

**INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT (APPRAISAL) REPORT
ON THE EDUCATION AND SPORTS SECTOR STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2020, UGANDA**

Commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID) in Uganda on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Education Development Partners Group.

Final Report, 10 November 2018

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Disclaimer: The information and views set out in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of DFID in Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Education Development Partners Group, or the Global Partnership for Education.

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1. Introduction

Uganda joined the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 2011 and has since received USD 100 million from a GPE implementation grant (2014-2018, extended to 2019), which is managed by the World Bank. The project development objective is "to support the Government in improving teacher and school effectiveness in the public primary education system"¹. and has three components related to effective teachers, effective schools, and implementation support and capacity building.

The project aims to support the Government in improving teacher and school effectiveness in the public system of primary education. The grant had significant delays and is still being implemented as the ending date was postponed to June 2019. There was a significant turnaround in performance over the last 24 months. The World Bank believes that, after its restructuring, most of its activities will be completed and the funds disbursed where results are achieved and verified.

Uganda is eligible to receive a second GPE Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG), with a maximum allocation of USD 100 million. Access to the GPE grant requires an independent assessment of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), to ensure that it meets the quality standards of a credible and sound plan and its subsequent endorsement by the Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC). At the outset, the general objective of this consultancy was to assess the overall quality and the technical and financial solidity of the current ESSP 2017/18-2019/2020, with a view to its endorsement to the GPE.

On behalf of the Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC), DFID Uganda hired Dr Alberto Begue-Aguado, Dr Albert Byamugisha, and Mr Wilberforce Muhwana as consultants to elaborate this independent assessment.

However, as the plan has already been signed off and launched by the political leadership, and given its short validity period, in the middle of this consultancy and with the agreement of the Education Development Partners (EDPs), the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has decided not to use the current ESSP to apply for a second GPE grant but to elaborate a new ESSP 2020-2025. The endorsement of the ESSP 2020-2025 will serve as the basis for the ESPIG application at the end of 2019. The consultant team was commissioned to orientate the recommendations to inform the elaboration of the ESSP 2020-2025, not improve the current ESSP 2017-2020.

¹ World Bank (2014), Project Appraisal Document on a proposed Global Partnership for Education Grant in the amount of US\$ 100 million to the Republic of Uganda for the Teacher and School Effectiveness Project, August 15.

2. Methodology

The purpose of the appraisal phase (independent assessment) is to assist education stakeholders in assessing the soundness, relevance, and coherence that lend credibility to an Education Sector Plan.

The methodology utilized to collect information relevant to the appraisal comprised the following activities:

- **Desk Review.** This stage included a review of the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017/18-2019/20, the Financial Model, and other relevant documents related to the education sector in Uganda (see Annex 3).
- **Interviews with Authorities and Education Partners.** Interviews were conducted in Kampala from 23 August to 7 September. The list of interviewees is presented in Annex 2.
- **Analysis of the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan.** The plan was analysed according to the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal.
- **Presentation of Preliminary Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations in Kampala.** The results were presented to the MoES and the education sector partners under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary on 31 August.
- **Elaboration of the Draft Appraisal Report.** The draft report was submitted to the DFID and the MoES focal point, James Mayoka, who shared the report more widely with the MoES, the Education Development Partners Group, and the GPE Secretariat for their comments.
- **Submission of the Final Appraisal Report to DFID/EDPs and the MoES.**

3. The Education Sector in Uganda: Background and Context

The right to education is guaranteed under Article 30 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda. Article 18 states that ‘The State shall promote free and compulsory basic education’. The Education Act of 2008 also guarantees this right.

The Education Act 2008 is the main legal framework for the education sector in Uganda (with the exception of higher education) and set the foundations of the current education system. The Government White Paper on Education (1992) is the overall policy for providing direction and interventions in the education system. All education sub-sectors are under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES).

The education system in Uganda comprises pre-primary education, seven years of free and compulsory primary education (also called basic education), six years of free secondary education, and a minimum of three years of tertiary education. It also includes Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET), and Non-Formal Education (NFE).

Pre-primary education is purely private in Uganda as determined by the Government White Paper 1992², the Education Act 2008 and the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy 2008. 'Pre-primary education to be run by private agencies or persons to provide education to children aged from two years to five years and the financing of that type of education shall be a responsibility of the parents or guardians. The government shall provide the curriculum, guidelines on minimum standards for school buildings, equipment, and other relevant facilities for pre-primary institutions through its relevant agencies, as well as (...) provide the curriculum for teachers training. (...) All pre-primary schools should be licensed, registered and regularly inspected by government education inspectors' (Education Act, 2008: 15). However, no reference to these guidelines is included in the ESSP. The Ministry is currently revising the policy on ECD to address issues of inequity and financing among others, which should be included in the ESSP 2020-2025.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in 1997 with a focus on enrolment, paying little attention to quality and equity. Twenty years later, UPE was still not achieved in Uganda and the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) declined in 2015. The NER in primary education has decreased from 97% in 2014/15 to 91% in 2015/16 (Statistical abstract 2017, 17). Universal Secondary Education (USE) was established in 2007 and, although the enrolment increased rapidly, it remains at low levels. Moreover, the NER in secondary education also decreased from 26% to 22% in the same period, resulting in 7.7% fewer students.

To implement these policies, among other strategies, the education system includes a system of capitation grants set for schools to cover indirect costs. Currently, capitation grant received by schools are set at Ugandan Shillings (UGX) 10,000 per pupil per year at the primary level and UGX 41,000 and UGX 80,000 per student at secondary level UCE and UPOLET respectively. However, despite the MoES's efforts and significant improvements in previous years, the NER in primary education was still at 91% in 2015, and the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in secondary education at 24.50%³. Pre-primary schools experienced an impressive increase, from 703 in 2007 to 6,798 in 2016. The GER increased from 2.5% to 16%, while the NER increased from 1.5% to 9%. This percentage is still low compared to other African countries with a similar level of development. The sector has also registered gradual improvements in enrolment in BTVET and tertiary education, following the adoption and implementation of policies for the respective sub-sectors⁴.

² Government provides the regulatory policy framework as well as training of care givers among others.

³ ESSP 2017-2020, 2017: 25-26.

⁴ BTVET Act, 2008; University and other tertiary institutions Act, 2001 as amended and university student loan scheme, 2014.

In addition to the access issue, the education sector still faces important challenges in terms of equity and quality. National averages mask significant geographical disparities. For instance, literacy rates in Kampala are 30-40 percentage points higher than in the poorest regions (Uwezo, 2016: 27).

One very relevant factor to be considered in the education sector planning is that Uganda has one of the world's youngest populations, with nearly half of them under 15 years of age. 'The population is growing at an annual rate of about 3.2 per cent, the third highest in the World' (Vision 2040: 88). Demand in primary schools could increase from 8 million in 2015 to 17 to 20 million by 2065⁵. While it represents an opportunity for development, the young population can also pose a challenge if the education system is not able to respond to the current demographic pressure.

The education system is financed through government (around 66%), development partners (around 17%), and private sector, CSOs, and households (around 17%). The private sector plays an important role in education, as it comprises 100% of enrolment in pre-primary education, 20.8% in primary education, and 53.4% in secondary education⁶. The government largely funds the recurrent budget while development partners fund most of the development budget. Over the last two decades, government priorities have shifted from education to others such as energy and infrastructure. The budgetary allocation to education sector has increased nominally but decreased significantly as share of state budget and GDP over the years.

Vision 2040 captures the aspirations of the Government of Uganda (GoU) to convert Uganda into an upper middle-income country by 2040. Such an objective would require significant improvements in the education system in Uganda, which must begin as soon as possible.

⁵ The African Institute for Development Policy and University of Southampton (2018). Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics, Uganda.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5af954f7e5274a25e1eb0834/Uganda_briefing_note_Regional_Analysis_of_Youth_Demographics_.pdf

⁶ ESSAPR, 2017: 197.

4. Technical Appraisal: Criteria Analysis

This section outlines and examines the five criteria of the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal⁷.

4.1 Leadership and Participation

Leadership and Ownership

According to the GPE/IIEP guidelines for education sector plan preparation, a credible plan must be guided by an overall vision. The Uganda ESSP 2017-2020 is anchored on the Uganda Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP) II 2015-2020, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Manifesto 2016-2021, the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and the decentralisation framework. These are well referenced in the background, implying that they provide the basis and direction for the aspirations of the plan.

Education appears in the NDP II as part of human capital development: 'In order to accelerate wealth creation and employment while enhancing competitiveness, the country will prioritize investment in developing a strong human capital, the components of which are health, nutrition education and skills developments' (NDP II, 2015: 188). The NDP II also includes 'introducing universal Education Childhood Development' as a key development strategy (ibid.). The Preface of the ESSP⁸ also mentions that 'it is through human capital development that Uganda's development objectives will be realized'. However, the ESSP does not propose a substantial improvement of either BTVET or higher education⁹ and ECD is barely mentioned, as the private sector (private entrepreneurs and civil society organisations) provides 100% of pre-primary education.

