



ANNUAL PLAN – 2023

*Approved by the Board [with amendments] on
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	African Curriculum Association
ALiVE	Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa
BAICE	British Association for International and Comparative Education
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CLL	Community-Led Learning
CSO	Civil society organisation
DES	Department of Education Standards
DQSF	Data Quality Standards Framework
ELANA	Early Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
FENU	Federation of Education NGOs in Uganda
ICT	Information and communications technology
LGIHE	Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
PAL Network	People's Action for Learning Network
RELI	Regional Education Learning Initiative
SESIL	Strengthening Education Systems for Improved Learning
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. INTRODUCTION: LEARNING FROM 2022 AND LOOKING BEYOND OUR CURRENT STRATEGY

2022 marked the third year of implementing our inaugural strategic plan since Uwezo Uganda evolved from being a programme of Twaweza East Africa into an independent organisation registered in Uganda. The four-pillar strategy – for assessment, research and experimentation, engagement, and institutional development – runs from 2020-2023. Over the last three years (including 2022), Uwezo Uganda has retained its focus on the mission of demonstrating the importance of improving learning outcomes and keeping communities and leaders focused on learning through assessment, research, partnerships, and advocacy. This is in line with a vision where we seek to contribute to a society in which all children are learning and realising their full potential.

The year 2022 coincided with schools reopening after a prolonged period of closure, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020. The pandemic, which resulted in economic and social difficulties of untold proportions, saw schools in Uganda close for a record period of time (close to two years) never previously witnessed. Our assessment of basic learning, in the later part of 2021, provided some evidence of losses and gains in learning over the school closure period. This assessment provided important insights and a platform for engaging with different stakeholders as schools reopened.

During the year 2022, we engaged with the evidence that we generated from the regular assessment, generated additional evidence on life skills and values, conducted studies on factors associated with learning, deepened our collaborations with partners in Uganda and beyond, and continued to strengthen our emerging systems as we grow the organisation.

Overall, the 2023 plan maps the concluding phase of the current strategy and starts us on a vigorous journey of ideating, and of rethinking our tactics, to realise our mission statement. We see ourselves tying up loose ends, clarifying our pathways in the coming strategy, and increasing our efforts in diversifying our funding sources to meet the increasing demand for diverse assessments, research and advocacy.

As our journey into 2023 begins, we recognise the central place that the partnerships at global, national and local levels – with policy makers, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, parents and teachers - will continue to play in shaping our contribution to enabling children to learn.

In the sections that follow, we elaborate the activities that we shall pursue to achieve our strategic goals as we also lay ground for the development of a new strategy.

2. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

This goal aims at producing independent evidence on the learning levels of children, their distribution, and factors associated with them. The goal is achieved through realising two outcomes namely:

1. Policy actors, practitioners, and public have increased knowledge, awareness and understanding of children's learning outcomes and distribution
2. The evidence is used to improve resource allocation and the delivery of education.

Over time, the target group for children has been stretching from the initial group of 6-16 years. This has seen the inclusion of children aged 4-5 with the increasing demand for evidence on pre-reading and pre-numeracy skills and evidence on functional literacy among young people above 16 years up to 20 years. We have also broadened our assessment focus to go beyond literacy and numeracy to include assessment of life skills and values, which we have developed and conducted collaboratively with other organisations united under the [Regional Education Learning Initiative \(RELI\)](#).

2.1 Context

The year 2023 comes when the country is still navigating the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there has been a scare of the outbreak of Ebola in several parts of the country resulting in the early closure of schools (by two or three weeks), the effects of COVID-19 remain the most visible. In 2022, we expanded our focus in assessments collaboratively with other partners assessing life skills and values, writing skills and expanded assessment age groups to include young persons of up to 20 years. This has meant a wider coverage of skills assessed and of target age groups, in response to the emerging needs for evidence of learning of different kinds. As the country navigates the education review process, evidence on low, delayed and inequitable distribution of learning outcomes remains to be critical traction. Our refined assessment methodology, the large-scale nature of our assessment allowing for granularity in analysis, the independence of our evidence generation, rigour in producing and interpreting the evidence, and the credibility that we have developed over the years, demonstrate the continued place of citizen-led assessments of learning in the education policy and delivery process in Uganda.

