantage of any community gathering to communicate UPE related issues to the community.*" In Hoima, the Chairman talked about the importance of sensitizing communities to demand for accountability, saying that he "*met citizens and urged them to demand for better results in PLE exams from schools since government was funding them using taxpayers' money.*" The LCV woman councillor in Mpigi also talked about the need to take advantage of other meetings and gatherings in order to access more people. As she said, "*We use community meetings, but turn up is usually low, so we utilize school-organized functions, such as speech days, because you know turn up will be good.*" Holding community meetings was also mentioned by LCV Chairs in Wakiso, Kamuli and Nakapiripirit.

The district-sponsored meetings were rarely mentioned by parents, community leaders, head teachers and members of SMCs when asked about mechanisms for engaging with duty-bearers on UPE issues. They were much more likely to mention SMC and PTA meetings as important venues for raising issues and providing input. In Mpigi, for example, one focus group participant said, "*If a parent has an issue, he or she can go through the PTA chairperson and/or the chairperson of the SMC.*" In Kamuli, a community member went one step further and stated that, indeed,

*It is the responsibility of every parent to get involved in the delivery of quality education for their children...by honouring invitations to attend general parents meetings organized by the school or the PTA.*

In Kamuli, Mpigi and Hoima, citizens talked about PTAs and SMCs as the first step in the accountability chain. An example of this was given in the Hoima FGD when a participant described a case involving a village member who tried to claim the land that a primary school had for a playground. The community



raised this concern with the SMC, which then wrote to the DEO about the issue. Ultimately, the playground was saved due to district intervention.

Technical staff and political leaders also highlighted SMCs and PTAs as key mechanisms for parent and citizen input, and discussed these as useful channels for passing information about UPE to constituents. In Kamuli, an LCV councillor even sits on the SMC as an ex-officio member. As the Chairman explained, even though the Education Act had removed councillors from being members of the SMC, in Kamuli *“we have chosen to maintain the councillors in the SMCs as ex-officios so that councillors can get direct feedback from citizens.”* Citizen feedback was also captured in SMC quarterly reports to the inspectorate.

Head Teachers and SMC members also talked about the importance of parent engagement with PTAs and SMCs. As an SMC member in Wakiso explained,

*SMCs are an important interface between communities and UPE as one of the roles of the SMC is to sensitize them on UPE programmes so that the parents are well acquainted with UPE procedures.*

Other tools of civic engagement such as writing letters, making phone calls, submitting petitions, and visiting councillors are available to citizens. A few interviewees and FGD participants discussed these tools of civic engagement, though there was little reporting of actual use of them. In Amuria, however, the LCV said that, *“the most common method used to day is phone calling. People find this quicker and time saving.”* He also said that, *“a good number of people just walk into the councillor’s compound to give or seek information.”* FGD participants in Kamuli and their LCV Chairperson mentioned the use of petitions, but the Chairperson said that while she had received petitions concerning secondary education, none was related to UPE. Similarly, the DEO of Kabarole talked about how petitions could be used, though it was not clear whether or not the Council had actually received any.

Outside of the formal systems of civic engagement, citizens often developed their own strategies for taking action to improve UPE programs and outcomes. Sometimes, this involved developing programs of their own, targeted towards resolving particular persistent problems. For example, in Kamuli district, one FGD participant described how they created a community policing program to deal with the challenge of pupil absenteeism and school drop-outs. They resolved that for any child found providing labour in a sugarcane garden, both the owner of the garden and the parents would be arrested. In Gulu, one community worked with an NGO to obtain support for children whose parents were unable to provide them with packed lunch. And in Hoima, one community organized a protest against an ineffective head teacher, to the extent of locking him into his office until he had been apprehended.

In addition to these strong, coordinated community actions, parents and citizens also described concerted efforts to mobilize community members to provide support to needy students, enhance attendance at meetings, and write letters to district officials to demand the transfer of ineffective teachers .

### **Stakeholder perceptions of participation**

When soliciting the data for stakeholder perspectives on the mechanism of engagement and the institutional and policy framework surrounding participation, concerns about the politicization of UPE, the limited engagement of parents and communities, poor leadership, problematic power relations, and lack of faith in the governance of UPE were identified. Communities believe that UPE has been heavily and unduly politicized, to create the general impression that government has the responsibility of providing all school necessities ranging from feeding the pupils to providing scholastic materials. School authorities who have intervened to compel parents to make contributions have often met resistance from politicians and district authorities. For example, in Mpigi, it was reported that the RDC arrested the people that sent the children back home for failure to make the requested contribution. In Mbarara, it was reported that, the head teachers were not supposed to send away any pupils who come to school without exercise books. In Kamuli, citizens revealed that, resolutions seeking for parent's contributions towards the welfare of their children were often passed by the PTA and SMC but were not binding because of the interferences from local leaders who insisted that it was illegal and against the president's directive forbidding school authorities from sending away pupils whose parents failed to make contributions towards the schools' programmes.

Communities believed there was need for more community mobilisation and sensitisation about the importance of education, especially in the northern region where pupil attendance was low due to cultural factors such as herding and nomadism, say in the Karamojong region. The Chairperson for the SMC in Nakapiripirit confessed that, there was lack of community awareness of the importance of education. She reported that, parents preferred their children to do domestic work rather than attend school, and that girls were influenced by their parents into early marriages in order to get dowry. In Amuria, citizens were of the view that community mobilisation initiatives such as the Local Action Plan (LAP) should be encouraged. The LAP is a mass community sensitisation programme that advocates against early marriages, and makes communities understand and appreciate their roles in the education of the child. In addition, they believed communities needed to be sensitized on their roles in the governance of UPE, such as, the financial management of UPE schools, by encouraging them to have interest in such matters. Many expressed a need to sensitise parents on how they could demand for accountability from their leaders. For instance, in Mpigi, it was voiced that citizens needed to know how

to follow up issues of concern and also know the relevant authorities to contact on particular issues.

There was a general concern over the leadership provided by the district authorities and head teachers. It was noted that some district leaders did not fully understand and appreciate their roles, which translated into poor service delivery. For example, some SMCs were reported to have inadequately sensitized the public about community participation in the implementation of UPE. Even at school levels, some head teachers reportedly absented themselves from school thereby failing to adequately monitor their schools' activities. In some schools, teachers were not monitored and so, they failed to execute their mandate of teaching the pupils. There were also cases of drunkenness of teachers in Gulu district that were reported. The FGD data showed that in most districts, parents felt they were not listened to, which demotivated them. For example, in Mpigi, parents reported writing letters to transfer teachers who were not performing well in their duties, but no action was taken. In many instances, frustration had led to parents relocating their children to other schools, in particular, private schools, which they considered to provide better education.

### **Challenges to participation**

Challenges to participation are about constraints to the involvement of people outside of government in decision making, planning, and monitoring. The challenges identified by the technical officers focused on the attitude and capacity of parents to effectively participate in UPE and the inadequacy of resources to facilitate the convening of the meetings. Participants from many districts emphasised poor attendance at scheduled meetings. A community FGD participant in Gulu district, for example, observed that, *"attendance at SMC meetings is very poor. When meetings are called, very few people turn up."* Respondents blamed poor attendance at meetings to negative attitude towards education. The RDC Kabarole attributed limited involvement of parents in education of their children to the negative attitude many of them had towards education. A respondent from the FGD of head teachers in Hoima district also blamed low levels of involvement of parents in UPE on the low value put to education. A head teacher from Kamuli pointed out that it is the negative attitude of men who usually do not attend meetings at the school. He further asserted that, the men do not cooperate when it comes to implementation of the resolutions of the meetings. The women are apparently sent to the meetings as listening posts whose involvement in the discussions is restricted. As the RDC Mpigi district explains:

*This problem to a large extent is because it is the female parents who attend these meetings as representatives. Their male counterparts ask them to attend but with clear instructions not to commit to any resolutions and as such nothing is decided or implemented. You*

*will notice that the women are quiet during these meetings because they are under instructions.*

A community FGD participant from Amuria district blamed low attendance of meetings on alcoholism among men who despite being more literate than the women preferred to spend their time drinking rather than attending such meetings. Another community FGD participant from Mbarara district also alluded to the disengagement of men from education of their children, by largely leaving it to women.

The confidence and self-esteem of the parents impacted their engagement during meetings, and consequently impacted on their participation. A respondent in a community FGD in Kabarole pointed out that, *“when these parents go to the meetings, they fear to express themselves because the majority do not make contributions to their children’s education.”* Another contributor from Mbarara pointed out that, *“inferiority complex in school meetings by the majority poor leaves all the decisions to be taken by the rich few.”* The literacy of parents, too, was cited as a factor in the poor attendance of meetings. A participant at the SMC FGD in Wakiso reported that,

*The challenge is that some parents are illiterate and cannot read and quite often they do not understand the message in the invitation letters and so they end up missing the meetings.*

Failure to convene meetings by head teachers and other actors, as cited by the community, was a major challenge to participation. A participant at the community FGD in Mpigi reported that, *“sometimes a whole year goes by without a single meeting being convened by the head teacher.”* Another respondent from Nebbi Community FGD reported that, *“we have not had a meeting to discuss UPE issues in the last four years.”* This could be blamed on lack of facilitation for meetings as demanded by the community members. As a respondent at the SMC FGD in one district reported, *“mobilizing for community meetings is not easy because the community demands for refreshments at the meetings.”*

### **Efforts to promote participation**

In spite of these challenges, the importance of participation was recognized and positive outcomes of participation were observed. Parents’ contribution towards the feeding of their children in schools in Kamuli district, for example, had improved learning and performance of pupils in their schools. The Kamuli Councillor, Martha Nakibogo said that,

*One of the ways of ensuring pupil retention in school was by ensuring that parents fulfil their responsibilities towards the education needs of their children such as provision of lunch, scholastic materials and sanitary pads for the girl child.*

In addition, involvement of parents and communities in school activities was noted to impact on school outcomes, such as, enrolment and retention of pupils in school. It was reported in Kabarole, for example, that parents whose children were involved in the education of their children through visiting the school and/or attending PTA and SMC meetings performed better than those whose parents were not involved.

Technical and political actors had made various attempts at promoting participation in the UPE program largely through efforts to change attitudes of the community members and raise awareness of the role of the community. A participant from Mbarara stated that, *“there should be sensitisation on the value of UPE.”* The LCV Hoima district also stated that, *“sensitisation meetings were conducted regularly to encourage communities to participate in running the schools.”* While the LCV Chairperson Mpigi district reported that,

*The district holds annual education conferences which are geared towards encouraging parents to send their girl children to schools as well as participating in school programs.*

The CAO of Amuru district cited the use of both meetings and radios in the sensitisation of parents. *“As for the parents, we have been doing a lot of sensitisation. Sometimes on radio and sometimes during meetings, we talk to parents about their duties and responsibilities.”* Similarly, the head teacher, Butende Primary School, in Kamuli District, explained how he uses health education days to change attitudes towards education for the better in the community:

*The head teacher mobilizes pupils to clean and sweep compounds of community members and in some cases constructs racks for plates as a way of improving sanitation. This initiative makes the community proud and many of them begin to appreciate the value of education by sending children to school.*

## Conclusion

The desire for and benefits of meaningful government engagement with citizens and other non-governmental stakeholders is clear in the interview and focus group data. Political and technical leaders valued community input, as did school management committee members, head teachers and PTAs. However, all stakeholders expressed frustration with the system that doesn't seem to translate participation into improvement. Just as the assessment data shows, holding meetings does not necessarily lead to participants' views being captured. Parents were pessimistic that attending meetings would lead to the needs they express being addressed. The mechanisms for participation were largely in place, particularly at the school and community level, but the trust that using these mechanisms would amount to anything was lacking.

### 4.3 Coordination

This section presents findings obtained from the content analysis of government documents as well as interview and focus group data on coordination practices and perspectives. The coordination principal looks at effective communication and coordinated action between the key stakeholders involved in the funding, planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the UPE program. The review of documents focused on identifying evidence of a joint meeting between the District Executive Committee (DEC) and Heads of Departments discussing UPE issues; evidence of a Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting discussing UPE issues at least three times a year; evidence of an annual joint sector review meeting (between district officials and other stake holders) on UPE; and evidence of a meeting between the DEO, Inspector of schools, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Planner to plan the implementation and evaluation of UPE. The documents reviewed under coordination were largely minutes of the joint meetings such as TPC and sector review meetings. Table 4.3 summarizes the findings of the review..

As evident in Table 4.3, only five (Nakapiripirit, Mukono, Wakiso, Kamuli, Amuru) of the eleven districts presented evidence that joint meetings between the District Executive Committee and heads of department had discussed UPE issues. Evidence of technical planning committees discussing UPE issues and evidence of joint sector review meeting was seen in six of the eleven districts. However, only Kabarole presented evidence of a meeting between the Key Technical Leaders to plan the implementation and evaluation of the UPE.

**Table 4.3: Evidence of Coordination Practices under UPE**

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Evidence of a joint meeting discussing UPE issues between the District Executive Committee and Heads of Departments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of a Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting-discussing UPE issues at least three times a year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of an annual joint sector review meeting (between district officials and other stake holders) on UPE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of a meeting between the DEO, Inspector of schools, CAO and Planner to plan the implementation and evaluation of UPE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen

☒ No evidence seen

☐ Documents not accessed

## Intra-sector and inter-sector collaborations

Information obtained from interviews and focus group discussions with government and non-government actors provided evidence of intra- and inter-sector collaboration between different actors in UPE program implementation. It is evident that district technical staffs appreciated the fact that UPE program implementation required both sectoral and departmental coordination through meetings to allow smooth flow of information and enhanced synergies in program implementation. Intra and inter sectoral or departmental collaborations enhanced common targets, goals and values, provided mechanisms for continuous communications among key players and stakeholders, optimized staff participation in decision making within and across sectors and departments. In UPE program implementation, the key players, particularly the District Executive Committee and Heads of Departments, School Inspectors, RDC, and Planners and other stakeholders at lower levels such as head teachers and SMC were required to meet regularly to plan, monitor and evaluate the UPE program. In one of the interviews with district technical staff, it was discovered that coordination between the political and technical staff at the district had yielded many dividends in UPE implementation, especially in terms of teamwork. For instance, in the field of educational monitoring, it was stated that it did not make sense for the DEO, RDC and LCV to all go out to monitor the same school at the same time. However, it was indeed noted that there were benefits for such joint collaboration. For instance, joint monitoring makes it possible for the leadership to allocate responsibilities in taking action such that those issues that require technical, administrative or political actions are taken up by the rightful office.