The references for the education sector are the Government White Paper on Education (1992) and the Education Act 2008. Some key informants have felt that the Government White Paper on Education, which lays the foundations of the educational policies, is outdated. Currently the sector is progressing towards reviewing and updating the White Paper for which an issues paper has been finalised. At the international level, the ESSP is underpinned by the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal #4. The plan is well aligned with all these documents and is geared to contribute towards the attainment of macro-level goals and international targets.

The ESSP does not mention the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025, which is a significant reference in the continent. This strategy states that 'key sub-sectors such as pre-

⁷ Available at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-appraisal>

⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, "the ESSP" and "the current ESSP" both refer to the ESSP 2017-2020. The "new ESSP" and the "next ESSP" both refer to the ESSP 2020-2025. The process of elaborating the new ESSP is scheduled to start in October 2018.

⁹ As an example, the projected enrolment annual growth is barely 2% for BTVET and 3% for higher education.

primary, technical and vocational, and non-formal education are severely underdeveloped in spite of growing evidence showing their importance' (AU, 2016: 13). The ESSP also neglects these three sub-sectors, which are then virtually left to the private sector and external donors.

The plan specifies the Vision and Mission statements, which underpins the plan's agenda to guide the sector in performing its mandatory role towards education attainment. The vision is 'Quality Education and Sports for All', while the mission is 'to provide for, support, guide, coordinate, regulate, and promote delivery of quality Education and Sports to all persons in Uganda; for national integration, individual, and national development'.

In the process of elaborating this ESSP, the MoES showed strong leadership, mainly through the coordination of the Education Planning and Policy Analysis Department (EPPAD). For the first time, the MoES has developed an ESSP without external support. 'It is the product of our own efforts', reported a member of MoES staff. Although this achievement can be considered a beginning in the education planning processes in Uganda, at the same time there are capacity gaps in the Ministry, visible for example in some inconsistencies in the financial framework/simulation model¹⁰. There is agreement among the key informants that there is ownership because the plan was developed internally.

The political leadership of the Ministry played a key role in the ESSP elaboration process. The NRM Manifesto and NDP II guided the selection of most of the strategies and interventions of the ESSP. However, there was delay in formulating the new ESSP as the old one expired in June 2015. This put the MoES under enormous pressure, as the Public Management Act 2015 states that a plan aligned to the NDP is a legal requirement for all sectors. The MoFPED ended up giving an ultimatum to the MoES, which in turn rushed to produce a plan in less than six months with the main purpose of complying with government requirements.

Participatory Process

The ESSP was developed by the Education Planning and Policy Analysis Department and then shared broadly for consultation, involving all stakeholders working in the education sector, at the central level and through four regional workshops that were held to discuss on key priority areas, policies, and interventions for the period of the plan. However, the participation of civil society organisations was limited as they did not participate in several of the workshops, including the four regional workshops held in August 2017. Other stakeholders and members of the MoES declared in our interviews that they would have preferred to be more involved from the beginning of the process to the end. As a key informant said, 'there was not enough time to allow all departmental working groups to articulate their priorities'.

Some commissioners and directors declared that the time for consultation was short and that many of their proposals were not included. A MoES's staff declared that the first ESSP draft was

¹⁰ More details and examples will be shown in the following sections.

very voluminous and thus cuts were necessary. Some sub-sectors, such as Special Needs Education, Guidance and Counselling, and Non-Formal Education, have been left behind, while in the case of others like Teacher Instruction Education and Training and Sports the priorities set in the ESSP were not among the critical ones proposed by the departmental working groups. The way this reduction has been done was internally criticized by most MoES staff.

Some NGOs expressed their frustration for not having been included, and yet they monitor the GPE activities and play the role of community mobilizers. The teacher union UNATU declared that it was involved in the preparation of the ESSP only through participating in an ESCC final meeting.

The Education Sector Consultative Committee (the Local Education Group in Uganda) participated in the process by providing comments on the ESSP drafts.

In sum, although the process was participatory and consultative, there was inadequate involvement in some cases due to the rushed elaboration of the ESSP.

Capacity Development

As the ESSP was developed internally in a very short period, key informants agreed that there was no capacity development process, in other words the process did not increase the capacities of the MoES' staff in charge of policy and planning. Analysis of the documents elaborated during the process shows that there have been some significant gaps, particularly related to the simulation model, the financial framework, and the monitoring and evaluation framework. More details will be provided in the following sections.

4.2 Soundness and Relevance

Evidence-Based Education Sector Analysis

An Education Sector Analysis entails presentation of achievements and shortfalls, challenges and constraints and identifying and teasing out the underlying critical/chronic rooted causes for the challenges and their magnitude/effect on impact. No Education Sector Analysis (ESA) was elaborated in the process. Section 2 of the ESSP includes a brief analysis of the education situation presented as a SWOT,¹¹ which is summarized and dominantly organisational/operational and does not elaborate on the status and challenges of the sector priorities – Access and Equity, Quality and Relevance, and Efficiency and Effectiveness. Moreover, a significant portion of the SWOT elements are not reflected in the proposed strategies and interventions.

¹¹ SWOT=Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

The three proposed strategic objectives are standard in education sector plans, focusing on equitable access, quality, and efficiency/effectiveness. The proposed interventions and targets are not informed by empirical evidence. A commissioner reaffirmed that the interventions were not conceived via 'a well- thought through and analytic' process. Rather, in many cases, the interventions or targets are guided by the vision of the NRM Manifesto, sometimes without an anchor in the reality of the sector, as is the case of the proposal to construct a primary school in every parish and a secondary school in every sub county. The ESSP often lacks the needed balance between political imperatives and technical rigour.

Relevance of Policies and Programs

The ESSP elaboration process did not include a revision of the previous ESSP 2007-2015 and only a list of lessons learned was included in the plan. The SWOT could have been a useful tool, but many of the elements included on it were not followed in the interventions proposed in the ESSP 2017-2020. The core of this ESSP contains three broad strategic objectives, focused on access, quality, and efficiency, as well as a list of interventions for each of them. These interventions are not categorised or organised according to any criteria and are barely aligned with the evidence in the sector. The MoES did not consider some important evidence-based analyses elaborated by partners at the time. At the time of the elaboration of the ESSP, rigorous analyses were published by the World Bank¹² and HEART¹³ on different topics related to education, such as education attainment, education achievement, spending, public-private partnership, or early grade learning outcomes. However, the evidence presented in these documents was not used to inform the interventions on the ESSP¹⁴. Some strategies have proved to be effective, such as reducing teacher absenteeism, improving in-service training, increasing per student spending, and increasing years of pre-primary schooling. However, many of these strategies are not prioritised or even included in the ESSP.

The sector has developed and/or adopted various sub-sector and thematic policies such as gender in education policy, teacher education policy, secondary education policy, ICT policy, BTVET policy and others. However, the analytic background and strategic information in these policies is not used to set the interventions and programmes in the ESSP. The plan mentions them in a limited way.

The lack of prioritisation or categorisation of interventions together with the low level of financial resources makes it difficult to discern whether the proposed interventions will have the expected impact.

¹² Wodon, Quentin et al. (2016), Uganda Notes, Education, Notes 1-11, March.

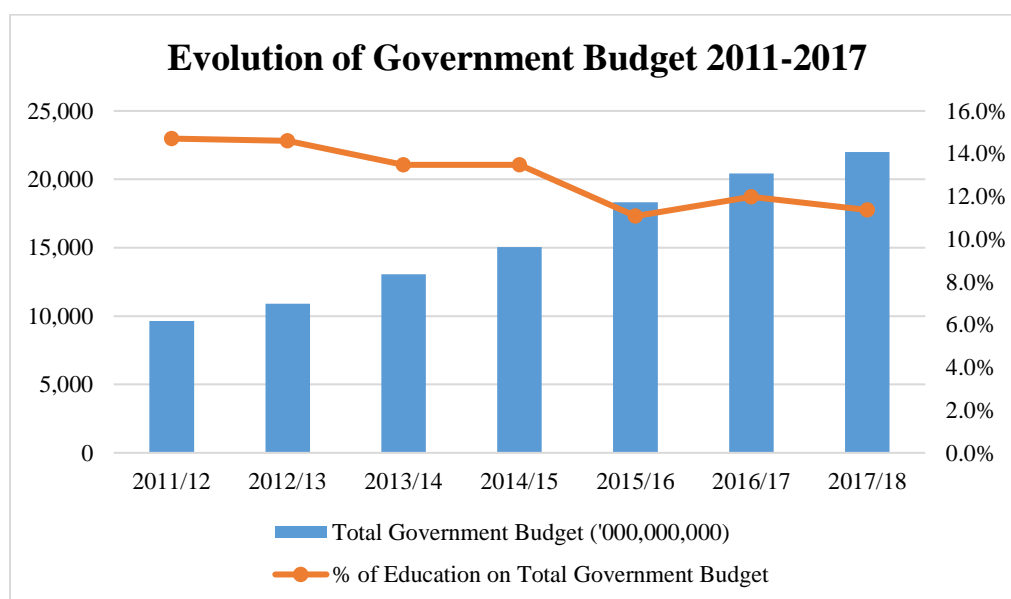
¹³ HEART (2016a), Improving early grade learning outcomes in Uganda, Final Report, February, and HEART (2016b), Uganda's Assessment System: a Road-map for Enhancing Assessment in Education, September.