2.2 Key achievements in 2022

During the year 2022, we achieved the following under strategic Goal 1: Assessment of learning”:

- (i) We produced a national learning assessment report illuminating the COVID-19 learning gains and losses, based on the 2021 learning assessment data.
- (ii) We conducted the Assessment of Life skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) in 20 districts in partnership with Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education (LGIHE), other CSOs and selected teacher training institutions, reaching 7,815 households and assessing 11,074 adolescents (aged 13-17 years) in the selected life skills of self-awareness, problem solving, collaboration and the value of respect and produced a national report.
- (iii) We piloted a writing assessment in Jinja City and District, with a seed grant from the People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network, to establish suitable and reliable procedures for household-based assessment of children's writing. For this we used a sample of 200 children in 10 Enumeration Areas, data collection by 20 volunteers and scoring by an independent research team of 10.
- (iv) We partnered with Cambridge Education/Mott Macdonald to evaluate the Community Led Learning (CLL) initiative implemented under the Strengthening Education Systems for Improved Learning (SESIL) programme of the Ministry of Education and Sports

(MoES) and the UK Government in Uganda. Baseline and endline assessments were completed in six districts: Kapchorwa, Kween, Maracha, Obongi, Sironko and Yumbe.

- (v) We advanced preparations for the Early Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (ELANA), a partnership initiative with 12 other countries united under the PAL Network. We conducted the field trial of the developed items in 45 villages in Mpigi District where we reached 2,040 children.
- (vi) We scaled up the Assessment of Young People’s everyday literacy and numeracy skills to four districts: Apac, Bugiri, Mukono and Ntungamo. The report of the assessment will be written and disseminated in 2023.

2.3 New elements in 2023

In 2023, we plan to continue developing and conducting learning assessments for the different target groups. We will use the strategy development window to clarify the different pathways that assessments will take in the coming years owing to the central role evidence on learning will continue to play in monitoring educational policy interventions in Uganda. In addition, we will explore ways of increasing utilisation of our assessment methodology and data by universities, practitioners and other CSOs within and outside Uganda. Specifically, we will:

- (i) Scale up ELANA to three districts. The districts will be identified, partners engaged, assessors trained, and data collected in line with the PAL Network protocols.
- (ii) Continue coordinating the expansion of the ALiVE activities with a focus on systems strengthening and school-based assessment of life skills and values among children aged 6-12 years building on lessons learnt from the last 2-3 years of implementing ALiVE among adolescents.
- (iii) Finalise data analysis and writing of the report of the assessment of young people’s workplace/everyday literacy and numeracy skills, which was conducted in 2022.
- (iv) Evaluate SESIL’s scaled-up Community Led Learning Initiative. This will take into consideration programme changes that will include expanded cohorts. For evaluation, we shall compare four groups: (1) with both classes and materials, (2) with classes only, (3) with materials only, and (4) with no SESIL intervention.
- (v) Review the Uwezo standards to, as much as possible, align with the PAL Network’s and RELI Data Quality Standards Frameworks (DQSF) and to encompass the more diverse assessment activities that we now engage in. This will aid our preparation for the next strategy.
- (vi) Partner with selected universities and individuals within universities to facilitate utilisation of Uwezo data and reports by academic staff and students. As much as possible, we will develop these partnerships around joint publications using Uwezo data.
- (vii) Work with a data management specialist to Improve the way Uwezo data is organised to make it easy to use by other researchers.
- (viii) Encourage and support other institutions to make use of Uwezo learning assessment tools in tracking learning outcomes.

