Exploring Community and Family Influences on Children's Learning Outcomes: A Positive Deviance Study

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Abbreviations (general)

EA	Enumeration Area
ECD	Early childhood development (especially preschool programmes)
LC1	Local Council, Level 1 (representing a village or ward)
P1, P2, etc.	Primary grade 1, grade 2, etc. (also 'Class 1', etc.)
PD	Positive deviance / positively deviant
PLE	Primary Leaving Examination
PTA	Parent-teacher association
PTR	Pupil-teacher ratio
S1	Secondary grade 1
SD	Standard deviation
SMC	School Management Committee
UGX	Ugandan Shillings
UPPET	Universal post-primary education and training
Z-score	Standardised score

Abbreviations for Uwezo's levels of reading and numeracy

These are used in Tables 6-14.

Non-read.	Non-reader
Story w.c.	Story with comprehension
Num. rec.	Number recognition 10-99
Arith. 1	Arithmetic, 1 operation
Arith. 2	Arithmetic, 2 operations
Arith. 3	Arithmetic, 3 operations
Arith, 4	Arithmetic, 4 operations

Executive Summary

Some types of community, school and family influences on children's learning outcomes are not easily captured by quantitative surveys. This research uses qualitative methods to explore community and family influences and adopts a 'positive deviance' (PD) methodology to identify cases for study and comparison. This focus complements previous research on school and teacher initiatives (Twaweza East Africa, 2019) and on pupil absenteeism and non-enrolment (Uwezo Uganda, 2023).

The PD methodology of research and development first achieved recognition in the public health sector (Marsh et al., 2004) and was then applied to some educational and criminal issues. It involves identifying unusual and successful behaviours that can be adopted more widely without major commitment of external resources (LeMahieu et al., 2017). Where the desired outcome is academic achievement, however, the task tends to be complex because of the multiple influences on learning.

The relationships between communities and families, on the one hand, and schools on the other, have attracted a significant body of research, including some in developing countries. Types of theory that have been applied to the relationships include those of overlapping spheres of influence on the child (Epstein, 1987, 1995), social capital based on social networks (Woolcock, 1998) and 'funds of knowledge' that are attributed to different social entities (Moll et al., 1992). Attention is drawn to some empirical research in low-income countries that shows the relevance of these theoretical perspectives (Francis et al, 1998; Tsang and Wheeler, 2011; Ngwaru, 2014).

The present study uses children's levels of English reading and numeracy, as measured in the Uwezo Uganda national assessment of 2024, to identify examples of positive deviance, both at the local community level and the family level, after controlling for major resource and structural factors. In the first, quantitative phase of the research, therefore, standardised scores (z-scores) were computed for the reading and numeracy levels of children aged 6-14 who were assessed. The scores were then regressed on eight independent variables to generate residuals from regression. The eight variables represent the child's grade level, the sub-regional poverty rate, two years or more at preschool (a dummy variable), the type of school attended (private or other), the household head's level of education, whether the household head was female, the possessions of the household (a factor score) and a control for stratification in the sample. These factors accounted for 50% of the variance in reading score and 48% of the numeracy variance. The resulting residuals are a rough guide only: but the method was effective for identifying PD communities and families.

The selection of four districts was based on the district's mean z-scores. It provided a mixture of high-scoring, medium-scoring and low-scoring districts and, within those, some high mean residuals at the level of the Enumeration Area (EA) as a basis for comparison with more typical EAs (local communities). Kabale, Kotido and Rubirizi Districts each provided one PD and one typical EA; Wakiso District, because of its social complexity, provided two PD EAs and one typical EA. Within each selected community, the residuals of individual children were used to identify PD and typical households (families). We attempted to visit two PD and two typical households in each community and to report on a maximum of two children per family. The response rate was generally high, though some 'reserve' households had to be visited.

In the second, qualitative phase of the research, data was obtained mainly by focus-group discussions at the community level, and by semi-structured interviews with individual parents and children at the household level. The focus groups consisted of community leaders representing the village council, school managers, teachers, parents and religious bodies. We tried to achieve a gender

balance both in the focus groups and in the selection of children and gave due attention to private schools. Before the main data collection took place, all procedures were piloted in Mukono District.

The qualitative findings are presented in two sections, on community influences and family influences. The evidence from our interaction with community leaders enables us to provide impressionistic ratings of three types of community influence: that of the village councils, of the founding bodies of schools, and of the parents acting collectively. The cases of Rushekyera and Bulenga EAs show the potential value of strong leadership by the village council (LC1) chairperson in educational matters, especially for a high level of school attendance. This is a practice that is transferable to some extent. Rushekyera also shows the benefit of a founding body that actively encourages learning through small gifts and scholarships, whereas in most other communities visited the founding bodies were reported not to be providing much support to schools. Collective parental support was strong at Birehe II and Bulenga, where the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) employed large numbers of supplementary teachers because of the shortage of teachers paid by the government. In Butto, where a high proportion of parents were in formal employment or business, they were regarded as reliable in supporting school attendance. Parents' collective support for the work of schools was rather dependent on the occupational focus of the community.

In analysing the data on family influences, we consider each district in turn and begin by tabulating the sex, age, grade level, reading and numeracy levels, and residuals of each child interviewed. The differences in learning outcomes are interpreted through the evidence from interviews with parents and children in each household. For each district, we first consider the direct support that the family provides in the home environment and then the interaction of parents or guardians with the schools.

Within Kabale District, there was a general contrast between the relatively prosperous and disciplined families of Rushekyera, an area with successful agriculture, and the families of Omubushenshero, most of which depended on casual industrial labour by parents and children. The latter group struggled to meet schooling requirements and most of the children had not attended ECD centres.

A more extreme poverty level, however, affected both the communities visited in Kotido District (part of the Karamoja sub-region but no longer pastoralist). Many children received a free school lunch through the World Food Programme. Schools adapted to the situation by charging very little and not insisting on uniforms or shoes. However, the schools faced acute shortages of teachers and could not prevent a high rate of dropout. Parents and children showed positive attitudes to education: but secondary education was seen as a remote prospect, dependent on external sponsorship.

Rubirizi District represented a more average socio-economic level, with more typical agricultural communities. There was a contrast between the PD households in Birehe II and the rest of the households, which struggled to provide fees and other school requirements. Families with more adults supporting the children fared better. Government-aided primary schools were charging UGX 40,000 and above per term – a level too high for many families.

In Wakiso District the research covered two PD communities (Butto and Bulenga) and one typical one (Nabweru South). All these communities depend on trade: but Butto has a larger element of formal (white collar) employment, while Nabweru South has fewer work opportunities. In contrast with rural Uganda, most children in these communities attend private (nursery and primary) schools and most are enrolled for school meals. All the parents in Butto and Bulenga were literate to some extent, and some recognised the value of the mass media for children's learning. But there was a high prevalence of single working mothers, especially in Bulenga, who faced challenges in paying fees and attending school events. In some cases, the level of fees was negotiated by parents individually,

private schools making less use of PTAs than government-aided schools. Nonetheless, some parents did well dividing children's time between study, household chores and play. Many parents provided some experience of buying and selling that was useful for numeracy. But few provided books for their children in the home to support literacy.

An important issue for the research was to determine how far successful behaviours of communities and families could be adopted more widely. From the evidence at community level, there is scope for more village councils to monitor basic education closely and we argue that they could protect parents from excessive charges by schools as well as preventing absenteeism. There is also scope for founding bodies to encourage excellence in primary schools, even in small ways and as far their financial positions allow. PTAs have a useful role in obtaining a consensus among parents about contributions for particular purposes: but in many poorer communities school charges tend to be too burdensome.

At the family level the research shows many desirable practices, including provision for lunch either at school or at home, provision of safe drinking water, allocation of time and space for homework, a balance between study, chores and play, and experience of buying and selling. In the poorer households, where parents depend more on children's work and have less time to supervise them, all these practices are harder to achieve, however. In their interaction with schools, issues of fee payment reduce the scope for them to monitor their children's progress. We call for some external intervention to increase the availability of textbooks and storybooks, in homes as well as schools.

The Constitution of Uganda and the Education Act of 2008 outline a social contract for compulsory primary education, in which the state is to provide the necessary teachers, capitation grants, learning materials and physical facilities. Children's food and clothing, however, are left for parents to provide. In practice, the failure of the state to fulfil its side of the contract adequately has fuelled the growth of private education and has caused many aspects of public education to become commercialised, with ever-increasing charges. We call for an effective social contract: one which would allow realistic expectations for support from families.

1. Background

Families, local communities, schools and major providers of education all have influences on children's acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy. National assessments by Uwezo Uganda have provided evidence about the skills that children have mastered in different grades and at different ages; they have also shown quantitative relationships between learning outcomes and some major variations in location, educational experience, household resources and individual characteristics. Some types of family, school and community influence, however, are not easily captured by quantitative survey research and deserve to be studied in depth. The 'positive deviance' methodology provides a potentially useful approach to in-depth case studies of such influences.

The proposed focus on community and family influences through positive deviance is complementary to other research conducted in Uganda. We recently completed a study of pupils' absenteeism and non-enrolment at the primary level, which used cases of 'negative deviance' in attendance at the school and individual level, with implications for communities and families (Uwezo Uganda, 2023). We also have the report of a positive deviance study, conducted in Eastern Uganda, of primary school and teacher initiatives that were of potential interest for wider adoption (Twaweza East Africa, 2019). This study builds on the previous research and seeks to identify and encourage community and family practices that are beneficial for education but not widely known and capable of wider adoption, especially in the local environments where they occur. Such practices would complement, but not be a substitute for, the policies and initiatives of the public educational system.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Research on Positive Deviance

The 'positive deviance' (PD) methodology of research and development achieved international recognition mainly through a Save the Children project in Vietnam, in which it was discovered that, in certain rural communities with many malnourished children, a few 'positively deviant' households had useful practices that enabled them to prevent child malnutrition without any external support (Sternin and Choo, 2000; Marsh et al., 2004). The combination of including shellfish and greens in the diet, giving children smaller but mor frequent meals, and more frequent hand-washing, was found to be very effective and was soon widely adopted through community effort. Since then, PD approaches have spread beyond the health sector to some educational and criminal issues, such as school dropout and child trafficking. A PD project on preventing dropout in rural Argentina (Duro and Singhal, 2009) has some quite close analogies with the malnutrition project in Vietnam, as the researchers and community members were able to identify six positive practices at school level that could be more widely adopted.