¹⁴ The notes WHICH NOTES??? were shared at various occasions and also formally disseminated with the MoES, both before and during a well-attended workshop organized with the Ministry in spring 2016.

Soundness of the Financial Framework

The ESSP includes a quantitative scenario in the financial framework/simulation model. After a decade with an average annual growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of 4.3%, the growth rate is expected to be over 5% in 2018 and could rise to 6% in 2019¹⁵. The public budget has grown at the annual rate of 16.2% from 2011 to 2016, while the education budget has grown at the rate of 8%. Therefore, as shown in figure 1, the share of the government budget allocated to education has been decreasing.

Figure 1: Evolution of government budget and share allocated to education (2011-2017).



Source: World Bank (2017b), Financial Highlights, Memo. Elaboration by authors for 2017/18 from MTEF data.

Despite the continuous economic growth in Uganda, the expected trend in education spending is also decreasing for the period of the ESSP 2017-2020. The ESSP includes a share allocated to education of 11.39% in 2018/19, and 11.01% in 2019/20.

It is important to mention that there is confusion regarding the calculation of the share of the national budget allocated to education. Both the MoES on the ESSP and the MoFPED are using a calculation based on budgets which include donor contributions and the external debt service. However, the drafts prepared by the MoES for the next GPE application present higher percentages, basically because debt service is excluded from the denominator (calculation method promoted by the GPE) and donor contributions are excluded as well. In this case, the share is about 4 percentage points higher. The GoU should homogenise the way to calculate the share of the budget allocated to education.

¹⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda>

Much as education is the 3rd ranked priority of the GoU, there is a declining trend in budget shares over the last 10 years against steadily increasing need. While 'public spending in education is the largest contributor to the reduction of inequality' (World Bank, 2017a: 6), and despite the country's significant economic growth of around 4.5% and the importance attached to education in the Uganda Vision 2040, the share has been declining and will follow this trend. Despite the significant population growth and the high targets set in the ESSP, the share allocated to education will continue to decline, 'not keeping pace with the enrolment growth and the ambitions for the sector' (Wodon, 2016, Note No 1: 4).

The specific quantitative scenario for the education sector included in the ESSP is based on the simulation model (called financial framework-FF), a broad document designed in Excel spreadsheets, which has multiple sheets and no scenarios. The projections in the financial framework present some inconsistencies. For instance:

- The population growth rates considered for the ESSP period are between 1.7 and 2.7%, while the national rate is 3.2%.
- Some figures are different on the FF and on the ESSP, for example, the figures on the funding gap on page 30 of the ESSP are different from those in the FF, and some targets on Annex 9 of the ESSP are also different in the FF¹⁶.
- The projections (enrolment and financial) do not include pre-primary, non-formal education, and special needs education.
- Regarding enrolment projections, the expected growth for BTVET is 2% for the period 2017-2020. For tertiary education, the projected growth is 3% per year. These figures show little ambition for two sub-sectors crucial for the country's economic development, as stated in the Vision 2040, the NRM Manifesto, and the NDP II.

Section 4 on cost and financing framework of the ESSP has some significant shortcomings, for example, there is no information on the expenditures by source of funding or on the executed budget. There is a serious inconsistency in the calculation of recurrent and development costs. According to Table 9 of the ESSP, 70% of the total costs are development costs. However, according to the National Budget Framework, 90% of the expenditures of the MoES are recurrent.

¹⁶ Several tables (Excel spreadsheets) are incomplete, e.g., the scenarios of cost saving measures are empty, as are the sub-sectoral expenditures. There are also multiple errors in the formulas marked with '#REF!'.

Table 9: Summary Costs by Sub-sector (Billion Uganda Shillings)

Recurrent Costs:				
Sub-sector	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
Primary	1,307.70	1,487.02	1,679.03	4,473.75
Secondary	126.53	141.45	148.78	416.76
BTVET	138.04	161.37	165.95	465.35
Sports		203.22	212.45	415.67
University/Tertiary	359.81	459.25	560.90	1,379.96
Centralized Services (Agencies, Autonomous Bodies & MoES Headquarter Services)	90.10	103.70	104.32	298.11
Total - Recurrent Cost	2,022.18	2,556.00	2,871.42	7,449.61
Development Costs:				
Primary	3,790.86	2,674.71	823.80	7,289.37
Secondary	346.42	663.87	768.67	1,778.96
BTVET	362.24	349.88	283.25	995.36
Sports		62.00	65.05	127.05
Tertiary / University	58.82	15.77	18.99	93.58
Centralized Services (Agencies, Autonomous Bodies & MoES Headquarter Services)	71.10	70.20	72.27	213.56
Total	4,629.43	3,836.43	2,032.02	10,497.88
Total – Recurrent & Development	6,651.6	6,392.4	4,903.4	17,947.5

Source: Costing Model (Annex 11b)

Cost and financing do not include donor contributions. Some of the donors' prior and ongoing commitments should have been factored into the financing framework.

Regarding the distribution of the education budget, Table 1 shows that the percentages allocated to sub-sectors are virtually stable over the years. Should the ESSP have included a prioritisation, these percentages would probably be different, showing a transfer of funds to one or another sub-sector.

Table 1: Evolution of the share of the allocations to each sub-sector in the education budget

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total	Trend
Primary	47.6%	46.4%	45.5%	46.5%	↓
Secondary	17.9%	17.2%	16.5%	17.2%	↓
BTVET	11.3%	10.8%	11.6%	11.2%	=
Higher Education	18.9%	21.7%	22.6%	21.1%	↑
Sports	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Centralized Services	4.3%	3.9%	3.8%	4.0%	=
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Source: Prepared by the authors with data from the ESSP, 2017: 30.

The analysis of the education budget reveals the following trends:

- The share allocated to primary education would decrease by more than one percentage point.

- The share allocated to secondary education, BTJET, and education management (called 'centralized services') remains virtually stagnant.
- The share allocated to BTJET is relatively high compared to other African countries, such as Kenya (5%), Tanzania (6%), and Ghana (3%).
- The share allocated to higher education would increase by 2.2 percentage points.
- Although the plan mentions the pre-primary sub sector, this is not reflected or traceable in the resource allocation, that is, it does not appear in the MTEF as other sub-sectors.
- Non-formal education and special needs education are also not included in the budget.

The main donors for this ESSP are the Global Partnership for Education, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the DFID, UNICEF, Enabel (Belgium), Ireland, South Korea and USAID. The ESSP does not include projections, although EDPs estimate that the total value of the programmed EDP support will be approximately USD 220 million for fiscal year 2017/18 and USD 175 million for fiscal year 2018/19. This figure would represent 17.5% and 16.8% of the total education budget, respectively. EDPs provide 60% of the development budget. Therefore, the education sector is highly dependent on external support and, moreover, the budget is sensitive to variations in major projects supported by donors such as the African Development Bank, the GPE, or the World Bank.

The ESSP includes a cost calculation for the different sub-sectors. Annex 11a includes the estimated cost for the priority interventions. However, some of the costs, especially for objective 1, are different on the simulation model and some interventions are not costed at all, especially for FY 2017/18. Moreover, when compared to the MTEF allocations there is a huge funding gap: 57% of the activities costed in the plan are not matched in the MTEF. According to the ESSP, 17% of the costs will be covered by households and the private sector. Therefore, there will be funds only for 60% of the activities. This gap would imply a dramatic reduction in the number of interventions that the MoES could carry out during the period of the ESSP. This would also imply less investments than planned and would reduce the possibility of achieving the goals. The lack of budget is very likely to reduce the current figures in indicators of access, quality, and efficiency.

The costing and financing framework in Annex 11b are not cross-referenced to the implementation plan or to the summary of estimated costs (annex 11a), which makes it difficult to read the financial information.

Soundness of the Action Plan

A multi-year implementation plan (IP) is included in the plan (ESSP, 2017: Table 14). As mentioned earlier, there is no chain of results linking the interventions with the achievement of the three objectives. The IP can readily be cross-referenced with the estimated costs shown in Annex 11a. The MTEF is organised in a different way. As the funding gap is extensive, the main issue is that most of the interventions are not covered by the budget at 100%.