2.4 Expected impact

Through the various learning assessment undertakings outlined above, we hope to achieve the following outcomes:

- (i) Increased knowledge of evidence related to learning outcomes and their distribution among different policy actors, practitioners and the public
- (ii) Findings from our assessments used in policy and practice aimed at improving foundational learning, including provision for pre-primary education
- (iii) Adoption of assessment of life skills and values at systems level and by other practitioners
- (iv) Uwezo assessment reports and data are used by staff and students in universities for further research and publishing
- (v) Uwezo assessment tools and/or methodology used by other institutions within and outside Uganda to assess and monitor learning

2.5 How we will measure

- i) Policy dialogue and recommendations making use of our assessment evidence
- ii) Number of data requests made to Uwezo Uganda
- iii) Evidence of organisations and individuals using Uwezo assessment tools and evidence in their work

2.6 Outputs

- i. Young People's Assessment Report
- ii. Revised Uwezo Standards
- iii. Clean anonymised learning datasets uploaded
- iv. Blogs/Articles from the assessment reports
- v. Learning briefs targeting policy makers

3. RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION

The two-part goal aims at carrying out research and promoting innovations that have potential to improve the level and distribution of learning outcomes in basic education with focus on foundational learning. The research, which focuses on analysis of existing datasets and collecting additional primary data, focuses on the drivers of learning at both school and the household level; as two points of interventions. The activities in research and experimentation seek to realise three outcomes:

- (i) As a result of the research and experimental work of Uwezo, policy actors and practitioners have increased knowledge and awareness of interventions that could improve learning outcomes and make them more equitable.
- (ii) The findings from the research and experimental work are used to improve educational policies and practices.
- (iii) The findings contribute to international knowledge and professional debate.

3.1 Context

The research components are informed by several realities. First of all, as the country emerges from the effects of COVID-19, factors associated with learning are still of interest in helping to resolve the challenge of low, delayed and inequitably distributed learning among the children in school. Further, the ongoing education reforms still requires evidence to inform the policy articulation and interventions necessary to increase learning opportunities for all children. Recognising that we still

have data available for further analysis (especially from the national assessments and surveys), we plan to use this as well as new data to look into issues such as the dilemmas about languages of instruction in primary education. We will be building on the successes of the year 2022 and utilising the strategy development window to refine the research pathway and identify new possibilities in the coming years.

3.2 Key achievements in 2022

During the year 2022, we achieved the following under Goal 2: Research and experimentation:

- (i) We conducted a study on issues faced by public schools enrolling a large number of refugee children in one refugee host district.
- (ii) We completed classroom observations in community-based preschools previously studied in 2020-21 (in two districts). These enable us now to evaluate the preschools more effectively.
- (iii) We started to conduct a qualitative study of pupil absenteeism and non-enrolment, focusing on home and school factors in four districts. The early closure of schools in November 2022 will delay the completion of this study.

3.3 New elements in 2023

In addition to completing and disseminating the work begun in 2022, we shall aim to take research initiatives that respond to the current situation in the education sector. Such initiatives could include reviewing the patchwork of existing and proposed policies affecting basic education and looking closely at difficult issues such as the choice of languages of instruction in primary schools and the need of partially literate and numerate young adults who are out of school for further education and employment. Specifically, we plan to:

- (i) Undertake a further analysis of Uwezo 2018-2022 assessment data with an equity lens and source any new data that might be needed to enrich the analysis. The analyses to be undertaken under this exercise will include, but not limited to,
 - a. Analysis of the interaction of gender with other factors that are associated with reading and numeracy outcomes
 - b. Analysis of the interaction of gender and other factors with the school's language(s) of instruction
 - c. Analysis of factors in the continuation of learning during the school closure of 2020, including ways in which online learning was utilised, among others
 - d. Analysis of young people's workplace and everyday literacy & numeracy skills (in the 16-20 age group) and issues that affect transition to secondary and other post-primary education for boys and girls and implications for employability
 - e. Further analysis of the 2022 ALiVE assessment data using an equity lens to develop a paper establishing the relationship between foundational literacy and life skills or on any other captivating finding.
- (ii) Conduct a small, mixed-method study on the issues that schools and teachers face in the implementation of the official language policy for primary education, with a view to considering the options and proposing a way forward.
- (iv) Complete analysis and reporting for the study on issues faced by public schools enrolling a large number of refugee children.
- (iii) Complete the qualitative study of pupil absenteeism and non-enrolment.

