

NEWSLETTER

Uwezo Uganda End of Year Newsletter – ISSUE 6, December 2021



SAVE THE DATE

REPORT
LAUNCH

Uwezo Uganda 2021 National Assessment Report Launch

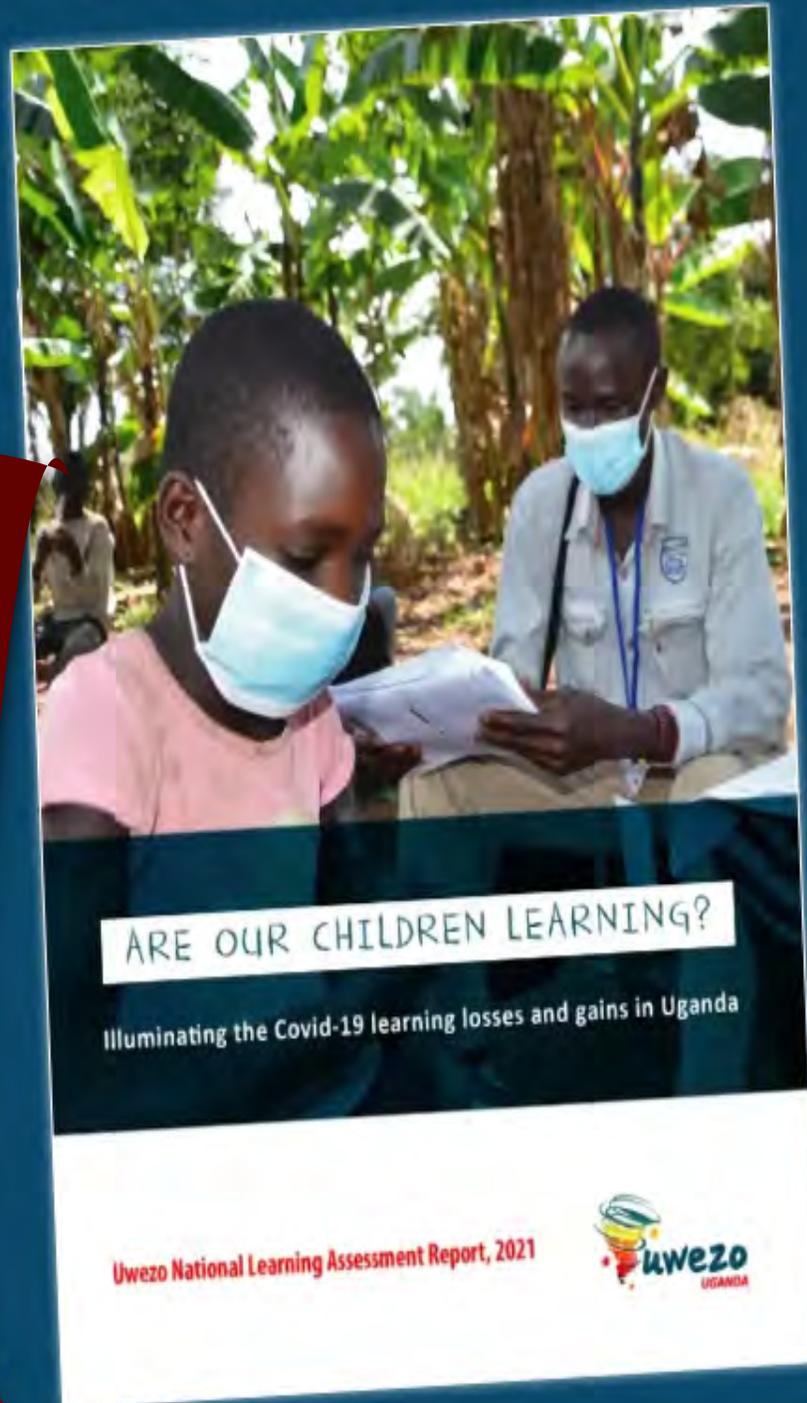
We invite you to register in advance for the launch by
using this link:



https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i1kcKw9QQkmGX6bHTRo5fQ

18th
JAN
2022

3:00Pm -
5:00Pm EAT





END OF YEAR NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy Holidays our much-cherished friends and partners! We hope you have had a fulfilling year 2021 despite the unprecedented pandemic-related challenges. As we come towards the end of the year, we would like to say, thank you for your continued support! During the year we have registered some remarkable achievements, many of which would have been difficult to attain without your support.