Two of the sources on PD define the stages of the methodology in similar, but not identical, ways. Marsh and others (2004) list the stages as (1) defining the types of cases to be studied, (2) identifying cases with positively deviant outcomes, (3) discovering the unusual and successful behaviours in these cases, (4) confirming that the behaviours could be adopted more widely, (5) designing a strategy for wider adoption and (6) monitoring and evaluating the outcomes. A similar sequence is given by LeMahieu and others (2017), but it begins with a statement of the objectives and separates Stage 3 into two parts: (a) description of typical behaviours, and (b) description of positively deviant behaviours (p. 112). An important feature of the methodology is that researchers must identify both outcomes and behaviours that are positively deviant and not dependent on unusual levels of resources.

In education contexts where the outcomes of interest are academic achievement, or a combination of achievement and retention in school, the task of identifying relevant behaviours is likely to be more complex because of the multiple influences on learning. This partly accounts for the mixed results of the PD project conducted at Merced High School California, USA, in 2009-12 (discussed by LeMahieu et al., 2017). The project was useful in promoting a supportive culture in the school: but it was difficult to draw conclusions about which 'new' practices made the most difference. In a rather similar way, the Supporting Teacher Effectiveness Project applied to two middle schools in California and supported by the Plexus Institute, seems to have focused more on the discovery of new processes of interaction, among teachers as well as with students, rather than measurement of outcomes. From the account by Buscell and Lindberg (2014), it appears that the leadership model known as Liberating Structures (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2014) played at least as important a part in the project as the PD methodology.

As Uwezo Uganda has a national frame of reference for assessment and research, identifying cases of PD to be studied, whether at school, community or family level, is a major task. For the previous PD project on education in Uganda (Twaweza East Africa, 2019), it was decided to focus on the Eastern Region of Uganda and the team used both Uwezo assessment data and school-level results of the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) to identify schools that seemed to 'buck the trend' in low-achieving areas. However, the statistics used are not presented in the report; neither does it document the differences in achievement that are associated with the various school-level and teacher-level initiatives that are described. The report provides a rich description of commendable examples of school leadership, of school-community linkages and of teacher collaboration. But, in the process, it does not provide a very clear sense of the practices that were more typical and, by implication, not so helpful for outcomes. For this to happen, it might have been necessary to select a smaller number of cases of PD, along with some 'average' cases, for detailed study. In the present study, we can learn from these limitations.

2.2. Research on the Role of Communities and Families in Education

As our focus is on local communities and families, it is useful to consider some theoretical approaches, conceptual schemes and empirical examples, selected from the large body of previous research, mostly not using a positive deviance method, on the relationships between communities and families on the one hand, and schools on the other. The bulk of this research was done in Western (especially United States) contexts but some of the theories and concepts have a wide applicability. In the discussion which follows we select elements that are relevant for developing countries and for this study.

Through a bibliographic survey of North American journal literature over a five-year period, Lois Yamauchi and others (2017) identified four theoretical approaches that are frequently used to study family-school partnerships. Three of these – concerned with 'overlapping spheres of influence', 'social capital' and 'funds of knowledge' – are potentially useful in our context, not difficult to apply, and not mutually exclusive.[1] Brief comments will be made on each.

The spheres of influence theory is that of Joyce Epstein (1987, 1995), who presents communities, families and schools as having overlapping spheres of influence on the child. She contends that the degree of overlap is influenced by historical factors and by the child's age and grade level but can be

[1] The fourth approach is Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, which is more complex to apply and perhaps best suited to ethnographic research.

changed through improved collaboration. In our context, variations in the overlap of influences could contribute to variations in children's learning outcomes.

Epstein points out the overlap of family and school influences can increase where the family becomes more 'school-like' or where the school becomes more 'family-like'. Over the past century, in high- and middle-income countries, the increased participation in pre-primary education, as well as progressive pedagogy, has encouraged a more 'family-like' school environment in the early years. At the same time, the rise in parents' educational level has enabled them to organise a more 'school-like' home. As our data will show, however, these changes only apply partially to Uganda: parents have a relatively low levels of education and some schools emphasise a separate sphere of influence.

A recent study of community and parental participation in Ugandan public (i.e. government-aided) primary schools (Kobayashi and Ogawa, 2025) uses a conceptual framework derived from types of parental involvement defined by Epstein (1995) and Shaeffer's (1994) 'ladder of participation' in the use of services. The study considers how far a high level of participation occurs in practice and how far it enhances the quality of education.

Social capital theory (the second approach) was established by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and has been widely used to analyse the influence of social networks on communities, families and schools. We prefer the definition of social capital given by Michael Woolcock (1998), as 'the information, trust and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks', which clearly distinguishes it from economic forms of capital. The social capital approach is especially useful for comparisons between communities in our context.

The funds of knowledge theory is derived from Lev Vygostky's (1978) view that learning is rooted in social interaction (sociocultural theory) and has been developed by Luis Moll and others (1992) to associate distinct traditions of knowledge to communities, families and schools, these 'funds' varying widely across communities and families. This approach is especially useful in postcolonial societies where formal schooling is juxtaposed with the traditional knowledge of rural communities.

To illustrate the application of some of these theoretical ideas and concepts, we shall now refer to three empirical studies that have been conducted in non-Western contexts. These are studies of school-community relations in Nigeria (Francis et al., 1998), local initiatives to improve schooling in Thailand (Tsang and Wheeler, 2011) and the educational role of parents in Eastern and Southern Africa (Ngwaru, 2014).

Paul Francis and his colleagues (1998) used social capital theory to examine the partnerships between government bodies and local communities in the management of primary schools. The findings were a landmark in the social capital literature, as they showed that, in a developing country with rapid urbanisation, rural communities were more successful than urban ones in mobilising support for primary schools and attributed this difference to the greater economic stratification in urban areas. These findings contrast with the tendency of some researchers in the West to find that wealthier individuals have more effective social networks (e.g. Harvat et al., 2003).

The research by Tsang and Wheeler (2011) is not explicit about theory but provides evidence that strengthening the relationship between school and local community can lead to improvement in the quality of primary education in relatively poor communities. The authors focus on the financial aspect of community support and show that in Thailand the Buddhist temples are an important channel for charitable contributions to schools that are funded (not very adequately) by the national government. This is a good example of social capital at work and also illustrates the idea of overlap

between community and school spheres of influence. Temple contributions are received by the school's managing committee and so are generally used in an equitable manner. How far local religious bodies in Uganda are making similar contributions is an important issue: as with the temples in Thailand, churches were the founding bodies of many primary schools that are now in the public sector. The research by Twaweza (2019) mentioned some instances of support from that source. Tsang and Wheeler also mention the important role of head teachers in fostering community support.

The selected work by Jacob Ngwaru (2014) is more concerned with the family: he reflects on parent-school relationships as revealed by various research on children's literacy development in rural areas of Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Ngwaru notes a general lack of collaboration between home and school: teachers did not recognise that parents could play a useful part in children's literacy development and parents' attitudes ranged from the view that they should leave everything to the teachers to scepticism as to whether the formal education would actually rescue their families and communities from poverty. In advocating more respect for, and inclusion of, home culture and knowledge in the school curriculum, Ngwaru explicitly aligns his advocacy with Vygotsky and with the 'funds of knowledge' theory of Luis Moll. This realistic discussion may help us to see where there are exceptions in rural communities, with closer collaboration between parents and teachers and benefits for learning outcomes.

3. Research Questions

We present research questions relating to the first five stages of the PD methodology as described above (from Marsh et al., 2000).

1. What examples can the Uwezo Assessment of 2024 provide, of positively deviant learning outcomes at the level of the enumeration area (EA), after the effects of major resource and structural variations have been controlled?

2. What examples of positively deviant learning outcomes at household level are available, within the local communities identified?

3. In the examples of PD at community level, what community behaviours contribute to children's successful progress in literacy and numeracy? How do these compare with typical community behaviours?

4. In the examples of PD at household level, what family behaviours contribute to children's successful progress in literacy and numeracy? How do these compare with typical family behaviours?

5. How far are the positively deviant and useful community and family behaviours open to wider adoption?

6. What strategies can assist communities and families with wider adoption of the behaviours?

4. Methodology

The first phase of the study is a quantitative one, in which we use the findings of the 2024 Uwezo Assessment to identify suitable examples of PD outcomes at the level of the local community (EA) and the household. For better comparability across the regions of Uganda, we restrict the sample to children aged 6-14. As measures of outcomes (dependent variables), we use standardised (z) scores

derived from children's levels of reading in English and of numeracy (six levels for reading and seven levels for numeracy). The levels and their z-scores are shown in Table 1.

Because these learning outcomes are known to be associated with certain aspects of location, educational experience and socio-economic status, PD at the local level is best represented by residuals from regression. Residuals are therefore generated for z English reading and z numeracy, from regression equations with eight independent variables (described in the next section). SPSS 28 software has been used for this purpose. The proportions of variance explained are high: 51% for English reading and 48% for numeracy. The sample size for both regression equations is 14,275.

Table 1. Standardised scores for levels of English reading and numeracy

English reading		Numeracy	
Level	**Z-score**	**Level**	**Z-score**
Non-reader	-1.10086	Non-numerate	-1.61933
Letter	-0.46495	Matching	-1.15895
Word	0.17096	Number recognition 10-99	-0.69858
Paragraph	0.80687	Arithmetic, 1 operation	-0.23820
Story only	1.44278	Arithmetic, 2 operations	0.22218
Story with comprehension	2.07869	Arithmetic, 3 operations	0.68256
		Arithmetic, 4 operations	1.14294

The second phase of the study was qualitative. In each of the selected districts, a research team, consisting of two Uwezo Uganda researchers and two from a civil society organisation based in the district, sought to discover behaviours and characteristics of PD communities that had positive effects on learning outcomes and yet were not widely known or practised in other communities of the district. An important part of this enquiry is concerned with school-community relations: but the occupational pattern in the community and its traditions in the upbringing of children may also be relevant. Similar issues apply to the PD households, which were compared with typical households in the same community.