- (iv) Develop a position paper on the learning of English writing in primary schools (using data from the pilot assessment of children’s writing.
- (v) Conduct a review of existing policy documents and statements relevant to foundational learning in Uganda, noting their potential but also duplications, ambiguities, gaps, costing issues and long delays in presenting draft policies for approval and develop a position paper.
- (vi) In partnership with UNESCO, undertake a spotlight study on progress towards UPE and Foundational learning in Uganda and produce a report.

3.4 Expected impact

- (i) Research study findings and recommendations inform policy decisions or changes
- (ii) Evidence from the research studies inform resource allocation by government or development partners

3.5 How will we measure

- i) Policy statements and dialogues that make use of our assessment and research evidence
- ii) Positioning and quantity of published items: articles, blogs, etc.
- iii) Evidence of data requests made to Uwezo Uganda

3.6 Outputs

- (i) Research report for each study conducted
- (ii) Conference papers / presentations for analyses conducted
- (iii) Journal articles or book chapters covering key issues and evidence
- (iv) Policy/learning briefs targeting policy makers
- (v) Blogs/stories/Newspaper articles

4. ENGAGEMENT

This goal aims at enhancing public and policy makers’ awareness of inequalities of educational provision and triggering increased efforts to improve educational opportunities at all levels for all children.

4.1 Context

We embrace engagement with different policy actors as an integral approach in our work. To us, engagement is a means to developing rigorous tools. Equally, through engagements, we share on the message of low, inequitable and delayed learning outcomes that in return focuses policy actors on the need to address the problem of foundational learning. Therefore, we take deliberate steps that include co-creation of tools and processes with different policy actors, conduct strategic communication activities and foster relationships to tell and amplify our message. To us, evidence generation is not an end in itself but rather the entry point in establishing meaningful collaborations and nodes that seek to find the solution to the problem of low, inequitable and delayed learning outcomes. The engagement goal aims at influencing and promoting policies and practices for improved learning outcomes. We consider engagement as the connecting goal that completes the Uwezo cycle to realise the impact that Goal 1 and Goal 2 creates. Our engagement goal aims at delivering two strategic outcomes namely:

- (i) Policy actors and practitioners use the evidence from the assessments, research and innovations of Uwezo to inform decision-making and educational practices.

- (ii) Parents and communities become stronger partners of schools at the local level to improve learning.

4.2 Key achievements in 2022

During the year 2022, we achieved the following under Goal 3, Engagement:

- (i) Made a written and face to face submission to the ongoing Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) on what we see as critical reforms needed to improve education delivery in Uganda.
- (ii) We launched the 2021 National Assessment Report on literacy and numeracy. The report illuminated the gains and losses of learning during COVID-19 using data collected in 29 districts in 2021. We also developed district-specific report cards that will be disseminated in each assessed district in 2023.
- (iii) We disseminated the findings from the national learning assessment report across different media channels that included radio, television, newspapers and social media (both locally and internationally).
- (iv) We engaged different policy actors in our evidence generation at different stages. We engaged with different national agencies (the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB), the Directorate of Education Standards – DES, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics – UBOS, selected public teacher training institutions and teachers) in sampling, developing assessment tools and field activities.
- (v) We presented findings from assessments and research at global, regional and national forums and conferences and actively contributed to strategic debates relevant to education development. The spaces we contributed to include, among others, the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), the African Curriculum Association (ACA) global meeting and the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) conference. Other forums we contributed to include, the NCDC 50th Anniversary launch keynote, USAID education workshops, RELI national convenings and Ministry of Education and Sports Basic Education Working Group.
- (vi) We actively engaged the public on social media where we shared our findings and progress report.
- (vii) Uwezo Uganda has continued to be a point of reference on evidence and/or opinion on matters related to education in Uganda by other actors and stakeholders, including development partners, academic institutions, other practitioners and the media.

