



**CSO POSITION PAPER ON THE EDUCATION SUB PROGRAMME IN RESPONSE  
TO THE FY 2024/25 NATIONAL BUDGET FRAMEWORK PAPER**

**January 2024**

## Introduction

The education sector is one of the key drivers to spur long term economic development in Uganda as it seeks to attain Vision 2040 that envisions “A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years”, NDP III, as well as the NRM manifesto objectives. In this regard, access and benefit from education programmes should be inclusive to benefit everyone while reducing the challenges faced by the disadvantaged.

The FY2024/25 National Budget Framework Paper (NBFP) highlights the Government's commitment to increase the relevance of learning and knowledge building to meet the needs of Uganda's growing economy. More specifically in FY 2024/25, the Education, Sports and Skills Sub Programme will focus on: Establishment of the National Teachers' Council; Construction of 60 Secondary Schools in sub counties without, renovation of 50 secondary schools in selected LGs, Full operationalization of the redeveloped EMIS; Enhance the inspection function of the Directorate of Education standards to improve teacher time on task and effectiveness; Operationalization of the High-Altitude Training Center; Provision of Capitation grants for UPE, USE, UPOLET and other tertiary training institutions; and support research and innovation at Higher Education levels through promotion of STEM STEI. We strongly recognize the efforts by the Ministry of Education and Sports in launching the EMIS and the launch of the E-Supervision for education institutions and the provision of UGX **13,958,000,000** in the supplementary budget to cater for the student loan scheme for the FY 2023/24.

**Table 1: Highlights Of Programme Projected Performance**

Program outcome	Improved learning outcome				
	Programme objectives contributed to by the intermediate outcome				
Program outcome indicators	Base year	Base year	Baseline	24/25	25/25
Average years of schooling	2021/22	6.2	65%	68%	70%
Gross enrolment ratio Pre-Primary	2021/22	16.6	35	50	50
Gross enrolment ratio – Primary	2021/22	111	116.9	128.4	130
Net enrolment ratio-primary	2021/22	17.8	24	26	28
Proficiency in literacy % P3	2021/22	58.2%	62%	65%	68%
Proficiency in literacy P6	2021/22	62.04%	67.0%	69.2%	70.5%
Proficiency in numeracy % P.3	2021/22	62.88%	71.7%	73.3%	74%
Proficiency in numeracy % P.6	2021/22	62.4%	70%	72.3%	74%
Survival rates, % - Primary	2021/22	38.9%	42%	43%	44%

*Source: FY2024/25 National Budget Framework Paper*

The proposed budget for the education sub programme is projected to increase slightly by UGX 334.45 Bn from UGX 4,187.198 Bn in FY 2023/24 to UGX 4,521.65 Bn in FY 2024/25. This increase is primarily on account of a projected increase in the external financing component based on resource allocations for the Uganda Learning Acceleration Programme (ULEARN) and Uganda Skills Development in Refugee and Host Communities (USDRH) projects.

**Table 2: Education and financing by Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Approved Budget 23/24 UGX Bn</b>	<b>Proposed Budget 24/25 UGX Bn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>013 Ministry of Education and Sports</b>	667.3	974.5	307.2
111 National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)	23.3	23.3	0
128 Uganda National Examination Board (UNEb)	127.5	127.5	0
132 Education Service Commission (ESC)	11.9	11.9	0
164 National Council for Higher Education	14.7	14.7	0
165 Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board	30.6	30.6	0
166 National Council of Sports	48.9	48.9	0
301 Makerere University	354	354	0
302 Mbarara University	60.4	60.4	0
303 Makerere University Business School	105.8	105.8	0
304 Kyambogo University	135.4	135.4	0
305 Busitema University	55.4	55.4	0
306 Muni University	31.6	31.6	0
307 Kabale University	60.3	60.3	0
308 Soroti University	26.7	26.7	0
309 Gulu University	67.4	70.4	3
310 Lira University	35.8	35.8	0
312 Uganda Management Institute	42	42	0
313 Mountains of the Moon University	38.1	39.1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,937.10</b>	<b>2,248.30</b>	<b>311.2</b>