The findings demonstrated that the districts had council meetings where different technical and political officials were brought together, including the CAO as an ex-officio member who could give technical advice to the council. Such meetings also involved the DEO and DIS. Technically, the CAO was supposed to be the Clerk to Council, an assignment usually delegated to any qualified technical staff of his or her choice. The DEO, as the secretary to the Education Sector Committee, may also assign duty to a junior officer. The discussions in these meetings could focus on many topical issues emanating from different sectors including UPE. As a result, the chairperson may either directly or indirectly monitor all the sectors' performance. The CAO, as member of the District Executive Committee, has direct access to the reports on the education sector.

It was further revealed that different departments in the districts oftentimes shared reports with the office of the internal auditor, the office of the CAO, and RDC. In Hoima district, the CAO's office interfaced with the district council and other stakeholders through monthly and quarterly sector meetings, council meetings, budget conferences and Technical Planning Committee meetings.



The analysis of documents from Nakapiripirit also revealed evidence of such meetings, something that was echoed in the interview of technical officers in the same district. The inspector of schools from Nakapiripirit, thus, stated that,

*Apart from the reports shared in council meetings and the monthly TPC meetings chaired by the CAO, we have senior management committee (chaired by CAO) that meets weekly. The meeting is attended by heads of departments who are encouraged to come up with plans and share challenges. At lower levels, we have regular meetings with head teachers and occasionally with SMCs. Also, sometimes the inspector of schools meets with teachers to discuss issues related to school performance and during these meetings, strategies to improve performance are set.*

In Nakapiripirit, the CAO also described interfacing with other stakeholders in planning, monitoring and supervising of UPE programs. He reported that NGO plans are integrated in the district plans, through the NGO forums organized by the district. In the forums, he said, “the district is able to know the NGO’s areas of interventions to avoid duplication and also to avoid over-concentration of NGO’s efforts in few areas.” It was noted, for example, that in the most recent forum,

*Moruita, Lorengedwat, and the Town Council had been left out as far as NGOs activities were concerned and the district compelled NGOs to go to these sub-counties and implement their activities there.*

Gulu District also stood out in the area of coordination. Interviews with technical staff indicated that during the district monthly and quarterly sector meetings, development partners were always invited to review the progress of the different sectors. The key output of this level of coordination was that development partners were able to identify gaps that needed interventions. The Gulu DEO described the importance of coordination between the district and non-government actors in the district and had this to say:

*We normally have quarterly meetings. At least every quarter, the different partners come, we share work plans, they tell us what they have done and what they intend to do. This is very good. First of all, you come to know what they do and also to avoid duplication of work.*

In Gulu, the coordination between districts and non-government actors had been formalized. The district had signed the MoUs with different partners in the area of education. Through this formal engagement, the partners had filled the gaps identified in the coordination process. It was noted that the coordination between the district and the development partners had yielded many dividends.



For instance, the DEO reported that school supervision was being done together with development partners. The partners had facilitated field work movements during supervision and monitoring and capacity building. The Gulu District Inspector of Schools had this to say:

*There has been a lot of support from our partners. For example, World Vision and Save the Children. They have a lot of projects in schools, like Save the Children International has a project in some schools called "I am Learning" and they are giving a lot of things. They are doing a lot of training. Many teachers and head teachers have been trained. The same thing with World Vision, which works in areas of Koro, Bungatira, Paicho and Unyama. They have provided trainings and books. And from time to time, they are addressing many issues so that we can improve.*

The interviews and focus group discussions revealed that despite the numerous intra and inter-sector collaboration that takes place at district levels, and between the district and non-government actors, a lot of coordination takes place at the school levels. Such collaboration included meetings of the SMC and PTA and the Annual General Meetings (AGMs). This level of coordination allowed the SMCs, head teachers, teachers and community to interface and deal with the challenges affecting the education sector. For instance, in Mpigi, it was revealed that regular SMC meetings were organized, where parents and guest speakers were invited. In most schools, AGMs were organized to discuss issues affecting the schools. However, holding meeting once year was not considered very effective. Some schools had school performance reviews every term during which, all the members of PTA, and the SMC together with the teachers came together to discuss school performance. The key outcome of the school performance review was the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan was designed to bring together all the leaders in in SMC, PTA, and other key stakeholders like the sub county authorities and LC1 who are supposed to participate in school improvement plan. In Hoima, it was noted that in addition to PTA meetings, schools involved other stakeholders through speech days, school opening and sports days.

While the interview and FGD data did not produce a lot of information about the challenges faced in the area of coordination among district-level bodies, inadequate funding and low morale among some stakeholder groups arose in some of the districts. Challenges to coordination at the school-level, particularly between SMC, parents and schools, are largely related to the challenges of participation discussed earlier. These include perceived political interference and non-participation of one stakeholder group in the meetings of the others.

## Conclusion

At the district level, the principle of coordination is largely concerned with the holding of regular meetings between government and non-governmental stakeholders. The analysis of government documents suggests that there is room for improvement in coordination in most districts. The interviews with stakeholders suggest that most stakeholders know the required form of coordination. Many coordination meetings took place in more districts than the review of documents suggests, simply because of limited documentation. That said, the review of documents suggests that Kabarole and Kamuli were doing better than the rest on this principle, with both providing evidence for three of the four indicators. The interview and FGD data suggests that Gulu and Nakapiririt had good practices of coordination as well.

## 4.4 Transparency

Transparency is a principle that is fundamental to a number of other principles. Without transparency, for example, participation is compromised and accountability is hindered as citizens are not able to access the information they need to participate in discussions of UPE. In addition, citizens find difficulty in providing input to decision-makers and hold their government leaders accountable for providing quality and equitable UPE services. To ensure transparency, government needs to ensure that information about UPE is made accessible to all citizens through proper channels for providing input to and receiving feedback from citizens.

As displayed in Table 4.4, the review of evidence on transparency practices at the district headquarters shows that much work remains to be done on this principle. Half of the districts, for example, did not display information on UPE-related grants received by the district from the central government for Q1 FY 2016/17. Only five out of the eleven districts displayed information on the number of teachers and enrolment of pupils in UPE schools as shown in the table.

In nine of the eleven districts, there was no evidence of communication from the CAO or DEO on guidelines to schools specifying which information to display. Only Kamuli and Kabarole provided letters to that effect. A similar picture emerged on existence of written procedures for requesting for information on UPE, either exclusively or generally. Only Gulu, Amuria and Mukono provided such documents. The data from the key informant interviews and focus group discussions adds depth to our understanding of the challenges and implications of the lack of complete transparency in the governance of public expenditures in UPE.

Table 4.4: Evidence of Transparency

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Display of information on grants related to UPE (Q1 FY 2016/17) at district head quarters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Display of current information on the number of teachers and their salaries in UPE schools under UPE on the public notice board at the district offices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Display of current information on the enrolment of pupils in UPE schools on the public notice board at the district offices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of communication from the DEO's office on the guidelines of publically displaying information on UPE schools' notice boards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Existence of clear procedures of requesting for information on UPE from district offices by the public.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen☒ No evidence seen☐ Documents not accessed

## Mediums of communication used to disseminate information

Dissemination is critical to transparency because it is the means through which information is conveyed to the public and other stakeholders. The method of dissemination impacts access to information and is very important for the supply side of transparency. A respondent from Gulu emphasized the importance of informing the public beforehand about what was planned and the resources available. The methods of dissemination of information on UPE mentioned by respondents included meetings, display of information on notice boards as well as radio programs. The LCV Amuria stated that, “*the district provided information through community dialogues, meetings, church services and other gatherings.*” Politicians, including councillors, were also reported to be conveyors of information on UPE. The DIS Kabarole stated, “*The councillors get information from the district and share it with the citizens.*” A respondent from Nakapiripirit also stated that, “*a lot of information on UPE is provided to citizens by the SMCs as well as Councillors during social gatherings and community meetings.*” Respondents from Wakiso and Gulu cited the district budget conference as an important platform for dissemination of information to the citizens. A respondent from Wakiso noted that, “*the district progress report which is presented at the district budget conference usually contained information on service delivery in the district.*” Also, a respondent from Gulu mentioned the annual general meeting as a platform for disseminating information to parents.

Respondents at the district as well as the school management level recognized the practice of displaying information on the notice board as an important practice for providing information to the public. A respondent from Nakapiripirt district stated that, *“information on the payroll and fund releases was pinned on the notice boards.”* A respondent from Gulu stated that, *“at the school level, they are supposed to put information on the money received on the notice board. That is how it should be for accountability and transparency.”* Participants from other districts too acknowledged the practice of displaying information on the notice boards. Respondents from the districts of Kabarole, Wakiso, Kamuli, Gulu and Mpigi mentioned the use of radio and other media to provide information on UPE to the public.

### **Access to information by stakeholders**

On the demand side of transparency, the procedures for accessing information by citizens and provision of the information required are critical. Responses suggested that there were no clear guidelines for the general public to access information. Respondents at the district explained that a request for information had to be made through the office of the CAO. A respondent from Nakapiripirt stated that,

*The public is welcome to come directly for information so long as they follow the proper procedure. It is usually recommended that a person gets recommendation for access to information from the office of the CAO before any department can provide the information. This procedure is stipulated in the Public Service standing orders*

This bureaucratic procedure was also cited by a respondent from Mpigi district:

*For citizens to access information from the department, there is government bureaucracy that has to be followed. I am not authorized to give information unless the CAO has given me permission to do so. Right now, I have been authorized. If some other person came for information, there is some information I may not give. However there is some information that we may give without authorization for example, PLE performance.*

The respondents from other stakeholder groups, excluding the DEOs office and head teachers, expressed concern over the level of transparency of those directly in charge of managing education at both the district and school level. A respondent from Kabarole stated that, *“the schools hide information about PTA funds and other contributions from us.”* A respondent from Kamuli pointed out that, *“head teachers who inflate the number of pupils enrolled in their schools so as to get money from capitation grant usually do not display information as required.”* Another respondent from Gulu noted that, *“many head teachers do*

*not want to show to the parents how much money they have received which is a source of tension in meetings.”*

The district officials decried the lack of transparency of some civil society organisations when it comes to dealing with the district officials as raised by a respondent from Nakapiripirit who stated that,

*Some NGOs do not want us to disclose information for reasons I don't understand. They come with many good plans that they never implement. When they are asked to explain poor implementation they do not cooperate. Many of them are not willing to share their budgets and reports. They also rarely accept to undertake joint monitoring of their projects.*

### **Challenges related to transparency**

Two major challenges to dissemination of information and access to information on UPE can be discerned from the findings of the study. First, there are many problems related to the use of the different mediums to disseminate vital information. One respondent from Gulu noted that many schools in the district were not holding parents meetings and when they are held, very few parents attend. A respondent from Kabarole District pointed out that, *“many people do not have radios while others may miss the program.”* There is also risk of information sent through third parties, such as councillors, being distorted. A respondent from Kabarole stated that, *“the challenge with conveying messages through people is that parents receive distorted information that leaves them more confused.”* Second, the issue of poor record keeping is a challenge to transparency. A respondent from Mpigi lamented that,

*There are no records kept and where they are kept they are very poor. For example when you ask for finance committee minutes they are not available. The schools do not keep records on finances as required.*

### **Conclusion**

The number of empty boxes in Table 4.4 is indicative of the transparency issues in the districts. An empty box means that the source document was not seen, and for the transparency indicators, these are documents that are supposed to be either displayed or clearly communicated and available in written form. As we have seen with the other principles, stakeholders up and down the governance chain were aware of the mechanism of transparency, and most were easily able to list the mechanisms for providing information to and receiving information from citizens. Evidence of these mechanisms being in place, however, was uneven. The information that was required to be displayed on public notice boards was seen in only three of the eleven districts. And in only three districts was there evidence of written procedures for public requests for information

from district officials. This is frustrating to citizens because confusion and bureaucratic obstacles make it difficult for the people to access the information they are entitled to.

## 4.5 Control of Corruption

This section presents findings obtained from document review and responses from respondents on control of corruption practices and perspectives. The document review focused on evidence of bureaucratic and administrative systems and practices in place that prohibit the use of public office for private gain. It includes controlling both petty and grand forms of corruption, and the 'capture' of the state by elites. This aspect of PEG of UPE is assessed by looking for evidence of UPE funds being captured in quarterly internal auditing exercises by district; evidence of the district PAC discussing issues related to UPE from either the Internal Audit or Auditor General's report; evidence of a Council meeting discussing a PAC report raising issues related to UPE; and evidence of administrative actions taken in response to queries raised by the Office of the Auditor General/district PAC. The documents reviewed under control of corruption majorly included quarterly internal audit reports, quarterly PAC reports, council meetings as well as council reports of actions taken in response to queries raised by the Office of Auditor General or PAC. Table 4.5 summarises the findings of the review.

