

Exploring integration issues faced by schools enrolling large intakes of refugee learners in host communities in Uganda

Mary Goretti Nakabugo, PhD (Uwezo Uganda), Amos Kaburu (Uwezo Uganda/Opticum) and Innocent Ajaga (Care Community Education Center - CCEDUC)

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Presentation Outline

- Context
- The Study Focus
- Methodology
- Data Analysis
- Key Findings
- Recommendations



Context

- Uganda is home to the largest refugee population in Africa - currently hosting close to 1.6 million refugees.
- Of these, children make up close to 60%.
- In education, large numbers of refugee children have been enrolled in schools in the host-communities as schools constructed within the settlements are insufficient.
- Schools with a large intake of refugee children enroll an average of 2,000 learners, over 60% of whom are of refugee status.



The Study Focus

- The purpose of the study was to explore and understand the integration issues for schools with large numbers of refugee children.
- The study explored issues related to school management, use of resources, language diversity, teaching and learning processes and how children experienced school in relation, but not limited to, speaking up, participation in class, feeling safe in school spaces, feeling safe on the way to and from school and feeling valued.

Methodology

- The study was conducted in October 2022, in a case study of four schools in one refugee-hosting district in West Nile (mostly hosting refugees from South Sudan) using a mixed methods approach and a descriptive survey design.
- The total sample was 514 informants consisting of primary three to six (P3-6) learners, parents, teachers, head-teachers, community leaders, education officials and development agency representatives.
- Data was collected through questionnaires, Uwezo learning assessment tools and key informant interviews.



The
research
team pre-
testing the
tools



Selected Findings

1. Schools with a large intake of refugee children are large taking an average of 2,000 learners, 61% of them mostly who are of refugee status while enrolling slightly more boys than girls.
2. All the four schools have clean water, and provide sanitary towels to girls. However, the infrastructure availability varies in the four schools.
3. In the absence of the children of refugee status in the schools visited, the sustainability of various interventions would raise a concern.
4. Most refugee children and nationals participate in school activities without discrimination, feel safe in and on the way to school, are free to speak up and feel valued.
5. Reading competencies among learners in the schools visited are low regardless of refugee status.
6. The language of instruction in the schools visited is inconsistent with the official language policy.

1. Schools with a large intake of refugee children are large taking an average of 2,000 learners, 61% of them mostly who are of refugee status while enrolling slightly more boys than girls on average.