*Source: FY2024/25 National Budget Framework Paper*

The proposed education sector budget has increased from **UGX 1937.1 bn** in FY 2023/24 to **UGX 2,248.3 Bn** in FY 2024/25. This increase is on partly account of an increase in external financing from **UGX 311.75Bn** to **UGX 619.03Bn** in the Ministry of Education and Sports based on resource allocations for the Uganda Learning Acceleration Programme (**ULEARN**) and Uganda Skills Development in Refugee and Host Communities (**USDRH**) projects, even though these are still pending World Bank's Board approval. GOU allocation to the Ministry of education has been maintained at the level of FY 2023/24 - **UGX 356.53Bn**. This implies that there are no additional discretionary resources for the Ministry and all emerging policy commitments must be funded within the existing budget constraint.

#### **Sub Programme Priorities in FY 2024/25**

1. 1,380,591 copies for P5-P7 English Readers, Local Language and English Dictionaries and IRE readers procured.
2. 715,000 and 221,500 P.7 and S.4 leavers respectively placed to the next level of education.
3. 399 teachers trained in psychosocial support services with special focus on Mental Health.
4. 1000 Teachers trained in Lower Secondary Curriculum.
5. 650,000 textbooks procured and distributed to support implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum.
6. 50,000 practical science students' manuals procured and distributed to 190 poorly performing schools.
7. 1200 science teachers trained in integrating ICT in the implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum.
8. 1200 science teachers trained in integrating ICT in the implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum.

9. 3,000,000 copies of instructional materials for science subjects for secondary schools procured.

### **Key CSO Issues for Concerns**

#### **1. Inefficiencies in school inspections by the Directorate of Education Standards in the ministry of education and sports.**

One of the ways of improving the quality of education is through implementation of improved quality standards through the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The DES is mandated to ensure improvement in the quality of education and training in schools and certificate awarding institutions through inspection. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) report of June 2023 indicates that much as the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) has been strengthening the collection and use of school level data which is useful in supporting evidence-based decisions, the department has challenges including lack of an Inspection Policy to guide the setting and defining of education standards in respect to inspection which affects regulation of inspection activities at the operational level. The directorate also lacks an inspection strategy making it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the directorate in addressing the gaps in education. This is amplified by lack of Annual Work Plans and Budgets, thus the choice of schools, regions and the nature of inspections to undertake could not properly be determined, lack of a complete and comprehensive database of secondary schools in the country, which would have been a tool to inform selection for inspections, inadequacies in school inspections, manifested in form of irregular inspections, inadequate time allocated to inspection sessions and inadequate number of full inspections undertaken.

The report also indicates very low full implementation of inspection recommendations by schools at only 7% with recommendations in 93% of schools either partially implemented or not implemented at all, which is an impediment to performance improvement.

### **Recommendations**

- a) MoES should engage the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development to prioritize funding and any other associated support leading to the formulation of an Inspection Policy to guide DES inspection activities.
- b) DES should ensure a complete and reliable database is maintained to support the DES during planning and implementation of school inspections and emphasize the use of the rolled-out e-inspection digital tool for standardized criteria and outputs/performance as well as better achievement of school inspection objectives.
- c) Consider developing a communication strategy to enhance the dissemination of inspection findings to the relevant stakeholders, especially to the head teachers and teaching staff of the schools inspected so that recommendations are timely actioned.

#### **2. Inadequate Financing of Education in Emergencies and Host Communities.**

As of June 2022, Uganda was hosting 1.53 million refugees and migrants settled mainly in 12 districts in the West, West Nile, and Kampala. The pressures that education service delivery undergoes in the refugee hosting districts are concerning. Except Kampala, the total population of school going refugees aged 3–18 years was 785,216, constituting 51.3 percent of the total refugee population. The increasing number of refugees has put pressure on schools across all education levels that have already faced challenges of poor infrastructure. For example, the

school-age population has more than doubled in Yumbe district since 2016. In some government primary schools near refugee settlements, refugee learners outnumbered learners from the host community. Whereas schools have welcomed and integrated refugee children, the district education departments do not have sufficient capacity to provide additional facilities and resources for the current number of learners.