Eight of the eleven districts produced evidence in the form of quarterly auditor reports capturing evidence of UPE funds. Only Gulu and Kabarole did not provide evidence of auditor's reports while Mpigi and Hoima showed no evidence of UPE funds in their quarterly audit reports. With respect to evidence of the district PAC discussing issues related to UPE from either the Internal Audit or Auditor General's report, only six districts provided evidence. Whereas Gulu, Amuria and Hoima submitted PAC reports, there was no evidence of issues related to UPE discussed in those reports. Kamuli, Mbarara and Nebbi did not provide quarterly PAC reports.

In Amuru, Kaborole and Nebbi, we found evidence of a council meeting discussing a PAC report that raised issues related to UPE. While no council minutes were provided in Mbarara, the remaining districts had no evidence of discussions of PAC report raising issues related to UPE in their council minutes.

In respect to evidence of administrative actions taken, like the introduction of new rules, procedures to control corruption in response to queries raised by the Office of the Auditor General/district PAC, we found the majority of the districts either did not provide council reports or there was no evidence of actions taken in response to queries raised. Kabarole, Wakiso and Nebbi, however, provided evidence of actions taken in response to queries raised by the office of the Auditor General/PAC.

Table 4.5: Evidence of Control of Corruption

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Evidence of UPE funds being captured in quarterly internal auditing exercises by district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of the district PAC discussing issues related to UPE from either the Internal Audit or Auditor General's report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of a Council meeting discussing a PAC report raising issues related to UPE.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of administrative actions taken (e.g. introduction of new rules, procedures to control corruption) in response to queries raised by the Office of the Auditor General/district PAC.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen☒ No evidence seen☐ Documents not accessed

Information obtained from interviews and focus group discussions with government and non-government actors provided a more detailed account of corruption and anti-corruption practices and experiences in relation to UPE program.

#### 4.5.1. Prevalence of corruption in UPE program

The main form of corruption prevalent in most districts in relation to UPE is identified as inflating student enrolment numbers to obtain much funding. Corruption through submitting false enrolment records is facilitated by the fact that Government remits money directly to school bank accounts and the money allocated to each school depends on the student enrolment numbers. In Mpigi district, the LCV noted an enrolment anomaly at one primary school where the count indicated 83 pupils while the submitted register had 380 pupils. This represented more than 78% inflation of numbers. This is a case of alleged corruption through falsified documentation. The same practice was reported by District Technical Staff in Gulu and SMC members Kamuli district. The other forms of corruption mentioned included nepotism and misuse of funds allocated for UPE. It was noted in Mpigi district that schools usually budgeted for items such as wall clocks, which would never be found in the schools.

The other forms of corruption prevalent in UPE schools related to head teachers soliciting money from parents to meet their private needs in the guise of school developments and extra teaching. This practice was reported in many schools in several districts. Hoima District Educational Officer revealed, in an interview, that a primary school head teacher was arrested after the parents reported him to police for collecting money to supplement UPE grants. This revelation



demonstrated that many head teachers extorted money from parents. However, a revelation from SMC focus group discussions in Kaborole and Mpigi districts indicated that there was ignorance about which aspects the schools had legal mandate to obtain money from parents. In Kaborole, it was reported that,

*The political leaders interfere with the work of the SMC, especially the contributions made by the parents. Some of the local leaders are against these monetary contributions towards the remedial classes and other motivation. Some of our leaders do not have their children in UPE but discourage us from asking parents to contribute.*

Similarly, SMC FGD participants in Mpigi claimed that:

*When the SMCs make proposals for parents to cater for meals by contributing and they ask for contributions, they are informed by the RDC and other political leaders that this is in contravention of the UPE policy.*

It should be noted that the guidelines issued by Ministry of Education and Sports (2015) in conformity with the Education Act (Article 13, sub-section 5(2c)) state that, “The responsibility of parents and guardians shall include... providing food, clothing, shelter, medical care and transport...” These guidelines are also in conformity with the Cabinet directive per Action Extract from Minute No. 85 (CT 2012) of 14th March, 2012 specifying methods of implementation of a school Food Programme (SFP) in urban and rural areas. This means that care should be taken when labelling the collection of money from parents by head teachers as corrupt behaviour.

That notwithstanding, the corruption practiced by the head teachers of schools from Kamuli and Hoima revealed that corruption in UPE program was promoted by the district officials. The head teachers reported that on many occasions, district officials had asked for money from head teachers allegedly for fuel or promotion. In other instances, district engineers had approved condemned school infrastructures while some teachers had failed to receive their salaries on fault of failing to meet the bribe demands of the duty bearer. For example, a head teacher from Kamuli said, “*if a head teacher fails to comply with the demand to bribe, they risk being transferred or worse still losing the school to another head teacher – in other words accepting to give a bribe is a form of job security for the head teachers*”.

Head teachers also noted that corrupt district officials had made some teachers small gods who were untouchable. This concern was also echoed in a community FDG in Amuria. Community members argued that sometimes when PTA and SMC recommended transfer of some teachers on genuine grounds, most of such teachers had their god-parents at the district and were unduly protected.



## Mechanisms for managing UPE funds

The FGDs and interviews with technical staff, SMCs, head teachers and LCVs indicated that auditing was an important and integral part of managing UPE funds. It was evident in the discussions and interviews that unlike the previous arrangement, UPE funds were wired directly to school accounts from the Ministry of Finance Planning and economic Development. Funds allocated to UPE schools were supposed to be monitored by CAO, the DEO and other educational supervisors, the Council and SMCs. The CAO Amuria district revealed that when the money was remitted to schools at the beginning of the term, they had to use the money under the supervision of the education staff (DEO and inspectors of school). Each school has to have an account and one of the signatories was the Chairman, SMC. And the principle signatory as the DEO. The supervision included checking whether the school spending was in conformity with established guidelines and regulations in place. It was also mandatory that each school had to have a finance committee chaired by the deputy head teacher in charge of administration of the school.

The SMC, in addition to being signatory to the school account, has the duty to approve school budgets through the school finance committees. The SFC was established to provide checks and balance to the school head teacher as far as managing the UPE funds is concerned. For example, any procurement the head teacher does, the finance committee has to cross check and see whether the head teacher exactly purchased and brought to school the goods and services were purchased. CAO Mbarara district argued that role of the CAO was to ensure that the Head Teachers submitted monthly returns and expenditure and given indication how the funds had been well utilized. He reported that on a routine basis, the district sent auditors to cross-check the books of accounts and made reports to the district. Where the reports indicated misappropriation, the district gave advice on what to do to enforce recovery.

In Mbarara district, it was reported that schools had to be audited before they could access UPE funds. For instance, it was noted that some head teachers who failed to bring monthly returns failed to get their salaries. The monthly returns consisted of returns on teachers and funds, which helped to crack down on teacher's absenteeism, death and retirement falsification. In each district, the Council was very useful in promoting the UPE program. It played an oversight role in monitoring performance of UPE schools. The audit, inspection and PAC reports generated by the respective departments were all scrutinized by the Council, and appropriate advice or guidance was given. The DIS of Hoima, reported that the politicians, District and Sub County Chairpersons and Councillors were tasked with monitoring UPE and guiding head teachers on how to operate schools. However, the different key stakeholders described above were sometimes the source of frustration. Instead of supporting and

safeguarding the UPE program, they reportedly mis-used their mandate and ended up frustrating the mechanisms and systems in place to control corruption in the management of UPE funds. In Nakapiripirit, for instance, one of the head teachers alleged that, “*SMCs demanded for payment for signing the cheque to withdraw UPE money.*”

There was consensus that auditing mechanisms were in place to manage and control the UPE funds. For example, the CAO Wakiso reported that the Principal Internal Auditor assigned staff under his department to carry out audits of sampled UPE schools. This audit was done to establish receipt of funds, display of release information on school notice boards, and whether the funds were used in compliance with spending guidelines. Audit findings and recommendations were reported to the CAO. The assistant CAO took responsibility of the audit recommendations.

On the other hand, the DEO Mpigi district reported that they had a functional audit department, as such, UPE funds must be accounted for and audited by the internal auditor. The UPE guidelines required the accountant at the sub-county to give technical support to the head teachers in bookkeeping. In Mbarara, the DIS said that the internal auditors worked with the finance department and CAOs office to check on the accountability of UPE funds while in Nakapiripirit, the CAO said that at sub-county level, there were sub-accountants who were under instruction to support schools in proper accounting and book keeping.

Thus, whereas there was agreement that there were mechanisms in place to audit UPE funds, the data suggested that there were discrepancies on the processes and procedures, particularly on who to audit the UPE funds. There were variations in roles and level of engagement of different stakeholders particularly in the CAO's office. For example, the CAO of Nakapiripirit reported that schools at sub-county level were supported by junior staff in elementary auditing and the district auditor would only be required to assess the situation on the ground when there were serious issue. This meant that the auditing of UPE funds was based on how serious the issues were rather than necessity of accountability in general.

### **Challenges to controlling of corruption**

The district technical staff, head teachers, LCV chairperson, SMC and community members revealed a number of challenges that affected control of corruption in the UPE program. According DSC of Hoima district, the education department was confronted with four major challenges in fulfilling its mandate of implementation UPE. These included having a small budget, staff, research and non-cooperation from head teachers. The districts had limited capacity to supervise, monitor and evaluate UPE schools. In Wakiso district, the conditions were worse. The DSC reported that they had challenges

of failing to inspect the schools. Wakiso district education office reported that they had only one car for the five inspectors of schools. They could not use it for inspecting all government schools in Wakiso district for the three mandatory times per term as mandated. The DSC had no official car, making spot visits to schools as required challenging. Human resource and transport challenges in the education department were also affected by other departments expected to offer oversight role over the use of UPE funds. In Hoima district, the RDC reported that his office faced staff and funding gaps, which limited the capacity of the office to monitor the UPE program. This was responsible for the delayed reporting and responses to concerns raised by other offices and stakeholders.

In Kamuli district, resource and human constraints affected the way the audit department conducted its work. For instance, that department grappled with the challenge of understaffing. The internal audit department had only three staff including the head of department, and yet Kamuli district had about 180 UPE schools. For purposes of efficiency; the auditor identified a centre and date whereby all head teachers were asked to appear with their files for accountability. The auditors could only visit a school that they thought had real issues.

It was evident in the interviews and group discussions that non-cooperation from parents and teachers had affected the control of corruption. In Mpigi, it was noted that the office of the RDC was seen as a spy agency and this created a big gap between that office and the citizens. The parents and teachers were hesitant to volunteer information because of this perception which hindered district accountability functions and roles. In Gulu district, it was reported during the group discussions with SMC that there was a poor working relationship between the head teachers and SMC. Head teachers did not want to share information that was relevant for accountability checks. The same perception was reported in Kamuli district where a head teacher of one primary school did not cooperate with members of SMC. In Mbarara, head teachers had repeatedly side-lined SMC members in the management of the schools.

Finally, poor remuneration and delayed release of UPE funds affected control of corruption. In Hoima district, it was reported that poor pay was responsible for some head teachers using UPE funds for their personal gains. In addition to poor remuneration, delayed release of UPE funds to schools had forced teachers to borrow money from businessmen to keep the school activities running, with the promise of repaying when the ministry remitted the funds to the schools.

## **Conclusion**

The interview results showed that corruption was prevalent in the UPE program, with the main acts being that of inflating student numbers to obtain much funding, and misuse of funds by using them on non UPE mandatory activities.

Group discussions and interviews with technical staff, SMC, head teachers and LCV indicated that the office of the auditor general, offices of the CAO, DEO and SMCs were key and integral parts of UPE funds management. As such, funds allocated to UPE schools were supposed to be monitored by the CAO, DEO and other education department supervisors, the Councils, and SMCs. In the analysis, the challenges prevalent in the control of corruption in the implementation of UPE were caused by limited budget, under staffing, non-cooperation from head teachers and poor remuneration of teachers. These challenges were made worse by the limited capacity of responsible offices to supervise, monitor and evaluate UPE schools. The review of documents showed that over three quarters of the districts under review provided evidence pertaining to UPE funds as evidenced in the quarterly internal district audit exercises. However, limited evidence on issues related to discussing PAC reports by council and administrative actions taken in response to corruption queries existed in most districts. This implies that activities and policies necessary for detecting, controlling, deterring and punishing corruption behaviour in relation to UPE were not effectively implemented.

#### 4.6 Accountability

Bovens (2007) looks at accountability as a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and justify his or her conduct. The forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor can be sanctioned. In Table 4.6 we present the results from the assessment of the districts' performance on accountability using existence of an accountability forum, provision of relevant monitoring and supervision information, posing of sanctions, and use of local revenue to monitor UPE funds as indicators..

Overall, on most of the indicators, the required documentation was missing and it was difficult to establish the existence of the accountability practices. For example, regarding existence of an accountability forum, there were only four districts (Mpigi, Kamuli, Kabarole and Hoima) with the relevant documents, and Hoima district lacking total evidence. Documenting evidence remained a challenge, in particular, evidence of submission of quarterly inspection reports to central government. This could have been due to failure to take note of the key issues or a result of poor records keeping.

The results in Table 4.6 show that the documentation in the Inspectorate Department is highly critical in the accountability process. The mandate of documenting the status of UPE schools both internally to the DEO and externally to the MoES requires the inspectorate to produce quarterly reports. Seven out of twelve districts had proper documentation in the form of quarterly inspection reports.