Five EAs with positive mean residuals were identified: one in a low-scoring district (Kotido), one in a medium-scoring district (Kabale), one in a high-to-medium-scoring district (Rubirizi) and two in a high-scoring district (Wakiso). In each of the same districts, one EA with a more typical mean residual was selected for comparison. In all of these EAs there are sufficient numbers of cases of residuals for comparisons between the EAs and for some comparisons to be made between boys and girls within the EA.

Within each of these EAs, two households with generally positive residuals for their children, and two with more typical residuals for their children, were selected for detailed study and comparison. 'Reserve' households were also selected, for use where the initial selections were not available. In the selection of these cases, equal consideration was given to reading and to numeracy.

The methods of data collection for the research at the community level consisted of focus group discussions with relevant leaders of communities, supplemented by some interviews with key informants and direct observation of the community location. At the household level, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the selected children and with at least one parent or guardian. The research teams aimed to engage community leaders in the research from an early stage and to show them that their own knowledge was valued. The community leaders who were invited to the focus groups normally included the LC1 chairperson, head teachers of primary schools (both government-aided and private) and ECD centres, SMC and PTA representatives of the schools that

most children attended, and some local religious leaders. Efforts were made to achieve a gender balance both in the focus groups and in the selection of children.

5. Initial Findings: Identification of EAs and Households as Examples of PD

5.1. Residuals from Regression

To generate useful residuals, we carried out a multiple linear regression analysis of z English reading on eight independent variables, and a parallel analysis of z numeracy on the same variables. This procedure was used for descriptive purposes only, as the sample does not have suitable properties for inferential statistics.

The selection of independent variables was informed by previous analyses of Uwezo assessment data (Uwezo, 2019, 2021; Urwick, 2022). The variables are listed and described in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of independent variables used

Variable	Description
Sub-regional poverty rate	The percentage of households in the sub-region classified as poor, as indicated by the National Household Survey of 2012/13.
Child's grade level	An ordinal measure from 1 to 14, covering Baby Class (in ECD) to S4.
Completed two years or more at preschool	A dummy variable (two years or more = 1, other = 0).
Attending a private school (ECD, primary or secondary)	A dummy variable (private = 1, other = 0). All ECD attendance is classified as private.
Household head's level of education	A rating, as measured in the 2024 assessment survey
Female household head	A dummy variable (female = 1, male = 0)
Household possessions index	A factor score obtained from factor analysis of the presence and quantities of 10 types of household possession (Factor 1 only).
Control for sub-regional stratification	The sampling fraction for the sub-region (a correction for bias due to stratification)

The child's grade level alone accounts for about 41% of the variance in z English reading and 46% of the variance in z numeracy. The combination of the eight variables, however, accounts for 50% of the reading variance and 48% of the numeracy variance. Consequently, the positive deviations that we find are not likely to be due to major variations in the length of the children's enrolment or in the material resources of districts, communities and families.

Certain limitations of the procedure need to be recognised, however. Firstly, characteristics of the surveyed schools such as the pupil-teacher ratio could not be included as reliable independent variables because only 44% of the children in this sample attended the surveyed school in their area. (Nevertheless, the private school variable captures important differences between schools.) Secondly, the equations are linear and so the residuals could reflect some non-linear effects of the variables listed. Perfect prediction is not to be expected and the residuals are a rough guide only.

It was intentional that measures of nutrition, water supply, sanitation and hygiene at household level were not included in the equations. Family practices in these matters were among the behaviours that we could consider in the case studies; community leadership too can influence water supply and sanitation.

As the dependent variables are standardised scores, residuals from regression are produced in the same metric and are easy to interpret. A residual of 1.00 is one standard deviation (SD) above the national mean and a residual of -1.00 is one SD below the mean. For clarity we present the positive scores and residuals with a plus sign, e.g. +1.00, +0.50, -0.50.

5.2. Classification of Districts by Achievement Levels

As we intended to find examples of positive deviance in several districts with different levels of achievement, the 29 districts and municipalities[2] that provided the sample for the 2024 Uwezo Assessment were classified as high-, medium or low-scoring, both for reading and for numeracy. Those with a mean standardised (z) score at least one-quarter of a standard deviation above the national mean (a mean of +.2500 or above) are classified as 'high-scoring'; similarly, 'low-scoring' districts are those with a mean z-score of -.2500 or below. Districts with a mean between -.2499 and +.2499 are classified as 'medium scoring'. The resulting groups of districts are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Grouping of districts by mean reading and numeracy scores

Area of learning	Reading in English	Numeracy
High-scoring	Fort Portal City, Kampala, Lwengo, Mbarara, Mpigi, Mukono, Rubirizi and Wakiso	Fort Portal City, Kampala, Mbarara, Mukono and Wakiso
Medium-scoring	Bugiri, Buliisa, Bundibugyo, Hoima, Isingiro, Kabale, Kapchorwa, Kassanda, Kitgum, Kyankwanzi, Maracha, Mbale, Namisindwa and Terego	Alebtong, Bugiri, Buliisa, Bundibugyo, Hoima, Isingiro, Kabale, Kamuli, Kapchorwa, Kassanda, Kitgum, Kyankwanzi, Lwengo, Maracha, Mbale, Mpigi, Namatumba, Namisindwa, Oyam, Rubirizi and Terego
Low-scoring	Alebtong, Kamuli, Kotido, Kumi, Namatumba, Oyam and Pallisa	Kotido, Kumi and Pallisa

By the criteria used, the groups are more dispersed for reading in English than for numeracy, but some districts are consistently in the high-scoring or low-scoring groups. We have selected districts at varied points in the range from high to low: Wakiso, Rubirizi, Kabale and Kotido.

[2]The term, district, is used here to represent both districts and municipalities with equivalent functions.

5.3. Selection of EAs and Households with Positive Residuals

The selection of EAs and households with mean positive residuals was done in two stages. First, a dataset of EAs was produced, sorted by sub-region and by district, with means of the scores and the residuals for each EA. At least one EA with positively deviant (PD) mean residuals both for reading and for numeracy, of +.30 and above in most cases, and another with more typical residuals (closer to 0) was identified in each selected district. Wakiso District, being very urbanised, was treated as a special case, with two PD EAs selected, one to represent a 'salary-earning' community and the other a trading community. In addition, a PD and a typical EA were selected in Mukono District, which was to be used for the pilot study.

In the second stage, the individual residuals within each selected EA were reviewed, in a selective spreadsheet, to ascertain whether the residual data was complete enough, whether it allowed for comparisons by gender, and whether good examples of households with positive mean residuals were available. The selection was thus reduced to five EAs in four districts – Kotido, Kabale, Rubirizi and Wakiso. These are geographically diverse, being located in different sub-regions. Dominant occupations of the communities were also considered. Table 4 shows the mean scores and mean residuals for the selected EAs.

Table 4. Selected EAs: mean scores and residuals

.

Classifications: PD = Positively deviant; T = Typical

EA by district	EA classific-ation	Mean z-score, Eng. reading	Mean z-score, Numeracy	Mean residual, Eng. reading	Mean residual, Numeracy
Kotido District (low-scoring)					
Nakosoburin C	PD	-0.39	-0.25	+0.65	+0.34
Kamor North B	T	-0.62	0.05	-0.06	+0.16
Kabale District (medium-scoring)					
Rushekyera	PD	1.07	0.90	+0.78	+0.60
Omubushenshero	T	0.44	0.24	+0.24	+0.13
Rubirizi District (high/medium-scoring)					
Birehe II	PD	0.43	0.77	+0.26	+0.51
Kinoni	T	0.22	-0.07	+0.11	-0.16
Wakiso District (high-scoring)					
Bulenga BQ*	PD	1.51	0.90	+0.72	+0.34
Butto M**	PD	1.12	0.60	+0.67	+0.35
Nabweru South IIF	T	0.43	-0.07	-0.10	-0.32

*Trading community

**Salary-earning and trading community

6. Pilot Study

To test the qualitative research procedures, a pilot study was conducted in Mukono District, in October 2024. Data was collected both from communities and from households in Bajjo and Mugomba EAs, the first meeting the criteria for a PD community and the second being a more typical community. The procedures were found to be satisfactory in general but all the research tools were

subsequently reviewed and minor amendments were made. At the community level, a difference in the provision of teachers in government-aided schools, which was notably insufficient at Mugomba, emerged as a factor that probably contributed to the difference in learning outcomes.

7. Qualitative Research Findings on Community Influences

The mean scores of EAs that are presented in Table 4 show that the variations between districts and between communities in learning outcomes are not simply determined by levels of urbanisation, commercialisation or accessibility in the communications network. The PD community in Kabale, a largely rural district far from the capital, has outcomes comparable to those of the PD communities in Wakiso, a highly urbanised district adjacent to Kampala. Within Kabale too, the PD community is one of small-scale farming but has higher outcomes than the typical community, which has peri-urban industries.

Table 5 provides an overview of the dominant types of adult occupation and the available types of primary school (public and private) in each of the selected communities (EAs). The descriptions are based on data obtained from the focus group discussions and interviews with community leaders.