Under our strategic goal of producing independent evidence on the learning levels of children, we were able to conduct a national, citizen-led, household-based assessment in partnership with our [district-based partner civil society organisations](#). This will enable us to provide evidence on the state of children's learning of foundational skills in the current unusual context.

Under our strategic goal of carrying out research and promotion of innovations that have the potential to improve the level and distribution of learning outcomes in basic education, we completed a research on community-based preschools, using interview data. Findings have been presented to members of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Community of Practice in Uganda and an abstract based on the study has been submitted for consideration at the Comparative International Education Society (CIES) annual conference, 2022.

Under our engagement goal, which aims to influence and promote policies and practices for improved and more equitable learning outcomes, we engaged the Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the various Local Governments in the national learning assessment. In partnership with a USA-based non-profit organisation, ideas42, we developed and shared behavioural change messages during the national learning assessment to encourage parents to re-enrol their children, and children to return to school when schools reopen. We also sustained engagement at international level through active participation in the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) and People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network activities as well as presented our work at three international conferences.

Finally, under our institutional development goal, we have ensured accountable systems through the quality assurance and guidance of our [Board and the Technical Advisory Committee](#). We successfully underwent the External Audit by Ernest and Young for the year 2020 that resulted in an unqualified audit opinion. In addition, we enhanced our staff capacity through continuing professional development, sustained existing partnerships and nurtured new ones, and realised the much-needed financial resources to execute our goals despite challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and changed donor priorities.

We are grateful to you for keeping us grounded, and for providing us with the much-needed feedback and support. So, cheers to you and yours! A very Merry Christmas and a Covid-free 2022. Enjoy reading our end of year newsletter.

Yours Sincerely, on Behalf of Uwezo Uganda,

Mary Goretti Nakabugo, PhD
Executive Director
gnakabugo@wezouganda.org



“UWEZO UGANDA ENVISIONS A SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL CHILDREN ARE LEARNING AND REALISING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.”

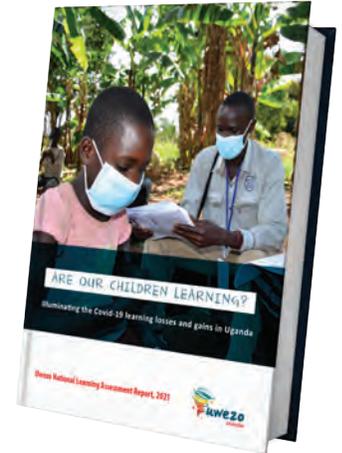
UWEZO UGANDA NEWS UPDATES

FORTHCOMING UWEZO UGANDA NATIONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT LAUNCH!

We are excited to invite you to the Uwezo Uganda 2021 National Assessment Report Launch, taking place on **18th January 2022, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm EAT.**

We invite you to register in advance for the launch by using this link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i1kcKw9QQkmGX6bHTRo5fQ

Please follow us on our Twitter page @UwezoUganda and at our website <https://www.uwezouganda.org/> for more updates on the launch in the coming days.



Uwezo Uganda, in its current strategy (2020-2023), emphasises improving equitable learning outcomes through generating evidence on learning. With respect to this, assessments of learning outcomes in foundational literacy and numeracy have been conducted in order that the evidence generated increases knowledge, awareness and understanding of learning outcomes and their distribution, as a trigger for action among audiences (policy actors, practitioners and the public).

The 2021 assessment, conducted in 29 districts, targeted children aged 4-16 in 15 enumeration areas (EAs) per district and 20 households per EA. The assessment and survey contained a special component on access to support for home-based learning during the continued closure of schools. The 2021 learning assessment report contributes evidence on learning outcomes and illuminates the Covid-19 pandemic learning losses and gains in Uganda.

We look forward to welcoming you to the launch of the new report! In the meantime, you can access our previous learning assessment reports at: <https://uwezouganda.org/publications/reports/>



RESEARCH UNDERTAKINGS

ANALYSIS OF INEQUALITIES IN CHILDREN'S BASIC LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS IN UGANDA

A [policy brief on inequalities in children's basic literacy and numeracy skills in Uganda](#) and their implications for policy was developed using 2018 Uwezo assessment data and shared during the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Basic Education Working Group meeting, which was held on 2nd February 2021, at Fairway Hotel, Kampala.