Table 4.6: Evidence of Accountability

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Evidence of discussion of UPE issues in an accountability forum e.g. Barazas, District Budget Conference, accountability meetings, meetings called by the DEO ( <i>any of these meetings can be considered as evidence</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Existence of at least two quarterly monitoring and supervision reports by the District Inspection Office.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Submission of four quarterly monitoring and supervision reports to the central government.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of sanctions enforced against any office bearer for non-compliance with accountability guidelines for implementing UPE e.g. dismissal, suspension, disciplinary action, refund etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of use of locally generated funds to monitor UPE in the district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen☒ No evidence seen☐ Documents not accessed

The document review revealed evidence of different kinds of sanctions imposed on errant office bearers. Examples of such sanctions included demotion of a head teacher with unprofessional conduct in Nebbi; a DEO's letter dissolving a SMC of a school in Mukono; a DEO's letter transferring a teacher from a school in Wakiso following complaints; warning letters from the DEO in Nakapiripirit and Mbarara to teachers absconding from duty; and a letter from the District Internal Auditor in Kamuli inviting a head teacher to answer audit queries of alleged embezzlement of UPE funds.

A discussion of the different forms of accounting for UPE funds reported by various stakeholders during the interviews follows. We also report the accountability structures established in the district, as narrated by different actors in the interviews. Accountability cannot be complete unless there is a system for rewarding good performers and sanctioning errant officers. Accordingly, we present the different ways officers can be sanctioned as evident in the responses.

### Accountability mechanisms

Inspection is one of the accountability mechanisms that districts use to ensure that UPE funds are used for the intended purpose. The inspection is performed by a number of stakeholders including the SMC, Inspector of Schools, DEO, District Council and CAO. In Hoima, it was reported that SMCs supervised school projects, while in Mukono SMCs sat at the beginning of every term to draw work plans and budgets, which they evaluated at the end of the term. The

Inspector of Schools was expected to inspect each school at least once a term, producing a report, which was shared with the DEO and CAO. According to the law, Primary schools have to be monitored by sub counties, but reality, schools report directly to the DEO, meaning that the role of the sub county in monitoring the school was not done.

In Kamuli, it was reported that before the district engineer produces any certificate of completion for construction projects, the chairperson had to inspect the project to ascertain the quality of work done before payments to the contractor were approved. For instance, it was reported that the Chairperson of Kamuli issued a directive that no payments would be effected to any contractor who did shoddy work in the construction of primary schools. She gave an ultimatum for such contractors to be called back on the site to correct their mistakes.

A number of reports were produced by different stakeholders to provide information required for monitor the utilisation of UPE funds. The Inspectors of Schools were expected to produce quarterly inspection reports which were supposed to be submitted to the Social Services Committee as reported in Kamuli district. Still in Kamuli, it was also reported that the SMC provided quarterly accountabilities on UPE funds. Those who failed to provide accountability were summoned before the district PAC to explain their actions. In Wakiso, it was reported that information on UPE funds was supposed to be displayed on school notice boards within the first weeks of receiving the funds.

The audit department plays a key role in the accountability process and has the mandate to approve the authenticity of the produced reports. It is required to visit all schools to ascertain the validity of the information reported on UPE. Due to resource constraints, however, the audit department only sampled UPE schools for auditing to establish whether they received the funds, displayed releases on their notice boards and whether the funds were utilised in accordance with the set guidelines. The audit findings were then submitted to the CAO for review.

### **Accountability structures**

In the existing accountability structure, the school finance committee initiated the process of budgeting for UPE funds. In Hoima, it was reported that after the finance committee had prepared the budget, the head teacher who was the secretary to the SMC presented the budget for approval to the SMC. The role of the SMC went beyond approving, like in Mpigi, it was reported that the SMC was expected to identify areas that needed more focus. In Kamuli, it was reported that the SMC supervised transactions for UPE funds at the school. Money was withdrawn with the signature of the SMC Chairperson and the Treasurer. The SMC was held accountable to the district council through the sector committee and PAC.

## Accountability forums

UPE funds were directly wired by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFPED) to school accounts using the Integrated Financial Management System. There were different accountability forums where accounting officers were required to account for their actions. For instance, in Kamuli, it was reported that the technical staff, including the DEO and team, were often invited in meetings of standing committees to explain certain queries. Similarly, head teachers who had misappropriated funds were summoned to appear before the district PAC and the rewards and sanctions' committee. It was revealed that the reports from the rewards and sanctions committee were forwarded to the chairperson's office which was expected to take action. In Kabarole, it was reported that they held an annual accountability week where information was shared with communities by the sub-county leaders.

## Application of sanctions

Sanctions can be imposed by any of the actors in the accountability structure. For instance, Local Government officials, such as, the LCV had the authority to discipline errant teachers and head teachers. The District Service Commission and Local Government had power and authority to demote and promote teachers. It was reported in Mbarara that, the Head Teachers' Association also disciplined teachers and performed joint inspections in school. In Mpigi, the district effected transfers and demotions of teachers who were underperforming. The teachers were first warned three times, as the regulation for public service requires, before the action was taken, which sometimes leads to delayed action. In cases of absenteeism, Mpigi district had intervened by removing the teachers from the payroll. Teachers could also be struck off the payroll due to misconduct or perpetual absenteeism. It was reported that a teacher first, was made to appear before the SMC and a head teacher was made to appear before the disciplinary committee for counselling. If no change was observed in the errant head teacher, the case was forwarded to district leadership for action while teachers were first given warning letters. In Amuria, the sector committee discussed the mismanagement of UPE funds in some schools and instances of diverting UPE funds by the head teacher were observed, and the head teacher was made to pay back the funds from his salary and later he was transferred to another school.

## Challenges

There were concerns over the lack of knowledge and skills by different accounting officers. In particular, it was noted that members of SMC and the technical staff in the finance department lacked the required skills to execute their mandate of planning, budgeting and monitoring UPE funds.



Districts reported both financial and human resource constraints to carry out the inspection function. In Gulu, it was stated that in any given quarter, the inspector received only UGX. 2.8 million for the inspection of both primary and secondary schools. This money was not enough to inspect all the schools. Moreover, the inspection department did not have any official vehicle to transport the inspectors. The lack of vehicles for the inspectors was reported in other districts as well, such as Kamuli and Nebbi. In Kamuli they reported having received two motorcycles donated by Plan International, which often broke down, and staff had to use their personal funds to repair the motor cycles because the bureaucratic procedure for the repairs often took very long time. Due to this and other financial and human constraints, inspectors were unable to visit all schools in a school term and some inspectors ended their inspection visits in the head teacher's office instead of visiting the classes.

It was also reported that some SMCs were not able to perform their duties because they were not facilitated. In Kamuli, a SMC Chair submitted that members of the SMC volunteered their services and were engaged in income generating activities which taking much of their time. In addition, cases of lack of cooperation between the SMC and head teachers were reported. In Kamuli, an SMC Chairperson said, *"for instance, after the SMC has approved the school budget, the head teacher resurfaces with yet another budget asking for its approval by the SMC by giving flimsy excuse like he had forgotten to reflect a debt that the school had acquired"*. Members of SMC in Kamuli reported difficulty in accessing information from head teachers who often concealed information which affected the functionality of the SMC. They also voiced concerns over the reliability of the information obtained from head teachers and suggested the need to get first-hand information from MoFPED.

## Conclusion

From the review of the relevant documentation of accountability practices and responses from interviews, it was evident that both the political and technical side had attempted to promote the proper use of UPE funds. The districts also passed judgement and sanctions on errant actors. The UPE program was implemented under a known accountability structure that vested authority to SMC to scrutinise school budgets working closely with sub-country chiefs and were accountable to the District Councils. However, there were concerns over the lack of relevant skills for members of the SMC who played key roles in overseeing the transactions of the UPE program. In addition, SMC members do not receive any financial rewards which would compromise their services. The Inspectorate Department also played the key role of documenting the status of UPE schools thereby documenting the use of resources under UPE. However, it was so underfunded that in many districts it was unable to fully perform its functions. Similar resource constraints were common in the audit department



that compromises its mandate of the audit function in the supervision of UPE funds.

## 4.7 Effectiveness and Efficiency

The principle of effectiveness focuses on the extent to which the objectives of a program or project are met, while efficiency relates to the optimal combination of inputs to obtain the desired outputs. Efficiency can be viewed in two dimensions: technical and allocative. Technical efficiency is doing things well, while allocative efficiency is doing the right things.

The Ministry of Education and Sports report (2008) stipulates the overarching goal of UPE as *“to provide the minimum necessary facilities and resources to enable all Ugandan children of school-going age to enter and remain in school compulsorily and complete the primary cycle”*. It also provides the guidelines on policy, planning and responsibilities of the stakeholders on issues of enrolment, retention, necessary facilities, and resources that are vital to the analysis of the effectiveness of the program. This is done to provide quality education which is one of the policy objectives of the UPE program.

Table 4.7 presents the results from the assessment of the districts' performance on the principle of effectiveness and efficiency. We use indicators like the level of pupil enrolment, retention rate and PLE pass rate. The figures on enrolment, retention and PLE performance represent district positions. Rankings on each of the indicators were provided in the Ministry of Education and Sports Annual Performance report (2015). The Ministry ranked a total of 112 districts. For example, Nakapiripirit district was ranked in position 107 in enrolment, 105 in retention and 29 in PLE performance. The ranking of Nakapiripirit was interpreted to mean that the district performed poorly in enrolment outperforming only 5 districts but it outperforms 7 districts in retention. However, the district performed fairly well in PLE which collaborates with the report from the LCV chairperson that the district had improved in its PLE performance.

Overall, from the results in Table 4.7, we note good rating of districts on the three indicators in central region and western region, and poor rating of districts in the Northern region. In particular, schools in districts of northern region have low enrolment rates, which implies that many children are still be excluded from primary education. This finding corroborates responses in the interviews, where the decline in enrolment was reported in Nakapiripirit. The problem of low pupil enrolment in schools in the northern region was compounded by the low retention rates. Gulu district in the northern region had relatively good performance on all indicators – enrolment, retention and PLE performance and could potentially provide peer learning to other districts in the region.

Table 4.7: Evidence of Effectiveness and Efficiency

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Ranking of district performance on enrolment rates for UPE by the MoES Annual Sector Performance report.	107	62	94	98	57	83	69	42	78	100	90	37
Ranking of district performance on retention rates in UPE schools by the MoES Annual Sector Performance report.	105	35	65	94	19	14	34	36	71	73	5	91
Performance on PLE pass rates in UPE schools by the MoES Annual Sector Performance report.	29	32	73	68	42	19	92	2	1	61	8	76
Evidence of review of performance on targets for primary education in the district.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of a Council meeting discussing district UPE enrolment, retention and PLE results.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Level of utilisation of funds transferred to the district for UPE as indicated by un-spent balances (%)	100	98	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99	98
Evidence of utilisation of locally generated funds to finance UPE related activities besides monitoring and supervision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen      ☒ No evidence seen      ☐ Documents not accessed

Furthermore, we assessed the extent to which the districts were able to utilise UPE funds and how they were able to supplement UPE funds with local revenue. We discovered that most districts utilised all the UPE funds (100%), with the exception of four districts – Gulu, Amuru, Wakiso and Nebbi. These four districts had unspent balances ranging between 1-2 per cent of the funds received. Failure to absorb the meagre resources signals governance challenges.

Below, we discuss views gathered from interviews on the different indicators of effectiveness and efficiency including: pupil enrolment, attendance, retention, performance and optimal use of resources. We also present the challenges faced by teachers and pupils during learning.

### Pupil enrolment

It was prominently reported that the introduction of UPE increased pupil enrolment across the country. The DEO in Amuria reported that the 108 schools in the district had population of 70,000 pupils, while the DEO in Kabarole reported a population of 16,064 in 124 schools. Increase in enrolment in primary schools was one of the successes of the UPE program. However, the large numbers of pupils per class and school caused serious constraints on the existing facilities, which had not been increased in step with the pupil population. This had affected the quality of education and in some cases threatened the lives of the pupils. For instance, a chairperson SMC in Mbarara in a focus group discussion said that due to large pupil numbers, some classes ended up studying from under

trees. In Mpigi, the head teachers, in a focus group discussion, noted that the number of classrooms and toilets were insufficient, leading to poor sanitation in the schools. However, in the Northern region, Nakapiripirit, in particular, it was narrated that enrolment was declining due to the long distances that pupils had to travel to attend school.

From the information gathered in the focus group discussions with the head teachers, it was noted that the high pupil enrolment figures had led to high pupil-teacher ratio, which in most districts, was above the national set standard of 53:1. This was not commensurate with the existing facilities such as classrooms, benches, latrines, and textbooks. It was reported in Hoima that some schools had a pupil-teacher ratio of 200:1. In Kamuli, some schools had a pupil-teacher ratio of 100:1, while others had over 1,000 pupils with only seven teachers. Kisimbiri primary school in Wakiso reportedly had 120 pupils per class in P.4 to P.6.

### **Class attendance**

Respondents noted a serious concern of poor pupil attendance and absenteeism. In Gulu, the inspector reported that the pupil attendance rate ranged between 50 - 70 percent. He also noted that parent support had a strong bearing on pupil's attendance, with pupils who had parents monitoring their children's education attending school more regularly. The regular class attendance of pupils was a key contributory factor to pupil performance. This was so because pupils who did not attend class regularly failed to acquire the taught knowledge and skills. It was noted that this problem was compounded by automatic promotion of pupils, making it possible for pupils who had not obtained the required competence to progress to the next class. The chairperson of Nakapiripirit narrated that,

*Pupil attendance was poor where in a class of 150 pupils only 50 may turn up due to lack of food and involvement in domestic work such as scaring of birds in the plantations.*

A respondent in Nakapiripirit revealed that pupil absenteeism increased after the termination of the feeding program by the World Food Programme (WFP) that was providing food rations for all the meals in school.