Table 5. Dominant occupations and types of primary school available in each EA

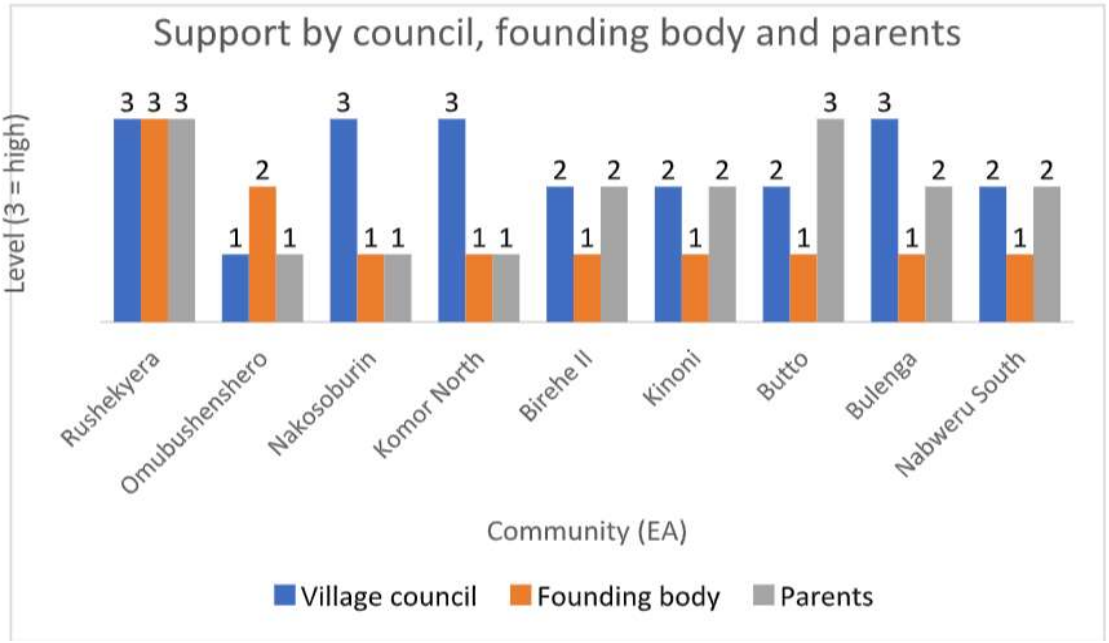
Community (district)	Classification	Dominant types of occupation	Types of primary school available
Rushekyera (Kabale)	PD	Small farming, partially for the market	Government-aided
Omubushenshero (Kabale)	T	Small business and casual industrial labour	Government-aided
Nakosoburin (Kotido)	PD	Crop farming, charcoal production & distant herding	Government-aided
Komor North (Kotido)	T	Crop farming, charcoal production & distant herding	Mainly government-aided, some private
Birehe II (Rubirizi)	PD	Small, mixed farming	Government-aided
Kinoni (Rubirizi)	T	Farming, small trade and informal mining	Government-aided and private
Butto (Wakiso)	PD	Small trade and white-collar employment	Private
Bulenga (Wakiso)	PD	Small trade	Mainly private, some government-aided
Nabweru South (Wakiso)	T	Small trade and casual work	Private

Parents' occupations affect their ability to contribute to school activities and development. As the family interviews confirm, their interaction with schools is conditioned by their financial resources and time. Those depending on casual work and some of those in small business, whether in Kabale or in the more urbanised Wakiso District, struggle to meet costs and have little time for meetings. The communities in Kotido District can be described as *ex-pastoralist*, as most of their livestock had been lost in raids. (A few still found herding work at a distance.) There, the parents have time for

school activities but have very little income. In Wakiso, on the other hand, most parents can afford the private school fees but some have time constraints, especially if they travel to work.

With this background, we now present a summary of the types and levels of community support for education, in Figure 1. The focus group discussions with community leaders provide opinions and other evidence about the extent of support from the village councils, from the founding bodies of schools, and from parents. In some cases the interviews with parents provided additional evidence. On this basis, the levels of support are rated as 'high', 'medium' and 'low'. These ratings are impressions only, based on the qualitative evidence and not on precise measurement.

Figure 1. Types and levels of community support, as reported by community leaders



Ratings: 3 = high; 2 = medium; 1 = low

The importance of leadership by the Village or Ward Council (LC1) Chairperson was illustrated most strongly by the cases of Rushekyera EA in Kabale District and Bulenga EA in Wakiso District (a male leader in the first example and a female leader in the second). In the first case, the leader had a long record of commitment to education and had earlier on established an ECD centre in the area. 'Since I came into this village, we have fought hard and worked with the school to ensure that every child goes to school,' the Chairperson said. The village council gave much attention to education and the focus group reported that the level of school attendance was high throughout the community, with the sole exception of a group of refugees from Rwanda. In the second case the leader was a popular figure in the community who had personally intervened to prevent pupil absenteeism in cases known to her. She seems to have been respected by the women who were small shop-keepers in the area. These cases were in contrast with Omubushenshero, where the Chairperson and the Council showed less interest in education and there was some difficulty in assembling the focus group.

The local councils were also playing an important part in the Kotido communities, however. At Nakosoburin, the council promoted savings groups and helped with the fencing of the school. At Komor North the council was active in making sure that parents provided some contributions of food and firewood for the school meals. Because of the level of poverty, these councils could not prevent the high levels of dropout.

These cases show that, despite the importance of leadership provided by the head teachers and school management committees (SMCs) demonstrated by previous research (Twaweza East Africa, 2019), the interest of the LC1 Chairperson in education can have a strong influence on commitment to education within the community. In a recent survey of attitudes to governance (Kibirige et al., 2021), the LC1 Chairperson was shown to be perceived as one of most accessible types of official, especially in rural communities. If citizens wished to complain about a public service in a rural area, the LC1 Chairperson was the person most likely to be contacted, while in urban areas it was the LCIII Chairperson (at sub-county level). These findings underline the potential influence of council leaders in service provision.

Rushekyera EA illustrated strong 'social capital', as the Church of Uganda was also active in supporting the primary school that it had founded. The Diocese of Kabale had provided some 'scholarships and scholastic materials to needy but excelling children'. In the general context of the study, however, this case was rather exceptional. With the partial exception of Omubushenshero (in the same diocese), the founding bodies were not thought to be providing much support beyond some religious observances. In Birehe II it was mentioned that the school contributed financially to the church and not the reverse.

The level of parental support for the schools was hard to judge from some of the focus group discussions. The focus groups at Birehe II and Kinoni, for example, were very critical of parents: but they may have overlooked the impact of the fees the schools were charging. Given the serious shortage of teachers, nationally, in government-aided primary schools, some PTAs were employing significant numbers of supplementary teachers: a fact which was indicative of parental support. Two notable cases were at Birehe II, where the PTA was employing 11 out of 31 teachers, to give a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 35), and at Bulenga, where a PTA employed 8 out of 21 teachers, to give a PTR of 52.

Parental support was highest in Rushekyera and in Butto EA, where incomes were relatively good and education was highly valued. Strong leadership in the school and the village council at Rushekyera was also a factor. At Butto, however, a council representative commented, 'LC1 leadership tries their best but not as much if I can say, it's more from the parents' side'. This was plausible in a community that was known for a strong work ethic and a high level of employment. The representative thought also that for legal reasons it had become harder for the council to control other people's children: nevertheless we have seen that the Bulenga Council managed to exercise some control over truancy.

Another community-level factor to emerge from the comparisons is a negative one relating to occupations: the dependence of some parents on low-paid casual work. This factor was illustrated by Omubushenshero in Kabale District, an area with brick and stove production, and by Kinoni EA in Rubirizi District, an area with some informal mining. Where parents themselves depend on casual work, it is more likely that their children will be absent, or drop out of school, to engage in the same work. In contrast, parents with small farms seemed better able to support their children's education, as in Rushekyera EA and Birehe II EA.

Uwezo Uganda interviews an LC1 chairperson

8. Qualitative Research Findings on Family Influences

In this section, individual children are identified in the tables by a letter and number, the letter indicating the district. Thus, those interviewed in Kabale District are shown as A1-A16; those in Kotido District as B1-B11, and so on. In some cases where children are identified personally in the narrative, pseudonyms are used as well. Individual parents are identified by the household number and in some cases by pseudonyms.

For each district, the discussion is divided into four sections: general observations about the sample; parents' support for children's learning; parents' interaction with the schools, and a summary of the differences between families.

8.1. Kabale District

8.1.1. The samples of children and levels achieved

The research team in Kabale District was able to interview 16 children, in eight households, four being in the prosperous, rural community, Rushekyera, and four in the poorer, peri-urban community, Omubushenshero. In each case two households were classified as PD and two as typical, on the basis of the children's residuals. At least one parent or guardian was also interviewed in each household. Tables 6 and 7 list the children by EA and by household, showing their sex, age, grade (year) in school, their levels of English reading and numeracy as measured in the Uwezo Assessment, and, in brackets, the residuals of their z-scores.

Table 6. Sample in Rushekyera EA (Kabale District)

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
3525	PD	A1	F	14	P6	Story w.c. (+0.98)	Arith. 4 (+0.03)
3525	PD	A2	F	12	P3	Paragraph (+1.09)	Arith. 4 (+0.15)
3535	PD	A3	F	13	P4	Story w.c. (+1.57)	Arith. 4 (+0.53)
3535	PD	A4	F	10	P3	Story w.c. (+1.79)	Arith. 4 (+0.86)
3524	T	A5	M	14	P3	Word (-0.11)	Arith. 4 (+0.86)
3524	T	A6	F	12	P6	Word (-1.10)	Arith. 4 (-0.13)
3531	T	A7	F	14	P3	Story w.c. (+0.90)	Arith. 4 (-0.13)
3531	T	A8	M	7	Top	Letter (+0.03)	Arith. 2 (+0.90)

*Abbreviations of the reading and numeracy levels, in Tables 6-14, are explained on page 5.

Table 7. Sample in Omubushenshero EA (Kabale District)

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
3509	PD	A9	M	12	P5	Story w.c. (+1.11)	Arith. 4 (+0.21)
3509	PD	A10	M	13	P4	Paragraph (+0.17)	Arith. 4 (+0.55)
3514	PD	A11	F	10	P2	Word (+0.62)	Arith. 1 (+0.25)
3514	PD	A12	M	6	Middle	Letter (+0.58)	Num. rec. (+0.54)
3505	T	A13	M	12	P3	Paragraph (+0.61)	Arith. 2 (+0.06)
3505	T	A14	F	9	P2	Letter (-0.33)	Num. rec. (-0.52)
3510	T	A15	M	12	P1	Letter (+0.23)	Matching (-0.45)
3510	T	A16	F	12	P1	Non-read. (-0.40)	Matching -0.45)

The tables show that the levels of reading and numeracy achieved are generally more satisfactory and consistent in the first (PD) EA than in the second. In the first EA, only Children A5 and A6 clearly do not have an adequate reading level for their ages and grades.