This brief focuses on two sets of factors that are found to account for inequalities of learning outcomes;

Some individual characteristics of children are considered: absenteeism and reported difficulties in hearing and memory.

We focused on some aspects of the educational structure: the child's grade in school, how much preschool experience the child

has and whether the child is enrolled in a private or other primary schools.



MoES Basic Education Working Group meeting, 2nd February 2021

RESEARCH ON COMMUNITY-BASED PRESCHOOLS COMPLETED

We completed a research on community-based preschools, using interview data. The research describes and compares in detail four examples of preschools in Uganda that are managed by local communities at low cost and identifies practices that can help to make such preschools sustainable.

Findings have been presented to members of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Community of Practice in Uganda and an abstract based on the study has been submitted for presentation at the [Comparative International Education Society \(CIES\) annual conference, 2022](#).



The full study report can be accessed at: <https://uwezouganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Uwezo-report-on-community-based-preschools.pdf>

CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLE

An article that uses the 2018 Uwezo assessment data for further analysis of inequalities in children's basic skills was accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Education and Development 88 (2022) 102525.

The article can be accessed at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0738059321001784?dgcid=rss_sd_all



BLOG POST PUBLISHED ON THE UKFIET CONFERENCE BLOG

A [blog](#) on access to and learning outcomes from early childhood education for refugee and non-refugee children in Uganda was co-authored with colleagues at the REAL Centre, University of Cambridge and published on the UKFIET Conference blog site.



CHAPTER PUBLISHED IN THE BRITISH COUNCIL LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE SERIES

A book chapter on "[Uwezo citizen-led assessments: Inspiring debate about children's learning and holding governments accountable](#)" was published in Harding-Esch, P with Coleman, H (eds) (2021) [Language and the Sustainable Development Goals](#). London: British Council. ISBN 978-0-86355-982-2

5. Uwezo citizen-led assessments: Inspiring debate about children's learning and holding governments accountable

Mary Goretti Nakabugo

Abstract

In many developing countries, measuring progress towards achieving global education goals has focused on visible indicators such as infrastructure, teachers, books and enrolment. No doubt school enrolment levels have been rising over the years. The assumption has been that having children in school will, automatically, lead to learning. This assumption has led to an invisible

This chapter focuses on an assessment that originates from the Global South, implemented in the South, by people in the South. For several years, progress towards achieving 'Education for All' (as defined by the six education goals agreed by 164 participating countries at the Dakar World Forum in 2000, and effectively replaced by the more comprehensive SDG 4 since 2015) has, in many developing countries, focused mainly on visible aspects of education such as the

CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL EDUCATION DEBATE THROUGH CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION AT THE CIES CONFERENCE 2021

A [paper](#) on measuring young people’s workplace and everyday literacy and numeracy competencies was presented at the virtual [Comparative and International Education Society annual conference, April 2021](#).



PRESENTATION AT THE UKFIET CONFERENCE 2021

A paper on, Early Childhood Education for children in crisis and conflict in Uganda was co-presented with colleagues at the Research for Equitable Access and Learning ([REAL](#)) Centre, University of Cambridge, at the United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training ([UKFIET](#)) Conference 2021.



PRESENTATION AT THE PAL NETWORK CONFERENCE 2021

Uwezo Uganda presented a conference paper at the [PAL Network second biennial conference](#) based on a study of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) capacity for education advocacy that was completed in December 2020.

As major challenges persist in the delivery of education – now complicated further by the school closures of 2020 and 2021 – and as anecdotal evidence about the success of local advocacy is very mixed,

it is critical for us to achieve a better understanding of the challenges that our collaborating CSOs face, at district level and more locally.

The intention is to strengthen Uwezo’s own advocacy and communications and our role in coordinating advocacy on educational issues. The full CSO study report can also be accessed at: <https://uwezo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Uwezo-Report-on-CSO-Capacity.pdf>

6:05 – 6:25pm		Breakout Room II:
Paper 6 (10 minutes)	Educational innovations with a playful approach to decrease the loss of fundamental learning in times of pandemic by COVID 19	
Presenter:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Anabel Velásquez (CIESAS), Dr. Samana Vergara (Universidad Veracruzana), Professor Felipe José Hevia de la Jara (CIESAS) 	
Paper 7 (10 minutes)	The Capacity of Civil Society Organisations at Sub-national Level for Education Advocacy.	
Presenter:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo Uwezo Uganda Dr. James Urwick, Uwezo Uganda 	
Chairperson: Mr. Daniel Plaut Results for Development	Co-chairperson: Ms. Dionne Oguna PAL Network	Rapporteurs: Ms. Winnie Návares Mr. Francis Njuguna

PARTNERSHIPS



Uwezo Uganda is delighted to continue to be part of the [Assessment of Life Skills, and Values in East Africa \(ALiVE\) project](#), an initiative of [RELI](#) since 2018.