The lack of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework makes it difficult to monitor and evaluate the action plan. Moreover, some targets are far from the ‘unconstrained targets for the plan’ pointed out in the implementation plan, for example, 16,065 classrooms will be constructed out of the 78,255 needed, or 2,728 out of the 11,809 teacher houses required. At the same time, the volume and timing of planned annual targets seem unrealistic. For example, the plan proposes to build 13,905 classrooms in fiscal year 2018/19, which seems unrealistic given the lengthy MoES procurement procedures.

The institutional structures responsible for implementing the interventions are clearly identified. However, they do not give much leeway to the decentralised structures, which are legally responsible for construction or teacher recruitment.

The implementation plan presents several errors and typos, probably due to the rushed elaboration process. There is information missing in some targets and some additions do not match.

4.3 Equity, Efficiency, and Learning

Robustness and Relevance of Strategies

In principle, the plan prioritises quality, equity, efficiency, and learning across all sub-sectors, especially in basic education. However, in practice there are significant gaps. Priority setting would have been better informed by and follow logically from a thorough ESA (as stated above) of quality, equity, efficiency, and learning.

Equity

The ESSP states that ‘the Ministry’s programmes encompass special projects targeted towards particular groups of learners, including children in disadvantaged and poor communities, orphans, children living in areas of conflict, and street children’ (page 77). Some interventions are included to support disadvantaged groups, but in a limited way: 150 scholarships per year for disadvantaged areas, and programmes for 10,000 learners per year to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups and communities.

Vision 2040 points out that ‘the state recognizes the need to provide assistance to people who are vulnerable either by age, social class, location, disability, gender, disaster or do not earn any income (...) According to UNHS 2009/10, 38 percent of the children in Uganda are vulnerable’ (page 93). However, the reference to vulnerable groups on the ESSP is modest, and there are only a few targeted interventions in favour of these groups (300 scholarships for students in higher education, and programmes for 50,000 disadvantaged students in primary, secondary, and BTNET, although budget is exclusively allocated to BTNET).

The MoES is acting on a number of fronts not mentioned in the ESSP. Government currently emphasises integration of gender and equity in public sector budgeting. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) verifies all sector budgets annually to ascertain adequate provisions for vulnerable groups (though not for disability yet), as a precondition for MoFPED's approval and disbursement of resources. Although MoES has been consistent in making provisions for equity and gender, there is still a disconnect between budgetary allocation and actual deployment for the vulnerable within the sector.

The Vision 2040 states that 'gender, disability and human rights mainstreaming are a core part of the planning process' (page 11). In the SWOT, teenage pregnancy and early marriages are considered a threat to the education system. However, gender analysis is limited: Indicators are not disaggregated by sex, the plan just mentions Gender Parity Index but there is no reference to School-Related Gender-Based Violence, re-entry guidelines for pregnant girls, prohibition of corporal punishment, and other protective measures. The spread of violence in schools is also a worrying issue in Uganda. A study identified that over 90% of children between 11 and 14 years of age have suffered physical violence from school staff (Raising Voices, 2017: 2). The ESSP does not address this alarming fact that should be considered for schools to be safe spaces for children. The sector has adopted and is implementing the policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming over the current plan period, though these are not adequately referenced in the ESSP.

According to the World Bank, 'Ugandan households face a high degree of vulnerability to poverty' and the coverage of social safety net programmes is limited (World Bank, 2017a: 10-11). However, the ESSP does not include any analysis of vulnerability or vulnerable groups, such as orphans, children with disabilities, child mothers, or IDPs. Moreover, according to the 2017 Statistical Abstract, the little attention paid to some of these groups is demonstrated by the fact that the number of orphans decreased by 15% in primary schools and by 3% in secondary schools from 2012 to 2016 (UBOS, 2017: 18). In fact, this is the only information regarding vulnerable groups in the ESSP. There is no information on children with special needs.

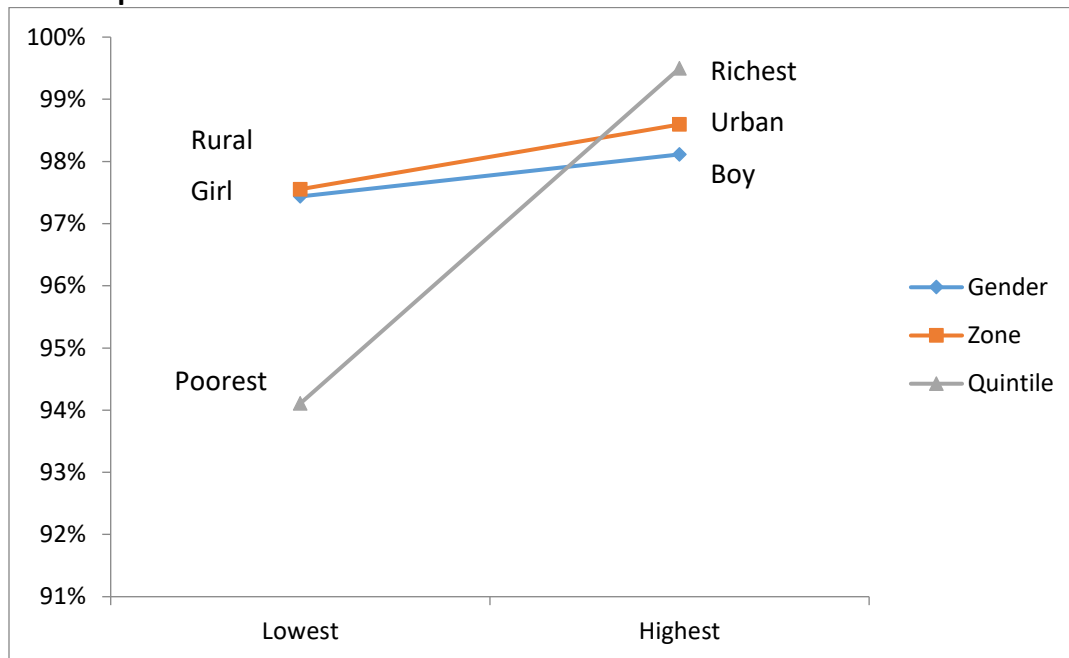
A study conducted by HEART stated that 'it is estimated that in Uganda there are approximately 2.5 million children living with some form of disability' (HEART, 2016a: 14). These children are disproportionately vulnerable, and the clear majority does not have access to education. However, the ESSP does not include special needs education as a priority, not even as a sub-sector.

Refugees comprise a significant group of vulnerable children. More than 1.4 million refugees are currently in Uganda, 61% of whom are children¹⁷. In September 2018, the MoES and EDPs launched an 'Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda'. This is a substantial step in enabling refugee children to have ensured their right to education. However, the ESSP does not pay much attention to this barely-mentioned group, allocating to it USD 800,000 for three years.

¹⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/humanitarian-action-children-2018-uganda>

Another equity issue is related to the significant variations by region. For instance, access to school for children in Northern Uganda is 6 percentage points lower than in Central Uganda. The completion rates in Central Uganda are 1.6 times higher than in Northern Uganda (EMIS, 2015). Figure 2 shows that there are also significant disparities regarding the wealth quintile.

Figure 2: Probability of Access to Primary School according to gender, zone of residence, and wealth quintile.



Source: UBOS data 2015 and EMIS data 2015, Kampala; calculations were done by the World Bank and DFID in preparation for SESIL (Strengthening Education Systems for Improved Learning) programme. Found on the PowerPoint presentation for the Design Consultation Workshop Data Pack, Cambridge Education, April 2018.

The budget is also not equity neutral. The only sub-sector that will see the budget increased is higher education. As only a small fraction of the population, mostly the middle and upper classes, reaches the university, there is an issue of potential inequity in allocating more public resources to this sub-sector. Pre-primary does not seem to be prioritized under equitable access, thus undermining the plan's aspirations towards SDG targets and Vision 2040. The contribution of public-private partnerships and CSOs is not highlighted, despite its well-perceived role in addressing equitable access, especially in pre-primary, primary, secondary, and BTVET education.

In sum, as a MoES staff stated, 'gender and equity issues are "mentioned in passing" over the plan document'. There is a scarcity of data on equity in the ESSP, with no vulnerability analysis nor substantial interventions for vulnerable groups. There is a high risk that quality and equity of education will be adversely affected in primary and secondary education unless resources allocated to education are increased. It is important for the MoES to monitor the equity impact of all interventions, for example, using the SDG4 indicators.

Efficiency

The ESSP considered the main variables related to efficiency: repetition, dropout, and transition. The low efficiency of the education system is shown by the fact that only one in three children (32%) who start primary education reach P7, which implies an enormous waste of resources (ESSAPR, 2017: 199).

Despite the enrolment gains in the last years, the completion rates did not improve, with only 61.5% of learners completing primary school (P7). The completion rate has followed an erratic path in the last years, with ups and downs. The current rate is the same as in 2004 and 10 percentage points lower than in 2014 (ESSAPR, 2017: 199).