Relatedly, the pupil-to-teacher ratio in the refugee-hosting districts is still high compared to the Ugandan national average for all levels of education. To adequately serve just the currently enrolled learners in settlements in the target areas, an estimated additional 6,185 teachers are required to bring the pupil-teacher ratio to the government standards of 25 pupils to 1 teacher for ECCE and 53 pupils to 1 teacher for primary and secondary in refugee-hosting areas (settlement and non-settlement). While improvements were made in Education Response Plan 1 in educational access, particularly in primary education level with the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of refugees improving from 58.2 per cent in 2017/2018 to 88.5 per cent in 2020/2021, it is still below the national average primary GER of 111 percent as recorded in 2017/2018<sup>1</sup>. School infrastructures are greatly lacking in refugee settlements and host communities. In addition, teachers teaching in refugee settlements and host communities are paid by donors and partners that operate project specific budgets. There is over dependency on external financing to address these challenges.

### **Recommendations**

- a) The Ministry of Education and Sports needs to step up support towards education interventions in refugee-hosting districts through the regular budgeting process, particularly capitation grants and teacher's salaries in government-aided schools, funds for inspection and support supervision, as well as school supplies including materials.
- b) There is a need for the Ministry of Education and Sports to budget for construction of schools and school infrastructure in refugee hosting communities to promote inclusive education among refugees and host communities.
- c) The Ministry of Education and Sports should ensure that teachers teaching in schools from refugee host communities and settlements are included on the government teachers' pay roll.

### **3. Poor service delivery and under performance of the Education Development grant.**

According to the Auditor general's report of June 2023, a budget performance review in LGs indicates that a total of UGX. 86.61Bn (99%) was received in 157 LGs out of the budgeted UGX 86.63Bn and only UGX. 82.63Bn (95%) was utilised by the end of the year, resulting in an under absorption of UGX. 3.97bn.

Consequently, a physical inspection of newly constructed and renovated classroom blocks, and 5-stance pit latrines in LGs by the office of the auditor general indicates poor state of service delivery. The OAG report of June 2023 indicates that construction of 42 projects in 19 LGs had not been completed at the time of inspection indicating that the projects had delayed by an average of 180 days, 67 projects in 35 LGs had defects such as cracked walls, unpainted windows, uninstalled lightning conductors, delivery of substandard furniture, and unfixed water gutters, 5 projects worth UGX 336Mn in 5 primary schools remained idle after their completion because they had not yet been commissioned which denied the beneficiaries service delivery. This poor service delivery and under absorption of funds is attributed to the late

release of funds and retention monies for contracts whose defects liability periods had not expired.

**Recommendation.**

- a) MoFPED should ensure timely release of funds and the accounting officers should always roll over the un-implemented activities to the following financial years. The accounting officers should ensure the defects are rectified before retention payments are made, they should also liaise with relevant stakeholders and ensure commissioning of projects to deliver services to the intended beneficiaries.

**4. Limited infrastructure in schools implementing Universal Primary Education Program**

The Auditor General’s report for FY2022/23 highlighted a high level of inadequacy in school infrastructure for UPE schools as shown in the table below;

	Classroom availability	Provision of desks	Availability of latrines
Recommended ratio	1:53	1:3	1:40
FY2020/21	1:70	1:4	1:62
FY2021/22	1:75	1:5	1:65
FY2022/23	1:77	1:4	1:67

The Auditor General reported that the inadequacies were attributed to the rise in pupil enrolment that did not match the number of classrooms, desks and latrines available. The report further noted that the limited infrastructure is negatively affecting pupils’ learning as some of them have to stand while studying, girls and boys share urinal and even sometimes with teachers.

**Recommendation**

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Parliament of the Republic of Uganda and the Ministry of Education and Sports should enhance the school facilitation grant to facilitate the renovation and expansion in UPE schools considering the increasing number of enrolment.

**5. Limited Financing for Instructional Materials in Primary Education**

Following the introduction of UPE, enrolment in primary school increased from 3.1 million in 1996 to 8.84 million consisting of 50% male and 50% female distribution in 2018<sup>1</sup>. Uganda achieved expanded access from 3 million learners in 1997 learners to 8.4 million learners in 2019 in 36,565 institutions of which 34% are public schools. Primary Education completion rate also improved. By FY2019/20, only 26% of children aged 13-16 years had finished primary school on time. Primary leaving examination (PLE) pass rate for girls increased from 65.3% in 2002 to 86.2% in 2014<sup>3</sup>. Primary survival rate was at 33% in 2017 out of which 66% transit to secondary education. Significant disparity is noted across the country (ESA report 2019).

