

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH: UGANDA

GOOD GOVERNANCE LESSONS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

Uganda possesses a rich base of legal and policy frameworks to regulate and promote the expansion of primary education in the country. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda established education as a right for all. The Education Act 2008 makes primary education compulsory for all children of school age.

As part of the three-year Africa Education Watch programme, Transparency International Uganda assessed whether the new decentralised education management systems are effective in controlling and preventing corruption in the country. The study examined whether school administrations are genuinely accountable and whether participatory governance systems bring public service closer to the user, particularly parents.

The key objectives of the programme are to:

- identify approximate levels of resource leakages or delays in resource transfer from the central government to school level
- determine the extent of (illegal) fees and other costs to parents, and
- assess decentralised accountability structures and determine how effective they are at controlling resources and preventing corruption.

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH RESPONDENTS: UGANDA

General Public (parents/guardians)	1,064
Head Teachers	52
School Management Committee members	117
Parent Teacher Association Chairs	49
District-level policy-makers	189

COUNTRY FACTS*

Primary Education in Uganda	FREE
Length of study	7 years
Population 2007	31m
GNP per capita 2007 (PPP US\$)	1,059
Percentage of Population living on Less than US\$1.25 per day	51.5%
Public current expenditure on primary education as % of GNP (2008)	2.1%
Net enrolment ratio primary school (2007)	95%
Primary-age children (2006)	6.5m



FINDINGS

- Increased enrollment has put enormous strains on facilities, teachers and instructional materials.
- There is a common occurrence of petty corruption in schools that affect day-to-day operations.
- Parents voiced a variety of complaints:
 - 29 per cent complained about teacher absenteeism
 - 24 per cent of classroom overcrowding
 - 23 per cent of poor building construction
 - 20 per cent of problems with toilets
 - 20 per cent of unqualified teaching staff.
- 23 per cent of head teachers and 47 per cent of School Management Committee members have received no financial management training.
- 83 per cent of schools either have incomplete or no financial information.
- 40 per cent of parents report paying registration fees, which are illegal.
- There are infrequent and unsystematic school inspections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Ministry of Education and Sports together with NGOs should strengthen financial management capacity at SMCs and PTAs.
- The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the structural delays of funds delivered to schools to enable schools to budget and plan.
- Schools should enforce education regulations and policies, and there should be regular school inspections.
- Head teachers and school administrators need basic record keeping and accounting training. Public officials found embezzling funds should be prosecuted and, if found guilty, repay all monies.
- Roles and responsibilities of all school administrators should be made clear to stakeholders and the general public.
- Parents should be encouraged to proactively demand access to information on public spending, including education.

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Contact

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