As pointed out by Uwezo, ‘despite the existence of the automatic promotion policy, class repetition remains prevalent in Uganda’ (Uwezo, 2016: 37). An analysis by RTI showed that repetition problems begin early in P1, as many children are enrolled before the official age. The study also found that P1 repetition is related to the lack of pre-primary education. Moreover, ‘P1 repetition rates were found to be much higher based on teacher and parent interviews than on what schools report to the Ministry’ (Brunette et al., 2017: 2). There are incentives for schools and parents: schools receive funds tied to enrolment and parents enrol their children at five years of age instead of sending them to private pre-primary schools.

The high population growth rate in Uganda (3.2%), one of the highest in the world, is a variable that affects efficiency and is not sufficiently considered in the ESSP. This implies that the school-age population at both primary and secondary education levels will be on the rise for many years.

Despite the USE policy, although dropout rates in secondary education are still largely linked to cost, other issues are also important, such as child marriage and early pregnancies. The ESSP does not include any measures to counteract these factors¹⁸.

Learning

In a study published in 2016, Uwezo states that ‘“Learning outcomes are consistently low nationally’ (Uwezo, 2016: 6). Only 46.5% of P5 students can read and understand a P2-level story in English, and this percentage is only 40.1% for a story in local language (Uwezo, 2016: 18). A P2 division task can be performed by 60.8% of P5 students. According to the 2017 Statistical Abstract, from 2012 to 2016, the competency in numeracy at P3 remained stable but decreased by 15 percentage points at P6 (from 54.8% to 39.4%). From 2012 to 2015, the competency in literacy increased in P3 (by 6 percentage points) and in P6 (by 11 percentage points). The causes of these low results are not adequately analysed in the SWOT analysis.

¹⁸ They are mentioned in the SWOT though.

As stated in Uwezo's study, 'learning outcomes go hand in hand with a conducive learning environment' (Uwezo, 2016: 37). Indeed, learning outcomes depend on a wide range of variables, although teachers are likely the most important factor. The World Bank Education Service Delivery Indicators 2016 estimated that 60% of teaching time was lost because of teacher absenteeism. This is one of the highest rates in the region. Moreover, teacher competencies are inadequate, as shown by the World Bank Education Service Delivery Indicators. Several key informants have declared that both the MoES and the local governments do not have enough means (transportation and fuel) to conduct an adequate inspection, and therefore many teachers are not supervised.

Poor teaching quality is a significant factor towards low learning achievements in Uganda as shown in the low ratings in the SABER assessment by the World Bank¹⁹. The ESSP includes teacher training among their priorities in terms of strategies but there is only a budget for teacher training in tertiary education. The ESSP hardly embedded the critical strategies and programmes (including innovations) for improving teaching quality that had emerged from a dedicated effort of the TIET (Teacher Instructor Education and Training) working group, thus undermining the sector's aspirations to address the persistent challenges in effective instruction. The TIET policy, once adopted, should be well embedded in the next plan.

All the key informants consulted on this topic agree that one of the main issues related to the low learning outcomes is examination-oriented teaching. For instance, in primary education, only literacy (in English or local languages), numeracy and sciences and social studies are tested. Thus, other subjects are not prioritised by teachers. In learning outcomes, regional disparities are significant: the bottom 20 districts are all in northern and eastern regions.

Regarding textbooks, the ESSP proposes to reduce the current student-textbook ratios from 6:1 to 3:1 in primary education and from 3:1 to 1:1 in secondary education. Uwezo has also analysed the 'inadequate textbook supply' in Uganda, identifying absence of textbooks in local languages in 49.9% of P2 classrooms, Math in 31.8%, and English in 23.5%. Provision of textbooks in general and in local languages is phenomenally constrained by the lack of resources. The ESSP ought to have recognised this constraint and explore innovative ways of providing such instructional materials, such as through partnerships with CSOs that have piloted more successful and cost-effective approaches, as a short-term solution.

Targets for learning achievements (literacy, numeracy, and proficiency) over the plan period are low²⁰, especially given that the sector has been heavily focusing and investing in this dimension for a long period.

¹⁹ The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) is a World Bank initiative to collect and disseminate comparative data and knowledge on education policies, to help countries systematically evaluate and strengthen their education systems, <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=2&ctrn=UG>

²⁰ The literacy rates in primary education would increase from 66.2% to 72.2% in P3, from 53.7% to 57.6% in P6, Numeracy Rate from 74.3% to 77.1% in P3 and from 53.5% to 57.8% in P6. In secondary education, S2 student rate proficiency would increase from 23.2% to 27.4% in biology, from 42.5% to 43.5% in math, and from 52.0% to 55.7% in English (ESSP, Annex 9, page 78)

Change Strategies

There is no results chain or a theory of change in the ESSP. As mentioned earlier, there are three long lists of interventions linked to the three objectives without any prioritisation nor categorisation.

Regarding innovation, a MoES staff said that ‘the strict EPPAD requirement for departmental adherence to the MTEF format (and resource envelope) was averse to innovation in mapping strategies and actions to increase efficiency in achieving the set objectives’. As many African countries, Uganda experiences a low adaption to the technological advance. The ESSP does not include any innovative proposal as the proposed interventions are already ongoing in the country.

The planned interventions could have some positive impact on increasing access to primary and secondary education, albeit limited by the low level of resources and time-consuming procurement procedures. The impact on equity, learning outcomes, and efficiency are more questionable due to the lack of sufficient resources to implement all proposed interventions, as well as the lack of evidence-based actions. The ESSP does not pay sufficient attention to core elements that could improve equity, learning outcomes, and efficiency, such as high teacher absenteeism or the constraints of local governments to deliver in primary schools. Some factors are mentioned in a limited way, such as teacher training, interventions targeted at disadvantaged groups, or accountability mechanisms.

Results Framework

The ESSP does not include a results framework. The indicators proposed in Table 6 (ESSP, 2017: 25-27) are not linked to the interventions, being only just listed by objective. Moreover, many of them are disconnected from the strategies and interventions. For example, there are mixed indicators on enrolment and learning. There are no output indicators to measure the progress of processes such as the construction of schools and the production and distribution of textbooks. Most interventions do not have indicators, e.g., school feeding, school health, strengthening of the inspection system, and capacity of universities to teach science and technology. In the first strategic objective, the first of the ‘key result areas’, is ‘improved learning achievements’. However, all indicators on this objective are related to access, not to learning outcomes. The third key result area refers to ‘efficient and quality service delivery’, although quality belongs to the second objective.

4.4 Coherence

Coherence Among the Strategies, Programs, and Interventions

As pointed out by several key informants, the proposed interventions do not seem sufficient to achieve the objectives in the medium term. As mentioned above, the priorities are not aligned with the realities of the country and do not respond to the evidence collected by several studies. At the same time, and paradoxically, a key informant declared that the 'strategic interventions were too ambitious to be achieved in three years. There is lack of capacity both at the centre and at the local government level to implement the plan'.

There is some lack of coherence between the declared intentions in terms of national development and the interventions proposed in the ESSP. Uganda wants to be a lower middle-income country by 2020, but 1) has lower indicators than other countries with a similar level of development; 2) its ESSP does not include core elements to boost economic development such as significant improvement of secondary education, BTVET²¹, and higher education; and 3) its education budget is declining. Moreover, the rushed elaboration of this ESSP did not allow the MoES to think strategically and propose a coherent results framework with a clear theory of change or an explicit causal chain. The mismatch between costs and allocations to the different sub-sectors breaks the link laid out between inputs and expected impact of the ESSP interventions.

Comprehensive Costing Aligned with the Budget

Note: Please see Section 4.5. for an analysis of this issue.

Coherence of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators

Note: Questions related to monitoring and evaluation indicators are included in Section 4.5 of this report.

²¹ Although the sector has adopted reforms in BTVET, being implemented through the BTVET Strategic Plan 2012/13 to 2021/22 "Skilling Uganda", most of the critical strategies within the reform have not been rolled out with the plan more than half way its span. ESSP itself does not embrace the BTVET strategy, while it is majorly donor supported.

4.5 Feasibility, Implementability, and Monitorability

Financial Feasibility

A senior staff stated that ‘overall, the plan is not feasible due to the phenomenal resource constraint’. The huge funding gap of 40% in the allocations implies that many activities will not be implemented during the ESSP period.

The ESSP does not include any analysis of expected contributions from donors. As mentioned above, EDPs estimate that their contributions will be USD 220 million in 2017/18 and USD 175 million in 2018/19. Development partners are willing to align their support with the ESSP.

The Plan has ambitious targets (e.g., number of schools per district or sub-county) to which interventions and budget do not match, and the MoES continues to rely heavily on donors for development expenditures.

Two more notes related to financial feasibility should be considered in this report. First, although primary and secondary education are fee-free, there are still substantial out-of-pocket costs that are a barrier to access. Capitation grants sent to schools are not sufficient. In 1997, when Free Universal Primary Education was declared, 7000 UGX per capita were provided to schools. UNICEF estimates that the current price value of those 7000 UGX comes to 38,000 UGX. However, the government currently provides about 10,000 UGX per capita to primary schools.