The initiative brings together more than 20 Civil Society Organisations that have committed to collaborate in deepening understanding of members on values and life skills, experimenting with what works in nurturing and developing values and life skills, and developing context-relevant assessments to measure progress, share learnings and inform system change across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

In 2021, Uwezo Uganda in partnership with other ALiVE member organisations contributed to the development of sample tasks assessing Problem-solving, Self-awareness and Collaboration skills, and the value of Respect.

In November 2021, Uwezo Uganda in partnership with [Luigi Guisanni Institute of Higher Education](#) implemented a mini pilot of tools for the [ALiVE](#) project. The mini pilot assessment was conducted in 4 districts (Oyam, Mbarara, Wakiso and Pallisa) focusing on validating the developed tasks and sub-tasks ahead of the main assessment in 2022.



As a learning partner on the [Schools2030 Program](#) implemented by the [Aga Khan Foundation](#) in Uganda, Uwezo participated in the Schools2030 National Design Workshop organised by the Aga Khan Foundation to unpack and

identify the learning domains for young people age 5, 10 and 15 years aligned to Uganda's national education agenda.

[Schools2030](#) is a 10-year longitudinal action research and learning improvement programme working with pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, tertiary institutions and non-government organisations across 10 countries including Afghanistan, Brazil, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Portugal, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda to search for and support locally-generated examples of 'what works' to improve holistic quality learning for all.



Group photo, partners that participated in the Schools2030 National design workshop in April 2021

Uwezo Uganda further participated in partner orientation meetings in Kampala and Arua cities, in which participants were being trained on the Human-Centred Design (HCD) phases, and document their journey towards generating practical solutions that can solve most of their learner's challenges in class. As a learning partner, Uwezo documents the HCD journey. Currently, teachers have embarked on the process of designing their prototypes and awaiting testing in early 2022.



Participants in partner orientation meetings in Arua



In partnership with a USA-based non-profit organisation, [ideas42](#), we developed and shared behavioural change messages during the Uwezo Uganda 2021 national learning assessment, to encourage

parents to re-enrol their children, and children to return to school when schools reopen. After the assessment, children were also given an opportunity to commit by signing a certificate of Planned Completion of their education.



After the assessment, the child received a certificate of planned completion

COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

PARTICIPATION OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE UWEZO NATIONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT, 2021

We engaged the Basic Education Department of the [Ministry of Education and Sports](#) and District Education Officers and District Inspectors of Schools in all surveyed districts in the learning assessment processes as observers and critical friends. This enabled us receive feedback from them on the assessment process as well as prepare them to receive and act on the assessment findings when they are published.



On the left, the District Education Officer (DEO), Bugiri District observing the school visit during the Uwezo Uganda 2021 assessment

COMMEMORATING INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

[International Mother Language Day](#), celebrated worldwide on [21st February](#), was commemorated in Uganda on 2nd March 2021, led by Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development in partnership with other relevant government and non-government organisations, including Uwezo Uganda, under the theme; “Mother tongue: Key to COVID 19 crisis prevention and response in Uganda”.

The function targeted NGOs, COSS, media, individuals, academia, researchers, Government Departments, and line Ministries involved in the promotion and advocating for effective communication through Mother Tongues in Uganda, , among others, Ministry of Health, Education and Sports and Gender, Labour and Social Development as lead agency.

