



Press Release
16 December 2016

**By the time they reach Primary 7, 2 out of 10 pupils still cannot do Class 2 work
Uwezo finds that basic learning is related to household factors like wealth, pre-primary attendance,
type of education and location**

Kampala, 16 December 2016: Nationally, 3 out of 10 pupils in P3-P7 can do Class 3 work.

English

- In P3, almost 2 out of 10 P3 children can read and understand a P2 English story, but 4 out of 10 cannot read an English word.
- In P7, 2 out of 10 children cannot read a P2 English story.

Local Languages

- In P3, almost 2 out of 10 P3 children can read a P2 level local language story but 4 out of 10 children in the same class cannot read a word in their local language.
- In P7, 3 out of 10 children cannot read a Class 2 local language story.

Numeracy

- 3 out of 10 children in P3 can solve a Class 2 division problem. In the same class, almost 1 out of 5 children cannot recognize numbers between 10 and 99.
- By the time children reach P7, 15 in 100 still cannot solve Class 2 division.

These findings, released today by Uwezo at Twaweza, are from the sixth national learning assessment conducted in September to October 2015. Uwezo partners assessed over 94,000 children, aged 6 to 16, from all 112 districts in the country. Data were collected from more than 3,000 schools and 65,000 households. The report, *Are Our Children Learning (2016)?*, provides new insights into the current status of learning in Uganda's schools and areas of focus to improve learning outcomes.

Although learning outcomes are poor across the country, there are stark inequalities between groups and locations. Household, school and locational factors seem to have the most effect on learning.

At the household level, socioeconomic status, assessed through considering the kind of assets owned by households, appears to have a consistent and significant effect on learning outcomes.

- P3 to P7 pupils who come from households with higher amounts of possessions seem to have an advantage over their peers of 4 percentage points in English, 2 percentage points in local language literacy and 4 percentage points in numeracy.

At school level, learning outcomes seem to be connected to pre-primary attendance, type of school and whether the pupil received privately paid remedial classes.

- **Pre-primary:** For P3 to P7 students, having two or more years of pre-primary experience boosts English competence by 15 percentage points, local language competence by 13 percentage points and numeracy by seven percentage points.

- **Private school:** For P3 to P7 students, attending private schools boosts their competence over their government school peers by 17 percentage points in English, 10 percentage points in mathematics and six percentage points in local languages.
- **Privately paid remedial classes:** For P3 to P7 students, attending privately paid remedial classes increases basic literacy and numeracy skills, English by 18 percentage points, local languages by 14 percentage points and numeracy by 10 percentage points.

Commented [r1]: Re-instated because it's different than private school. If these work then there is potential for them to become part of education offer in public schools.

Locational factors also appear to influence learning outcomes.

Children in urban areas outperform their rural peers

- **English**, percentage of P3-P7 pupils who could read and understand a P2 story: rural 35%, urban 56%.
- **Local languages**, percentage of P3-P7 pupils who could read and understand a P2 story: rural 34%, urban 40%.
- **Numeracy**, percentage of P3-P7 pupils who could solve P2 division: rural 50%, urban 60%.

Children learn more in some regions and specific languages

- Pupils in Southern and Western regions have much better learning outcomes across all three subjects than those in Northern and Eastern regions. In English the gap is as high as 2.5 times (Northern 26%, Kampala 67%); in numeracy it is 1.5 times (Karamoja 42%, Kampala 63%) and in local languages it is 4.5 times higher (Lusoga 12%, Runyakore-Rukiga 54%).

These locational inequalities are also visible in teaching quality indicators

	Central	Western	Eastern	Northern
Pupil-teacher ratio	36:1	41:1	56:1	58:1
Trained primary teachers	95%	91%	97%	94%
Teacher presence	88%	83%	80%	77%
Pupil-classroom ratio	68:1	72:1	104:1	105:1

Uwezo also collected data on a number of indicators of school facilities and learning materials.

- In 69% of schools, it takes less than 20 minutes to reach the water source
- 66% of schools have a library service
- 65% of schools have safe drinking water
- 61% of schools have a school feeding program
- 47% of schools have a first aid kit
- 42% of schools have a teacher trained in first aid
- 34% of schools have a pre-primary unit
- 33% of schools have hand washing facilities
- 30% of schools have one or more teachers with special educational needs training
- 14% of schools have special educational needs units

In terms of learning materials, the availability of writing materials was sufficient but there are extreme shortages of textbooks. In half of the local languages, a third of the mathematics, and a quarter of the English classrooms, there were either no textbooks or only one for the teacher. Textbook availability is linked to learning outcomes.

Dr Mary Goretti, Manager of Uwezo Uganda at Twaweza said *“Uwezo data provide startling insight into the state of our education system. As a new administration settles in, these data highlight a number of areas to focus on. First, learning outcomes must become the policy priority and the most important yardstick by which we measure success in education. Second, inequalities by socioeconomic status and location must be addressed. Education is supposed to eliminate these circumstantial inequalities not entrench them. In particular extra attention and resources must be dedicated to marginalized groups and areas. The shortage of teachers and classrooms in Northern and Eastern regions must be tackled.”*

“A positive example of targeted government intervention is in the area of local language literacy,” she continued. “A number of programs have been initiated to provide learning materials and train teachers in this area. We look forward to the results of these interventions and encourage policy actors in education to provide similar support to tackle other systemic inequalities.”

Dr John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza added *“These Uwezo results present some sobering insights as we begin our journey towards the Sustainable Development Goals. A focus on inclusion and equity will improve learning outcomes for the many Ugandan children attending school. More generally, investing thought, money and time across the entire spectrum of schooling, starting with the early pre-primary years, will yield very strong returns for Uganda, as the children learn more, better and faster.”*

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Notes to Editors

- This report, the tools used for the assessment and the underlying data can be accessed at www.twaweza.org, or www.uwezo.net. Twitter: @Twaweza_NiSisi
- Twaweza is a not-for-profit company working in Kenya Uganda and Tanzania with a vision of an open society, built on the human impulse to make a difference; where information and ideas flow, citizens engage, and authorities are responsive to the needs of the people. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo* and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa’s first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership.

Commented [r2]: Not comfortable with this quote. Are we saying they don't invest thought, money and time? It seems too strong. Also the 'policy recommendations' as they are in the report are in Goretti's quote. I think the John quote should take a different approach, connecting national to global or regional.