### **Pupil retention**

The respondents reported a higher pupil population in lower classes compared to the upper classes which was attributed to pupils dropping out of school. Nawantumbi primary school in Kamuli was reported to have a total of 170 pupils, and out of these only 5, 6, and 3 were in P.5, P.6 and P.7 respectively. The same occurrence was reported in Mbarara, where schools had more pupils in the lower classes than upper classes. Some respondents noted that it could have resulted from pupils switching to private schools which were perceived

as offering better education. In some instances, bright pupils were moved to schools where they were offered bursaries, while girls got married off in the quest for bride wealth; as mentioned in several districts. In Nakapiripirit and Kabarole, head teachers reported that some pupils had dropped out of school because their parents could not afford the financial demands of the schools. In general, Karamoja region had a low school pupil attendance and drop-out was attributed to several factors including lack lunch at school, farming (work) activities at home, and pupils whose parents could not afford to contribute towards the child's school requirements.

## **PLE performance**

According to the responses, the common criterion used to measure performance of UPE schools was the number of pupils who passed their Primary Leaving (PLE) examinations in division one as opposed to passing in any of the other grades such as division two, three and four. Officially, when a pupil passed in any of the four divisions, they were eligible to join a government secondary school. Due to the high competition for best performing secondary school, parents had great desire for their children to get the best grades. This undermined the relevance of division two, three and four and tended to put a lot of pressure on both the pupils and teachers to aim at obtaining division one. Some districts, such as Gulu, reported improved in PLE performance for the last five years. In 2009 Gulu district had a pass rate of 73.5 percent, 78.6 percent in 2010, 81 percent in 2011, 86.7 percent in 2012, 86.7 percent in 2013, and 86.4 percent in 2014. Nakapiripirit, too, recorded improved performance. The LCV there reported that at the onset of UPE they had no first grades, but started in 2014 to register first grades. On the contrary, Amuru recorded a downward trend in PLE performance, as the CAO submitted that they had 89 first grades in 2014 which dropped to 39 in 2015.

## **Challenges**

As stated in the Education Act, Article 13, sub-section 5(2c), parents were expected to provide food for the pupils. However, this was a challenge to many parents who were unable to provide meals to their children due to lack of capacity, or lack of cooperation from parents who thought the state had taken over their parental responsibilities. This has grossly affected the performance of the pupils who missed meals at school. In Gulu, the RDC stated that,

*If our parents do not style up to facilitate our children by providing them with lunch at school, the UPE program is likely to flop because the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) report indicates that the performance of our children where there are no meals at school is extremely poor.*

The issue of maximum staff was a major constraint to the quality of education as voiced by many respondents. In the focus group discussions, it was stated as the major cause of the high pupil-teacher ratio, especially in the lower classes, even though lower classes were the foundation where the pupils had to be given more attention to grasp key concepts. The practice in many districts was to have one teacher per class, which disproportionately created a high pupil-teacher ratio in the lower classes, a situation that became untenable when a teacher fell sick and the classes had to be combined.

UPE funding was limited, with schools receiving a threshold of UGX 130,000 and UGX 10,000 per pupil annually. If a school had 1,000 pupils, then it would be entitled to UGX 10,130,000 annually, which gave a capitation grant of UGX 3,376,666 per-term. As a conditional grant, it was supposed to be spent on school expenditures such as instructional materials (50%), co-curricular activities (20%), management (10%) administration (15%) and others (5%), as stipulated in the UPE guidelines. Respondents suggested that perhaps the more appropriate method of allocating the funds would have been in terms of school activities rather than pupil numbers. The argument for this was that school activities remained the same yet enrolment varied between years and terms. Some districts like Wakiso informed us that they had supplemented UPE funds with locally generated revenue. But many districts, such as Hoima, Nakapiripirit and Amuru confessed that they had raised very little local revenue, and therefore had no resources to supplement the UPE capitation grant.

Many UPE schools had limited resources such as teachers, classrooms, benches, latrine stances and textbooks. For example, St. Maria Goretti primary school in Wakiso had a P.4 classroom occupied by 156 pupils and a P.6 class had 120 pupils. In Nakapiripirit, the LCV said that *“teacher’s houses are inadequate. Teachers share houses, and classrooms are partitioned so that they can serve as both teachers’ houses and as classrooms”*.

According to the UPE policy, teachers were expected to instruct pupils in their local language from Primary One to Primary Three. This policy was considered a challenge because the pupils ended up being examined in the English language, rendering them less competitive than their counterparts who had started studying using the English language. While this type of medium of instruction had been fully adopted in upcountry schools, UPE schools in Kampala and districts close to Kampala such as Wakiso still instructed their pupils in English. This created an imbalance in the learning process and gave pupils in the central region schools an advantage over others, since PLE examinations were written in English.

## Conclusion

UPE is generally perceived to be a good program, one that has increased the level of literacy in the country. Yet, it is mired with many resource and policy-related challenges. Schools struggle with inadequate financial, human, and physical infrastructural resources, compounded by policy-related challenges, such as, the provision of meals, recruitment of teachers and automatic promotion of pupils. The governance issues raised included the role of SMC and sub-county chiefs in the monitoring and supervision of UPE funds. While these challenges exist across the board, there are regional disparities in the effectiveness of the UPE program on all three key indicators: pupil enrolment, retention, and PLE performance. The northern region is particularly challenged on all three indicators, with exception of Gulu and, to a certain extent, Nebbi. Perhaps schools in the northern region require affirmative action to improve their performance on UPE and could be encouraged by peer learning from better performing schools in central and western regions. A good starting point could be to address the identified challenges that schools, pupils and teachers faced in implementing UPE. Lastly, the large pupil enrolment puts serious constraints on the existing facilities resulting into crowding of classrooms and high pupil-teacher ratios which thus affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of the system and pupil performance.

## 4.8 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is about the way government officials respond to issues and concerns raised by citizens. In the context of the governance of public expenditures in UPE, responsiveness involves having the systems and mechanisms in place for providing information on UPE budgets and activities and receiving citizen input on the program. Responsiveness is not only about information sharing but involves political leaders taking up citizens' concerns to Council and making resolutions to appropriately address these concerns. This information is then shared with the technical personnel, to take action in response to the resolutions passed by the district councils. Ultimately, this response results in improvements in the delivery of UPE.

The data in Table 4.8 suggests a poorly functioning system of responsiveness. There was no district where evidence of all five indicators was present. Wakiso was the only district that had evidence of four out of five, and in Kamuli and Nakapiripirit there was evidence for only three of the five indicators. Furthermore, only two districts – Wakiso and Mpigi – had evidence of district councils passing any resolution on an issue raised by citizens. This does not mean that the other districts did not pass resolutions of importance to citizens; rather, it means that there was no evidence to suggest that a resolution had been passed in direct

**Table 4.8: Evidence of Responsiveness**

Practice	District										
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso
Evidence of resolutions taken by Council on issues raised by citizens on UPE (through petitions, letters, complaints etc.).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of the implementation of resolutions on UPE passed by Council.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Existence of a clear feedback procedure for citizens who raise issues on UPE.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of complaints to DEO's office from citizens on UPE related issues.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of response from DEO's office to complaints from citizens on UPE related issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen☒ No evidence seen☐ Documents not accessed

response to a citizen's complaint. As demonstrated by data on the second indicator, five districts had evidence of passing resolutions on UPE-related issues, which may or may not have been raised directly by citizens.

On the technical side, six of the eleven districts had demonstrated evidence of citizen complaints being received by the DEO, but in only two of those – Mukono and Wakiso – was there evidence of the DEO having responded to those complaints. As the information from the interviews and focus group discussions indicated, there were many blockages along the responsiveness chain that made it difficult for the citizens to raise issues, for district officials to receive those issues, and for both the political and technical leaders to take action. The process of responsiveness starts with clearly articulated procedures for citizens to provide feedback and input on UPE. While stakeholders along the responsiveness chain frequently named some of the mechanisms, only two districts – Wakiso and Nakapiripirit – provided documents with those procedures articulated.

As described in the sections on participation and transparency, there were a number of standard mechanisms districts used for providing information to citizens about UPE, including posting information on notice boards, radio announcements, and *Barazas*. There are also a number of mechanisms citizens could use to provide feedback and their raise concerns to schools and district officials about UPE. Though unevenly used, these include participating in the radio programs, making phone-in calls, attending meetings, writing letters and petitions to Councillors. Responsiveness, however, is about the ways and extent to which government officials respond to the issues and concerns raised by citizens through these various forums.



Government response begins with actually receiving information from citizens. Information from interviewing both technical and political leaders suggested that obstacles existed that inhibited this first step from happening. The CAO, Gulu explained that,

*We communicate through the SMC and PTA, through our inspectors and the Centre Coordinating Tutors (CCTs). We get a lot of feedback through radios and through our inspectors....The challenge is that the SMC, PTA and inspectors do not meet regularly. The inspectors go to schools only maybe twice in a term, but you know in between many things happen so we miss out on day to day information.*

Head teachers were also supposed to be key links in the communication chain, though this could also be problematic. The Amuria DIS explained how the system was supposed to work:

*Our parents receive information from the head teachers. Even when we inspect the school and write the report, we give a copy to the head teachers and the head teacher is supposed to share the report with the management committee so that they also know what has been discovered and what needs to be improved. The head teacher is an accounting officer in the school so most information goes through him.*

The SMC is also a critical link in the responsiveness chain, as the Nakapiripirit DIS states:

*SMC meetings is one of the avenues in which the community shares and seeks for school information. These are persons involved in planning, and budgeting and approvals in school fund utilization. The SMC do value for money audits through physical check of items purchased, they are also involved in monitoring of on-going projects at schools.*

However, as the Officials in several districts pointed out, there were weak links in the system. The Amuria DIS further explained that,

*Some head teachers are weak. They do not think it is their duty to inform the management committee and it is important because the management committee is supposed to monitor the school.*

The Waksio DIS echoed this, saying, “Some head teachers are exploiting the incompetence of some chairpersons of SMCs and PTAs in order not to adhere to transparency guidelines in the UPE policy.” One of the SMC chairpersons in Kamuli district also expressed frustration with a head teacher who was holding information from the SMC:



*Once the head teacher develops suspicions that the chairman SMC is seeking to access information to implicate him in one way or the other; he/she will begin to side line or undermine the SMC in school activities. This has made it very challenging for me as a chairperson SMC to effectively perform my responsibilities.*

Frustrations such as these were very common in the SMC focus groups. Both head teachers and SMC members also talked extensively about the low parents' turn up for meetings, making it challenging to voice their concerns with district officials. However, as explained in the section on the participation principle, parents got frustrated when they raised issues but did not see any resultant change.

Clearly, there were many hurdles to overcome with regards to citizens' concerns reaching district leaders. Notably, the Gulu LCV Chairperson had decided that, *"all the councillors move to all the schools. That was about a month ago; we divided into groups and each group went to a minimum of four schools."* This action has already produced results. The Chairperson further explained:

*One key problem you see in school is leadership. The head teacher of a school is the accounting officer of the school. Unfortunately, most of these head teachers in our primary schools have capacity gaps. For example, we found a school had gone without water for the last two years. A broken bore-hole and I actually have pictures of girls who walked 2km to get water from some dirty well. So when I went and said, 'head teacher what happened with this bore-hole?' He said, 'you know it got broken.' I said, 'did you send the information to the sub county? Did you communicate to the district?' And so my visit there made the bore-hole functional. It was a simple problem.*

Once issues reach district headquarters, whether through direct contact or via committees, inspectors and direct phone calls, letters or petitions to councillors, government responds by taking actions in Council. Even at this point, however, responsiveness could be blocked as the Mpigi LCV Woman Councillor demonstrates,

*The district council passed an ordinance to retain pupils in school up to primary completion level to negate the issue of early drop out especially for the girl child, but the district failed to move it forward from the district level due to a lack of facilitation. While there may be hope to revive it and move it forward, funds remain a constraint.*

While the Mpigi example is related to lack of funds, an example from Amuru shows how LCV actions to construct a new school can be blocked by government officials even further up the responsiveness chain. According to the Amuru LCV,

*The community members, the people who have allocated land to the district, have put it in writing an agreement to give the land to allow the district to build, but we cannot build when the school is not taken up by the ministry. So we are at a cross road. As a district our hands are tied up; we cannot act. The ministry is the one frustrating the effort of making sure that every child goes to school.*

It is striking that the interviews and FGDs produced very few examples of Council resolutions or actions. This is consistent, with the assessment data showing that evidence of resolutions taken by Council on issues raised by citizens was limited and found in only three of the eleven districts.

Citizen complaints can also make their way to the DEO through elected officials, technical staff, and direct contact with citizens. The interview and focus group data contained examples of each of these, though few complaints were reported to have led to actual change. In Nakapiripirit, for example, the LCV described the process during a monitoring visit and subsequently wrote a field report that was submitted to the DEO:

*The report included the community request of the education office to put in use primary school structures constructed through a NUSAF project. The classroom blocks were finished and equipped with furniture, but to date they are not in use. The report had recommended that the DEO takes over the structures, codes them, and sends teachers, but this has not yet happened.*

In Amuru, the DEO described his attempt to act on a citizen complaint about financial mismanagement. When citizens lodge complaints, he said, “*You send the accountant to check. When he finds a problem, there is a need for capacity building to be done. As of now, we are waiting for money to train all teachers on financial management.*”

Kamuli was one of the few districts where systematic action was taken in response to citizen complaints received by the DEO. Evidence of responsiveness was seen in the content analysis of government documents, as indicated in Table 4.8. In one instance, the DEO reported that,

*Members of the community from Bugulumbya sub-county delivered a letter to the DEO's office a day after the roof of their primary school was blown away by a storm. I wrote to the office of the CAO informing him of the disaster, and the CAO wrote to the Ministry concerned with disaster preparedness. The office of the Prime Minister intervened and the roof of the school was fixed.*

Here, we see an example of the responsiveness chain working as it should. Another example from Kamuli shows this was not a unique occurrence in that district. A parent wrote directly to the MoES complaining about the performance

of the school. His child was in position four but with a total score of 150 per cent out of 400 percent. This complaint was an eye opener, and when the DEO and his team followed up on the issue, they discovered that teachers were buying examinations from external sources and administering them to the pupils. Yet, by training, teachers were supposed to set examinations from the areas covered in the syllabus. They also discovered that even the work schemes were being bought and not prepared by the teachers as required of them. Therefore, the District Education Department decided to roll out continuous assessment of teachers. The fact that these kinds of issues were clearly recorded in district documents was also testament to Kamuli having sound systems of responsiveness to technical issues.