Second pre-primary and primary education are decentralised in Uganda. Local governments are responsible for recruiting and deploying teachers (the payment of salaries is done by the MoFPED directly to schools), buying vehicles, and building and inspecting schools. However, they have a low level of resources, scarce personnel, a limited leeway to collect taxes, and low technical capacities. Therefore, districts depend on the central government for the delivery of primary education. Pre-primary is, in practice, left to the private sector, with limited actions carried out by the MoES. Secondary education is legally also decentralised, although in practice the MoES manage the sub-sector in its entirety. Several key informants mentioned that community engagement is missing and needs to be strengthened.

System Capacity

Several key informants mentioned capacity gaps at all levels (planning, monitoring and budgeting), pointing out that these gaps could jeopardise the implementation of the plan. The ESSP does not include any capacity analysis or capacity development plan, and the MoES does not seem to have engaged in any of these initiatives. The situation seems even more serious at decentralised levels, where many positions are not covered. Prohibiting the recruitment of new teachers and education staff has been a major barrier in improving the capacities in the sector.

The role that universities, civil society organisations, and other education providers could play in the implementation of the ESSP is unclear in the plan. Some of the key informants from these groups have showed their frustration about their low level of involvement and yet they are able to contribute both technically and financially towards education service delivery.

Governance and Accountability

In a presentation made in 2017, Mr Patrick Muinda, Assistant Commissioner for Communication and Information Management, stated that ‘the Ministry of Education and Sports has developed its communication and Advocacy Strategy in 2012 and is reviewing it for the 2017-19 period’. The referred draft includes objectives, target audiences, and a detailed description of roles and responsibilities of the different line ministries, departments, and senior staff of the MoES involved in the education sector. However, the ESSP does not make any reference to this strategy.

Internal and external accountability is paramount for an efficient implementation of an education sector plan. Accountability is included among the principles and core values of the sector. The ESSP includes the development and implementation of ‘a comprehensive strategy that strengthens community and parent participation in the affairs of the schools and training institutions – public and private institutions; in the community’s respective areas’ (ESSP, 2017: 121). There is also a very specific reference to accountability mechanisms for non-tax revenues. Although MoES informants declared that District Education Officers must be made accountable, the GoU has to assume its own responsibilities, as the taxes are mostly centrally collected and decentralized areas such as teacher training or school construction still require the approval from the central levels.

There are no mechanisms to allow non-state organisations to evaluate or monitor the education expenditures through sectoral expenditure reviews.

Risks to Implementation and the Mitigation of Risks

There are significant constraints for the implementation of the plan, which are mainly related to the low level of funding, the lack of prioritisation, and the capacity gaps. The plan does not address itself the risks to implementation, although some of them are mentioned sporadically in passing – outdated legal frameworks, inadequate funding, less participation, and negative attitude by the communities, among others.

Whereas Uganda suffers regularly from droughts, flood, landslides, earthquakes, and population movements, the ESSP does not include a section on education for emergencies nor foresees contingency plans.

Robustness of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

It is always important that a Ministry of Education can monitor the performance in the implementation of a plan, which also applies to other stakeholders who contribute to the education sector. The current ESSP speaks of monitoring and evaluation in passing, not presenting a consolidated monitoring and evaluation framework that encompasses the necessary information, such as data sources, who will collect and process the data, and how often and with which tools this data will be collected. Therefore, the MEF is insufficient to monitor the progress of the proposed interventions. The latest Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Review 2016/2017 (ESSAPR), a document developed at a similar time than the ESSP, includes more M&E elements than the Plan.

Annex 9 includes a list of monitoring indicators and outcome targets that does not present important information, such as the attributions of those involved, the tools to be used to collect the data, and the EMIS situation.

Several considerations should be made on the quality of the indicators included in the ESSP. While there are standard indicators for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, for other sub-sectors the selection of indicators seems rather random. For instance, there is a single indicator for higher education (gender parity); enrolment is not measured for BTVET, quality and standards are measured only through student tutor ratios, and there are no indicators to measure the efficiency of the system management. The section on special needs education, which is a sub-sector neglected throughout the plan, suddenly includes eight indicators. The list does not include any output indicator, and thus it does not allow monitoring the progress of processes such school construction, teacher training, and teacher recruitment. There are inaccuracies not only between the simulation model and the ESSP but also between different parts of the ESSP.

As the MoES is aware of the weaknesses of the current system in collecting and analysing data, it has launched a school mapping and will move forward with a data frame and a comprehensive baseline. However, as it seems to be often the case, the challenge is on the availability of funds, still not secured for the baseline. There is a national M&E policy ongoing, coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister. The MoES has recently developed a MEF draft that should inform the ESSP 2020-2025.

5. Conclusions

From the analysis of the five criteria presented, we can conclude that the ESSP 2017/2020 is a sector plan which present many gaps and that does not comply with the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal.

The main **strengths of the Plan** are:

- ESSP developed by MoES; ownership.
- Good institutional framework: a MoES, Vision 2040, NDP II, NRM Manifesto 2016, SDG4, and some education policies.
- Strong political good will.
- MoES leadership.
- Broad participation of stakeholders.
- Commitment by MoES staff; sector pride.
- Commitment of education partners through the ESCC.

Some **areas of improvement** are:

- No Education Sector Analysis.
- Low level of prioritization.
- Weak financial framework: mismatch between costs and MTEF allocations, and budgets not aligned with the strategic interventions.
- No capacity development plan while there are low capacities across the sector.
- No monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Pre-primary, NFE, and SNE are almost invisible.
- No risk assessment.
- Lack of focus on BTVET despite the NDP II and Vision 2040 priorities.
- Lack of mechanisms to improve efficiency.
- Decrease in the national budget for education.
- Insufficient strategies on equity issues; gender is not mainstreamed.
- Insufficient analysis of private sector participation.

We present on table 2 a brief analysis of the seven characteristics of a credible plan of the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation.

Table 2: Analysis of the Seven Characteristics of a Credible Plan (GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation²²).

Criteria	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Guided by an overall vision	-The ESSP includes vision, mission, and guiding principles. -Guided by the National Development Plan 2015-2020, the SDG 4.	-Although national development goals focus on skills for the workplace and on promoting socioeconomic development, the BTVET sector is not prioritised.
2. Strategic	-The ESSP is oriented by three strategic objectives.	-Lack of prioritisation of interventions. -Poor analysis on the teachers and other staff needed to accomplish the proposed reforms.
3. Holistic	-All education sub-sectors are under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Sport.	-Some sub-sectors are not included in the ESSP (e.g., pre-primary, NFE, SNE). -The distribution of resources among sub-sectors does not seem coherent with the strategies and targets.
4. Evidence-Based	-The ESSP includes a SWOT analysis.	-There is no Education Sector Analysis. -The ESSP is not based on the evidence collected in studies produced by EDPs. -The proposed strategies on equity do not respond sufficiently to the challenges.
5. Achievable	-Ownership by MoES and education stakeholders.	-Education budget will increase at a rate well below expected economic growth. The share of the national budget allocated to education is declining. -The funding gap is huge: 40%. -Some targets are too ambitious compared to current trends.
6. Sensitive to the Context		-No analysis by region and income. -No vulnerability analysis. -No risk analysis. -No reference to potential disasters or emergencies.
7. Pays attention to Disparities		-Disparities related to income, region, and gender are not identified. -Weak proposals to overcome regional disparities. -No gender-responsive strategies.

²² <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>

6. Recommendations

The recommendations of this appraisal report are not oriented, as it is usually the case in this type of exercise, to the improvement of the ESSP 2017-2020 with the view of endorsing it, but to provide recommendations to inform the elaboration of the ESSP 2020-2025.

The ESSP 2020-2025 must be aligned with the seven characteristics of a good education sector plan as detailed on the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation²³.



Following those characteristics, **the ESSP should be ambitious but realistic**. It must be, above all, a useful tool for planners, decision-makers, and stakeholders.

