**UWEZO UGANDA**

**VOLUNTEER MANUAL FOR PILOT ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN’S WRITING**

**IN GREATER JINJA AREA**

**JULY 2022**

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO UWEZO UGANDA

As an Uwezo volunteer, you are the face of Uwezo Uganda in your village. You will be received better in the households if you speak confidently and knowledgeably about Uwezo Uganda. This section will enable you to understand Uwezo Uganda in detail so that you are able to explain it confidently and accurately.

**About Uwezo Uganda**

Uwezo is a Swahili word which means 'capability'. Uwezo Uganda is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, registered and operating in Uganda since October 2019. In undertaking our activities, we envisage a society in which all children are learning and realising their full potential.

Previously, Uwezo operated as a programme of Twaweza East Africa, a regional organisation which works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be responsive to citizens' demands in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda since 2009. Today there are separate and independent Uwezo organisations in Uganda and Tanzania.

Currently, Uwezo Uganda is committed to deliver on three strategic goals to address the main problems related to low and inequitably distributed learning outcomes in Uganda:

1. To produce independent evidence on the learning levels of children and young people, their distribution and factors associated with them.
2. To carry out research and promote innovations that have the potential to improve the level and distribution of learning outcomes in basic education.
3. To engage with policy actors and with the public to influence and promote policies and practices for improved and more equitable learning outcomes.

**Uwezo's core purpose**

Uwezo envisions a society in which all children are learning and realising their full potential. The idea of Uwezo is very simple. We send children to school because we expect them to learn the basic skills and competencies necessary to thrive. That's why we ask the simple question 'Are our children learning?’

**Key characteristics of Uwezo assessments of children’s learning**

Uwezo Uganda learning assessments have the following key characteristics:

* They focus on basic skills: literacy, numeracy and life skills.
* Children are assessed at home, in households.
* The samples of children are nationally representative.
* Simple methods of assessment are used.
* Citizen volunteers assess the children.
* Some feedback is given immediately.

# CHAPTER 2: A SUMMARY OF THE TASK AND WHAT VOLUNTEERS WILL DO

On this occasion we are piloting (trying out) a new procedure for the assessment of children’s writing skills and we have selected Jinja District and Jinja City for that purpose. We also wish to test the reading level of the same children and to obtain some background information about them.

Here are the main actions that volunteers will have to take:

1. **At the headquarters of the Local Council**
2. Visit the Local Council Chairperson on the first day of the Assessment.
3. Introduce yourself and present the introduction letters and consent form.
4. Confirm the names of the village/local council and of the Enumeration Area (EA). The name of the EA will be recorded on the survey sheet and on each child’s writing script.
5. **In each of the 20 households selected**
6. Upon entering the household, introduce yourself to the household head or other responsible adult and introduce Uwezo.
7. Ask for their consent for one child to be assessed.
8. Find out the names and ages of the eligible children (aged 8-12), who are available.
9. If there is more than one eligible child, use the Kish grid to select ONE child. (This procedure will be explained.) Make sure the child is willing to be assessed.
10. Obtain and record the background information on the household and the child. (Most of this will be provided by the household head or parent.)
11. Carry out the reading assessment and record the child’s reading level. (We shall explain how this is to be done.)
12. Give the child the writing tasks, allowing sufficient time for each section.
13. Provide feedback by informing the responsible adult (a) the reading level the child has reached and (b) the writing levels he or she was able to attempt. (But the script will be sent to specialised scorers for more detailed marking.)

**The importance of planning the work**

It is essential to plan and prepare well before starting the assessment process. You must understand all the survey tools and when to use them. You are a team, share out roles so as to gain confidence and be able to collect data in the correct way. Planning and preparation involve:

* Carefully going through and understanding all the assessment tools (the data sheet, assessment packs and volunteer manual).
* Assigning roles and responsibilities between you and your fellow volunteer in advance - introductions, interviewing, assessment of reading and supervision of writing tasks, recording the data.

# CHAPTER 3: MORE ABOUT HOUSEHOLDS and children

**What is a household?**

A household is a group of people who are living within a house on a regular basis. These people must also be cooking and eating out of the same pot in order to be considered as one household.

