KIFAD
ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Assessment Report on the Barriers to Education in Wakiso, Uganda
August 2019

Acknowledgements

Far too many people deserve acknowledgement for their contributions to this report than we have space to name. That said, we would like to specifically thank Bongole Bob and Mutasingwa Davis for their tireless work, mentorship, and guidance. We would like to acknowledge the fantastic community volunteers who worked with us to spread the word about the ECD. Finally, we would be remiss to not mention the local KIFAD interns, whose compassion, dedication, and conversational abilities made this report possible. We are grateful for their friendship.

Warmly,

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List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDO	Community Development Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DEO	District Education Officer
DHT	District Health Team
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GoU	Government of Uganda
HCT	HIV Counselling and Testing
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGA	Income Generating Activities
KIFAD	Kiyita Family Alliance for Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoH	Ministry of Health
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development
NAT	Needs Assessment Tool
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VHT	Village Health Team
VAT	Vulnerability Assessment Tool
VSLA	Village Saving and Loans Association

Executive Summary

46% of children in Uganda do not attend school. This high delinquency rate is a symptom of multiple barriers to education throughout the country. To understand this issue on a more local level, KIFAD conducted a qualitative study of Bulabakulu and Kiwazzi Villages in Wakiso District, Uganda. This study was composed of in-depth interviews with local stakeholders and focus groups with members of each community. Through these interviews and focus groups, we identified six key barriers to educational attainment in the communities surrounding KIFAD: lack of community awareness, parental irresponsibility, poverty and inability to pay school fees, violence and exploitation of children, lack of adequate sanitary products for young women, and a dearth of local schools forcing some children to walk several kilometers each day. We analyzed

each of these barriers and the populations that reported them, and followed the barriers with relevant recommendations. We think that comprehensive awareness campaigns surrounding discipline, parenting, abuse, and child empowerment are the best steps that KIFAD can take to ensure that every child in local communities has adequate opportunity to attend school and attain the necessary skills to become upwardly mobile.

Introduction

46% of children in Uganda between the ages of 0 and 8 are not attending school (Uganda Census, 2014). Though Uganda has universal primary education (UPE), sending a child to school still requires certain school fees, such as paying for a child's scholastic materials, uniforms, shoes, and food. Many families living in poverty cannot afford to pay these fees. Approximately 4.7 million children in Uganda live in poor households (UNICEF, 2014), with 100,000 children living even outside of any protective family environment. Moreover, in rural areas like Kiwazzi and Bulabakulu, 42% of children are engaged in some form of child labor, compared with approximately 17% in urban areas (Uganda, 2016). Children staying at home to help with housework, to care for siblings, or to engage in other forms of labor miss a critical stage in their development, as they are often isolated and unable to socialize with other children and often lack even simple toys to provide some form of mental stimulation. Early childhood development is a key indicator of future educational retention and success, and formal education is key to a child's future economic success. KIFAD believes that identifying and addressing some of the common barriers to accessing education are powerful ways to empower vulnerable children.

Purpose of Assessment

Given the high percentage of young children who are not attending school in Uganda and in the areas surrounding the KIFAD headquarters, the purpose of this assessment is to identify common barriers that prevent families from accessing education. The children in KIFAD's ECD Center will benefit from having a structured alternative to languishing at home day after day, but the ECD Center is not intended to be a substitute for formal education. KIFAD's ultimate goal is to address and respond to these barriers in order to enroll children in formal schools after attending the ECD Center, as well as to work on the retention rate of children in the community who are already in school. This assessment report is the first step in understanding the necessary steps to achieve these goals. Given the number and variety of stakeholders who participated in the assessment, another objective is the collection of a broad range of opinions and ideas to be compiled and analyzed here, leading to the most effective solutions.