8.1.2. Parental support for children's learning

The interviews reveal that all the households in the Rushekyera sample, except No. 3524, provided adequately for the basic school requirements such as writing materials and fees, set time aside for homework, and encouraged reading and numeracy. In one case (3525) the father was a teacher but the fathers of Nos. 3525 and 3531 had little education themselves. By inference, they were successful farmers who could meet the costs and valued the education. The father of No. 3509 was unusual in saying that he bought books for the children. The household head of No. 3524, however, was a grandmother who struggled to meet the requirements, having limited support from the parents. Those interviewed were unanimous in having a high opinion of Kabu Primary School (the one attended) and its management.

There was a sharp contrast with the peri-urban community of Omubushenshero, in which most parents depended on casual labour and most of the children had to carry bricks at the weekends to help meet the costs of their schooling. The only exception to the general poverty was Household 3509, in which the LC Secretary supported numerous grandchildren. The grandmother would not allow A9 or A10 to carry bricks for pocket-money: but they helped with gardening and goat-herding. Household No. 3514 barely qualified as a PD example and the mother, on whom the children mainly depended, was a casual worker who had difficulty in paying the school fees. No. 3510 was an even poorer household in which Maria, the daughter, could not say her own age. The children, A15 and A16 (Paul and Maria), had not attended any preschool and were still in P1, at the age of 12 according to our survey. Their mother, Annette, admitted too that she could not always provide lunch for the children.

It was clear that very poor and illiterate parents could not directly support their children's literacy development. 'My parents don't teach me reading and writing,' Jossy (Child A11) said. The most they could attempt was to provide a space and time for homework and to encourage practical arithmetic. One mother mentioned that she always gave time for homework before dusk, as the house had no electricity; water would then be fetched as the night fell. Households with electricity could schedule more time for homework.

8.1.3. Parental interaction with the schools

Parents' comments on the primary school in Rushekyera supported the impression given by the focus group that it was very popular and that its events were well attended by parents. The one activity in which perhaps it was less successful was the feeding programme: most children seemed to be having lunch at home if they lived near the school. In Omubushenshero parents were less likely to meet the teachers or to attend school events, largely because they had difficulty in paying the fees and providing uniforms and scholastic materials. Annette, the mother of No. 3510, was afraid to visit the school because of the fees that were owed. While struggling to meet these costs, they paid less attention to their children's progress in school. Communications from the school that they noticed were reminders to pay fees, usually stated in Rukiga.

8.1.4. Summary of family differences

In general, there is more variation, in children's learning outcomes and in household interaction with schools, *between* the two communities selected in Kabale District, than there is *within* each community, even though the selected households were designated as 'PD' or 'typical' through comparison of the residuals. In Rushekyera, families did reciprocate the efforts of the school to provide a supportive learning environment. On the other hand, there was limited opportunity for the families in Omubushenshero to be more supportive to learning, given the adults' lack of education and their daily struggle with financial insecurity. The reliance on casual work provided by local industries seems to correspond to an 'equilibrium of poverty', as described by John Kenneth Galbraith (1979), in which the available income was quickly divided between unskilled labourers, including children, who were in large supply. The children of these families had multiple disadvantages and there was no 'magic bullet' practice that could be transferred from Rushekyera to change their situation.

8.2. Kotido District

8.2.1. The samples of children and levels achieved

The research team in Kotido District was able to interview at least one parent or guardian for each of the eight households selected, and 11 children, seven of whom were in households classified as PD. Data on the children is shown in Tables 8 and 9.

The children's residuals in this district are not entirely reliable, as the interviews showed that grade levels and ages had not been correctly reported in the assessment survey, in a number of cases. The fact that some children were not sure of their ages was an additional limitation. In the national context, too, the two EAs selected did not differ very much in the generally low levels of children's reading and numeracy. As the tables show, however, children of the PD households in Nakosoburin C were above the average for the district both in reading and in numeracy.

The interviews help to resolve some of the apparent inconsistencies in the data from the focus groups, in which some members reflected a pastoralist tradition. The interviews show that, as mentioned earlier, both of these communities are *ex-pastoralist*, having lost their livestock to a large extent in raids attributed to the Turkana of Northern Kenya (Kang-Chun Cheng, 2023). An informed guess is that those raids occurred in the first decade of this century (Stites, 2022). Since that disaster, the economy of the two communities has radically changed to an emphasis on cultivation, charcoal production and petty trading. Attitudes to education are more positive as a result, partly because there is not the same demand for boys to become herders and eventually owners of cattle and even of smaller livestock. These communities do not show the tension between the 'Western' school and traditional socialisation that was identified by Ejuu, Apolot and Serpell (2022) in another part of Karamoja.

Table 8. Sample in Nakosoburin C EA (Kotido District)

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
7221	PD	B1	M	?	P2	Paragraph (+1.40)	Arith. 4 (+1.33)
7221	PD	B2	M	?	P4*	Word (+0.77)	Arith. 4 (+1.33)
7237	PD	B3	M	12	P5	Paragraph (+0.64)	Arith. 4 (+0.45)
7237	PD	B4	M	9	P3	Paragraph (+1.30)	Arith. 4 (+1.17)
7224	T	B5	F	10	P2*	Letter (+0.81)	Matching (-0.27)
7226	T	B6	M	9*	P1	Word (+1.34)	Matching (-0.49)

*Data corrected through the interviews.

Table 9. Sample in Komor North EA (Kotido District)

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
7365	PD	B7	F	7*	Middle*	Letter (+0.65)	Arith. 1 (+0.35)
7370	PD	B8	M	?	P3*	Letter (+0.70)	Arith. 2 (+0.87)
7362	T	B9	M	12	P3	Letter (+0.01)	Matching (+1.08
7372	T	B10	F	12	P2*	Letter (+0.02)	Arith. 3 (+0.64)
7372	T	B11	F	8	P2	Letter (+0.05)	Arith. 1 (+0.35)

*Data corrected through the interviews.

Another development that has helped schools in Karamoja is the provision of a free lunch by the World Food Programme. All children in Nakosoburin and some of those in Komor North benefited

from this; the reporting on Komor North is rather ambiguous, but parents were contributing firewood and some produce rather than money.

Major disadvantages, however, were the severe shortages of teachers in the government-aided primary schools and the very limited learning materials. The pupil-teacher ratios were 125:1 at the government-aided primary school in Nakosoburin and 76:1 at the one in Komor North. When parents said they were providing 'books' for use at school, this always meant exercise books, into which their children would copy notes. Published textbooks were likely to be seen by the teachers only. An additional problem was grade repetition: many of the children interviewed had repeated and this would reduce their chances of completing the primary cycle, as social pressures to work (for boys) or to marry (for girls) increased with age.

8.2.2. Parental support for children's learning

All of the parents interviewed had a positive attitude to school attendance, hoped that their children would benefit, and made an effort to get them to school on time. The main factors that limited their support were (in most cases) their own lack of education and their poverty. Typical parents could not help with problems of English homework because they were not literate. They managed to provide some writing materials for school – but not the uniforms or suitable shoes in many cases.

The parents of the two PD households in Nakosoburin (Nos. 7221 and 7237) were slightly more prosperous than typical parents and so rather more effective in their support. Their children were making progress in English reading. Those of the PD households in Komor North were more educated as well as having more income from food crops than the typical parents, and the numeracy results seemed to have benefited. Daren (Child B8), for example, had gained some experience of selling produce from his father's farm.

A general limitation was that few of the children had attended ECD centres (where fees would have to be paid). An exception was Florence (Child B7), whose mother kept her in an ECD centre although she was over-age. The motive may have been to ensure that she gained some literacy before entering the large classes of the primary school.

8.2.3. Parental interaction with the schools

The level of fees reported as charged in this district was very small, ranging from nothing to UGX 5,000 per term. The government-aided primary school in Nakosoburin, for example, just charged UGX 2,000 for report cards and UGX 500 for maintenance of the water supply. There were also voluntary donations of firewood for cooking the daily meal. This was realistic in relation to the low financial capacity of most households.

The schools managers were also realistic in depending on verbal messages rather than written letters to communicate with parents. Those interviewed also mentioned that the LC1 helped by publicising school meetings verbally. They were generally complimentary about the efforts of the SMCs, including their attention to issues of teacher and pupil absenteeism. However poor they were, parents felt able to interact with the teachers and if necessary the head teachers.

Another sign of realism was the schools allowed children to attend without uniforms or suitable shoes, in cases where the parents could not afford them. We did not hear of any cases of children being sent home for reasons of dress.

8.2.4. Summary of family differences

As we have indicated, the PD households in both EAs were able to support their children's education rather more effectively than typical households, mainly because of their higher income levels. The levels of numeracy, in relation to children's grade levels, were clearly better as a result. In Nakosoburin the PD households also had slightly better English reading levels, in a context of generally low levels. The low levels of reading, however, were not due to lack of motivation: the lack of ECD attendance, the teacher shortage in primary schools, and the lack of learning materials, were the obvious main factors. For a poor district such as Kotido, remedies require, mainly, an improved financing and management by the central government.

8.3. Rubirizi District

8.3.1. The samples of children and levels achieved

The researchers interviewed seven children in the large village of Birehe II, classified as PD, and three children in the smaller village of Kinoni, classified as typical. (Kinoni replaced another EA where the survey data was found to be unreliable and for this reason only two households were visited there.) At least one parent or guardian per household was also interviewed. Data on these children is shown in Tables 10 and 11.

In this district there was a marked contrast between the PD and more typical households *within* Birehe II, the PD EA. The situations of the selected children in Kinoni EA were not very different from the typical cases in Birehe II.