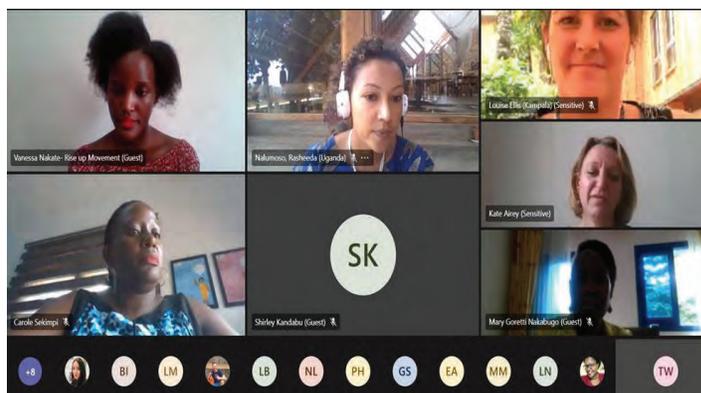


Uwezo Uganda was privileged to jointly co-moderate the public event together with Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY PANEL DISCUSSION ORGANISED BY THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION IN UGANDA

In preparation for the International Women’s Day that’s celebrated globally on 8th March, on 4th March 2021, Uwezo Uganda was part of a virtual [panel discussion organised by the British High Commission in Uganda](#); under the global theme “**Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a Covid-19 World**”. This was an opportunity to celebrate the tremendous efforts of women in various spheres of leadership in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Uwezo Executive Director shared her experiences as a woman in leadership, the tremendous role that education plays in the lives of girls and the important women role models in her life.



CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIA

Uwezo Uganda continues to contribute to the national education debate through radio, TV and print media. We have been consulted and/or referenced regularly as an independent voice on contemporary issues relevant to education in Uganda including, among others, the impact of Covid-19 and prolonged school closures on the education sector.

During 2021, Uwezo Uganda has been interviewed and hosted by various media houses, including NTV, NBS, SEE TV, BBS and a number of radio stations on the future of children's learning amidst the pandemic. Here are some of the TV and radio interview clips, as well as references in the print media

Parents cry out over suspension of nursery schools
<https://youtu.be/HWqnmcydVnI>

Parents cry out over suspension of nursery schools
<https://youtu.be/JMZHtuiXDEo>

REMOTE LEARNING: Stakeholders call for adjustments in delivery
<https://youtu.be/qvD1FbmOPR0>

REMOTE LEARNING: Stakeholders call for adjustments in delivery
<https://youtu.be/sar-kgsgmIQ>

Reflecting on the UCE results for 2020 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bNz3_GomI2EPDG6Nkkuh4H_nPSaQsPj3/view?usp=sharing
Reference in print media can be accessed here:

A Ugandan crisis in 18 months: No schools, unpaid loans, 2-in-1 class
<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/a-ugandan-crisis-in-18-months-no-schools-unpaid-loans-3529880>



Uwezo Uganda Executive Director (on the right) at SEE TV contributing to the debate on the forthcoming reopening of schools in January 2022 [date: 15 December 2021]. This can be accessed at: <https://youtu.be/XIKZDQMDkeA>

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CLEAN EXTERNAL AUDIT BY ERNEST AND YOUNG!

During the year 2021, we successfully completed our first external audit as an independent organisation (conducted by one of the "big 4" audit firms) for the year ended 2020, and received an unqualified opinion. The external audit report can be accessed at: <https://uwezouganda.org/financial-statements/>

STAFF RETREAT AND ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2022

In November 2021, Uwezo Uganda conducted an annual planning retreat with an aim of reflecting on the progress made in the year, and planning rigorously for the following year. The retreat allowed staff to reflect on their practice and performance, document progress, gaps, lessons, challenges and plans for 2022.



Group photo; Uwezo Uganda staff at the retreat

A final output from the Staff Retreat was the 2022 Annual Plan that has been ultimately approved by Uwezo Board of Directors. This can be accessed at: <https://uwezouganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Uwezo-Uganda-Annual-Plan2022.pdf>



ANNUAL PLAN – 2022

Approved by the Board of Directors on 14th December 2021

With this flexible and adaptive plan, we look forward to 2022 with optimism!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the immense support that we have received from the Ministry of Education and Sports, National Curriculum Development Centre, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the 29 Local Governments, District Education Officers and District Inspector of Schools in the 29 districts who participated in 2021 National Learning Assessment and our district-based partner CSOs who coordinated the assessment.

Thanks to Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Echidna Giving and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the UK Government, who have funded our work in 2021.

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  uwezouganda

#Covid-19 is real. The Omicron variant is spreading very fast. Get vaccinated. Remain vigilant. Wash your hands. Wear a Mask. Keep social distance. Avoid crowds. Stay Safe!

HAPPY 2022 !