In Gulu, too, both the content analysis of government documents and the interview data pointed to responsiveness on the part of the DEO. Here, we also had evidence of coordination with the political side. The DEO of Gulu described the process of creating Education Ordinances and the compromises that were sometimes required to bring such ordinances to fruition:

*This ordinance arose from people's outcry for the need of laws to promote education in the district. You remember we were just moving away from the camps to homes and most people seemed to be reluctant to care about the value of education. So, some people said, why don't we come out with a simple law that will govern and promote teaching and learning in Gulu. The idea was so good, especially if you look at the input of the parents in making this ordinance. We moved to sub-counties, we gathered views and so forth. But later, when it was being filtered, what the technocrats wanted, to me, was not enough. Many things were left out, but at least, the citizens had an influence.*

The DEO of Mbarara also described a success story about citizen input leading to change and the way the responsiveness chain worked to bring it about.

*We verify the feedback given to us by citizens because sometimes what we receive may not be what is actually happening. Then we respond. For example, I have received a number of complaints from a school in Muduuma sub-county about management deficiencies in the school and I instructed my inspectors to conduct full inspection. With clear terms of reference, they have written a report, which I have submitted to the CAO. The CAO took action, and the head teacher has been notified in writing and given 14 days to respond.*

While the ultimate outcome of this intervention is not known at this point, the way the system of responsiveness has worked is instructive. Notable, however, is that the researchers did not see evidence of DEO response to citizen complaints

in Mbarara, an indication that gaps in documentation practices needed to be improved.

## Conclusion

The data presented in Table 4.8 coupled with the information from the interviews and focus groups portray a responsiveness system that is, for the most part, functioning poorly. While stakeholders up and down the governance chain – from district leaders to parents – are able to articulate how the system should be functioning, all could easily come up with examples of situations where issues were raised by citizens but never made it through the system. Moreover, only a few were able to cite cases where the system of responsive governance worked smoothly. The interviews and focus group discussions helped to explain the data in Table 4.8; that is, relatively little evidence for the five responsiveness indicators, especially for those indicators related to actions being taken to resolve the issues raised by citizens. The frustration about this less than functional system was widespread among the stakeholders. Hopefully, this signifies that the will to fix the chain of responsiveness is widespread as well.

## 4.9 Equity

Equity is about ensuring that the UPE program is delivered in a way that ensures that every child, irrespective of their personal, social and economic circumstances, can achieve their fullest educational potential. Vulnerable populations such as the girl child, children from hard to reach areas, and children with special needs were especially targeted in actions designed to ensure equity. Designing and implementing programs that enhanced the equitable delivery of primary education depended on having a clear understanding of the needs of the populations targeted, a set of strategies for addressing those needs, and the policy and monetary resources needed to implement the strategies.

An important starting point for addressing issues of equity is to have data on vulnerable populations readily available and incorporated into development plans and performance reports. These data not only highlight the existence of these vulnerable populations, but are critical in tracking progress on meeting their needs. Only in one district – Kamuli – did researchers find evidence of UPE performance data disaggregated by vulnerable populations, and in only three districts was there disaggregated data on enrolment (Nakapiripirit, Kamuli and Hoima) and retention (Nakapiripirit, Mbarara and Hoima). Moreover, in all of those cases, the data were only disaggregated by gender. Data on disabled children, children with special needs, and children from hard to reach places were not included for any districts. This could be a case of failure to disaggregate the data or lack of records of disaggregated data in districts which were not able to present such data.

Table 4.9: Evidence of Equity

Practice	District											
	Nakapiripirit	Gulu	Amuru	Amuria	Mpigi	Mukono	Kamuli	Mbarara	Kabarole	Hoima	Wakiso	Nebbi
Evidence of up-to date disaggregation of UPE performance information on PLE results by vulnerability (including disabled or boys and girls, hard-to-reach communities, special needs children).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of up-to date disaggregation of UPE performance information on enrolment by vulnerability (including disabled or boys and girls, hard-to-reach communities, special needs children).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of up-to date disaggregation of UPE performance information on retention by vulnerability (including disabled or boys and girls, hard-to-reach communities, special needs children).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of strategies and plans to improve equity in enrolment of pupils in UPE schools.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of strategies and plans to improve equity in PLE performance in UPE schools.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of implementation of strategies and plans to improve equity in the retention of pupils in UPE schools.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Key: ☒ Evidence seen☒ No evidence seen☐ Documents not accessed

Ten of the eleven districts did, however, show evidence of strategies and plans for improving equity in enrolment and PLE performance, something that the interviews and focus group data as follows. Most district officials were well aware of the issues facing the vulnerable populations and were clear about what needed to be done to improve equity in their districts. However, the funds to implement their strategies were often distressingly lacking, as indicated by the fact that in only two districts – Mpigi and Nakapiripirit – showed evidence of the implementation of district strategies and plans to improve equity in UPE.

Data from the KIIs and FGDs helped to clarify these data. They clearly pointed to a number of very specific needs of vulnerable children that were well understood by stakeholders across the board, as along with the challenges the districts faced in addressing them. We also see in the data examples of attempts by various stakeholders to enhance equity and ensure that all children get the opportunity to achieve their educational potential.

### Children from poor households

One of the main issues faced by children coming from poor households was lack of food during the school day as their families were unable to provide them with a packed lunch. Even though providing lunch was a stated responsibility of parents, many parents were unable to fulfil this responsibility due to economic hardship. This issue came up in every district under study and clearly linked to both retention and performance. In Nakapiripirit, the issue of hungry students

came up in every KII and every FGD. They all agreed that a food program was needed in order to retain pupils in school and improve their performance. One member of SMC stated that,

*Provision of meals at school is seen as a driving factor for pupils to enrol and stay at school, the reduction in WFP rations has impacted so much on pupil dropout since a child cannot learn on an empty stomach. Parents are charged boarding fee to cater for their children's feeding at school, however few are able to afford it.*

Many participants talked about how the gendered nature of food provision enhanced the problem. One SMC member in Mpigi explained:

*You will find a mother who strives to send all her 5 children to school and tells them to first study as she tries to figure out what to eat. In the same family, you may find the man has abandoned his responsibility altogether and the children are simply not fed at school.*

The link between food and performance came up repeatedly. The Gulu RDC made this connection very clearly and put it in the broader context of the UPE program:

First of all, you look at the concept that the government initiated. The program was good; the intentions were good to increase literacy. As you know a society which is illiterate is not able to perceive issues and concept. So, as the representative of government, the intention was good but as time went on, the dynamics kept on changing. It was intended for poor people so that they access education but conditions kept on changing. For, when you look at the most disturbing part, the number of children who were going to school increased. But the quality of the education was a problem in a way that it is affected by the attention span of the child. The child attention span is low. And when most of our children go to school, they stay at school from morning to 4:00pm and only get food at home. There is no food provision at school.

A head teacher in Wakiso echoed this concern, adding the lack of food for teachers. She said that,

*Teachers also don't get meals at school so they find themselves in a situation where hungry pupils are being taught by a hungry teacher – a hungry child loses concentration in class, thereby making it difficult for the pupil to comprehend what is being taught.*

The Kamuli LCV Chairperson also related learning to feeding, saying that “hungry pupils cannot concentrate in class.”

Poor households also presented difficulty in providing materials such as books, pens, and paper that their children needed to perform well in school. The Hoima DEO talked about the seriousness of this problem, noting that “95%

of pupils in upper primary in UPE Schools did not have mathematical sets, atlases, dictionaries, etc.” In Kamuli, community FGD, participants agreed that “failure by some parents to provide scholastic materials such as school uniform, exercise books, shoes and pens can be attributed to poverty,” a problem that had been exacerbated by climate change. One farmer argued that, “most parents rely on crop harvests as their major source of income and the planting seasons have become more confusing and unreliable.” Environmental issues were also cited as a problem by the DSC in Mpigi, who stated that,

*The environment has played a negative role, there are no rains and no food is being produced and thus can't spare some for selling to get funds to contribute towards their children's education.*

Another significant factor mentioned as affecting the performance and retention of children from poor households was child labour, as children are expected to contribute to household income. A Hoima head teacher, for example, said that “the biggest cause of high dropout is child labour especially during the planting seasons of tobacco and rice.” In Mpigi, child labour, especially in the fishing industry, was cited by the CAO as a cause of pupil absenteeism in three major sub-counties. He explained that,

*Children leave school to go fishing and only appear in school once in a while. During a meeting with the community, I asked why the parents let their children do this and the reply was that, 'they are making their own money for school fees'.*

Similarly, in Nakapiripirit, children were under pressure to tend the cattle and help with gardening during the growing season. In Kamuli, absenteeism among boys was mainly attributed to working in the sugar cane industry.

Districts were searching for strategies to effectively deal with the vulnerabilities associated with poverty. An SMC member in Mpigi described one way the SMC tried to address the issue of food insecurity:

*We require their children to contribute UGX 27,000 towards feeding per term. If out of 20 parents, 15 pay in full, 3 pay half and the other 2 fail to pay, as a committee, we look into it and try to provide for meals for all the children from the total collections.*

The Kamuli and Wakiso, LCVs spoke about introducing ordinances to prohibit child labour while Kamuli and Amuru district leaders engaged in parents' sensitisation campaigns on parental responsibility to ensure children go to school.

### **Children from hard to reach areas**

Children from hard to reach areas experienced many of the same vulnerabilities as those from poor households, as there was much overlap between these



populations. Pressure to participate in the household's agricultural animal husbandry activities and family difficulties associated with contributing to their children's educational expenses cross-cut both populations. However, there were a few challenges that were unique to children from hard to reach areas, such as, access to fewer teachers and schools. In Nakapiripirit, for example, one SMC member noted that,

*There are no UPE schools at Nakapiripirit mountainous areas. The schools are in the lower land, making it difficult and tedious for children to move daily to distant areas to attend classes.*

Similarly, Koome Island in Mukono District, a conglomeration of 17 islands, has only three primary schools, according to the DEO. The problem of too few schools in island areas was also reported by the Wakiso DSC. In Gulu, there were areas where children had to walk for over ten kilometres to reach school. In Amuria, the LCV and community focus group members talked about remote areas that were susceptible to environmental calamities which affected children's ability to attend schools. As the LCV Amuria explained,

*Natural calamities grossly affect primary education in some parts of the district. The whole parish of Achinga in Acowa sub-county is at times completely cut off by a flooded stream for months. The Northern, North West and North Eastern parts of the district are particularly susceptible to floods. Hail storms and drought also take their toll in some parts of the district leaving communities in a dire state of food shortage, which resonates with households' inability to supply food and materials for their children.*

Rural areas also have challenges of retaining teachers, as they, too, have to travel long distances to reach the school. A head teacher in Hoima, for example, noted that, "in hard to reach areas, and faraway places, such as, Kyangwali Sub County, teachers are posted there but they do not go there." This issue was reported in many districts, and often accompanied by a plea for construction of staff housing. The combination of too few schools and too few teacher resulted into astoundingly high pupil:teacher and pupil:classroom ratios. For example, the DIS of Kabarole said that the pupil teacher ratio, "in some schools, is at 60:1, especially the rural schools," and the pupil:classroom ratio was 55:1 in the mountainous areas. Some classroom have had to be divided into two so that students in two levels could share the same classroom. The Kamuli DSC explained how all of these factors worked together to affect school performance in hard to reach areas in his district:

*Teachers who are posted in hard to reach areas complain of lack of houses both within the school and even for rent outside the school. They therefore have to travel long distances, the nearest being*

*8km....Teacher turn-over has contributed to increased pupil-teacher ratios, thereby affecting the performance of schools on PLE.*

## **Girl children**

It is widely understood that girls have more challenges that affect their attending and staying in school than their boy counterparts. With the enrolment numbers of girls dropping steeply as the years pass, the RDC in Gulu, had this to say,

*If you go to some of these schools, the rate of girl child dropout is very high. You find in a school there are 400, out of the 400 pupils in P1, by the time they reach P5, P6 and P7, the number of female children will have drastically dropped to as low as 10%.*

The factors that most significantly contribute to their vulnerability, according to the interviews and focus groups, included lack of menstruation-associated facilities and early marriage. Overarching all of these, of course, is the persistent perception that girls are of less value than boys. The most cited challenge related to the performance and retention of girls was a lack of pads and sanitary facilities for girls to use when menstruating. Indeed, the Gulu RDC, continued his discussion about the dropping enrolment figures by saying,

*As the child matures, the girl child dropout rate increases because the facilities that are at schools for the girl child sometimes are not conducive and you know this is also the time when the girl start experiencing menstruation and in some schools you do not have changing rooms, and there is no provision of pads.*

This issue was mentioned in every district. The Mpigi LCV captured the sentiment of many when he stated that,

*Menstruation is a sensitive issue to girls and sometimes, some of them leave school because of this. I understand the central government is doing something about it but I don't know to what extent. It is ridiculous that in the 21st century, you find a girl child using banana fibres because they lack sanitary pads.*

In addition to the lack of pads, most schools lacked latrines and changing rooms for girls. As the Hoima DIS said, "Sanitary facilities are lacking and leading to high drop outs. Girls during their periods absent themselves in fear of being rebuked by their fellow pupils." A SMC member in Kamuli added another factor to this issue:

*Male teachers lack knowledge and skills to handle the girl child, particularly when girls experience menstrual periods, and girls fear to be embarrassed by the male teacher or even drop-out of school.*

Districts are working on solving this problem in a variety of ways. In Kabarole, special changing rooms have been constructed. According to the LCV Chair, Gulu had made it a practice that,

*In every school there must be a room kept for changing because these girls some of them are in primary four and they are already going through menstruation experience.*

Technical staff in both Kamuli and Mukono cited partnerships with NGOs that trained girls how to make pads from local materials in an effort to increase the retention of girls in schools. According to the Kamuli DIS,

*One staff from the inspectorate has been trained in how to make local pads; this project is being sponsored by UNICEF. Within one month of its commencement, the trained staff has trained girls in schools from Balawoli and Namasagali sub-counties on how to make local sanitary pads. This is seen as a strategy to reduce drop-out rates of girls due to menstruation.*

Cultural practices that encourage early marriage for girls was another factor that was cited in almost all of the districts as explanation for declining numbers of girls in primary schools. This issue was specifically brought up in Mpigi, Nakapiripirit, Amuria, Kamuli, Mpigi, Gulu, Wakiso and Hoima, and most times it was related to parents wanting to marry off their daughters for the bride price. The district council of Kamuli has recently tabled a Gender Ordinance that would explicitly address this issue. According to the LCV Chairperson,

*There is a national law on defilement and early child marriage, but it remains silent on the guests who attend marriage functions where a girl is being given away for marriage. Through this ordinance, the district intends to customize this law to suit the situation in Kamuli. When the Gender Ordinance is passed, parents and guests who attend functions where the girl child is being given away for marriage risk being arrested.*

The Mpigi LCV Woman Councillor talked about the challenges facing girls in UPE at a systems level, linking women's issues more generally and to the need for more support for women in school and local governments. She said,

*Women are generally accorded a negative attitude in comparison to their male counterparts. This poses a hindrance to build capacity of the community and even advocate for the issues pertaining to the girl child.*

This was manifested in a host of ways, ranging from women lacking authority when representing families in school-related meetings, to the lack of resources Female LCV Councillors have to monitor and represent constituencies that are

larger than those of their male counterparts. She also discussed the difficulty of assigning priority to issues specific to girl children. Here, she pointed out that while the needs and concerns of women were noted when deliberating in Council, there was a gap between deliberation and the development of plans and policies that respond to the issues they raise. She said that having *“disaggregated figures on enrolment, retention and performance of the girl child would greatly help me to strengthen my debate in Council.”*

### **Children with special needs**

When interviewees and focus group participants were asked to name the most vulnerable populations when it came to UPE, many said that children with special needs were the most vulnerable of all. The lack of teachers trained to work with special needs students, the lack of learning devices needed by blind and deaf students, the lack of accessible facilities for children who are disabled, and the persistent stigmatizing of children with special needs all combine to leave them extremely vulnerable to poor performance and dropping out of school all together. In a community focus group in Amuria, all of these issues were named by the participants in explaining why children with special needs were the most vulnerable.

*Lack of assistive devices and equipment like hearing aids for the deaf, and the prohibitive cost of such devices/equipment leads these children to remain home. The deaf are sometimes completely ignored and classed under the category of the mad people. Where parents are willing and able to take such children to school, lack of properly qualified teachers to handle them becomes an issue.*

Similarly, in a Kamuli focus group, all participants were in agreement with one participant who opined that,

*Children with special needs are the most vulnerable and underserved group as far as UPE is concerned, adding that Kamuli district doesn't have a single school for the deaf and the blind and the UPE program does not cater for the needs of this group of children. Learning aids for children with special needs are too expensive.*

School Management Committee members in Wakiso also raised all of these issues when discussing the challenges of serving students with special needs:

*UPE schools are not able to serve children with disability because their learning aids are expensive and schools cannot afford them. All participants admitted that their schools did not have teachers trained with special skills to teach children with special needs and that parents don't bring such children to school because they don't believe that the children will amount to useful adults in the future.*

District leaders across the board expressed frustration with the lack of UPE funding for children with special needs, citing the extra funds needed to hire trained teachers, building ramps and accessible latrine stances, and acquiring materials such as braille books and hearing devices, yet, there was no additional funding. The Amuru CAO explained this predicament well when he said that,

*UPE policy, at least up to now, does not discriminate. They just provide a flat figure per pupil even though the needs of a disabled child are not the same.*

The Gulu DIS also expressed frustration with this situation, explaining that when you look at the district budget, there is a line item for special needs but “you don’t see any money for special needs.” Officials in Amuru, Wakiso and Mpigi stressed the need for data on the numbers of children with special needs, arguing that if they had these data, they could more easily make the case for receiving funds. However, getting the data was itself complicated by the factors discussed above. As the Wakiso CAO explained,

*It is hard to get numbers on children in these categories or know where they live; the numbers from the CDOs of different sub-counties cannot be relied upon.*

The Kamuli LCV added a cultural layer to that explanation, saying that,

*Generally, in Busoga, it is a bad omen for one to give birth to a child who is deaf or blind and therefore parents tend to hide such children in the houses for fear of being stigmatized. This makes collection of data about such children difficult and fully serving them very challenging.*

In spite of these intertwined challenges, some districts were taking action. In Mpigi, for example, the LCV Woman Councillor said that,

*The district passed an ordinance to the effect that all schools should incorporate infrastructure that is geared toward the convenience of the disabled – walking ramps, etc.*

Gulu, too, had a policy where every classroom or latrine built had to be accessible to all. In Amuru, the CAO was trying to get a special needs education inspector who could help to generate good data on the vulnerable population, something that Kabarole has managed to do. Also in Kabarole, the district has offered training on special needs to selected teachers from every UPE school.

## Conclusion

The data from the focus groups and key informant interviews was quite consistent with the assessment data, and helped to explain most of the results. Districts across the board were very much aware of the challenges facing vulnerable children, and had strategies in place for improving equity in their

districts. Indeed, evidence of the strategies for enhancing the performance of children in vulnerable populations was seen in the Development Plans and/or Annual Work Plans in ten of the eleven districts assessed. Districts faced challenges in securing the resources needed to make real progress on equity. Children in hard to reach areas needed more schools and teachers; children from poor households needed to be able to have lunch each day to concentrate and not to feel pressured to work or embarrassed to come without food; girls needed to be in school every day and not to be pressured to get married, or feel like they have to stay home several days each month due to lack of sanitary pads and clean, safe facilities at school; and children with special needs needed to have access to the devices and infrastructure they needed to learn like everyone else. Accomplishing these things requires the political will to generate policies and strategies that address these needs and allocate the resources required to implement them. It also requires reliable, disaggregated data on these vulnerable populations so that communities, school officials, and government stakeholders can advocate at all levels of government for the policy and resource envelope necessary to ensure that every child, irrespective of their personal, social and economic circumstances, can attain their fullest educational potential.

#### **4.10 Summary of the Assessment of PEG Principles for UPE**

While there are several recurring themes in this assessment of public expenditure governance of UPE, one that comes up in the discussion of each principle is the discrepancy between knowledge of how the system is supposed to work and actual practice. Stakeholders across the board were, for the most part, knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities as well as others in the implementation of UPE. However, the actual implementation of the practices associated with those roles and responsibilities often fell short.

The analysis of all nine principles together points to the systemic nature of these shortfalls. The interconnectedness of the practices associated with each principle is clear in the above discussions. Issues of participation, for example, come up in the discussions of coordination, transparency, accountability; and issues of transparency come up in accountability, control of corruption and responsiveness. At the level of practice, this interconnectedness is very important to understand as the actions – or lack of action – on the part of any one actor or set of actors can significantly hinder the ability of others to do their part effectively and with confidence that it will actually contribute to the overall functioning of the system. In the following chapter, we return to the model of public expenditure governance discussed in Section Two, and delve into these interconnections in order to identify particular actions that can be taken to make the system function more smoothly, effectively, and efficiently.

## 5.0 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This section presents a discussion of the interconnectivity of the nine principles of governance used in this study. We are aware that these principles can be practices in isolation and the occurrence of one affects the occurrence and effectiveness of another principle. We also provide a general conclusion to the study that focuses on the study's third objective, which links the practices and perspectives of the actors to the outputs and outcomes of UPE. Lastly, we recommend actions required by the school management, district leaders and central government that would address the challenges and problems reported by the various participants in this study.

### 5.1 Discussion

Central to the conceptual framework of this study of public expenditure governance in Uganda's Universal Primary Education programme is the dynamic model of public expenditure governance discussed in Section Two and portrayed in Figure 2.1. The nine principles are associated with inputs (strategic vision, participation, and coordination), processes (transparency, control of corruption, accountability) and outputs (efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness, equity) of governance. The research and assessment findings discussed in Section Four show this model in action and demonstrate the systemic and dynamic nature of public expenditure governance.

Understanding public expenditure governance as a system points to seeing the way that all of the parts and principles – are interconnected such that a malfunctioning of one part interferes with the functioning of another part. Without the inputs in place, processes cannot work, and without the process working smoothly, the outputs are compromised. This interconnectivity between the principles is evident in the data. For example, the connection between participation and accountability is clear in the discussions about the importance of parents' engagement with School Management Committee meetings, given the role of SMCs in sensitising and providing information to parents about UPE programmes. If parents do not participate in these meetings, their ability to demand accountability for programme outcomes is greatly lessened, and the SMCs are less able to perform their roles in the accountability chain as well. Similarly, the process of transparency is intricately intertwined with output of responsiveness. If government officials don't maintain open channels for citizen input, their ability to respond is compromised. Indeed, there are many examples of citizen frustration with responsiveness, many of which relate to perceptions that the channels through which their complaints should flow were blocked. This frustration with the process affected participation as well, as many had



decided that attending meetings and providing input was futile in that their concerns would never reach the decision-makers.

The interconnected nature of the principles is evident even among the inputs and among the processes. For example, having a clearly articulated and well-known strategic vision in the district optimizes the impact of coordinated efforts between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, reducing redundancies and increasing efficiency in the implementation of the UPE programme. Similarly, there is an undeniable connection between transparency, accountability, and control of corruption. Without transparency, accountability is lessened, and without accountability, corruption is less likely to be controlled. When information on UPE funds and performance is not posted on noticeboards, citizens may not have access to the information they need to hold their government officials responsible for UPE outcomes, which creates an opening for corruption tendencies.

The research questions guiding this study focused on identifying practices and perspectives of PEG in UPE. Just as the principles themselves are intertwined, so too are the practices and perspectives. Parents' decision not to participate in PTA and SMC meetings because their views are not considered is a clear example of the overlap between a practice and a perception. Perceptions of a malfunctioning system are manifested in practices of non-participation. Thus, changing perceptions is not just about sensitisation; it requires duty bearers to demonstrate that participating will indeed lead to improvements in the UPE outcomes.

While there is much to be done to achieve full functionality in the PEG system with regards to UPE, there are indeed promising practices relating to the various principles practiced in the districts that deserve to be shared. Hoima and Wakiso districts, for example, were working to bolster practices associated with the principle of strategic vision by training SMCs and PTAs on how to set targets and monitor progress. In relation to the principle of participation, Mpigi's Annual Education Conference is an excellent example of a way to deeply and meaningfully engage citizens on UPE issues. Nakapiripirit's NGO forums organized by the district put the principle of coordination into practice by providing a venue for integrating and aligning the plans of NGOs working in the district with district plans, thereby avoiding duplication of efforts and ensuring that the work of the various NGOs was not overly concentrated in a few geographic areas within the district. In terms of accountability, Kamuli's practice of keeping an accessible trail of evidence from citizen complaints all the way through to ordering the offending teacher to appear before the PAC and rewards and sanctions committee was commendable and should be replicated in other districts. Kabarole was directly tackling effectiveness by taking steps to improve retention and performance by revising the practice of auto-promotion

so that a student had to attend at least 90% of the time in order to be promoted to the next level. In terms of equity, Gulu, Kabarole and Mpigi were using the district council tool of passing ordinances to demonstrate responsiveness to ensure more equitable education for girls (Gulu and Kabarole) and children with special needs (Mpigi).

These are just a few of the many examples of political and technical leaders, often with the encouragement of parents and communities, taking steps to improve the governance of public expenditures for UPE in their districts. The recommendations below suggest additional policies and practices that need to be put into place to improve the functioning of each component of the public expenditure governance system. This would then maximize the likelihood that the desired outcomes of Universal Primary Education will be achieved..

## 5.2 Conclusion

This study sought to assess the governance of UPE by ascertaining the practices and perspectives of actors in the implementation of UPE and how these actions impact on programme outcomes. Overall, the school administration and other management bodies and local governments were found to be committed to the successful implementation of UPE. In particular, we found most local governments involved in sensitization programs aimed at inculcating a positive attitude towards education among the populace. These sensitization drives encouraged parents with school-age children to send them to school as opposed to making them work in the gardens or markets. District leaders had also developed different strategies of improving the supervision and monitoring of UPE activities, including peer support supervision in Gulu, where head-teachers in one sub-county supervised schools in another sub-county. Other districts such as Mukono had instituted mid-term and termly school visits called 'check-on-progress days' where parents visited schools to check on their children's performance.

In a bid to improve programme outcomes such as increased pupil enrolment, retention and PLE performance, districts had drafted bylaws to enforce practices which promoted UPE. For instance, Kamuli was in the process of passing an ordinance to curb early marriages, while Mpigi intended to formulate a law which would make it compulsory for all school-age children in the district to attend school. In this same interest of ensuring that all school-age children attended school, Gulu district had embarked on a census programme to register all children of school age, ascertaining whether they were in school and where not find out why. In Hoima, the district leaders had apprehended school drop-outs who were found in markets during school days, in order to increase retention of pupils in school.