Table 10. Sample in Birehe II EA (Rubirizi District)

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
8511	PD	C1	F	14	P5	Paragraph (+0.04)	Arith. 4 (+0.36)
8511	PD	C2	M	8	P2	Word (+0.39)	Arith. 4 (+1.35)
8514	PD	C3	F	10	P3	Paragraph (+0.70)	Arith. 4 (+0.99)
8514	PD	C4	F	7	P1	Paragraph (+1.36)	Arith. 4 (+1.66)
8504	T	C5	F	14	P6	Paragraph (-0.53)	Arith. 3 (-0.55)
8504	T	C6	F	12	P3	Word (+0.13)	Arith. 3 (+0.57)
8520	T	C7	M	14	P6	Paragraph (-0.20)	Arith. 4 (+0.07)

Table 11. Sample in Kinoni EA (Rubirizi District)

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
8691	PD	C8	M	10	P2	Word (+0.42)	Arith. 2 (+).44)
8697	T	C9	M	7	Top	Letter (+0.10)	Matching (-0.42)
8697	T	C10	F	7	Top	Letter (-0.23)	Num. rec. (-0.29)

8.3.2. Parental support for children's learning

The two PD households in Birehe II managed to meet school requirements through the combined efforts of various adults in the families. In Household 8511 a grandmother was the effective carer: but financial support came from the mother (who was living elsewhere) and another child was boarding in P7. Patience (Child C1) had been transferred frequently, and this may have affected her reading level. The other grandmother had electric light, and the children could do homework in her house. Household 8514 struggled more to meet the requirements of the same government primary school, the fees being in the range of UGX 40,000 to 60,000 per term. But an aunt helped by monitoring homework and attending school events.

The parents of Households 8504 and 8520 had little education and seemed to depend on casual work. Children C5 and C6 (Anne and Rebecca) were not provided with breakfast – only lunch. The father of C7 (Simon) struggled to pay the fees. As direct help to the learning process, these parents could only encourage practical calculation and were not able to help with reading: a common finding in all the rural districts visited for this research.

In the Kinoni sample, the mother of C8 (John) was able to provide some monitoring and help for homework. John had, however, repeated both P1 and P2, partly because of changing schools, and his reading and numeracy levels were not good for his age. In the typical household (No. 8697), the mother also helped with homework, being a former nursery schoolteacher. The children attended a private school with relatively small classes: but it was not explained why they had started schooling late and were only in ECD Top Class at the age of 7. These children, too, went without breakfast and were only given lunch.

8.3.3. Parental interaction with the schools

In most of the cases, one of the adults in these households attended school events. It was the grandmother for No. 8511, the aunt for No.8514 and the mothers for Nos. 8520, 8691 and 8697. The main exception was No. 8504, where the mother, as a single breadwinner, said she had no time to attend. The adults of No. 8514 considered that the head teacher was accessible and appreciated the efforts of teachers in contacting them by phone. In general, schools were sending notices to parents in the local language (Runyankore-Rukiga).

8.3.4. Summary of family differences

Some families in the sample benefited more than others from the support of relatives other than parents (aunts, grandparents, etc.) for children's education. However, most of the families found it challenging to pay the fees that primary schools were demanding, in particular those of the

government-aided primary school attended by Birehe II children. The levels of fees reported by parents (in the range UGX 39,000 to 58,000) were higher than those reported by school representatives in the focus group (UGX 25,000-35,000). The only secondary school near the community was a boarding school and not affordable to the poorer families. In short, there were serious financial barriers to educational opportunity.

8.4. Wakiso District

8.4.1. The samples of children and levels achieved

Because of the social complexity of Wakiso District, three communities were selected for study, Butto, Bulenga and Nabweru South, as explained above. The first two were moderately prosperous, Butto having a significant presence of 'white-collar' workers (salary earners) and Bulenga having mainly trading occupations, while Nabweru was dominated by businesses of a simpler kind, including some animal husbandry in small spaces. In the event, however, the parents and guardians interviewed in Butto were at least as much involved in, or supported by, business as by any white-collar occupations and not very different in life-style from their counterparts in Bulenga. The main difference was that the 'typical' Bulenga parents had greater difficulty in meeting the costs of education.

Tables 12, 13 and 14 show the profiles of the children interviewed: seven in Butto, eight in Bulenga and seven in Nabweru South.

Table 12. Sample in Butto M EA

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
1033	PD	D1	M	10	P4	Story w.c. (+1.16)	Arith. 4 (+0.50)
1033	PD	D2	F	6	Top	Word (+0.57)	Arith. 3 (+1.36)
1034	PD	D3	F	8	P2	Story w.c. (+1.85)	Arith. 4 (+1.16)
1023	T	D4	M	11	P4	Paragraph (-0.07)	Arith. 2 (-0.41)
1023	T	D5	F	7	Top	Letter (-0.03)	Num. rec. (-0.00)
1025	T	D6	F	8	P2	Paragraph (+0.54)	Arith. 3 (+0.69)
1025	T	D7	M	7	P2	Paragraph (+0.54)	Arith. 2 (+0.23)

Table 13. Sample in Bulenga BQ EA

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
987	PD	D8	M	6	P2	Word (+0.24)	Arith. 4 (+1.50)
987	PD	D9	M	8	P3	Story w.c. (+1.49)	Arith. 4 (+0.84)
996	PD	D10	F	11	P4	Story w.c. (+1.19)	Arith. 4 (+0.48)
996	PD	D11	F	10	P4	Story w.c. (+1.19)	Arith. 4 (+0.48)
989	T	D12	M	7	P2	Word (-0.01)	Arith. 4 (+1.18)
989	T	D13	F	14	S1	Story w.c. (-0.08)	Arith. 4 (-0.80)
992	T	D14	F	7	P2	Paragraph (+.0.44)	Arith. 1 (-0.27)
992	T	D15	F	12	P5	Story w.c. (+0.73)	Arith. 4 (+0.11)

Table 14. Sample in Nabweru South EA

Hh. no.	PD/T	Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Reading level* (residual)	Numeracy level (residual)
4483	PD	D16	F	8	P2	Story w.c. (+1.47)	Arith. 4 (+0.81)
4496	PD	D17	F	13	P5	Story w.c. (+0.91)	Arith. 4 (+0.18
4496	PD	D18	M	12	P5	Paragraph (-0.36)	Arith. 3 (-0.28)
4497	T	D19	M	11	P5	Paragraph (-0.50)	Arith. 2 (-.0.84)
4497	T	D20	F	8	P3	Paragraph (+0.15)	Arith. 1 (-0.64)
4498	T	D21	F	13	P5	Word (-0.48)	Num. rec. (-1.06)
4498	T	D22	F	8	P1	Letter (-0.46)	Matching (-0.86)

8.4.2. Parental support for children's learning

In contrast with the situation in other districts, none of the children in Butto M EA, and only one in Bulenga BQ EA, had repeated any grade. The one exception was Sarah (Child D15), who had repeated after being transferred from what she described as 'a bad school' in the village. The levels of literacy and numeracy were generally good or fair in relation to the children's grade levels.

Within the Butto M community, the sample shows a consistent pattern of effective parental support, with only slight differences of learning outcomes between the households classified at PD and

typical. In all cases the children were provided with the essential scholastic materials and were enrolled for school lunches. Either good drinking water was available at the school, or they carried a bottle of water with them. In all cases they were attending English-medium private schools, with fees in the range of UGX 200,000 - 450,000 per term.

In all cases the Butto children were given a set time for homework and were encouraged to read, write and calculate. They could obtain help from parents, other relatives or friends if they needed it. An educated adult was usually available to help. The mothers of Households 1023 and 1025 mentioned that they had bought books for the children and both households had some of the characteristics of a 'school-like home', with a very disciplined approach to learning. It would not be correct to assume that strictness always produced the best results, however: Patrick (Child D1), living with his tolerant grandmother who understood the value of play, achieved better results than Ahmed (Child D4), also in P4, whose mother seemed rather domineering. (She boasted about her assertive approach to the school.) As the mothers or grandmothers tended to have small shops, the children in all four households were gaining some experience of buying, selling and related calculation. In two of the households, the presence of storybooks or 'reading books' was mentioned, whereas this was seldom encountered in other districts.

The Bulenga parents were also consistently supportive in their attitudes and home arrangements: but all those interviewed except the children's 'aunt' (probably a step-mother) at Household No. 987 seemed to be single mothers with little or no assistance from fathers. This reflects the high prevalence of female household heads in the Greater Kampala area. All the single mothers were struggling to pay the fees and one had a neighbour helping with childcare because she worked an evening shift. The typical households (Nos. 989 and 992) were using a government-aided primary school but unfortunately it was charging UGX 100,000 or 130,000 per term (according to the grade). Part of the reason for this was to pay supplementary teachers (eight out of 21 employed), as there were too few on the government payroll.

The parents at the PD household No. 987 tried to give the children a balance of activities – some reading, household work and play – during the holidays (a very enlightened approach). This and No. 992 actively encouraged the reading of books and newspapers. However, Gabriel at No. 989 commented, 'Here we don't have newspapers or storybooks, so nothing to read'. As in Butto EA, the support for numeracy at home, through experience of buying and selling, was more consistent than the support for literacy and the Uwezo numeracy result was satisfactory in most cases. As far as the school language work was concerned, children did not show any consistent pattern of finding Luganda easier than English or vice versa, in cases where both languages were being taught. (Some of the private schools were not teaching Luganda.)

In Nabweru South, a poorer but urbanised community, there was a clearer contrast between the PD and typical households. The PD households managed to provide most of the fees and other school requirements, though it was a struggle, while the typical households got by with more difficulty and a lot of negotiation. Except for Household No. 4496 (which paid about UGX 500,000 per term), all the families were using private schools at the lower end of the market, with fees in the UGX 100,000 – 200,000 range, partly because there were no government-aided schools in the community. Hadiza (Child D16), although attending a lower-end school, seems to have good results because she is intelligent and helped by her mother – even though the father, Ibrahim, rejects the idea of helping his many children with their homework. 'They help themselves because we pay the school to teach our children … '. Paula, the mother at No. 4496, is careful to allocate time for homework but considers that the school (a higher-end one) is assigning more than enough and does not add to it.

The typical households in Nabweru South were both financially very challenged by schooling. No. 4497 depended on the father's income as a Safari worker, the mother having no employment, while Belinda, the single parent at No. 4498 depended on casual work. 'I am the father and the mother … yet I just do casual work here within our community.' Not surprisingly, the children's reading and numeracy levels were low. Nevertheless, the children voiced the desire to complete their education and aspired to professional roles.

The Butto and Bulenga parents were all literate to some extent, and some recognised the value of the mass media for their children's learning. Tabitha who was in S1 (No. 989) used her mother's smartphone 'to do my research'. Some of the households had TV sets and one parent mentioned the TV news as a useful source of language. Paula in Nabweru South mentioned using the web to support her children's learning.