4.3 New elements in 2023

Moving into 2023, we plan to deepen the engagement by identifying nodes that deliver impact, draw into more policy actors to address the problem of foundational learning at the national, sub-national and global levels. We will take three approaches to realise our engagement intentions. First,

we will strengthen our communication with a focus on communication for impact through the message presentation and choice of channels. Secondly, we will continue with collaborations with different actors in our generation of evidence; for we believe that the process of evidence generation is as important as the evidence itself. From the onset, we will seek to involve those that we seek to influence with our evidence in the process of evidence generation. This approach whether seen as co-creation or consultation helps to continue building credibility in our work. We will also deepen our branding and engagements with the media and the public as a means of increasing the reach & influence of our findings. Our work in engagement in 2023 will be organised as follows:

Amplify the message of low, inequitable and delayed learning at the Global level through:

- (i) Sharing evidence from our assessments and research with the academia, transnational alliances, coalitions and organised stakeholders on the learning levels for children in Uganda.
- (ii) Establishing, nurture and forge and sustain alliances, linkages and relationships with other like-minded organisations like RELI Africa and PAL Network to advocate for better learning outcomes.

Deepen engagement with policy actors at the national level to galvanise support for improved learning outcomes through:

- (i) Involving policy actors in the evidence generation (both assessments and research) to appreciate the process, or in discussion of the evidence.
- (ii) Holding pre-launch meetings with relevant policy actors to share key highlights of the findings before unveiling them to the public. This is to enable policy makers raise any clarifying questions to strengthen their understanding and engagement with the findings.
- (iii) Strengthening the capacity of education data journalism to identify and report issues on learning outcomes. The target will be on editors of leading dailies with a view of creating champions who can continue reporting on Uwezo research and assessment findings beyond report launches.
- (iv) Collating and sharing stories of engagement and change with different policy actors at national and sub-national levels, who have interacted with Uwezo assessment, evidence and impact.

Deepen engagement with the public at national level through public launches of selected outputs

- i) Holding pre-launch events with editors of leading dailies to strengthen their understanding of the research at hand and increase media coverage of the findings
- ii) Hold public launches of selected research outputs produced under Goals 2 and 3 (at least 4 launches in 2023 – one per quarter)

Stimulate action at the sub-national level involving households, communities, professionals and schools to improve learning through:

- (i) Engaging professionals at all levels to understand the status of learning through the “Know the status of reading in my village campaign!” ahead of the International Literacy Day.
- (ii) Sharing indicative evidence on the status of learning in respective districts from the 2021

- learning assessment.
- (iii) Collecting and sharing stories of “My Village” from partner organisations and volunteers.
- (iv) Organise a national campaign to reduce absenteeism and non-enrolment in the light of findings from our research on absenteeism and non-enrolment.

Deepening our branding

- i) Strengthening our communication and branding of key outputs
- ii) Revamping our website and social media pages and making them alive

4.4 Expected impact

- Referencing of Uwezo findings to ongoing education interventions and policy reforms
- Campaign issues featuring in policy reforms and practices for improving education delivery
- Uptake of Uwezo tools for improving learning (literacy self-tests).
- Improved reporting on education related issues.

4.5 How we will measure

- i. Tracking mainstream mentions and appearances
- ii. Monitoring website traffic
- iii. Monitoring invitations to forums attributed to Uwezo evidence
- iv. Monitoring social media growth/presence
- v. Random (spot checks) feedback surveys
- vi. Monitoring attendance to Uwezo forums/launches/campaigns

4.6 Outputs

- i. Launch/dissemination of reports & assessment findings
- ii. Policy briefs
- iii. Blogs/newspaper articles
- iv. Documented stories

5. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This goal aims at building a sustainable and impactful organisation working in education with an operational relationship with government, civil societies and other actors nationally and internationally. Uwezo seeks to achieve this goal through:

- i. Establishing governance structures and having systems in place, regularly reviewed and improved.
- ii. Ensuring Uwezo has the human and financial resources and capacity to carry out its mission.
- iii. Establishing partnerships with relevant stakeholders from the village to the global level, who support Uwezo to achieve and sustain its mission.
- iv. Establishing a network of capable and motivated Uwezo assessment volunteers, working towards improving learning.

