



**Assessment of FY 2020/2021 Education Sector Budget Responsiveness to the
aftershock effects of COVID-19 on Children in Uganda**

Policy Briefing Paper

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List of the Abbreviations

BMAU	Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit
DLGs	District Local Governments
DPs	Development Partners
FY	Fiscal Year
GoU	Government of Uganda
GPE	Global Partnership in Education
LG	Local Government
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
SNE	Special Needs Education
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USD	United States Dollars
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UShs	Uganda Shillings
WV	World Vision

1.0 Introduction and Rationale

This policy brief was compiled through a review of the study report on “*Assessment of FY 2020/2021 Budget Responsiveness to the Aftershock effects of COVID-19 on Children across Key Sectors of Health, Education, Social Development and Livelihood*” by World Vision Uganda. The policy brief presents policy recommendations which are suggested for implementation by the government with an overall target of increasing financing for children education needs given the impact of Covid-19 in Uganda. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches – mainly making use of the review of relevant publications, and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to the world. Developing countries like Uganda are likely to be more affected due to limited resources to address the potential impact. Children of all ages are being affected, in particular, by the socio-economic impact and, in some cases, by mitigation measures that are, in some instances, inadvertently doing more harm than good. Among the key challenges that children are facing, is the disruption to learning since learning institutions were closed in March 2020, only to open for candidate classes in October 2020.

Budgets will play a central role in government responses to this virus and its fallout. However, due to the impact of Covid-19, government would not be able to generate the projected revenues (domestic and external) to fund the FY 2020/21 budget. Therefore, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Governments (LGs) were required to re-align their budgets to respond to the impact of COVID-19. This briefing paper provides an assessment of FY 2020/2021 education budget responsiveness to the aftershock effects of COVID-19 on children in Uganda.

2.0 Key Findings

2.1 Budget Allocations towards Child-oriented Interventions

The analysis of funding for interventions that have direct impact on children in the education sector shows that planned spending for the education sector during FY 2020/21 was US\$ 1,985.4 billion. This constitutes 5.3% of the total national budget (excluding domestic financing). US\$ 1,756.3 billion (88%) was recurrent spending; of this, 79% (US\$ 1,388 billion) are wages and salaries; 21% (US\$ 368 billion) is non-wage. Development spending is US\$ 229 billion (13%) of the total sector budget (see *Table 1*). The high wage spending in the education sector is mainly due to the high level of human resource requirements (especially primary teachers). However, the low level of development spending has negative implications on infrastructure development, which is critical to the provision and sustainability of education interventions.

Table 1: Education Budget Allocations towards Children FY 2020/21 (US\$ billions)

Sub-Sector	Wage	Non-Wage	Development	Total
Pre-Primary & Primary Education	989.3	192.4	65.3	1,247.0
Secondary Education	398.6	170.3	161.2	730.0
Special Needs Education	0.1	3.8	2.7	6.6
Guidance & Counselling	0.1	1.7	-	1.9
Total	1,388.1	368.2	229.2	1,985.4

Source: Author's calculations based on the Approved Budget Estimates FY 2020/21

Despite the relatively large budget allocation to the education sector, the sector is grappling with inadequate funding to provide quality education. It is worth noting that, although funding to the education sector has been increasing, the sector share of the national budget has been reducing from 14.6% in FY 2012/13 to 9% in FY 2020/21 against an increased population of Universal Primary Education (UPE) learners from 7.5 million in 2018 to 7.6 million in 2019, and an increase of Universal Secondary School (USE) learners from 670,000 in 2018 to 708,000 in 2019. Although the capitation grant for primary school pupils increased from US\$ 10,000 in FY 2016/17 to US\$ 14,000 in FY 2019/20, and secondary school students from 45,000 in FY 2016/17 to US\$ 55,000 in FY 2020/21, this is still insufficient. This amount is too meagre to provide the minimum requirements to enable equitable access to quality education, in addition to observance of SOPs to mitigate the spread of Covid-19.

2.2 Covid-19 Funding for Child-oriented Interventions

On March 20, 2020, Government of Uganda (GoU) closed all schools and education institutions in order to curb the spread of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). An estimated 15 million learners in 73,240 institutions and 548,192 teachers were affected. The COVID-19 pandemic created a number of priorities that put new pressures on the budget for FY 2020/21 and beyond. Therefore, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Governments (LGs) were required to re-align their budgets to respond to the impact of COVID-19.

Due to legal limitations, re-adjustment of the budget could not be implemented through forced suppression of spending for 'unprotected votes' (many of which implement children-related interventions) and supplementary budgets. During the first quarter of FY 2020/21, parliament passed two supplementary budgets amounting to US\$ 3.729 trillion. However, an analysis of the supplementary budgets shows that only US\$ 3.807 billion for the Education Capitation Grant as well as funding for Primary Health Care under the Local Governments, was associated with children. Nevertheless, government continued to pay salaries of public school teachers during the lockdown.