8.4.3. Parental interaction with the schools

There was no consistent relationship between the classification of the household as PD or typical and the frequency with which parents interacted with teachers and attended school events. In Bulenga EA, the mothers of Nos. 996 (PD) and 989 (typical) both had difficulty in attending events because of their work commitments. In general, the interaction between parents and schools seems to have been more consistently frequent in Butto than it was in Bulenga, the parents being under less financial pressure. However, a Butto parent mentioned that the SMC of the private school her children attended (Dream Community School) did not consult parents much. This was in contrast to our impressions of the schools where the focus group discussions were based.

With the exception of Abdul (father of No. 4483), who said that he never interacted with the teachers and was not invited to meetings, parents of Nabweru South, even those with long working hours, made an effort to attend, or be represented at, parents' meetings and other school functions. Winnie of No. 4497 felt that attending improved her standing as she negotiated for more time to pay the fees (a common attitude). 'I attend such meetings so that the school management know that I am around and ask the teachers to be patient.'

Schools in this district generally sent written notices about events, and about fees owed, both in English and in Luganda, and these were readily understood by most parents. At least one school uses a Whatsapp group to send messages.

An Uwezo Uganda researcher enters one of the sampled households

8.4.4. Summary of family differences

The samples of children from Wakiso District do not include any cases of children who had dropped out of school or who were considering entry to commercial or artisan work as an alternative to continuing with education. In a few cases children were learning potentially marketable skills from the home, such as selling in a small shop, learning to sew or learning to grow vegetables, but in general there was no great conflict between the demands of the school and the culture of the home, as happens in some rural areas. Families that had recently moved to the Greater

Kampala area may have come with strong educational aspirations.

The families that we have described do of course vary in their ability to accommodate the demands of the school staff, both financial and academic, especially as most of the schools attended are private. Private primary schools in Uganda may be going through a phase rather like that of the early 20th century in the United States, as depicted by Joyce Epstein (1987), in which they distance themselves from the home and emphasise the specialist knowledge of teachers. Trends like requiring 'prep' periods after classes, offering Saturday classes and opening boarding facilities for P7 are indicative, and are also sources of additional pay for these schools, as they compete for good results in the Primary Leaving Examination. Such trends increase the pressure on families with modest incomes and limited educational knowledge. Only the nursery sections seem to have a more family-like environment.

The households that were best able to meet the demands of the schools were those with (a) higher levels of parental income and financial commitment to the children and (b) multiple sources of adult support, where grandparents, uncles and aunts as well as parents, played a part. Other households apparently did not benefit from the 'extended family' tradition and some of the female household heads had little or no support from their partners. These less fortunate parents were not receiving any support from public welfare programmes either. With reference to the Parish Development Model (which has a welfare component) and Emyooga (a presidential initiative for job creation), focus group members in Nabweru South thought that corruption affected the selection of beneficiaries and that very few benefited.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1. Community-level Influences

Both at the community and at the family level, the research illustrates a number of practices that are useful for children's commitment to education and for their learning outcomes. The illustrations come mainly from the 'positively deviant' EAs and households, including some more 'typical' households within PD communities. However, unlike the health practices that attracted attention in the early examples of positive deviance research, most of these practices are not easily transferable between communities or between households because they have developed in specific, and favourable, socio-economic contexts. One of the main conclusions from the comparisons is that, without additional external support, transfer to less favourable contexts would be difficult.

At the community level, a partial exception can be made for leadership by the village or ward council, and especially by its chairperson (known as LC1 in Ugandan phraseology). This is a potentially useful support for schools and for educational outcomes that could be adopted more widely. It is best illustrated by Rushekyera and Bulenga, where the council commands wider social respect than the school management committees and is clearly a source of social capital. Although the village councils have many responsibilities, more attention to education could be encouraged, even in communities that face challenges in other sectors. The present, narrow focus on the use of a 'big stick' (literally in the case of Rushekyera) to prevent pupil absenteeism could be changed to include a monitoring of schools' fees and levies, some of which are very burdensome for the poorer parents and not strictly necessary.

A case can also be made for the founding bodies (usually religious) of government-aided schools to provide more encouragement for learning, as illustrated by the Church of Uganda in Rushekyera. Unfortunately, some churches charge schools for the use of their premises, adding to the existing

burden on parents at government-aided schools and disregarding the ethics that they are supposed to uphold.

While such improvements are possible, it has to be noted that village councils and founding bodies have very limited formal authority in educational matters. The funding and staffing of government-aided schools are primarily central government responsibilities, while oversight of all school management is a joint responsibility of the central and district authorities. Prevention of the over-use of grade repetition in primary schools, a perennial issue, depends on action by the district educational authorities as it requires professional judgement.

Collective action by parents, at the community level, is visible through the work of SMCs and (in most schools) PTAs. PTAs have established school meal programmes in many schools: but, as our evidence shows, these programmes are more effective in private schools where most parents can afford to meet the termly cost in advance or where (as in Kotido) they are funded externally. It is not realistic to advocate making such programmes compulsory, in the absence of public or external funding, partly because of the other financial demands on parents that government-aided schools are making.

The costliest commitment made by some PTAs is the employment of supplementary teachers. This report has mentioned cases in which the PTA had become so frustrated with the shortage of government-paid teachers and the large class sizes that it was contributing more than one-third of the school's teachers. This in turn adds to the financial difficulties of parents with low incomes and for this reason the level of support for staffing that was achieved in Birehe II or Bulenga could not reasonably be transferred to Kinoni or Nabweru South. We shall comment further on the social injustice of the under-staffing.

The managers of government-aided schools are obliged by the Education Act (Government of Uganda, 2008, pp. 14-15) to tread a fine line between raising funds to improve facilities and learning materials and not excluding any pupils because of non-payment of fees or levies. The demand for supplementary teachers makes this task even harder: some focus groups mentioned instances of parents complaining to Resident District Commissioners and the latter threatening school managers because of fee increases decided by PTAs.

9.2. Family-level Influences

At the household level, the research illustrates both the multiple supports to school attendance and learning that parents and guardians provide, and their interactions with schools through meetings, events and correspondence. In both areas, their 'sphere of influence' over children overlaps with that of the school, and to some degree with that of the community. In general, the types of support in which most parents have some success are ensuring a punctual arrival at school, designating a time and place for homework, and providing some practical experience of buying and selling that requires simple arithmetic.

The more effective families visited were able to ensure that children received either a school meal or lunch at home and that they carried some safe drinking water if none was available at the school. They were able to help children to overcome difficulties in their homework. Children were expected to help with household chores but were also allowed some free time, so that there was a balance between study, household work and play. It would be difficult to transfer these desirable practices to the poorer households, however. Some parents do not manage to provide lunch every day; others provide a packed lunch but no breakfast. Parents with little education say that they cannot help with cognitive problems in the homework and that this is a matter for the teachers. Parents who work for long hours (especially single mothers) are more dependent on children's help with household chores,

such as the fetching of water and firewood by boys and care of younger siblings by girls. In extreme cases, children have to engage in casual work at the weekends to boost the family income.

One important area of deficiency is reading materials for children. Only a few of the parents interviewed (mainly in urban areas), mentioned providing their children with textbooks, storybooks or newspapers. Lack of books at home, as well as shortages of books in schools, goes a long way to explain the slow progress in literacy throughout primary education. The problem applies both to English and to local languages (Ssentanda and Andema, 2019). Lack of access to storybooks explains why very few of the children interviewed were able to name any story that they knew. Those that were named were traditional stories (e.g. the Hare and the Leopard) and not contemporary children's stories or novels.

Books could reach more homes if there were a more generous procurement for primary schools by the Ministry of Education and Sports and a wider marketing of low-cost books by publishers. The formation of libraries in schools and communities has been encouraged for some years by the Reading Association of Uganda: but the informants in this study made no reference to libraries and the presence of books in the home would probably have more impact. Some schools are afraid to release books to children, however: we learned of an extreme case in Komor North where a school had given up setting homework and releasing exercise books, fearing that paper from the exercise books would be used by hawkers to wrap foodstuffs.

Some of the parents interviewed were very positive about their interaction with teachers and head teachers, attended parents' meetings regularly, and were able to monitor their children's progress. Here again, however, the transfer of good practices faces difficulties. The more the parents interviewed were struggling to pay fees and provide other school requirements, the more their interaction with schools was dominated by questions of money, allowing less opportunity for discussion of their children's progress. In some extreme cases, parents were afraid to visit the school because of the fees they owed or could not afford to reduce their working hours to attend parents' meetings.

9.3. Towards a Renewed Social Contract for Basic Education

Uncertainty about the present and future role of the Ugandan state in basic education makes it difficult to give realistic expectations for the roles of local communities and families. Important elements of a social contract for basic education are provided by Uganda's constitution and by the Education Act of 2008. The constitution commits the state to providing 'free and compulsory basic education' and to promoting equal educational opportunities for citizens and to equitable development of all services (Constitute, 2017). The Education Act is specific about the obligations of the Government to government-aided schools: it is responsible for deploying and paying trained teachers, paying statutory grants, providing educational materials and 'other capital development inputs' (Government of Uganda, 2008, pp. 14-15). Such schools are allowed to raise additional funds on a voluntary basis but not to exclude any child for non-payment. The state is not obliged to pay for children's meals or clothing while at school.

The context of this study is one in which parents generally accept primary education as compulsory but the state is delinquent, not fulfilling its side of the social contract adequately. School survey findings show that teachers on the government payroll are far too few and inequitably deployed and the same applies to classrooms (Uwezo Uganda, 2019, 2021). Head teachers find that the capitation grants are insufficient for learning materials. This situation not only encourages flight to the private sector but also causes head teachers, SMCs and PTAs in government-aided schools to charge fees for a range of purposes, including the employment of supplementary teachers, and to treat the fees as

compulsory. The ban on exclusion of children for non-payment is widely disregarded. The fee-raising practices of private schools are imitated by the government-aided schools and in some cases squeeze the poorer households to the limit. We have seen a government-aided school in Wakiso District charging fees of UGX 100,000 per term and in the process raising funds for a P7 boarding facility. The privatisation and commercialisation of basic education is in stark contrast with the vision of 'social justice' in the constitution. There is also an issue about equitable access to secondary education through the UPPET policy, as fees were perceived to be a barrier.