Scope of Assessment

The information in this assessment comes from interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders in the community, including local, political, opinion, traditional, and religious leaders, DEOs, CDOs, community volunteer, school administrators and teachers, parents, and children themselves. All participants in this research live in the areas surrounding the KIFAD headquarters, including Bulabakulu, Kiwazzi, the larger Bhanda Parish, and workers at the Wakiso District level. A total of 27 interviews and 4 focus groups were carried out during the span of this project.
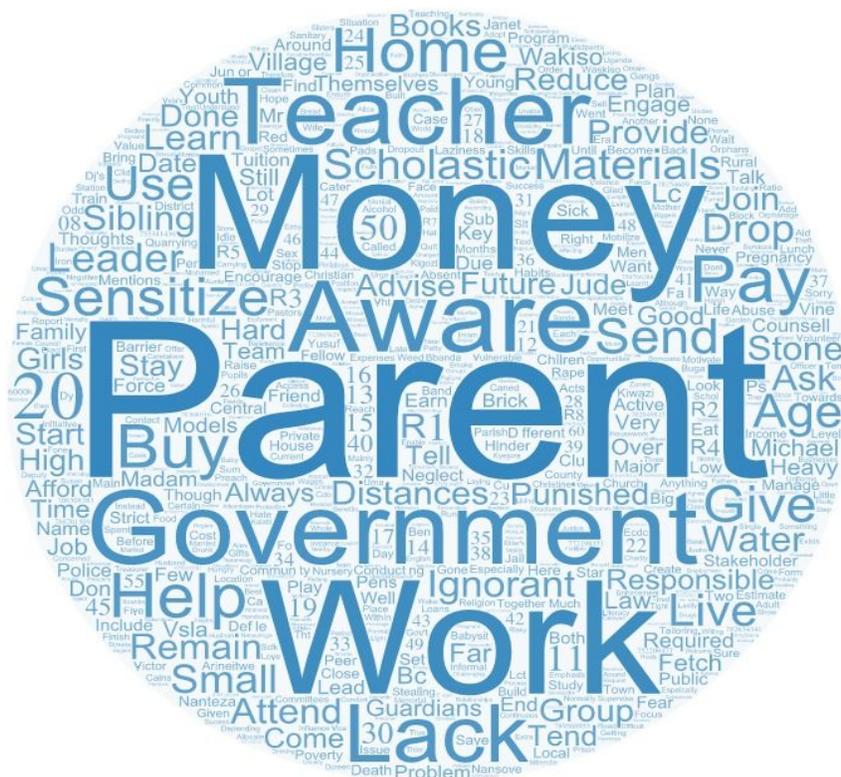
Methods and Procedures

The interviews and focus groups were conducted by three teams of local interns in either English or Luganda. The interview and focus group guide consisted of seven question, gauging factors like awareness, action, and planning. During the interviews, one intern would speak with the stakeholder(s) while the other took notes. The completed guides would be given to the international interns who transcribed them. Following the completion of the interviews and focus groups, the international volunteers analyzed the data through Excel. They identified the most common themes and observed the differences between the answers on a theme in one group compared to another. For the purposes of privacy, the names of no local stakeholders appear in this report; rather, they are identified simply by their occupation or general area in which they work.

Ethical Considerations

Hereby, KIFAD and its members consciously assure that for this report the following is fulfilled: this material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere. The report is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere. The report reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner. The report properly credits the meaningful contributions of co-authors and co-researchers. The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research. All sources used are properly disclosed (correct citation). Literally copying of text must be indicated as such by using quotation marks and giving proper reference. All authors have been personally and actively involved in substantial work leading to the paper, and will take public responsibility for its content.

Findings

The interviews and focus groups yielded many disturbing findings. The word cloud below (fig 1) gives a sense of the sheer breadth of topics that arose as well as the most common themes mentioned.

Fig 1: Unfiltered Word Cloud

This is certainly too many topics to cover in a report, and the most common themes are rather obvious: school, children, educate, etc. We would of course expect such themes to arise in this kind of report, but they do not actually tell us much. The following word cloud (fig 2), then, controls for the most common words in favor of more informative occurrences.