Figure 1: Enrolment across the classes by gender across the four schools

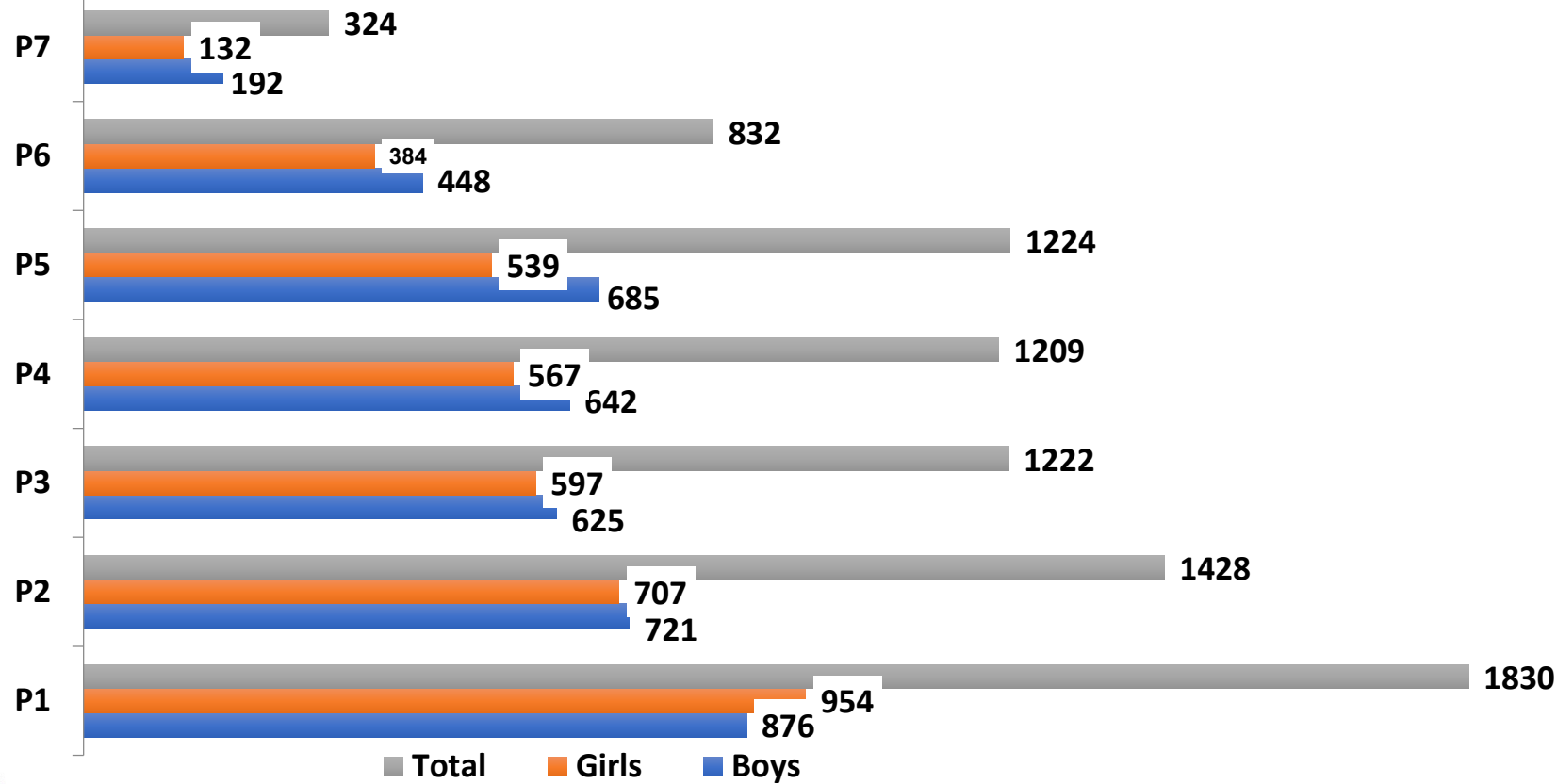


Figure 2: Average enrolment by class

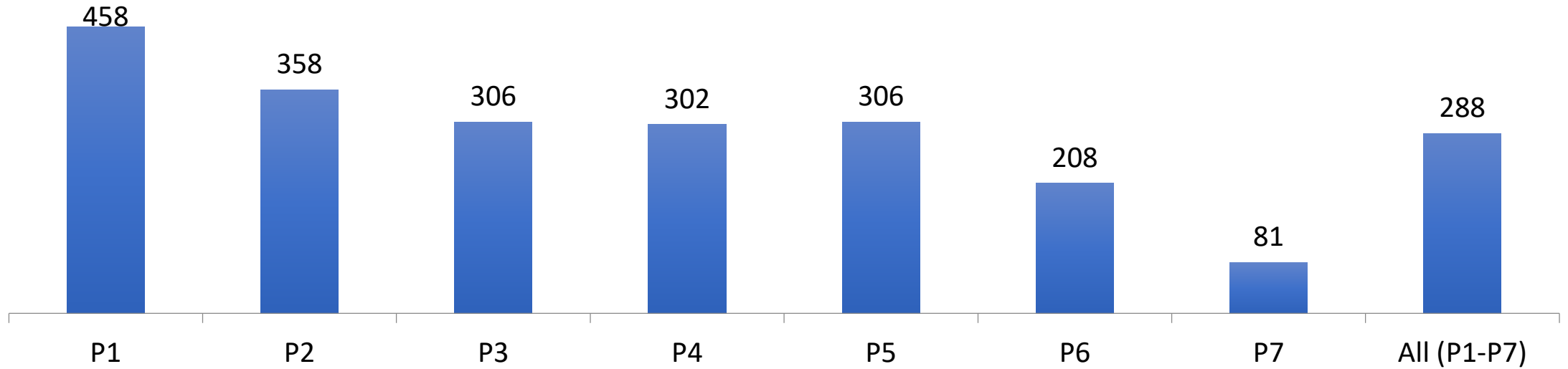
