

ODEED

Open Data & Evidence in Education Day

Brief

Friday, Dec 12, 2025
Hilton Garden Inn | Kampala, Uganda

1. INTRODUCTION

Uganda's education sector stands at a critical juncture. Since 2020, Uwezo Uganda and its partners have produced strong research and assessment evidence on learning in Uganda in order to support the strengthening of the sector. However, even with more data available today, education faces challenges such as limited access to usable data, weak links between evidence and planning, and poor follow-through on agreed actions.

The one-day Open Data and Evidence in Education Day (ODEED) aimed to tackle these gaps by bringing together key actors to review Uwezo Uganda's evidence from 2020 to the present, discuss what it means, and agree on practical steps to use data better for improving learning. Held on December 12, 2025, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kampala, Uganda, the event brought together 136 participants (87 male and 49 female) from government, civil society, development partners, academia, the media, and more.

The dialogue focused on five critical themes emerging from Uwezo Uganda's growing body of evidence on education: learning recovery post-pandemic, educational equity, enabling learning environments, evidence utilisation, and systemic reform. The following research and assessment reports were disseminated at the one-day event:

1. [Developing Sustainable Models for Community-Based Preschools in Uganda](#)
2. [Exploring Best Practices in the Development and Utilisation of Lesson Plans and Schemes of Work for Effective Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Uganda](#)
3. [Development of the Assessment of Children's Writing Skills in Uganda](#)
4. [Are our Children Learning? Learning recovery and challenges for Uganda: Uwezo Uganda National Learning Assessment Report, 2024](#)
5. [District Report Cards](#), based on Uwezo National Learning Assessment of 2024
6. [Integration Paradox in Schools with refugee and national children](#)
7. [Measuring Young People's Literacy and Numeracy Competences Required in the Workplace and Everyday Life](#)
8. [Absenteeism and non-enrolment in Uganda's primary schools: An investigation of home-based and school-based factors](#)
9. [Exploring community and family influences on children's learning outcomes](#): Findings from a positive deviance study
10. [Literature review on special and inclusive education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Uganda](#): Emerging insights
11. Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) reports – [Uganda 2022](#) and [Regional 2023](#)
12. [PAL Network 'State of Foundational Learning in the Global South: 2025 Report'](#)
13. [Insights from the National Conference on What Works in Girls' Education 2025 Report](#)

In addition, a panel discussion involving selected university-based researchers who had recently worked with Uwezo assessment data to write and publish shared insights from the following papers:

ODEED Objectives

- Share key findings from Uwezo's learning assessments and research (2020–present).
- Create a platform for government, civil society, funders, and researchers to discuss what the evidence says about learning for all.
- Identify priority gaps in evidence and agree on actions to improve data availability and use.

- a) Asiimwe, J. A., Musisi, F. and Opit, E. (2024). Nexus between Menstrual Hygiene Management Facilities and Primary School Girls' Class Attendance in Uganda. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences* 5(5), 73-81.
- b) Kyagulanyi, R., Rwothumio, J., and Mpoza, J.B. (2024). Wealth and learning achievement of pupils in primary schools in Uganda: Implications for government economic empowerment programs. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Rural and Community Studies*, Vol 6, Issue 1, pp. 1-12, 2024.
- c) Luyima, J., Komba, L. R., and Kamya, S. W. (2024). Household Characteristics and Primary School Dropout Among Ugandan Children. *Primaryedu: Journal of Elementary Education*, Volume 8, Number 2, September 2024.
- d) Nakijoba, R., Biirah, J., Akullo, T., & Mugimu, B. C. (2024). Parental Involvement and Children Acquisition of Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Uganda. *Futurity Education*, 4(1).53-70.
- e) Waiswa, R., Nabakibi, A., Nabbira, J., and Mugimu, C.B (2024). Relationships between children's literacy comprehension and their achievement in numeracy and ethno-math at lower primary schools in Uganda. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, Vol 5 Issue 1, pp. 54-60,2024.

The day's program is attached in Annex I. This brief synthesises the key insights and commitments that emerged from the day's vital discussions.

2. HIGHLIGHTS FROM OFFICIAL SPEECHES

Welcoming participants to the ODEED was the Chair of the Board of Uwezo Uganda, Prof. AJ Lutalo-Bosa. Prof. Lutalo-Bosa highlighted Uwezo Uganda's strong history of advocating for education reform through assessment, research, and engagement to inform policy and practice; as well as its plans to continue this work through its [2025-2028 Strategy](#).