²³ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>

- a. **The ESSP is guided by an overall vision** and is based on the government's development policy, the government's approach to achieving its goals, and the principles and values that will guide this approach.
- The MoES has to entrench the **right to education** in the next ESSP, as stated in the Constitution of 1995.
- b. **The ESSP is strategic.** It identifies the strategies for achieving the vision, including the human, technical, and financial capacities required, as well as sets priorities.
- As the current one, the new ESSP structure could be organised by objectives, although it is important to include a **section with interventions by sub-sector** to make them visible for all stakeholders.
 - The ESSP should imply a special effort to meet the **national development objectives** of the NDP III and the education priorities and strategies, e.g., BTVET must be substantially transformed so that a qualified population responds to the needs of a middle-income country. At the same time, the MoES should have some capacity to negotiate with the NPA and the MoFPED and discuss the priorities and financial framework of the new ESSP. As a senior staff stated, it is important to bring technical rigor to political promises.
 - The MoES should consider the development of a **theory of change** (ToC) for the ESSP and for the sub-sectors. As an example, according to the World Bank, 60% of teaching time is lost due to teacher absenteeism. In this case, a sub-ToC could be elaborated as follows: If the MoES makes teachers accountable, if there is a reduction of PTR, and if the MoES motivates teachers (with housing, compensation for deployment in remote areas, and professional development, among other incentives), then teacher absenteeism will decrease, students will have more instruction hours, and learning outcomes will improve. Objectives, strategies, and interventions will derive from the ToC.
 - The ESSP must include a **Results Framework** with clear causal chain/links between objectives, strategies, and interventions:
 - i. It should establish prioritisation through a systematic approach to the education sector.
 - ii. It must profile indicators and set achievable targets for all strategies and interventions.
 - The ESSP elaboration should be conducted with the required **technical external support**, either national or international, to ensure that there are no technical gaps. Some areas where a technical external support might be required are the simulation model, the financial framework, and the analysis of the education indicators.
 - **Consistency among documents** (simulation model, results framework, action plan, M&E framework) must be ensured, especially regarding indicators and budget.

- c. **The ESSP is holistic.** An ESSP covers all sub-sectors (pre-primary, primary, secondary, BTVET, higher education, non-formal education, special needs education, and system management). It acknowledges the need for coherence among sub-sectors, with particular attention to the levels attached to recognised education rights and compulsory schooling, and reflects awareness that education takes place throughout life.
- The process of developing the new ESSP can be a great opportunity to reaffirm the importance of **pre-primary education** as the foundation for a good education system and make the case for a higher involvement of the MoES in this sub-sector, overcoming the limitation set by the Education Act 2008. A comprehensive strategy on early childhood development could include the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, especially in child protection and gender issues, and the Ministry of Health, in matters of school health and nutrition, with a component of awareness and training for parents.
- d. **The ESSP is evidence-based.** It starts from an education sector analysis providing data and assessments that form the basis of information on which strategies and interventions are developed.
- The MoES will need to **conduct a rigorous and detailed Education Sector Analysis:**
 - In addition to statistics, it requires a precise causal analysis of the different education indicators and the changes that have occurred in recent years. As an example, in primary education, the NER was reduced by 6 percentage points from 2014 to 2015, and then increased by 5 percentage points in 2016. The ESA should include an analysis of the causes of these changes.
 - The ESA should highlight the critical challenges facing the sector, including low enrolment rates in pre-primary education, low completion rates in primary and secondary education, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, low learning outcomes, and financial and human resource constraints, among others.
 - The possibility of conducting thematic studies and use of systematic reviews to inform the choice of objectives and strategies of the next ESSP should be assessed.
 - Existing **evidence-based studies** linking education to economic growth (not only human capital formation but also consumption increases and improvements in youth employability) should be used. The analysis and the recommendations of the technical notes developed by Quentin Wodon's team (World Bank), the studies conducted by HEART and the Uwezo study in 2016 should also be considered. The ESSP should link the infrastructures planned for the country to related education needs, such as electricity through rural electrification and roads.
- e. **The ESSP is achievable.** An ESSP is based on an analysis of current trends and thoughtful hypotheses to overcome financial, technical, and political constraints to effective

implementation. It should provide a framework for budget and management decisions. It is also recognized that strong ownership by key stakeholders largely determines the ESSP feasibility.

- **The ESSP must include a strong financial framework:**
 - i. It should be based on a detailed and rigorous simulation model.
 - ii. It should include scenarios for analysing different targeting options to be achieved as well as the implications for each of them.
 - iii. It is recommended that the case be made to the MoFPED to increase the current share of the government budget allocated to education and to finish with the 'endemic financing shortages' as stated by a government staff. The importance of education to allow Uganda to reach the desired status as a lower middle-income country can be a powerful argument.
 - iv. Donors should be encouraged to increase the predictability of their contributions.
 - v. The costs must be aligned with the expected allocations.
 - vi. It is recommended that the funding gap be maintained within reasonable limits.
 - vii. The MoES should study efficiency measures for the next five years.
 - viii. Prioritisation of some strategies and sub-sectors will have financial implications.
 - ix. Explore increasing the operational costs for decentralized levels, in particular for the inspection services.
 - x. All sub-sectors, including pre-primary, non-formal education, and special education must be included in the financial framework.
 - xi. For sake of clarity, the ESSP budget tables should show absolute figures and percentages.
 - i. All the tables with financial data in the ESSP should specify sources.

- The Plan should have a rigorous **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF)**, whereby the data on the implementation of activities and the indicators for the outputs and outcomes are tracked, reviewed (through annual reviews and into other appropriate structures), and acted upon in a timely manner:
 - i. The MEF will be based on the new Data Frame and Comprehensive Baseline and will rely on a strengthened EMIS.
 - ii. The recent MEF draft produced by EPPAD can be a good starting point, although it needs to be reviewed and improved.
 - iii. It is recommended that data collection for the entire MoES be centralized in the EMIS. Other existing data collection systems should be included in the EMIS, which should be expanded and improved to meet the requirements and needs of all MoES structures.
 - iv. The MEF will include indicators with annualised targets based on the national standards indicators recently developed by the GoU, means of

- verification, data collection tools, who collects the data, and frequency, among others.
- v. The MEF should include indicators at different levels: output, outcome, and impact.
 - vi. All ESSP Key Performance Indicators should be collected by the EMIS.
 - vii. SDG-4 indicators should be added to the KPIs to monitor Uganda's engagement in education.
 - viii. Indicators should be disaggregated by sex, location, wealth, and disability, when possible.
 - ix. Targets must be realistic and consider the capacities and resources available in the education sector.
 - x. There is a need to strengthen support and articulation with the M&E department, as well as to improve the usage of departmental reports in decision-making, planning, and prioritisation.
 - xi. Policy briefs should be prepared to provide real time information on emerging issues on key result areas to inform the policy makers for decision making.
 - xii. Mechanisms for the evaluation of the ESSP should be included
- For purposes of fiduciary assurance, specific mechanisms for **internal and external accountability** must be detailed in the new ESSP.
 - A plan to **improve procurement** at the MoES should be included.
 - A discussion on the difficulties of **using local languages as a means of instruction** seems to be a pending subject for the MoES that could be addressed during the elaboration of the new ESSP 2020-2025.
 - The new ESSP should include a **Capacity Development Plan** with a detailed capacity assessment. This plan should include a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of education personnel for both local governments and central governments at various levels.
 - The implementation of the ESSP will benefit from **better coordination with other ministries and agencies working in education**. It is recommended that a section be included in the ESSP giving more visibility to other ministries by listing the actions taken by other ministries to support the Ministry of Education and Sports, for example, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development works on early childhood development and gender issues, and the Ministry of Local Government is a privileged partner in the implementation of the decentralisation process.

- The ESSP could include mechanisms to increase dialogue with and **accountability to civil society/communities**. Revive the community dialogue with all the district stakeholders in education and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).
 - **Cross-cutting issues**, such as gender, HIV/AIDS, special needs education, inspection, and curriculum should be included.
 - Regarding the **dissemination of the ESSP**:
 - i. The ESSP should include a communication strategy with ways of disseminating the ESSP among all stakeholders, including at the district and community levels.
 - ii. The publication of an abridged ESSP or summary may be useful. We recommend translating a short version of the ESSP into the main national languages for dissemination within and outside the education sector.
- f. **The ESSP is sensitive to the context.** It includes an analysis of a country's specific vulnerabilities, such as conflicts, disasters, and economic crises. An ESSP must address preparedness, prevention, and risk mitigation to strengthen the resilience of the education system at all levels.
- The ESSP should be more aware of the implications of the **accelerated population growth rate** and study how to expand good quality education in a cost-effective and equitable manner.
 - The ESSP should include a **chapter on education in emergencies**, with education interventions for drought, floods, landslides, earthquakes, epidemics, political conflicts, refugees, and internally displaced people.
 - The ESSP should include a **risk matrix with mitigation measures**. Some of the risks identified by the consultant team are: 1) the financial constraints that can jeopardise the achievement of the strategic objectives, 2) the lack of sufficient capacities in the MoES to implement the ESSP, and 3) the lack of sufficient coordination between the central MoES and the local governments.
- g. **The ESSP pays attention to disparities.** A sector plan should acknowledge that, within a country, there may be significant gender differences between girls and boys and inequalities between groups of students regarding their participation in education and the quality of education they receive. These groups may be defined, for instance, by their location, their socioeconomic or ethnic characteristics, or their abilities.
- **Decentralisation process:**
 - i. The ESSP should consider decentralisation in the education sector as an opportunity, not as a constraint.
 - ii. Current challenges in the decentralisation of pre-primary and primary education should be addressed, such as lack of resources, capacity gaps, and unclear roles and responsibilities.