5.1 Key achievements in 2022

In the year 2022, Uwezo Uganda:

- a) Successfully underwent the external audit for the year 2021, which resulted in an unqualified endorsement.
- b) Renewed the NGOsource Equivalency Determination that certifies Uwezo Uganda as a U.S public charity equivalent. This is a critical certification that supports resource mobilisation.
- c) Ensured accountable systems through the quality assurance and guidance of the Board and Board committees.
- d) Ensured staff retention, and engagement of strategic partners necessary to implement Uwezo Uganda activities, despite shifts in donor priorities
- e) Stepped up resource mobilisation efforts through new grant proposal submissions and sustaining & establishing relationships with existing and new potential funders, including Porticus, Echidna Giving, Lego Foundation, UNESCO, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, and the, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)/Mott.
- f) Sustained existing partnerships and nurtured new ones locally, regionally and internationally. Continuing partnerships include those with Schools2030, PAL Network's International Common Assessments of literacy and numeracy and RELI's ALiVE initiatives. At national level, partnerships were sustained with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), NCDC and Federation of Education NGOs in Uganda (FENU). New partnerships include those with Zizi Afrique Foundation, Oxford MeasurED, and Lego Foundation, among others. All partnerships are driven by the need to improve learning for all.
- g) Developed a Communications Policy to strengthen our engagement and branding, which was approved by the Board.
- h) Implemented a successful internship programme that provided an opportunity for three recent university graduates to contribute to and learn from the work that Uwezo does.
- i) Strengthened safeguarding measures by instituting mandatory ICT backups on cloud, and common folder) and retained a legal firm to cushion the organisation against any unanticipated eventualities.

5.2 New elements in 2023

As we come close to the end of the current strategic period, our activities under Goal 4 will combine aspects of continuity while at the same time laying ground for a new strategic period ahead. Hence, the following activities are planned in 2023:

- i. Commissioning an evaluation of the 2020-2023 Uwezo Uganda Strategy, capitalising on achievements realised and drawing on lessons learned to guide the development of the next strategy.
- ii. Developing Uwezo Uganda's new strategy for 2024-2027. This will involve consultations with strategic stakeholders to ensure the new organisational strategy is well suited to contribute to addressing not only national education challenges but also to the global education agenda.

- iii. Reviewing and developing new policies critical to governance and programme implementation
- iv. Nurturing new partnerships, including with universities,
- v. Strengthening fundraising efforts by making Uwezo brand visible through the following:
 - Deepening policy engagement
 - Developing collaboration with potential users of Uwezo assessment approaches within the country and beyond
 - Participating in various working Committees of MoES
 - Revamping the website and making it alive
 - Improving communication of our findings through mainstream and social media
- vi. Engaging recent graduates as interns to learn and contribute to program implementation as well as visiting scholars with a global perspective to strengthen Uwezo technical base and global engagement.

5.3 Expected impact

- Lessons generated from a review of the 2020-2023 strategy implementation and feed into the new strategy (2024-2027)
- The organisation is managed effectively and programme activities are implemented systematically
- Increased financial resources are obtained and core staff are retained to sustain the planned activities

5.4 How will we measure

- Reflection reports
- 2020-2023 Strategy evaluation report
- Internal and external audits

5.5 Outputs

- 2020-2023 strategy evaluation report
- Approved 2024-2027 strategy
- Approved organisational policies
- New partnerships established
- Signed funding contracts

5.6 Risks and how these will be mitigated

Uwezo Uganda has an ambitious programme, but we seek to be adaptable and diplomatic in pursuing our goals. We are aware that during implementation there could be some risks and challenges that may affect implementation of the planned activities. For this matter, we keep a comprehensive risk register, which we review and update. We anticipate the following risks in the year 2023 and have provided possible measures to mitigate them:

- i) Although the education sector was reopened in January 2022 following a 2-year closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, entry into schools for research may continue to be quite restricted as schools try to catch up on lost time. We have secured an introduction letter from the Ministry of Education and Sports indicating how our work complements Government efforts. We shall use the letter to gain entry into schools. In addition, we shall phase the research studies to ensure there's ample time to arrange with schools and avoid disruptions to school programs.