Remarks from the Commissioner, Education Policy and Research at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), were shared by Mr. John Mpande of the MoES Policy and Research Department. The Commissioner's remarks highlighted the MoES' commitment to evidence-informed work and to partnership with organisations like Uwezo Uganda. The Commissioner's remarks noted its key initiative to create an education embedded laboratory to bring together various government agencies to access and use education evidence and data and its plans to host an education evidence symposium focused on teacher effectiveness in 2026.

The ODEED was officially opened by Dr. Cleophus Mugenyi on behalf of the Minister of State for Primary Education, MoES. In his personal remarks, Dr. Mugenyi highlighted the challenges the Ugandan education system faces, including serious learning poverty, but also noted the MoES' work on new policies and restructuring to better meet current education needs. In the official opening, the Minister of State's remarks emphasised the "last mile gap," where sound education policies and dedicated teachers fail to translate into universal learning outcomes in the classroom. The remarks framed evidence as a crucial tool in pinpointing where targeted interventions are most needed, and called for a shift from general advocacy to precise, evidence-based problem solving at all levels, from government leaders to teachers.

3. CRITICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE ODEED

Insight 1: Foundational Learning Crisis

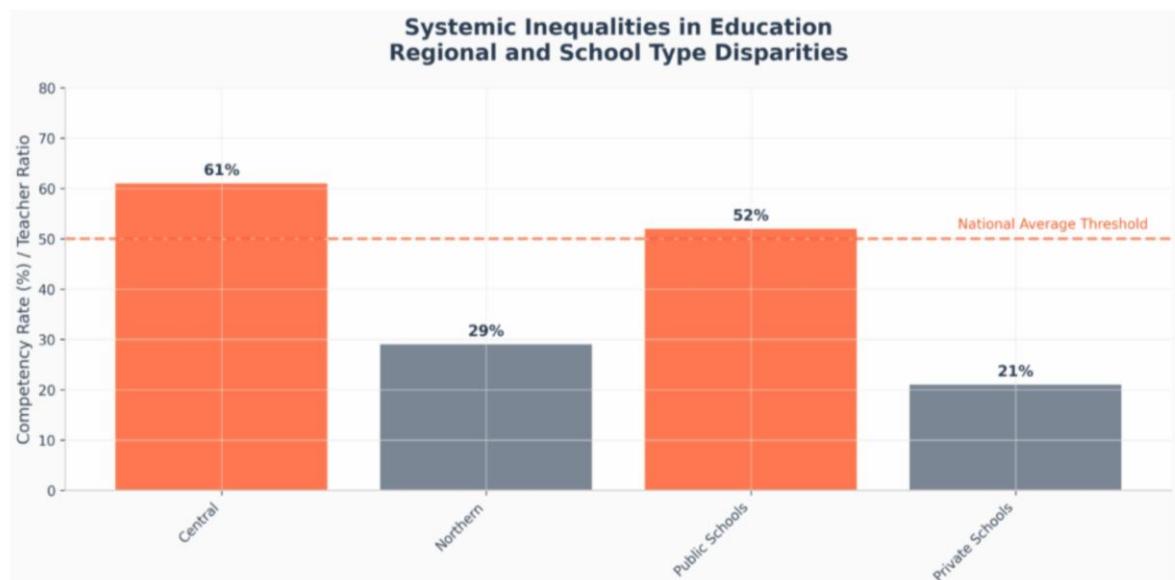
Uganda faces a national crisis of learning poverty. Only 1 in 10 Primary 3 children can read at the Primary 2 level. By age 12, fewer than half achieve foundational literacy and numeracy. This indicates that schooling is not translating into learning, and as such a fundamental failure is threatening an entire generation. As a further consequence, youth are exiting the system without the functional skills and values needed for work and living, revealing a critical school-to-life disconnect.



Insight 2: Systemic Inequalities in Resources and Access

Glaring disparities exist across regions and school types. The Central Region achieves 61% competency compared to only 29% in northern regions. Public schools face pupil-teacher ratios of 52:1 compared to 21:1 in private schools. Without targeted resource redistribution, equity remains a distant goal as data systems exclude critical populations (refugees, over-age learners), making them invisible to policy and further perpetuating marginalisation.