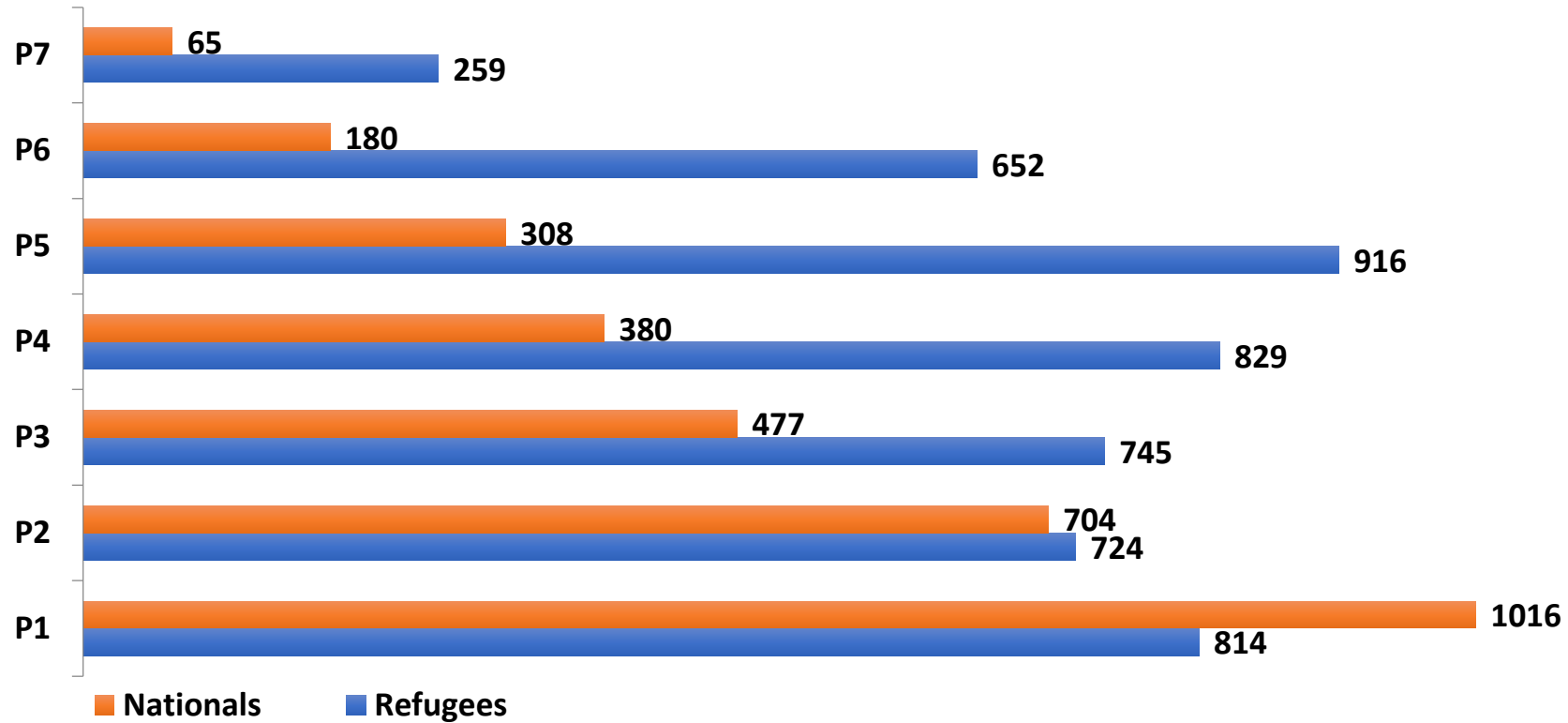
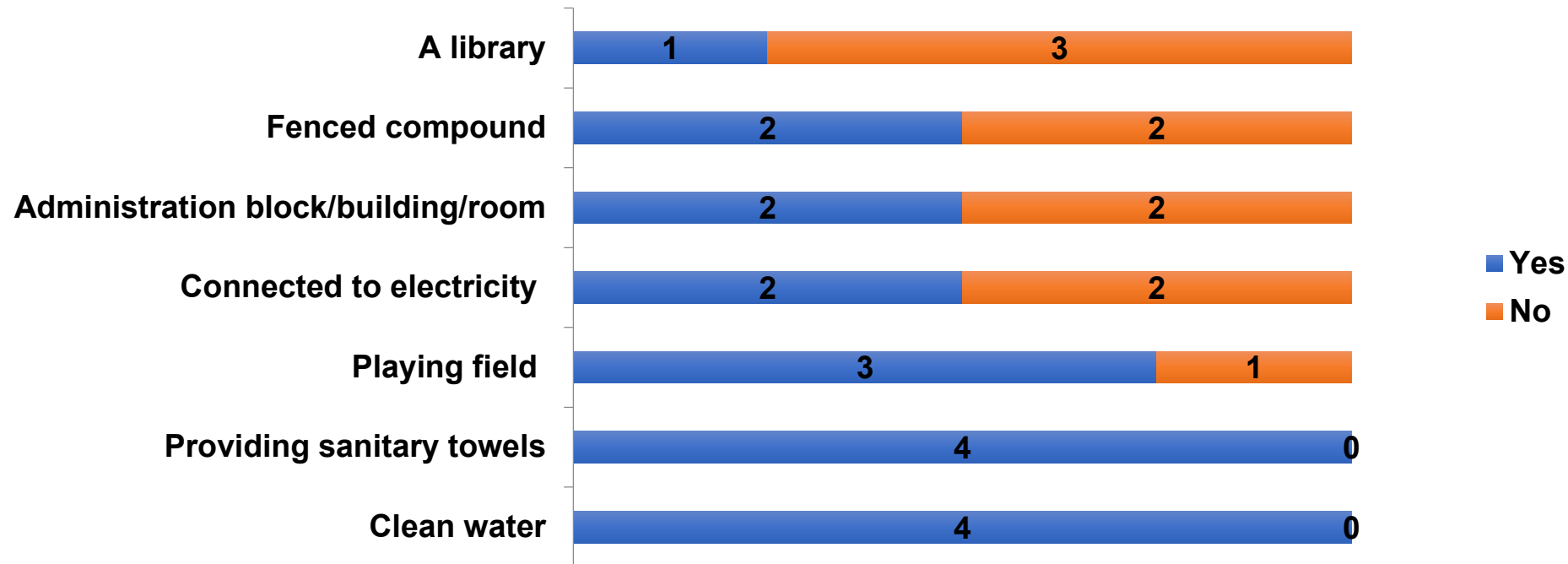