Despite this increase in access, most of those remaining in primary education do not achieve minimum levels of literacy and numeracy. In 2018, the numeracy and literacy rates were still very low at 55% and 50% Literacy at Primary 3 and 51% numeracy and 53% Literacy at Primary 6 (NAPE 2018). These outcomes are lower in refugee hosting districts, with 5.6% literacy proficiency at P3 and 33% at P6 literacy proficiency (ERP Baseline Survey, 2021). In

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<sup>1</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics Primary school enrolment by class and sex-2022

the FY 2024/25 the Education Sub Programme priorities speak to this issue and aim to procure 1,380,591 copies for P5-P7 English Readers, Local Language and English Dictionaries and IRE readers. Given the 2017 enrollment of 1,170,640 pupils in P5, 971,231 in P6 and 623,946 in P7<sup>4</sup>. There is a shortage of books in P5 where the pupils are higher than the budgeted books. This predicament will undermine improvement of reading outcomes that are required at early learning stages.

### **Recommendation.**

- a) The Ministry of Education and Sports should make a budget provision to increase the number of copies for P5-P7 English Readers, Local Language and English Dictionaries and IRE readers to the number of pupils in P5 such that each pupil has a personal copy to avoid sharing which reduces the contact time with the instructional materials.
- b) The Ministry of Education and Sports should also make a budget provision to procure reading books for P3 -P5 learners since Literacy rates were at 50% at Primary 3
- c)

### **6. Low capitation grants for Universal Primary (UPE) and Secondary Education (USE) Programs**

In 2018, the National Planning Authority (NPA) evaluated the public financing for UPE and established that the UGX 10, 000 that was being allocated per pupil per year as capitation grant (operational) expenditure was insufficient. It accordingly recommended that government makes capitation grant allocation of UGX 59, 503 and UGX 63,546 per pupil per year in rural and urban schools respectively to enable schools to meet the operational costs.<sup>2</sup> However, the allocation was increased to UGX 20, 000 despite the increase in inflation over the years. As a result of the insufficient funding, parents are required to contribute 57% of the total cost for public primary education despite the high levels of poverty.<sup>3</sup> At the secondary level, NPA estimates for schools to be able to effectively implement the new lower secondary curriculum, they need a capitation grant allocation of UGX. 177,500 (\$45) per student per term compared to the current capitation grant allocation of UGX 51000.<sup>4</sup> The limited funding of public primary and secondary education has led to schools charging non – tuition and consequently contributing to school drop out for those who fail to meet the non – tuition. The Uganda National Bureau of Statistics has reported that 67.7% of boys and 62.1% of girls drop out due to unaffordability of education in its Uganda National Household Survey 2019/ 20.

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<sup>2</sup> National Planning Authority, Comprehensive Evaluation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy, Thematic Report 5: Financing and Costing of UPE, 2018, p. xv at <http://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Thematic-Report-5-Financing-and-Costing-of-UPE-080119.pdf> accessed on February 2, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> The National Planning Authority (NPA) Issues Paper on Uganda's Education Reforms Submitted to: Education Policy Review Commission October 2022 at <https://docplayer.net/236090849-The-national-planning-authority-issues-paper-on-uganda-s-education-reforms-submitted-to-education-policy-review-commission-october-2022.html> accessed on February 2, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## **Recommendation**

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Parliament of Uganda and the Ministry of Education and Sports should ensure that the capitation grants for UPE and USE schools are enhanced as per the unit thresholds recommended by the National Planning Authority.

### **7. Challenges in implementation of the Lower Secondary Curriculum**

The government rolled out the new lower secondary education curriculum (LSC) that is being implemented in a phased-out approach from February 2020, starting with senior one learners. So far 90 national facilitators, 1600 master trainers, and 20,000 senior one teachers were trained (representing an average of 4-5 teachers from each school - both Government aided and private were trained) and a total of 6020 schools - both Government & private) received syllabi books distributed by the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC) between October and December 2019 (NCDC 2023).