Insight 3: Teacher System and School Environment Challenges



Teachers face multiple systemic challenges that prevent quality instruction. High absenteeism rates (8-13%), extreme pupil-teacher ratios (up to 78:1), and inadequate training (10-20% untrained) collectively undermine instructional quality and student learning outcomes. Relatedly, school environments often undermine learning through insecurity, punishment, and volatile attendance. Corporal punishment remains widespread (70% of schools), creating fear-based rather than learning-focused environments.

Insight 4: ECD Access and Quality Gaps

While over 80% of children attend pre-primary education in some districts, any gains seem to evaporate as children move through primary grades. This suggests attention is necessary both to ECD and primary education.

ECD itself remains privatised and inconsistent. Public investment and quality assurance are necessary to secure gains from pre-primary for all children in Uganda.



Insight 5: Evidence to Action Gap

While education evidence is abundant, a critical gap persists between evidence production and local action. Education evidence and data remains at the national level, failing to reach districts and communities where it can spur concrete action and reform.

4 CORE COMMITMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

The dialogue moved beyond problem identification to forge specific, actionable commitments for addressing Uganda's education challenges. These commitments represent a collective pledge to translate insight into action and evidence into reform. The above critical insights demand urgent attention, while six core commitments provide a roadmap for collective action.

Commitment 1: Sustaining the Data and Evidence Sharing Momentum: Uwezo commits to convening stakeholders annually to strengthen the evidence-to-action pipeline. The next ODEED is scheduled for December 2026. The time for action is now—Uganda's children cannot wait for perfect systems. They need immediate action based on the compelling evidence already available.

Commitment 2: Localised Data. We commit to compiling tailored district report cards and "quick fact" briefs to empower local leaders with actionable evidence for decision-making and action.

Commitment 3: Systemic Investigation. Participants pledged to investigate why strong ECD attendance does not translate into better primary outcomes.

Commitment 4: Partnership Strengthening. The MoES department of policy and research commits to applying the ODEED model to its 2026 symposium on teacher effectiveness.

Commitment 5: Further Research in Special Needs Education. Uwezo Uganda pledges to partner to develop a status report on special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Commitment 6: Locally-led Research and Practice. We commit to advancing locally-led, gender-responsive participatory research and implementation in foundational learning, life skills, values, and competency-based education, and ensuring tools, assessments, and curricula are contextually grounded, culturally relevant and accessible.

5. ODEED PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

32 participants (34% were female and 66% male) shared feedback on the day, expressing a high degree of satisfaction, with 97% satisfied or very satisfied. Participant feedback included several recommendations to host the ODEED in a larger space and to allocate more time for presentations

and the day as a whole. Some participants recommended improving dissemination of evidence by summarising evidence, establishing a theme for the day, or sharing evidence products in advance.

ANNEX I: Program for Uwezo Uganda Open Data & Evidence in Education Day (ODEED)

12 December 2025

7:30am – 5:30pm

Hilton Garden Inn, Kamwokya, Kampala, Uganda

MCs: Robert Mugambwa (Uwezo Uganda) and Grace Musiimire (Building Tomorrow/RELI)

7:30-8:30am: Arrival, registration and breakfast [Near Meeting Room 3]

8:30am – 10:30am: PARALLEL SESSIONS

Parallel Session 1: [Meeting Room 3] – Moderated by MG Nakabugo & Robert Mugambwa)

- 14. Developing Sustainable Models for Community-Based Preschools in Uganda (Dr James Urwick, Uwezo Uganda)**
- 15. Exploring Best Practices in the Development and Utilisation of Lesson Plans and Schemes of Work for Effective Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Uganda (Dr Aziz Kakooza, NCDC)**
- 16. Development of the Assessment of Children's Writing Skills in Uganda (Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Uwezo Uganda)**

Parallel Session 2: [Garden Hall 1] – Moderated by Faridah Nassereka & Grace Musiimire)

- Are our Children Learning? Learning recovery and challenges for Uganda: Uwezo Uganda National Learning Assessment Report, and District Report Cards, 2024 (**Joseph Kasasa, Judith Nyakaisiki** – Uwezo Uganda, **Simon Byamukama** – LUSUDI, **and Mary Achilles Namatovu** (CAWODISA)
- Integration Paradox in Schools with refugee and national Children (**Amos Kaburu**, Opticum & Uwezo Uganda)
- Measuring Young People's Literacy and Numeracy Competences Required in the Workplace and Everyday Life (**Faridah Nassereka**, Uwezo Uganda)