In April 2020, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) developed the Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19. The response plan was to ensure better preparedness and effective response by MoES, DLGs and stakeholders to COVID-19 outbreak. The cost of the plan was estimated at US\$ 116.2 billion, with most allocations going to: Printing and distribution of self-study materials; Supporting the re-opening of education institutions; Strengthening the capacity of education institutions to respond to emergencies; Supporting availability of planning data for sector response in emergencies; Developing, printing and distribution of revision materials during the lockdown; supporting teachers in the use of e-learning; Presentation of lessons on radio and TV programmes; Procurement of printery equipment for the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC); and Project management, monitoring and evaluation.

To implement the plan, the MoES received COVID-19 Accelerated funding from Global Partnership for Education (GPE) amounting to US\$ 53.95 billion (USD 14.7 Million) for the period 2020 – 2022. The funding will go towards: Ensuring learning during school closure and preparing for school re-opening; Supporting safe re-opening, student re-entry and capacity building for resilience; and Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (see *Table 2*).

Table 2: GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding for Uganda

Component		US\$ (Billion)	USD (Million)
1.0	Ensure learning during school closure and prepare for school re-opening	28.01	7.63
1.1	o/w Continuity of learning	26.10	7.11
1.2	o/w Supporting the most vulnerable/disadvantaged group	1.91	0.52
2.0	Supporting safe re-opening, student re-entry and capacity building for resilience	24.66	6.72
2.1	o/w Supporting safe re-opening, student re-entry and sustained progression in schools	21.44	5.84
2.2	o/w Capacity building for resilience	3.21	0.88
3.0	Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	1.29	0.35
	Total	53.95	14.70

Source: GPE (2020), Cover Note for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Request

According to the MoES, the sector has a funding gap of about US\$ 80.6 billion if it implements all the planned Covid-19 interventions, especially safe-opening of learning institutions, as shown in *Table 3*).

Table 3: Education Sector COVID-19 Budget

Sn	Item	UShs (Billion)			Remarks
		Budget	Funded	Funding Gap	
1	Capitation grants for LG decentralised schools/institutions and inspection (excluding KCCA)	31.94	31.94	-	
2	Implementation of SOPs	20.63	20.63	-	
3	Learning materials to P.4, P.6; S.1 to S.3 and S.5	46.80	26.0	20.80	From GPE
6	Learning materials for lower primary (P.1 to P.3)	35.50	0.0	35.50	
7	Outstanding payment to New Vision	6.08	3.0	3.08	Re-Allocation (MoES)
8	Facilitation of educational broadcasting (radio & TV)	1.00	-	1.00	
9	Outstanding payment for educational broadcasting	0.97	-	0.97	
10	Personal protective equipment and nutrition for finalists in health training institutions	10.02	-	10.02	MoH to Provide
11	Capacity of education institution for psychosocial support and case management for teachers/learners	3.22	3.2	-	Some funds from GPE
12	Strengthen capacity of higher learning education institutions to implement open distance learning (62 HEIs (11 Govt and 51 Private)	5.81	-	5.81	
13	Monitoring and Evaluation of COVID-19 response and SOPs	2.70	0.6	2.10	
14	Coordination and sensitisation costs (Facilitate MoES Covid-19 response taskforce, sensitisation of public on re-opening of schools; develop, print and disseminate guidelines, SOPs and posters on WASH)	1.60	0.3	1.30	
	Total	166.3	85.7	80.6	48%

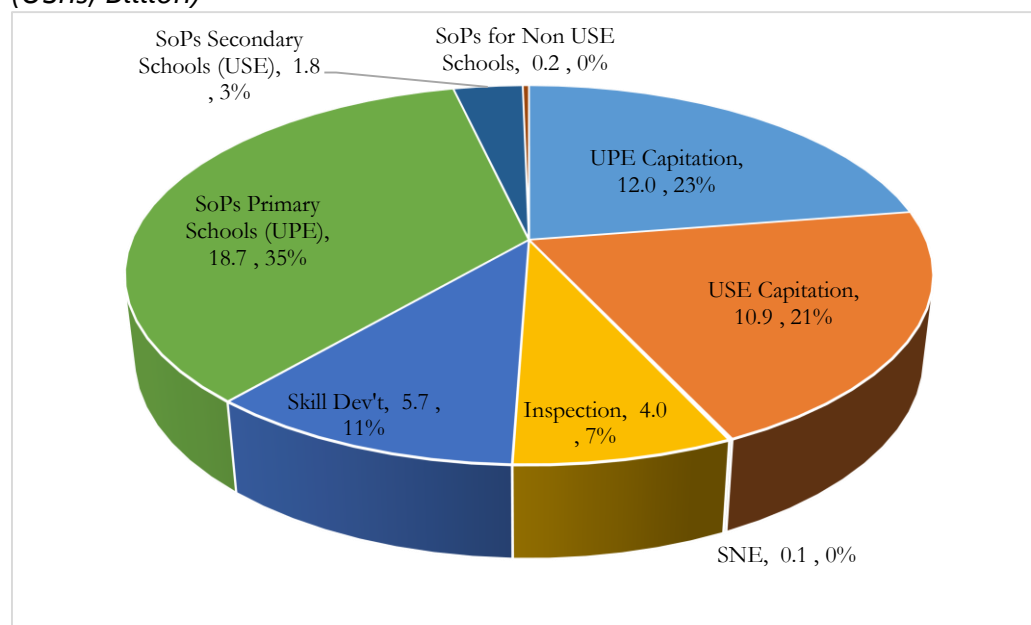
Source: Interview with MoES

Through the funding, the Ministry of Education and Sports promoted remote learning through digital, television and radio channels. It worked with National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and produced self-study revision materials for primary