Fig 2: Filtered Word Cloud

While not the most scientific analysis of the data, this word cloud nonetheless provides an excellent visualization of our findings. Some of the themes we describe below are the most common that appear in the cloud: awareness, poverty, child labor, and parent responsibility all appeared in the interviews and focus groups repeatedly. Some of the other themes we describe, however, are much smaller on the word cloud, but we analyze them for different reasons. One typical example is punishment, seen below the "e" and the "n" in "parent." While a smaller word, who used it, and, more specifically, who did *not* use it proved extremely interesting.

We analyze the following themes below: parental responsibility, poverty, violence and abuse as well as exploitation, lack of accessible schools for many, poor female sanitation, and lack of awareness among the general public. We begin with the last.

Theme 1: Lack of Awareness

Justification of Analysis: Two reasons present themselves for analysis into lack of awareness about educational issues. First, we found a huge discrepancy between the stakeholders' perception of delinquency and actual rates of delinquency. Second, and ironically, many stakeholders raised the issue of awareness themselves, claiming that people should be made more

aware of the educational crisis in Uganda. They frequently did so using the word "sensitize" which can be found in figure 2 above the "p" in "parent."

Analysis: As the introduction states, 46% of children in Uganda between the ages of 0-8 do not attend school. To gauge the awareness of stakeholders to the issue, we asked each what they thought the rate was. Answers varied greatly, but most fell far below the 46% line. Some respondents answered without using actual numerical percentages, and those answers were filtered out for the purposes of the analysis.

Figure 3 depicts a histogram of the respondents' answers to their perception of the delinquency rate. The chart is unimodal and skews heavily to the right, meaning that the vast majority of respondents affirmed that the rate at which students do not attend school was lower than 46%. The most common response (mode) was 20%.
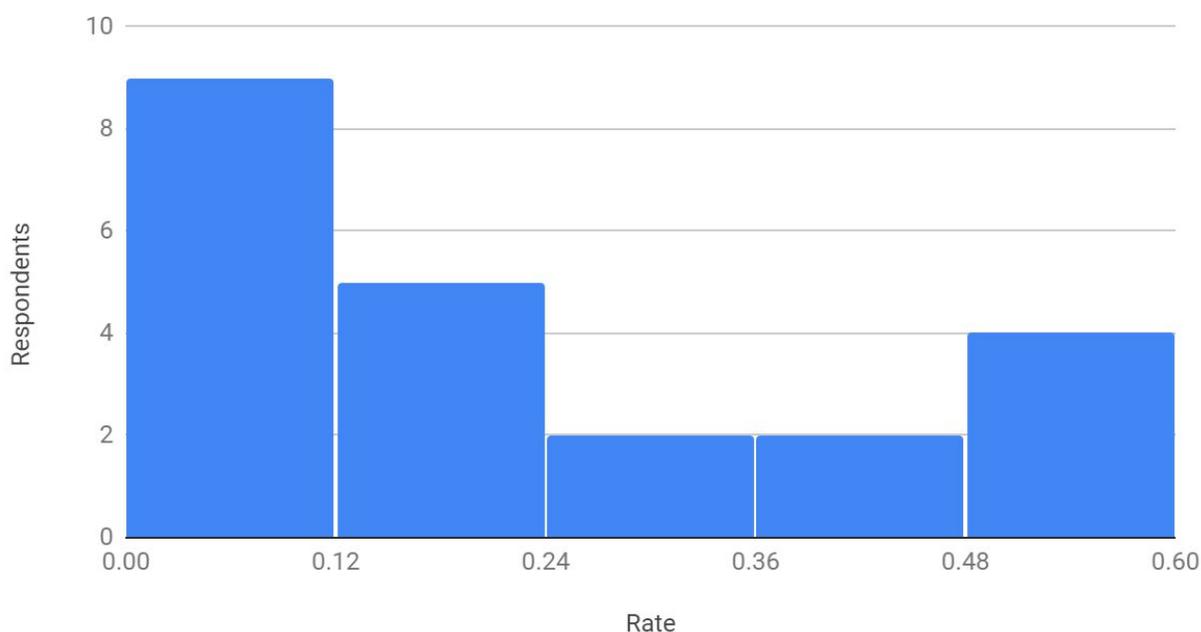