10:30-11:00am – Tea break - [Near Meeting Room 3]

11:00am – 1:00pm – PLENARY: OFFICIAL OPENING [Meeting Room 3]

- Anthems (Uganda, East African, Buganda)
- Opening prayer
- Opening remarks by the Chair of the Board of Uwezo Uganda (**Prof AJ Lutalo-Bosa**)
- Introduction to Uwezo Uganda, the Open Data and Evidence in Education Day (ODEED) and introducing selected research outputs (**Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo**, Uwezo Uganda)
 - i. Absenteeism and non-enrolment in Uganda's primary schools: An investigation of home-based and school-based factors (**Pius Akol**, Uwezo Uganda)
 - ii. Exploring community and family influences on children's learning outcomes: Findings from a positive deviance study (Joseph Kasasa, Uwezo Uganda)

- iii. Literature review on special and inclusive education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Uganda: Emerging insights (Dr James Urwick, Uwezo Uganda)
- iv. Other collaborating research reports and outputs:
 - Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) 2022/23 evidence – (**Martin Ariapa**, Luigi Giussani Foundation)
 - PAL Network ‘State of Foundational Learning in the Global South: 2025 Report’ (**Faridah Nassereka**, Uwezo Uganda)
 - Insights from the National Conference on What Works in Girls’ Education 2025 Report (**Dr MG Nakabugo**, Uwezo Uganda)
- Q&A
- Remarks by the Commissioner, Education Policy and Research, MoES (represented by **Mr John Mpande**, Principal Research Officer, Policy and Research Department, MoES))
- **Official opening and launch of selected research outputs by the Guest of Honour (Dr Cleophus Mugenyi, for Minister of State for Primary Education, MoES)**
- Entertainment
- Group Photo & Press briefing

1:00-2:00pm: Lunch break – Restaurant and designated spaces

2:00-4:00 pm: PLENARY: Panel discussion, emerging issues and official closing **[Meeting Room 3]**

- A panel discussion involving selected university-based researchers who have recently worked with Uwezo assessment data to write and publish (**Moderated by Dr MG Nakabugo**)
 - f) Asiimwe, J. A., (**Dr Musisi, Fred**) and Opit, E. (2024). Nexus between Menstrual Hygiene Management Facilities and Primary School Girls’ Class Attendance in Uganda. East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences 5(5), 73-81.
 - g) (**Dr Kyagulanyi, Ronald**, Rwothumio, J., and Mpoza, J.B. (2024). Wealth and learning achievement of pupils in primary schools in Uganda: Implications for government economic empowerment programs. Interdisciplinary Journal of Rural and Community Studies, Vol 6, Issue 1, pp. 1-12, 2024.
 - h) **Dr Lutale, Aisha J.**, Mubiru, F. N., Nkumbi, J. C., and Mugimu, C. B. (2024). Home-based factors associated with competences in literacy among learners in primary three and four in Uganda. Journal of Education and Practice, Vol 15 issue 5, pp. 58-69, 2024.
 - i) (**Dr Luyima, Jimmy**, Komba, L. R., and Kamya, S. W. (2024). Household Characteristics and Primary School Dropout Among Ugandan Children. Primaryedu: Journal of Elementary Education, Volume 8, Number 2, September 2024.
 - j) Nakijoba, R., Biirah, J., Akullo, T., & **Prof Mugimu, B. C.** (2024). Parental Involvement and Children Acquisition of Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Uganda. Futurity Education,4(1).53-70.
 - k) (**Dr Waiswa, Richard**, Nabakiibi, A., Nabbira, J., and Mugimu, C.B (2024). Relationships between children’s literacy comprehension and their achievement in numeracy and ethno-math at lower primary schools in Uganda. European Journal of Education and Pedagogy, Vol 5 Issue 1, pp. 54-60,2024.
- Q&A
- Summary of emerging issues from the Open Data & Evidence in Education Day (ODEED) (**Jocelyn Amongin** and **Pius Akol**, Uwezo Uganda)
- Concluding remarks (**Prof JA Lutalo-Bosa**, Chairperson, Uwezo Uganda Board)
- **Official closing by Mr Raymond Obiayi Ombere**, City Education Officer, Arua City and Chairperson, National Association of Municipal and District Education Officers (NAMUDEO) in Uganda – on behalf of **Dr Cleophus Mugenyi and the Permanent Secretary, MoES**

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