Like any other new programme, the curriculum has had some challenges, and there are still gaps in implementation, some of which include a great scarcity of materials, especially for vocational training and hands on teaching and learning, including computers and the internet, among others which are inaccessible by most of the vulnerable students and those in rural schools. There is still a gap in teacher orientation and some teachers are not implementing the curriculum as expected. This is worsened by a high degree of resistance that is still prevailing among some teachers, school administrators, and school owners. There are schools that are still struggling to adopt the methodologies of delivering the curriculum regarding teaching, classroom management, and even assessment, which is affecting the effective implementation of the programme.

According to the MTEF Budget Projects FY 2024/25 the NCDC development budget is projected at UGX 3.074 Bn remaining consistent with FY 2023/24. However, with the rolling of the new lower-level secondary education curriculum the NDP 111 sub programme priorities require increased investments in the recurrent budget which is only projected to increase from UGX 11.671Bn in FY 2023/24 to UGX 24.090Bn in the MTEF FY 2024/25. The limited increase in the recurrent non-wage budget will make it hard for NCDC to effectively implement the curriculum looking at the fact that UNEB is having a new grading system for O-level starting this year.

## **Recommendations**

- a) The Ministry of Finance should consider increasing the allocation for NCDC to effectively deliver on the stated 2024/25 priorities like procuring of materials for the new curriculum and orienting of more teachers.
- b) The Ministry of Finance should provide funds to intensively implement provision of incentive packages for teachers, including in-service training, redeployment, provision of accommodation especially those in hard-to-reach and hard-to-stay areas.

### **8. Limited access to pre-primary education and Absence of comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD) Curriculum**

Currently, there are 3,614,827 children aged 3 – 5 years who are eligible for pre-primary education (EMIS, 2016). However, by 2016, there were 6,798 registered pre-primary schools with a total enrolment of 563,913 learners, of which 279,089 (49.5%) were boys and 284,824 (50.5%) girls. This implies a net enrolment of 15.6% meaning that 3,050,913 eligible learners

were not accessing pre-primary education in 2016. Comparatively, access to ECD delivery stood at 9.5% in Uganda, 53.3% in Kenya and 35.5% in Tanzania during 2014 (ESSAPR, 2013/14). Although the Government established the Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy 2016 aimed at achieving ECD objectives and the development of the ECD curriculum, the curriculum is not disseminated.

### **Recommendation**

- a) The Ministry of Education and Sports should allocate funds for the dissemination of the ECD curriculum to enhance its implementation across the country.

### **9. Lack of School Health Policy.**

The absence of a school health policy affects the control and management of health-related challenges in the educational environment. Critical issues like mental health, teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, among others are not effectively managed due to a lack of a governing policy. The policy was drafted in 2013 but has not been finalized. It has been reported that 45% of Ugandan primary school learners and 25% of teachers are having social emotional or mental health challenges.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, school mental health programs for children and teachers do not exist in the Ugandan education system. Out of the total budget for the health sector for FY2024/2025, only 0.7% had been allocated to mental health of which a big proportion is retained by Butabika National Referral Hospital.

### **Recommendations**

- a) MOES Education should increase budget allocations to critical departments of Basic Education- Guidance and Counseling from the current 0.6% to cater for mental health and psychosocial well-being of learners.
- b) The Ministry of Health should make budget allocations to fast track the development and roll out of the Uganda School Health Policy.

### **Conclusion**

Much as efforts are being made to increase education sector financing, Uganda's education financing still falls short of its national and international commitments. Our analysis of the Education Sector budget for FY2020/21-FY2022/23 reveals the Education budget averaged at 12% in FY2020/21, 13% in FY2021/22 and 8% in FY 2022/23. This is lower than the Dakar Declaration which requires African Union States to spend at least 20% of their National Budgets on the Education. The per capita spending per learner is still inadequate. For example, in FY2022/23, the UPE Capitation Grant was UGX148 billion, translating to UGX17,000 per child. This is lower than the National Planning Authority (NPA)'s recommended budget per learner of UGX 63,546 for urban schools and UGX 59,503 for rural schools. There is need to invest in education sector which has a high multiplier effect on the economy and complements growth in all other sectors of the economy.

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<sup>5</sup> LASER PULSE Program in the Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning Policy Brief Version March 1, 2023,