Figure 3: Enrolment by refugee status



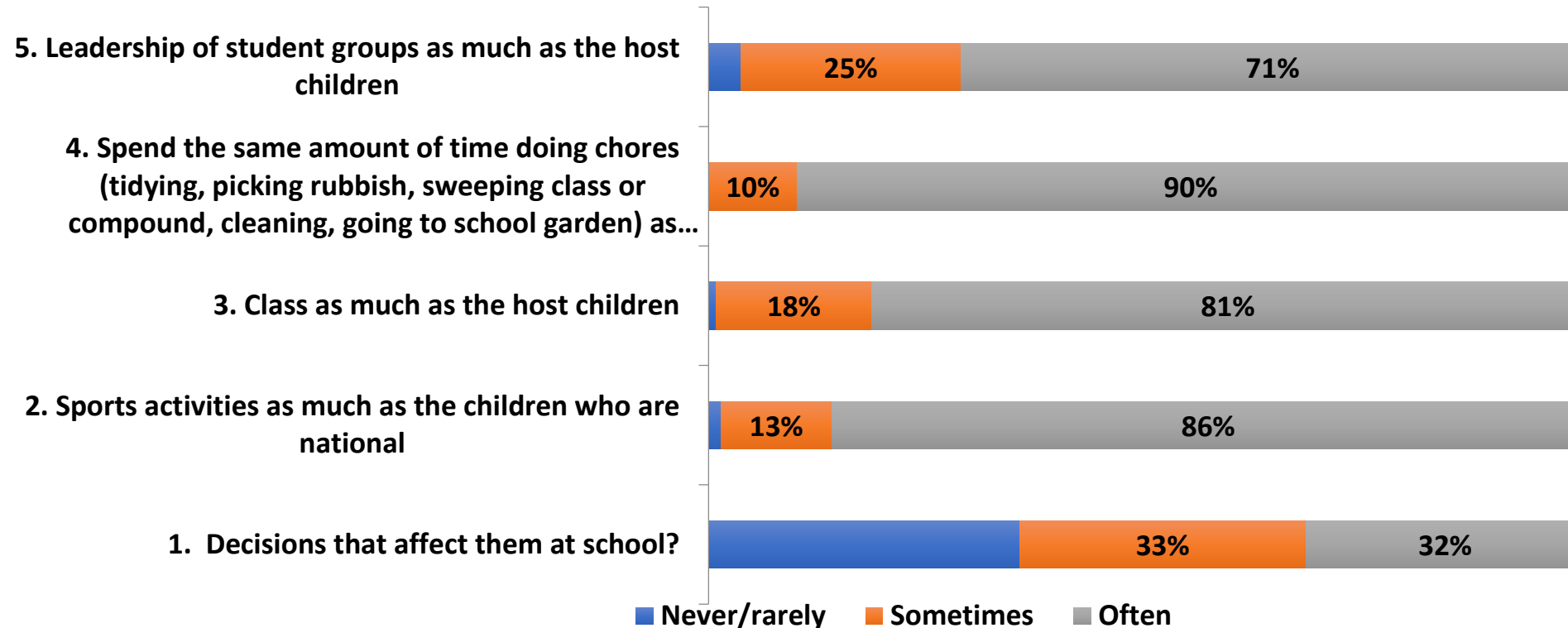
2. All the four schools had clean water, and provided sanitary towels to girls. However, infrastructure availability varied in the four schools

Figure 4: School infrastructure



3. Most learners of refugee status feel they participate in school activities without discrimination...

Figure 5: Participation in school activities





4. Reading and numeracy competencies among learners in the select schools are low regardless of refugee status

Table 1: P3-p6 pupils in the schools visited who could fluently read a p2 text, comprehend and perform p2 division tasks

Competent	National	Refugee	Total
Female	14.5%	13.5%	14.0%
Male	15.7%	18.0%	16.9%
Total	15.1%	15.8%	15.5%

5. The language of instruction in the schools is inconsistent with the official language policy

- In all the schools visited, the language of instruction across the grades is English. In some classes where there is the use of local languages (rarely), the inclusion of assistant teachers (who are of refugee status) helps to resolve the language barrier to an extent.

“I come from Eastern Uganda, I cannot speak the Kakwa-Aringa spoken by most of the children here. Even if I were to translate a concept in the local language, some concepts cannot just be translated. In college, I was not trained on how to teach using local languages. Even when I have an assistant teacher translating in class, I feel sometimes that it is just a waste of time having someone interjecting when you are explaining a concept”

(Classroom teacher in a selected school, 2022)

Recommendations based on the case study schools

- Implement measures that will increase retention rates among the learners in upper classes where dropout rates exacerbate in the focus schools.
- Invest in literacy programs to improve acquisition of foundational learning.
- Resolve the language in education policy dilemma in the target schools.
- Deliberately invest on sustainability measures for the impact created from the tripartite partnership.

Thank you!

Contact Us!

Uwezo Uganda,
Corner House, Suite B1
Plot 436/437, Mawanda Road
Kamwokya, Kampala
P.O Box 33275, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256-393-193-441
E-mail: info@uwezouganda.org
<https://uwezouganda.org/>