- ii) The recent Ebola outbreak may limit movements if it reoccurs in 2023. In the event this happens we will devise means of collecting data electronically to avoid physical contact or through our district-based partners to avoid cross-district travel.
- iii) Inflation and high fuel and commodity prices may make program implementation costly. Consistent with our procurement policies, we shall source multiple quotations and negotiate with service providers to achieve value for money.
- iv) Since we implement our activities with and through partners, the risk of fraud within our partners is high. We will continue to do due diligence on our partner organisations before they are brought on board to support activities and we will sustain our internal controls.
- v) Harm, abuse of children/ respondents by any of our representatives or partners. We mitigate this through a rigorous due diligence assessment of our partners and an effective child protection and safeguarding policy instituted. Furthermore, safeguarding issues are incorporated in the training of our partners; we make our staff and partners sign declaration forms and we include a complaint phone number in the materials given to households to report any abuse.
- vi) Foreign exchange losses arising from currency translations is usually a risk. We plan to continue working closely with our bank to take advantage of foreign exchange fluctuations to the benefit the organisation.
- vii) Finally, the funding environment for education programs is still constrained and we may face challenges to raise resources to fund all activities planned for the year. We shall strive to diversify our funding sources through responding to bids and pursuing new Foundations funding education programs to close the funding gap.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

6.1 Context

Our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) work is intended to guide and help track the implementation of the activities under each goal at both strategic and implementation level and also ensure that Uwezo is a learning organisation. The specific purposes of our MEL efforts continue to be:

- a) To allow us work effectively and efficiently towards achieving our four goals.
- b) To monitor progress of implementation, achievement of core outcomes and identify challenges for course correction in a timely manner.
- c) To monitor and evaluate our achievements and impact as highlighted in our annual plans.
- d) To enable the organisation and staff therein to continuously learn in order to keep pace with the everchanging development environment.

6.2 Key Achievements in 2022

We continued to undertake level one monitoring, which included keeping track of implementation progress of the activities we planned for per quarter. We ensured this through preparing quarterly progress updates to the Board of Directors.

We also monitored immediate effects of our trainings through end of training evaluations and quiz.

We have continued the practice of participatory review and planning, through quarterly reviews of our work and an annual retreat (held on 1-3 November 2022).

We evaluated the effect of the behavioural change messages that were communicated at household level during the 2021 assessment in partnership with ideas42 on re-enrolment of children, particularly girls, in school once schools reopened after COVID-19-related closures. On average, schools in districts belonging to the control group increased their total enrollment by 2.5%. Schools in districts belonging to the treatment groups experienced an estimated 9.5% increase in enrollment, about 2.8 times more than schools in the control group. Similar results are found for the number of girls enrolled between this period. Schools in districts belonging to the control group saw an increase in girls' enrollment of 3.3%, while schools in districts belonging to the treatment groups experienced an estimated increase of 9% in girls' enrollment

The learning programme during the year continued to place more emphasis on training from external sources and less emphasis on internal training.

- Three members of staff attended training offered by the PAL Network on quantitative data analysis
- Two staff benefited from training offered under the ALiVE program on developing tools for assessing life skills and values
- Two staff participated in training on full cost recovery offered
- One staff attended an advanced leadership training by Perennial, a US-based organisation
- One staff participated in training on qualitative data analysis using NVivo offered by the Assessment Division of the American Education Research Association.
- We also continued our organisation-wide learning for all staff through quarterly reflections and an annual retreat.
- We have continued to offer learning opportunities to graduate interns: during the year four were engaged, each for a maximum period of six months.

6.3 Planned Elements in 2023

We will continue treating monitoring and evaluation as elements in a single process and we shall consider all stages of the implementation process in our various areas of activity, assessing both short-term and long-term outcomes.