**Rules to be followed**

* In each selected EA, a pair of volunteers will be asked to visit 20 pre-selected households and to assess one child in each household. Your DC or VC will give you the list of households.
* You must report any cases of non-response to your DC or VC. In such a case they may give you a replacement household to visit. But you cannot visit any household without their authorisation.
* Do not assess more than one child per household. Where necessary, use the Kish grid to select the child.
* Always visit the households as a pair. Do not separate at any point in time.
* Never start collecting information from the household until you have obtained permission from the household head or responsible adult.

**Entry to the household and starting the process**

You should do the following upon entering each household:

1. Confirm if it is the correct household, as indicated on the household list that you have been supplied with.
2. Introduce yourselves to the head of the household. You may or may not be invited inside the house.
3. Direct the questions to the household head or the adult left in charge. Do not ask questions to children if adults/parents are not at home. (In this case, you may proceed to other households and come back when the head of the household is back.)
4. Introduce Uwezo (very important) and explain the reason for your visit.
5. Answer any questions the household members may have.
6. Ask for permission from the household head/adult left in charge, to survey the household and assess one child. It is only after permission has been granted that the survey and assessment can begin.
7. Stress that it is important for the household head or adult to observe the entire assessment process. (Some feedback will be given at the end of the process).
8. Ask the head of the household or representative adult to provide the survey information needed, including the names and ages of the children aged 8-12.
9. If there is more than one eligible child, select one child by means of the Kish grid. Record the selection on your grid sheet. Ask the child if he or she is willing to do the exercises.
10. Assess the child in reading and then give him or her the writing tasks.

**Note:** If the available child is not at home (they may be in the village or in the field), take down the information about the child’s name, age and schooling status. Ask a family member to call the child so that you can speak with him or her directly. If the child does not come immediately, mark that household and revisit it after visiting other households nearby.

Other special situations are mentioned in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Special Situations and Action to be Taken**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Action** |
| Even though the household was listed as having one or more children aged 8-12, none is available to be assessed. | Mark the case as ‘non-response’ and report it to your DC or VC. If possible, allocate a replacement household from the reserve list. |
| Either the responsible adult is not willing for a child to be assessed, or the selected child does not wish to be assessed. | Mark the case as ‘non-response’ and report it to your DC or VC. If possible, allocate a replacement household from the reserve list. |
| Eligible children are at home, but there is no adult available to give consent for the assessment. | Try to re-visit the household later. If the problem persists, report it to your DC or VC, who will try to contact the responsible adult. |
| The house appears to be closed, with no-one at home, even though it was listed. | Try to re-visit the household later. If the problem persists, report it to your DC or VC, who will try to contact the responsible adult. |
| The household is headed by a child. | If the child is in foster care, consent for the assessment should be obtained from the caretaker or from the LC1 Chairperson. |

**Guidelines for interaction with the responsible adult**

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to Covid-19 are included here. They should be followed if they are required, either nationally or locally, at the time of the assessment.

* 1. Visit each of the 20 households on the list provided to you by the DC. Visit the households systematically, beginning with those on one side of the EA before crossing to another side.
  2. Ensure you’re wearing your mask properly (covering nose and mouth).
  3. On visiting each household, greet and conﬁrm if it is the right household you intended to visit. Request to speak with the household head. If the household head is not present, ask to speak with the spouse (as applicable) or the adult left in charge. Introduce yourselves, the organisation you work for and Uwezo Uganda.
  4. Sanitise your hands and also oﬀer your sanitiser to the person you’re speaking.
  5. If the respondent is not wearing a mask, provide him/her with one and ensure that he/she is wearing it properly (covering nose and mouth, unless there’s a health reason for not doing so) before you proceed with the interview.
  6. Ensure there’s a reasonable physical distance between you and the respondent.
  7. Share the introductory letter. Explain the consent form and share it with the respondent. Request the respondent to grant permission to be interviewed by signing and returning to you a signed copy.
  8. Explain how the household was selected and what you will be doing while at the household.
  9. Request the person to respond to the household survey questions and to allow you to give the reading and writing exercises to one child aged 8-12. Explain that you are doing the same thing in 20 households within the EA.

**Points about eligibility of children for assessment**

1. One child aged 8-12, in each selected household, must be assessed at home in reading and writing.
2. Children who are away attending boarding school cannot be assessed. Select only a child who is at home and available.
3. Children who are visitors and do not live in the household are not eligible for assessment. For a child to be counted as a member of the household, he or she should have lived with the household for at least three months.