- iii. The ESSP should acknowledge the importance of the decentralised levels with specific strategies and interventions on how to improve districts' resources and capacities, as well as the relationship between the central level and the decentralised levels. Mechanisms for better collaboration and coordination between central and decentralised levels should be included. The GoU should provide the necessary resources and support for capacity improvement as needed, as well as include standards and accountability mechanisms.
- The new ESSP should have a stronger commitment to improve **equity in education**:
 - i. The Government should demonstrate greater commitment to the equity agenda through resource allocation.
 - ii. Specific/differentiated strategies for the north and east regions (which are the most disadvantaged regions) to increase enrolment, completion rates, and learning outcomes should be set. Several criteria could be used, including the poverty level index.
 - iii. The MoES should aim to increase the expenditure per student in areas with lower education indicators. A staff at the Ministry of Local Government considered this politically feasible.
 - iv. A detailed analysis of specific vulnerable groups should be included.
 - v. As mentioned in the NRM Manifesto (page 65), it is necessary to 'operationalise the Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy to improve accessibility, retention, and completion rates of children with disabilities in education'. The elaboration of a comprehensive study of the situation of children with disabilities who are dropping out of school should be considered.
 - vi. Mainstream gender in the plan:
 - Identify specific problems, barriers, and challenges for boys and girls.
 - Develop specific strategies/interventions for boys and girls, including protection-related issues (e.g. school-related gender-based violence), early marriages, and early pregnancies.
 - All indicators should be disaggregated by sex, when possible.
 - Sexual and reproductive health and rights should be included in the curriculum.
 - A differentiated approach to male and female teachers should be set, including the recruitment of more female teachers to serve as role models, especially in secondary education.
 - A gender-sensitive analysis of teaching and learning materials should be considered.
 - Given that gender has not been a priority in the current ESSP, it would be desirable to train senior staff of the MoES on gender issues.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations.
- Annex 2: List of People Interviewed.
- Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed.

Annex 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations

BTVET	Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDP	Education Development Partners
EDPG	Education Development Partners Group
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPPAD	Education Planning and Policy Analysis Department
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESCC	Education Sector Consultative Committee
ESSP	Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan
ESPIG	Education Sector Program Implementation Grant
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoU	Government of Uganda
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Planning Authority
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TIET	Teacher Instructor Education and Training
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UGX	Ugandan Shillings
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education

Annex 2: List of People Interviewed

Organisation	Name	Position/Division/Agency
Ministry of Education and Sports	Hon Rosemary Seninde	Minister of State Primary Education
	Alex Kakooza	Permanent Secretary
	Aggrey David Kibenge	Under Secretary
	Fredrick Matyama	Commissioner, Education Planning and Policy Analysis Department (EPPAD)
	Nelson Wanambi	EPPAD, Assistant Commissioner, Policy & Budget
	Ssozi Vincent	EPPAD, Assistant Commissioner, <i>Statistics</i>
	James Mayoka	EPPAD, Principal Economist/Planning
	Derrick Namisi	EPPAD, Budget
	Grace Nankabirwa	EPPAD
	Amos Mubangizi	EPPAD, Principal Economist, Policy Formulation
	Carbert Mulyalya	EPPAD, Head Monitoring and Evaluation Section
	Gordon Mukasa	EPPAD, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
	George Opio	Assistant Commissioner- Accounts
	Moses Byaruhanga	Principal Internal Audit
	Daniel Nkaada	Director, Basic Education and Secondary Education (ai)
	Tony Mukasa Lusambu	Commissioner, Basic Education
	Ismael Mulindwa	Commissioner, Private Secondary Schools
	Mr. Ssebukyu	Assistant Commissioner, Private Secondary Schools
	Negris Onen	Commissioner, Special Needs (and Non-Formal Education)
	Sarah Ayesiga	Ag. Assistant Commissioner, Special Needs Education
	Deus Monday	Assistant Commissioner, Instructional Materials Unit
	Patrick Muinda	Assistant Commissioner, Communication and Information Management
	Harriet Mary Ajilong	Commissioner, Guidance and Counseling Department
	Enock Bongyeirwe Gumisiriza	Assistant Commissioner, Guidance and Counseling
	Timothy Ssejjoba	Principal Education Officer, Higher Education
	Angela Nakafeero	Gender Technical Advisor
Grace Baguma	Director, National Curriculum Development Centre	
Bernadette Karuhanga	Deputy Director, NCDC	
Frances Atima	Assistant Commissioner, Education Standards Agency	
Doreen Matovu	Head, Construction Management Unit	
Dan Odongo	Secretary General, Uganda National Examinations Board	
Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development	Angella Rwabutomize Matsiko	Principal Economist
Ministry of Local Government	Emmanuel Tugabiirwe	Assistant Commissioner, District Administration

National Planning Authority	Hamis Mugendawala	Senior Planner
DFID	Edward Barnett	Human Development Team Leader & Education Adviser
UNICEF	Nabendra Dahal	Chief of Education
	Tomoko Nakajima	Education Officer
	Night Stella Candiru	Education Specialist
UNESCO	Victoria Kisaakye Kanobe	Programmes Coordinator
World Bank	Kirill Vasiliev	Senior Education Specialist
Enabel-Belgium	Jan Bjjens	Education-BTVET and teacher training
Uwezo	Mary Goretti Nakabugo	Regional Manager East Africa
Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda	Fred Mwesigwa	Executive secretary
Coalition of Uganda Private School Teachers Association	Patrick Kaboyo	Executive Director
Faith-based Organisations	John Byamukama	UJCC
	Shiek Juma Bakuit	UMSC
Uganda National Teachers Union-UNATU	Baguma Filbert Bates	General Secretary
	Juliet Wasege	Deputy General Secretary
	Kirere Ben	M&E and Research

Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed

- **Government of Uganda**
 - Formulation of the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2020/21-2024/25, National Planning Authority, 2018.
 - Statistical Abstract 2017, Uganda Bureau of Statistics.
 - Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), 2017.
 - National Resistance Movement Manifesto 2016-2021.
 - National Development Plan II 2015-2020.
 - Implementation Strategy for the Second National Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20, National Planning Authority.
 - Uganda Vision 2040, 2013.
 - Education Act 2008, August.
 - Constitution of Uganda 1995, with amendments in 2005.
 - Government White Paper on Education 1992.

- **Ministry of Education and Sports**
 - Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017/18-2019/20.
 - Financial framework / Simulation Model for Uganda's ESSP 2017-2020.
 - The Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report, Financial Year 2016/17, 2017.
 - Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy, Draft, August 2018.
 - Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, Draft, August 2018.
 - Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda, 2018.
 - Draft Communication and Advocacy Strategy 2017/18-2019/20, August 2017.
 - Report of the Regional Consultative Workshops on the ESSP 2017-2020, August 2017.
 - Aide-memoire for the 24th Education and Sports Sector Review, 7-8 November 2017.
 - Ministerial Policy Statement FY 17/18.
 - The Achievement of Learners in Early Grade Reading in Selected Districts of Uganda: Midline Report, National Assessment of Progress in Education 2017, Uganda National Examinations Board, 2016.
 - Gender in Education Sector Policy, 2016.
 - Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2007-2015.
 - National Strategy for Girls' Education 2015-2019.
 - BTVET Strategic Plan 2012/13 to 2021/22 "Skilling Uganda".

- **Global Partnership for Education**
 - Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation, 2015
 - Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal, 2015
 - Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Improving Learning and Equity Through Stronger Education Systems, 2015

- Equity and Inclusion in Education: A Guide to Support Education Sector Plan Preparation, Revision, and Appraisal, 2010
 - GPE's Engagement on Domestic Financing for Education, Policy Brief, September 2016.
- **Other sources**
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 - Najjumba, Innocent Mulindwa and Jeffery H. Marshall (2013), Improving Learning in Uganda Vol. II: Problematic Curriculum Areas and Teacher Effectiveness. Insights from National Assessments. Washington, DC: World Bank
 - Raising Voices (2017), Is Violence Against Children Preventable? Findings from the Good Schools Study summarized for general audiences, Kampala, Uganda.
 - Sylla, Benjamin; Carina Omoeva, and Anne Smiley (n/a), Child Vulnerability and Educational Disadvantage in Uganda. Patterns of School Attendance and Performance, FHI360.
 - Uwezo (2016), Are Our Children Learning? Uwezo Uganda 6th Learning Assessment Report. Kampala: Twaweza East Africa.
 - Wodon, Quentin et al. (2016), Uganda Notes, Education, Notes 1-11, March.
 - World Bank (2018), Facing forward: schooling for learning in Africa, Overview.
 - World Bank (2017a), Sectoral priorities for Uganda's FY18/19 budget: a poverty and equity perspective, Policy Note, December.
 - World Bank (2017b), Financial Highlights, Memo
 - World Bank (2016), Education Service Delivery in Uganda, March.
 - World Bank (2014a), Restructuring Paper on a Proposed Project Restructuring of Uganda Teacher and School Effectiveness Project, August.
 - World Bank (2014b), Uganda Teacher and School Effectiveness Project, Project Appraisal Document, August.