pupils and secondary students for all classes. In partnership with Vision Group, the materials were distributed to all Local Governments (LGs).

For safe-opening of the schools for Candidate classes, in October 2020, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) released funds to all LGs in Uganda amounting to **UShs 53.3 billion** of which **UShs 32.7 billion** was for capitation grants and **UShs 20.6 billion** for Covid-19 SOPs (see *Figure 1*). In addition, all public education institutions were provided with non-medical face masks.

Figure 1: Non-Wage Recurrent Education Capitation Grant for Safe Opening of Schools (UShs, Billion)



Source: Author's calculations based on the MoFPED Circular on Non-Wage Recurrent Education Capitation Grant and SoPEs for Safe Opening of Schools of 2nd Oct, 2020.

Since the liberalization of the education sector by the Ugandan Government in 1993, the provision of primary education is undertaken by both the Government and the private sector. Out of the 18,887 primary schools in Uganda, 64 percent (12,035 schools) are Government schools and the remaining 36 percent (6,852 schools) are private schools (National Planning Authority, 2018). Private rural schools have been affected more than the private urban schools by the closure due to COVID-19. Many of them are struggling to fulfil the SOPs for re-opening. Some of these schools were servicing loans and did not realise all the fees for term one. Many schools are not able to pay salaries to their staff, corporation tax, and bank loans. Despite the fact that Government promised to provide financial support to teachers through their SACCO, and the Emyooga scheme, the funding

is inadequate to assist private schools, especially on ensuring continuity of learning and safety of the learners in private schools.

2.3 Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to transform education service delivery through adoption of remote/distance learning. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is working with countries including Uganda to support and scale-up the best distance learning practices, and to create a repository of national learning platforms designed to support the continuity of curriculum-based study.

Various DPs are willing to support interventions towards addressing the impact of Covid-19 on children. For instance: GoU secured a loan of USD 20 million from the Global Partnership in Education (GPE), to support the education sector to respond to the impact of Covid-19. However, prudent utilisation of donor and other funds is critical.

2.4 Challenges

Inadequate funding for self-study materials. The MoES tried to reduce the number of subjects, volume of each booklet and classes, however, still the required resources can't be met. Thus, the ministry still has some arrears on radio and Television programmes through recordings and lesson broadcast. In addition, having a consistent, clear and accessible delivery of learning is still a big challenge.

Instruction materials which were released by the government were inadequate and written in English language, yet lower class learners (P.1 to P.3) use local languages as the medium of instruction. In addition, not all children were able to access the radio programmes because not all parents have radios. Even some of those with radios can't afford to buy batteries/ cells all the time.

3.0 Conclusions and Policy Proposals

3.1 Conclusions

Despite the fact that COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to people, especially children, the education Sector budget for FY 2020/21 was silent on the COVID-19 emergencies. Nevertheless, government continued to pay salaries of teachers. The MoES is implementing the Covid-19 preparedness and response plan with funding from the GPE amounting to US\$ 53.95 billion (USD 14.7 Million) for the period 2020 – 2022. However, the sector has a funding gap of about US\$ 80.6 billion if it implements all the planned Covid-19 interventions, especially safe re-opening of learning institutions.

3.2 Policy Proposals

- a. Government should increase spending on education to improve enrolment and the quality of learning in Ugandan schools from the current 10.4% in FY 2019/2020 to match the Sub-Saharan average of 16%. Thus, Government must quickly shift the priorities in the national budget to make more funds available to the education sector for the unfunded sector priorities.
- b. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) should increase funding towards education infrastructure, especially construction of classrooms and teachers' housing in schools to enable learners and teachers engage effectively.
- c. The MoES needs to invest more in vocational skills training because a very big percentage of children are likely to drop out of school even when schools open.
- d. In order to promote remote learning, the Ministry of ICT should make a number of interventions like increasing internet connectivity, reducing connection fees and the cost of Internet.
- e. Government should assist the private education institutions by giving them tax holidays and other incentives to enable them provide the much needed services, especially for children amidst the COVID-19 challenges.
- f. Funds should be availed to public schools to help them i) purchase enough hand washing materials and equipment in adherence to COVID19 SOPs; ii) prepare senior teachers and some staff to handle changing dynamics as a result of COVID19 and iii) position them to provide psychosocial support to students most especially those that got pregnant during the period.

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