# CHAPTER 4: ASSESSING THE CHILD’S READING IN ENGLISH

**Objective of the reading assessment**

The objective is to find out the HIGHEST LEVEL at which the child can read effectively, with material of Primary Two standard. The five possible levels in this assessment are:

* + 1. Non-reader or unable to read words
    2. Word level
    3. Paragraph level
    4. Story level
    5. Story level with comprehension

**Key points to note**

1. The child must be given the reading sheet to hold while he or she is doing the reading.
2. The child will start with the word level and progress to the highest level at which he or she can read. At each level attempted, you will record whether the child could do it or not.
3. At each level, a child shall be given TWO CHANCES to read correctly before you decide whether to move to the next level or to terminate the assessment.
4. For the child to progress from the word level, he or she must read any five words, of which four must be read correctly.
5. For the child to progress from the paragraph level, he or she must read the paragraph with not more than two mistakes.
6. For the child to progress from the story level, he or she must read the story with not more than four mistakes.
7. There are two comprehension questions on the story and you will record whether each was answered correctly.
8. As feedback to the household head or responsible adult, you will report the reading level that the child achieved.
9. Do not provide feedback until after all the reading and writing tasks have been completed.

**Additional points**

* ‘Mistakes’ include omitting or partially omitting words or reading a sentence as a string of unrelated words.
* Do not penalise minor variations in pronunciation that may be due to the influence of the child’s local language or mother tongue.

# CHAPTER 5: ASSESSING THE CHILD’S WRITING IN ENGLISH

**Objectives of the writing assessment**

The writing performance tasks are intended to show, in general terms, whether a child can write words, sentences and/or a short narrative text in English.

A team of specialised scorers will give a general classification to each child’s script: non-writer, writer of words, writer of sentences or writer of text. They will also give a precise mark to each script..

**Key points to note**

1. Your role as a volunteer is limited to administering the writing tasks, making sure that the child attempts as much as he or she can. The scripts will be marked by specialised scorers.
2. The tasks are divided into three sections, for words, sentences and text, as shown in the booklet. But every child assessed must be given the opportunity to attempt each section, even if he or she did not complete the previous section.
3. It is important that the child should have adequate space and a hard surface on which to write. Allow time for the responsible adult to make the arrangements.
4. Writing with a pen rather than pencil is to be encouraged, as ink tends to be more legible. Pencil is allowed, however. Volunteers must have a supply of pens for children who need them.
5. The responsible adult should observe, but others (siblings, neighbours, etc.) should be discouraged from watching, as they might distract the child who is writing.
6. Generous amounts of time should be allowed for each section to be attempted. As a rough guide, allow up to 5 minutes for Section 1 (the word level), up to 10 minutes for Section 2 (the sentence level) and up to 15 minutes for Section 3 (the text level).
7. As feedback on the writing, to the responsible adult, the volunteers can only say whether the child attempted each section and whether they completed it. Explain that detailed marking will be done by specialists to help with assessment procedures. As this is a pilot assessment of writing, we cannot provide detailed feedback for individual children. However, commend the child on his or her efforts, as appropriate.

**Other points**

* Encourage the child to complete as much as he or she can. If they cannot answer one question, they should go on to another.
* Do not indicate a time limit in advance.
* If the child has not finished a section in reasonable time, ask him or her to attempt the next section.

# CHAPTER 6: UWEZO CORE VALUES AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

As a volunteer for Uwezo, your behaviour in the community should be a reflection of Uwezo's mission and values. Some of the core Uwezo values and expected behaviour of all Uwezo agents are summarised in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Values and Behaviour**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| UWEZO VALUES | VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOUR |
| Transparency | Always be truthful: do not overpromise, do not exaggerate, and do not make up an answer if you are having trouble with a question. |
| Not-for-profit | Do not offer or receive any token, including money, in exchange for the data and evidence you collect. |
| Independent and neutral | Do not favour anyone in the community. Do not give advice to schools and families favouring any particular solution to problems of children's learning. |
| Respectful of children and families | Treat children and families with respect, patience, and kindness, no matter how they treat you. You should never take advantage of children or other household members in whatever manner. |
| Effective communication | Should there be any serious concern, report it immediately to the DC/VC or directly to Uwezo Uganda. |
| Protection of respondents and sources | Ensure that the safety and welfare of the children you  assess is duly considered and that the confidentiality of the respondents is respected. Do not disclose any information gathered to any third party. |