An expansion of the public teaching force, a more equitable deployment of teachers, and substantially larger capitation grants would enable the Government to restrict the charges that a government-aided school can make. More limited fees would help the poorer families to meet their obligations to provide food for each child (or subscribe to a school lunch) and provide sufficient uniforms, shoes and writing materials. There would still be some families that had difficulty in providing the basics for school attendance but local councils, with their detailed knowledge of the community, could help in identifying them and linking them with charitable individuals or organisations.

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Annex I: Procedure And Questions for Village/Ward Focus Groups: Community Influences on Children's Learning

Participants

The following are suitable participants for a focus group in each of the selected enumeration areas (villages or wards):

- The chairperson of the village/ward council (LC1)
- The head teachers of any primary schools and/or ECD centres in the village/ward. (If there is no primary school in the village, invite the head teacher of the school that most children attend. In the urban wards where there are many schools, select one government and one private primary school.)
- Religious leaders with significant congregations in the community. (If the school was founded by a church, it is important to invite a representative of that church.)
- Up to two other executive members of the council.
- Up to two representatives of school management committees (SMCs).
- Up to two representatives of parent-teacher associations (PTA's), if available.

The goal should be to assemble a group of 8-10 persons. In cases where an important informant is absent from the focus group, it may be necessary to interview him/her on some of the issues later.

Facilitators

For focus group discussions, two researchers should work together as facilitators. One, **the moderator,** should function as initiator of discussions, prompter and time-keeper, while the other, **the note-taker**, observes all the interactions, takes notes and (if agreed) makes a recording. The initiator should try to ensure that all participants have an opportunity to contribute and should seek to recognise a consensus where there is one.

Points of guidance for the moderator: It is important that participants should be able to contribute spontaneously, but the moderator may need to steer the discussion to keep it relevant. He or she should also seek comments on any important issues that have emerged from the interviews held with children and parents/guardians.

Points of guidance for the note-taker: The task of the note-taker is to describe what took place and this is more than just a record of what was said. A mixture of reported speech and quotations of important statements is acceptable in the final record. It will be helpful if the speakers are identified (by their roles) in the record. The use of a code for each participant is recommended, as a means of identifying speakers in the notes.

Language: For all focus group discussions, the facilitators must request the use of English, whether or not they are speakers of the local languages. If any community representative has difficulty with English, a team member from the collaborating CSO can be asked to interpret where necessary.

Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For some years Uwezo Uganda has been assessing children's reading and numeracy and at the same time gathering information on children's educational status and attendance. We are now trying to understand better the influences that different communities and families have on children's learning and progress at school. Your community is one of those that we have selected for enquiries and we thank you for agreeing to help us.

Questions

Part 1. About the local community

Tell us a little about the community:

a. What are the main types of work that people do here?

b. Is there a market and how frequently does it meet?

c. Are there any big employers?

d. What religious organisations exist here?

e. Are there any clubs for sports or leisure activities?

f. Is there any adult literacy class?

g. What is special about this village/ward? What is it known for?

Part 2. About the organised support for local schools

(If there is no primary school located in the village, apply the questions to the primary school that most children attend. In urban wards, apply them to the two selected primary schools.)

a. Does the school have an active SMC? How often does it meet? (Ask about each school and ECD centre if there is more than one.)

b. Does the school also have a PTA and how often does it meet?

c. How often does the village/ward council meet? When was the last meeting?

d. In what ways does the council support and cooperate with the school and with any ECD centres in the community?

e. How does the foundation body support the primary school (if applicable)?

f. Does the school charge development levies to parents? How much per child per term? How are they used?

g. Does the PTA employ supplementary teachers? Give details.

h. Are the school buildings used for community meetings or other activities?

i. (In the case of government primary schools): Does the school belong to a zone of schools for sharing resources?

Part 3. About educational issues of interest to the community

a. Do many children attend ECD centres? (What proportion is estimated?)

b. Does the primary school have a high completion rate? (What rate is estimated by the head teacher?)

c. Do many children gain entry to secondary schools? Which secondary schools are the most accessible?

d. At the last meeting of the village/ward council, were any of the following discussed?

- Provision of teachers
- Provision of school buildings
- Provision of school meals
- Teacher absenteeism
- Pupil absenteeism
- Dropouts
- Pregnancy of female pupils
- Any other educational problem (specify)

e. What action is being taken or planned, in response to the problems discussed?

Annex II: Interview Schedule for Parents

Participants

Both parents of the family (if accessible) will be invited to take part: but in some cases only one will be available. Guardians (not biological parents) will be treated as parents if they are the ones looking after the children and providing for schooling needs. In some cases grandparents may have the role and should be included (e.g. a mother and grandfather could be interviewed together).

The interview will normally be conducted by two researchers, one asking the questions and the other taking notes and (if permitted) a sound recording. If the parents have limited knowledge of English, a familiar local language should be used. Children must not be present during the interview.

Introduction

Good Evening

For some years Uwezo Uganda has been assessing children's reading and numeracy and at the same time gathering information on children's educational status and attendance. We are now trying to understand better the influences that different communities and families have on children's learning and progress at school. Your family is one of those that we have selected for enquiries and we thank you for agreeing to help us.

Household profile

Record the up-to-date facts about the composition of the family/household on the household data sheet provided.

Questions

Part 1. Support at home

1. Are you able to provide your children with their basic requirements for school?
2. What steps do you take to ensure that your children attend school every day and punctually?
3. Are your children enrolled in school meal programmes? What is the cost of these? (If they are not enrolled), what provision do you make for their lunch when at school?
4. What steps do you take to ensure that your children complete the homework set by teachers? (Ask about where and when they do it.)
5. If the children have any difficulty with homework, do you give them any guidance?
6. Do you encourage your children to read and write? By what methods?
7. Do you encourage your children to perform calculations or solve mathematical problems. How do you do that?

Part 2. Interaction with the school(s) (Ask about each school if the family uses more than one.)

8. Do you have any opportunities to meet the teachers and discuss each child's progress with them? (Give details of termly report sessions and other meetings.)

9. Do the teachers listen to your opinions and concerns at such meetings?

10. Have you met the head teacher? Is he or she available if parents ask to see him/her?

11. Do you attend any events at the school? (If necessary, prompt about PTA meetings, sports days, musical or drama events, religious services).

12. Do you have any difficulty in making time for such events? (Give reasons, e.g. hours of work or looking after other children.)

13. What written communications (letters or notices) to you receive from the school as a parent? In what language are they written? Can you easily understand these communications?

14. Is the school charging parents any development levies? How much per child per term? How are they used? What other payments do you have to make to the school?

15. Is the PTA raising money from parents? How much and for what purpose?

16. Do you perform any voluntary work at the school (e.g. as a member of the SMC, provider of extra tuition or in helping with school events)? (Give details.)

Part 3. Perspectives on community support

17. What support does the school receive from the local community?

18. Is the school management committee (SMC) effective?

19. How does the foundation body (e.g. a church) support the school (if applicable)?

Annex III: Interview Schedule for Children

Participants

This interview is to be conducted individually with one or two children (a maximum of two), in the age range 6-14, in each household selected for its positive or typical residuals. Where there is a choice, select one boy and one girl. The interview will normally be conducted by two researchers, one asking the questions and the other keeping notes and (if permitted) a sound recording. Parents or other members of the household must not be present.

Introduction

Hello Peter / Patricia (use first name),

My name is … and this is … who works with me. We are researchers and we would like to ask you some questions about how you are getting on with your schoolwork, especially in English, the local language and mathematics. This will help us to suggest improvements in the way that schools and homes help children to learn.

Questions

Part 1. General and basic needs

1. For how long have you been attending primary school? Did you repeat any class?

2. Please say whether you find each of these subjects easy, just OK, or difficult: (a) English, (b) the local language (specify) and (c) mathematics.

3. Which subjects or activities do you like at the school?

4. Do your parents always provide you with the things you need for school? (Uniform, shoes, school bag, writing materials, books.)

5. Are you enrolled for a school meal (breakfast or lunch)? If not, do you carry a packed meal to school?

6. Is drinking water available at the school? If not, do you carry drinking water?

Part 2. Homework

7. Does the teacher often give you homework? (Every day / twice a week / not often)

8. Does your mother/guardian give you a time to do your homework? Where do you sit to do it?

9. If you find the homework difficult, what help can you get at home? (Give details of who helps – mother, sibling, etc. – and how far it is effective.)

Part 3. Home learning

10. What self-help skills have your learned at home? (Prompt to ask about care of livestock, growing staple foods and vegetables, finding firewood, cooking, sewing, care of clothing, selling food or other goods.)

11. Have you learned any traditional stories or songs at home? (Give examples.)

12. Do your parents encourage you to read and write? If so, how? Does this apply to the local language, English or both?

13. (Where applicable) Does this help you in your schoolwork?

14. Do your parents encourage you to perform calculations when needed, e.g. to estimate the costs of food or to record sales of goods?

15. (Where applicable) Does this help you in your schoolwork?

Part 4. Expectations about schooling

16. Do you expect to complete primary school? (If not, give reasons.)

17. Do you hope to attend secondary school? (Give reasons for response.)

18. What work would you like to do after completing your education?

Annex IV: Household Fact Sheet

Some of the details in this fact sheet will already be known from the Uwezo Assessment Survey of 2021 or 2024, but verification is important. Researchers should complete the sheet with the help of parents before carrying out the home-based interviews.

Adults (aged 18 or above						
Names	**Sex**	**Age (approx.)**	**Relationship to children interviewed**	**Whether formally responsible for the child's schooling (Y/N)**	**Occupation**	**Remarks**

Children aged 6-14						
Names	**Sex**	**Age**	**Grade (class) attended**	**Name of school**	**Level (ECD, primary, secondary)**	**Whether to be interviewed (Y/N)**

Other children (aged 0-5 or 15-17)			
Names	**Sex**	**Age**	**Remarks**

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