With regards to improving PLE Performance, Kabarole district had shelved the policy of automatic promotion and instead emphasized school attendance. Accordingly, a pupil would be promoted only if she or he had attended 90 percent of the school days in a year. Other districts encouraged good performance by rewarding good performers. Hoima, for example, appreciated best performing teachers and pupils with mathematical sets. In Kamuli, students who performed well were exempted from contributing towards meals. Conversely, districts had executed penalties to errant officers whose actions jeopardized the successful implementation of UPE. For example, underperforming teachers were given warning letters and when they did not reform they were required to appear before the disciplinary committee for counselling. The absentee teachers or those with misconduct were punished by removing them from the pay-roll. Teachers who diverted UPE funds were asked to repay the money from their salary.

In several districts, we noticed a presence of many NGOs and CBOs supporting UPE schools. In Mukono and Kamuli, NGOs trained girls in making sanitary pads, while in Wakiso district Nurture Africa assisted the district leadership to implement an outreach programme to support vulnerable children. The World Food Programme in Northern Uganda provided food rations in school to reduce school drop outs in the region. All these programs were intended to address the causes of school dropouts such as lack of sanitary pads, lack of school meals, and lack of facilities for special needs children especially the mentally impaired and physically handicapped.

The source, quality and medium of providing information were raised as important issues likely to affect the level of participation, transparency and accountability of key actors. Concerns over the reliability of available information, especially with regard to enrolment figures and accountabilities for UPE funds were apparent. The channels of information sharing such as meetings, notice boards and the media were used to varying degrees by the districts, with corresponding degrees of success. The common forum for disseminating information was the Budget Conference that brought together a cross section of stakeholders to deliberate on the budgetary activities for all departments at the district level.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations are closely tied to the decentralized structure, where Ministry of Education and Sports and other agencies are responsible for policy direction and supervisions; the local governments are responsible for strengthening their oversight role; and the schools are charged with improving the learning environment.

## School

*Strengthen planning through informed determination of targets related to enrolment, retention, learning, and PLE performance.* There is need to strengthen planning through informed determination of targets related to enrolment, retention and learning including PLE performance. This will require taking into account the constraints and parameters the school faces. The schools will have to be guided by the district and MoES on how to arrive at the right targets. The parameters could include society factors, servicing levels (number of schools per capita), enrolment levels, performance of pupils, number of teachers and financial resources. The schools should be able to match resource requirements (including financial) with outcomes and strategies in their planning as postulated in the framework.

*Improve record keeping at school level including information and data on resource utilization by the schools, performance reviews, and minutes of meetings.* Record keeping at school level including, information and data on resource utilization by the schools, performance reviews, minutes of meetings needs urgent attention. The frustration of particularly SMCs at the absence of information at school level also negatively impacts on accountability. Implementation of this recommendation will also require the backing of the district administrations, which ought to focus more on record keeping at school levels and holding head teachers accountable. The MoES should ensure that the guidelines on record keeping in the primary education sector as a whole are adequate. It should also ensure that the guidelines are enforced within the existing framework.

*Schools should ensure that parent and SMC meetings take place.* The schools should ensure that meetings with the different stakeholders particularly parents meetings and SMC meetings take place. The meetings as demonstrated by findings from this study serve multiple purposes including providing a platform for participation and accountability at that level. It is equally important that the participants view their attendance of the meetings as adding value. This requires that their contributions must be given due consideration and resolutions of the meetings implemented. The findings also suggest that there is a need to guide schools on how to conduct and take minutes in these meetings. The trainings that have been undertaken largely by NGOs have only covered a few schools.

*Head teachers should use periodic performance reviews to strengthen their supervision as well as get over the hurdles that the disciplinary channel presents.* The findings showed that the head teachers did not have effective controls to hold teachers accountable for their actions and outcomes. The process described is often a protracted one involving writing warning letters and later on forwarding the case to the CAO or the DSC. The performance reviews should be participatory thereby providing an opportunity to discuss underlying issues

which if un-tended may cause tensions among staff. Also, these performance reviews, ought to lead to identifying solutions to the challenges as well as plans of action.

## District

The districts are greatly resource constrained and therefore they have limited capacity to deliver on UPE. Sadly, this also affects implementation of strategies to improve performance, such as, passing ordinances in some districts and enforcement of sanctions, all of which require resources. It is also clear that some of the innovations are desperate and in some instances at variance with the UPE guidelines and policy. The challenge therefore is to identify and pursue the most effective and efficient strategies for improving UPE performance within the constrained environment that they operate in. This requires improvements in strategic planning, coordination and monitoring as well as enforcements of sanctions. The specific recommendations that require action at the district level include,

*Strengthen strategic planning through use of evidence in setting targets, making forecasts and determining strategies for achieving UPE goals.* Only Gulu district mentioned that they had deliberately set out to collect information on children in the community (outside the school) with the purpose of improving enrolment and retention in UPE schools. This is a good practice that should be emulated by other districts. This requires commitment from the district leaders and mobilizing resources to operationalize the strategy. A closer look at the strategic plans shows that for the most part, there is no basis for the projections on UPE enrolment figures. Further, the roles of the different actors in the implementation of the DDPs ought to be articulated. Otherwise it is difficult to bring actors together to act incrementally as required of strategic visioning and may lead to coordination problems.

*Develop a systematic approach to the coordination of UPE activities among government, non-government, and community stakeholders.* There is need to get out of the haphazard method of coordinating UPE activities. Only a few districts could provide evidence of holding meetings for coordination of UPE activities. In most cases it appeared to be lumped with many other activities, resulting into limited attention being devoted to the issue. Further, the coordination meetings for which evidence was seen were largely district meetings that targeted actors and stakeholders beyond the district or the UPE structure. The districts should deliberately create coordination forums and meetings with carefully selected participants. The forums should enable different actors to report on their activities, linkages and opportunities for collaboration identified. Most districts covered in the study mentioned interventions by NGOs as being important for UPE performance especially the enrolment and retention of girls. Supervision of UPE is one area that desperately needs coordination. The study shows that

various actors are independently undertaking supervision with no indications of collaboration among actors.

*Undertake periodic performance reviews to measure the district point on UPE, and use that to identify persistent challenges and devise strategies to improve performance.* The reporting by the education department at the Budget Conferences largely focuses on outputs and not performance or outcomes. There is already information on performance- such as the Government Annual Performance Report, the Auditor General's Report, the Annual Education Census by the MoES, as well as the monitoring and supervision reports of the education departments at the district- that could be the core object of such reviews. The use of this information would greatly reduce the cost of such reviews. It is also very important that the UPE performance reviews address enforcement of penalties for non-performance.

*Improve record keeping and dissemination of information by the district.* Record keeping and dissemination of information by the district remains weak. The findings suggest that some documents were simply not prepared. In some instances the claim was that they were prepared but could not be retrieved at the time of the study. This situation negatively impacts on transparency. Districts should make sure that all documents are prepared, including reports and minutes, and archived in the registry for ease retrieval. Where computers are available, electronic versions of the documents should be available. In relation to dissemination of information, the internet is the easiest place to save information. Districts should invest in establishing functional websites in a bid to improve transparency and facilitating access to information.

## **Central Government**

The recommendations to Central Government focus on facilitating improved governance of UPE at the sub-national level. They have little to do with improving the workings of the UPE at national level. These recommendations nevertheless would improve the outcomes of UPE on the whole. They are largely concerned with creating an enabling policy framework and sufficient financing for UPE.

The MoES should harmonize the messaging and interpreting of UPE policies, particularly as it relates to parental contributions and/or charging fees for students' feeding during the school days. Universal education or Education for All is not analogous to free education as has been construed. Indeed, the UPE policy and legal documents articulate the roles of different actors, including parents, who are supposed to contribute towards a midday meal for their children. However, statements by politicians in high places including the Office of the President back up the dominant narrative that the schools should not charge any fees. This propagates problems related to school feeding across the board, even where parents are able to contribute. In any case, there are

already instances where districts have sanctioned school fees and a significant number of parents are reportedly paying. The sector is greatly underfunded and contributions from parents, within reasonable limits, would provide the much needed resources to close the financing gap.

*The spending on education should be increased from the current 2.2 percent to at least 4.0 percent of GDP, the average in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Development Indicators, 2014).* This increase in spending should be accompanied with greater discretion at the district level, depicted by reduction in the share of conditional grants in transfers to Local Governments. The current funding structure is compounded by constraints that make it very difficult to undertake any strategic actions to improve UPE outcomes at district and school levels. The conditional grants provide limited discretion for the implementers, undermining accountability and participation since it does not accord actors leverage to be more innovative in operationalizing UPE.

*Assign teachers on the basis of an ideal student: teacher ratio, rather than simple one teacher per class.* The policy of one teacher per class poses a serious challenge to the effectiveness of teaching and attainment of expected learning outcomes in UPE schools. The responsibility of recruiting teachers who instruct the pupils lies with government and the existing framework provides for one teacher per class. This is a challenge in many ways. First, in the lower classes where the pupil-teacher ratio is high, sometimes reaching 200:1 (higher than the national standard of 53:1), the teacher may not be able to monitor a pupil's learning achievements which may lead to low levels of knowledge and skills acquisition. Second, in the event that the teacher is unable to instruct the pupils due to illness or any other official and family commitments, the pupils may not be able to learn on such days. Some schools reported that they addressed this challenge by combining classes when a teacher failed to turn up. However, this practice creates an unfavourable learning environment as classes become overcrowded and disadvantages one class against another, since the different classes may be at different levels of learning.

*Qualify the automatic promotion policy by specifying the minimum school attendance level which a pupil is required to attain to qualify to progress to the next class.* The policy of automatic promotion has not produced the expected results. The effectiveness of this policy is undermined by the low school attendance of pupils. In the existing policy framework, there is no provision for mandatory attendance of class which is necessary for automatic promotion to be effective. In this respect, it is important that government formulates a policy specifying the minimum school attendance level which a pupil is required to attain to qualify to progress to the next class. This provision will ensure that pupils attend school regularly to acquire the required competencies at each level which will improve their overall performance.



*Conduct an impact assessment to ascertain the effectiveness of conducting lessons in the local languages in lower primary.* In the current UPE policy, pupils are supposed to be instructed in their local languages from P.1 to P.3. This policy has been implemented in some districts as reported in our study. However, it is not uniformly implemented across the country and doesn't apply to private schools.

*Finally, there are recommendations which can be addressed by more than one power centre.* The low level of retention of pupils in schools, for example, came out strongly as one of the overwhelming challenges to realizing the objectives of UPE. Proving compulsory basic education to all school-age children to complete the primary education cycle relates closely to school attendance. However, this was reported to be poor especially in schools in the northern region. Several contributing factors to low pupil school attendance and high school drop-out were reported in this study including lack of school meals, early marriages, child labour, lack of an enabling environment for girls in their menstruation period, and poor households that could not fulfil the required contribution to their children's education. Many of these factors relate to the high indirect cost such as the opportunity cost of maintaining the pupil in school. This means, they cannot work on family farms and reap the expected returns from education. Given that poor households are excessively bearing a high indirect cost of education, there may be need to devise affirmative action strategies targeted at reducing the indirect costs of education for poor households, such as providing free food and sanitary pads to menstruating girls. In addition, there is need to put in place an appropriate legal framework to enforce compulsory primary education. A provision penalizing parents who don't ensure that their children go to school can be made in the national laws or bylaws passed by local governments.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Susan N. Kavuma** is an Economist with wide experience in policy research and analysis and lecturing university students. She is a Research Fellow at ACODE attached to the Centre for Budget and Economic Governance that undertakes research activities on budget monitoring and economic governance in Uganda. Susan holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Nottingham (2015), which she attained as a commonwealth scholar. In addition, she holds a Master of Arts Degree in Economic Policy Management and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from Makerere University. Susan's research interests are in the areas of economic governance, labour, education and health economics.



**Kiran Cunningham**, PhD, is Professor of Anthropology at Kalamazoo College (USA) and a Research Associate at ACODE. Her areas of expertise include action research methodologies, local governance, deliberative democracy, gender analysis, conflict analysis and resolution, and transformative learning. She has worked for over two decades with communities and institutions desiring change. Consistent with her action research approach, her research has led to both systems change and scholarly outputs. Her publications include two books and numerous journal articles



**George Bogere** is a Research Fellow under the Center for Budget and Economic Governance (CBEG). He holds an MA Economics Degree from Makerere University. Before joining ACODE in January 2011, George was a Researcher at Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)-Makerere University for over five years. His areas of interest include Economic Growth and Development, Decentralization, Governance and Service Delivery as well as Natural Resources Management particularly land.



**Richard Sebaggala** is currently PhD Fellow in Economics at Mbarara University of Science and Technology. He has been a lecturer of economics at Uganda Christian University, Faculty of Business and Administration since 2007. This year, he has been appointed as the head of Oil and Gas unit at the School of Research and Postgraduate studies. Richard completed his Master of Science degree in Quantitative Economics and a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Education majoring in Economics from Makerere University. His research interests lie in the area of Education outcomes and development, Institutions and Natural resource management, Agriculture productivity and Extension services, Health, Inequality and Development, and labour market outcomes. Richard is also an associate research fellow with Policy Analysis and Development Research Institute (PADRI). Between 2011 and 2012, Richard worked with Program for Accessible Health, Communication and Education (PACE) as a Research Manager.



**ADVOCATES COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Plot 96, Kanjokya Street, Kamwokya**

**P. O. Box 29836, Kampala. Tel: +256 312 812150**

**Email: [acode@acodea-u.org](mailto:acode@acodea-u.org) / [library@acode-u.org](mailto:library@acode-u.org)**

**Website: [www.acode-u.org](http://www.acode-u.org)**