6.4 Monitoring

Most of the monitoring processes implemented in the previous year will continue to be embraced and will focus on the following activities:

- a) Drawing from the annual plan, the staff will be meeting weekly and sitting quarterly for one day to review progress of implementation and adjust accordingly. The weekly staff meeting notes and quarterly reflection reports will be for internal learning.
- b) Media monitoring – We shall continue to maintain an internal media monitoring tool as a measure of wider reach and influence.
- c) Program activity monitoring: We will develop tools for tracking compliance to Uwezo standards as well as immediate and short-term gains from activity implementation e.g. learning outcomes from a training measured by end of training evaluation tasks and quiz.
- d) Field visits and observations: Our monitoring framework will continue to include activities such as site visits, observations, interviews, self-reports and stories of change written by our implementing partners to understand the quality and effect of our interventions from the perspective of the partners and beneficiaries.
- e) Internal and external audits to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of our internal governance and financial management systems.

- f) Participatory planning and reporting: the planning and reporting process will be done collaboratively with all staff. An annual staff retreat (3 days) will be organised to reflect on the progress made in the year, and to plan rigorously for the year 2024. The outcome of the retreat will be a draft annual plan.

6.5 Evaluation

We will undertake an evaluation of our current strategy to generate lessons to feed into the development of a new strategy. An external consultant will be identified and engaged to support the evaluation and documentation. At the same time, we will commence the process of developing a robust MEL framework.

6.6 Learning

Our learning agenda will create opportunities for sharing experiences acquired from within and outside, e.g. from attending conferences and external meetings. Staff will be supported to attend relevant short training courses, study visits and selected conferences as part of learning to improve their professional knowledge and skills. Those who attend these events will be expected to lead learning sessions for the benefit of the rest of the staff. Staff in charge of specific MEL activities shall document the lessons from implementation of these activities to inform internal learning. Program staff will be responsible for Level 1 monitoring i.e. measurement of immediate learning from a given activity implementation. A designated staff will be responsible for coordinating the learning agenda under the oversight of the Executive Director.

Our learning agenda for 2023 will continue to be achieved through the following modes:

- i) *Learning Sessions*: These will aim at strengthening staff understanding and engagement with the organisational strategy, organisational policies, and evaluation and monitoring framework, among others. They will also provide opportunities for staff to share learning acquired from participating in conferences, meetings, workshops or from attending specialised training. Learning sessions will happen at least twice a month and will be facilitated by staff.
- ii) *Skills Lab*: This is aimed at expanding staff practical skills relevant for work as well as personal development e.g. use of social media, data analysis skills, qualitative data skills etc. These will be organised once per month, largely by staff and occasionally by external individuals.
- iii) *Food for Thought sessions*: These provide an informal space for sharing new ideas and work-in-progress, and external inspiring people and initiatives. These sessions will happen as needed and will be facilitated either by staff who have something new to share or by head-hunted inspiring external individuals

In addition to the above four learning modes, which directly involve staff, we shall also continue to create the following learning opportunities for, or through external individuals:

- a) We shall create learning opportunities for selected fresh graduates through 3-6-month internships.
- b) In addition to internship, we shall provide opportunities for established international academics and/or researchers to spend 1-2 weeks with us, utilising our data to do their writing and thereby enhancing our contribution to global knowledge, but also informing us of any quality issues they may encounter with our data. Such an academic or researcher may also be involved in designing and executing specific studies as per our strategic plan to complement internal capacities or in designing funding proposals to contribute to our financial resources and sustainability.

7. Budget

The estimated budget for Uwezo Uganda in 2023 is **USD 1,123,191** as summarised in Table 1 below.

ANNEX I: BUDGET	
DETAILS	2023
	USD
Goal 1: Assessments	\$417,045
Total Goal 1	\$ 518,077
Goal 2: Research and Experimentation	\$ 93,820
Total Goal 2	\$150,888
Goal 3: Public and Policy Engagements	\$72,550
Total Goal 3	\$135,774
Goal 4: Institutional Development	
Strengthening organisational systems and governance structures	\$ 93,497
Strengthen policies, standards and procedures on staffing	\$61,697
Learning, monitoring and evaluation systems	\$ 34,500
Establishment and maintenance of partnerships with relevant stakeholders from the village to the global level to support achievement and sustenance of Uwezo mission.	\$ 6,000
Total Goal 4: Institutional Development	\$ 318,452
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>\$ 1,123,191</u>