Fig 3: Histogram of Perceptions of Delinquency

Figure 4 depicts a chart of every respondent's answer to the question about delinquency rate with a target line at 46% percent to show how far most answers were from the actual statistic. As the chart demonstrates, only four respondents answered that the delinquency rate was above 46%. The rest predicted that the rate was below 46%, and for the most part, far below 46%, with one respondent, a local church leader, claiming that the percentage was as low as 2%, and a member

of a local leadership council responding that the rate was only 5%. We found that the median value was 35%, 11 points below the real value. That said, when we remove the five outliers present in the data, that rate drops to only 10%, much closer to the perceived rate by the majority of our respondents. In general, then, our stakeholders are not even remotely aware of the crisis in school attendance in Uganda.
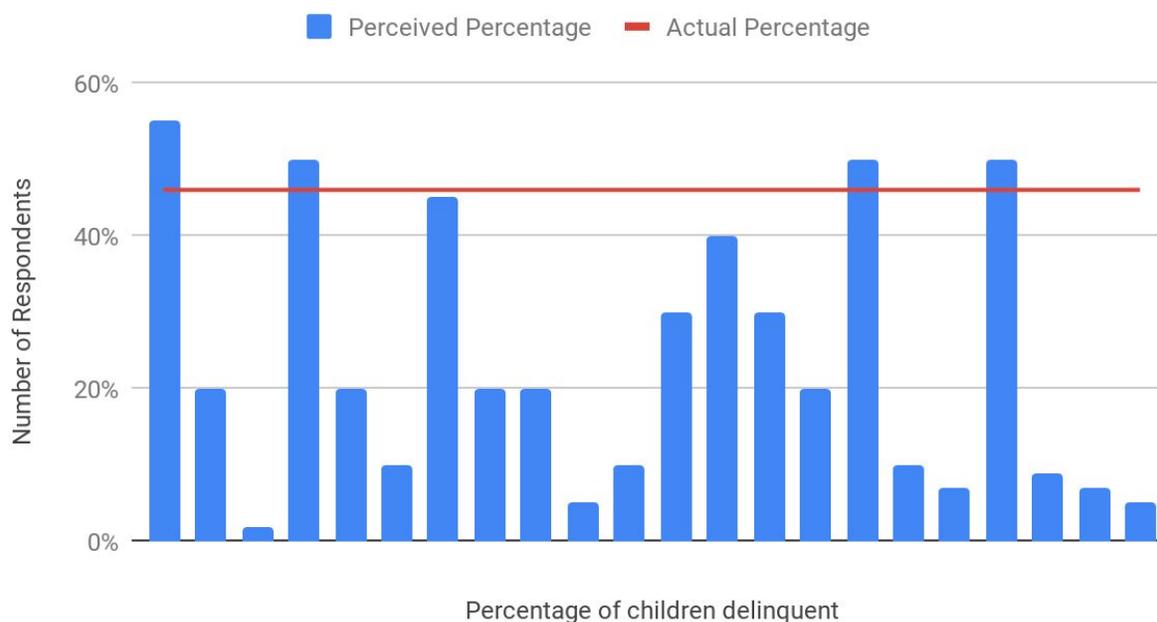

Fig. 4: Chart of Awareness of Delinquency

The five outliers were very close, however, and their characteristics deserve observation. Those who were close were a community volunteer, two teachers at a local Christian school, a leadership council member (who aptly justified his rate of 50%: "Even my own child is not at school so the percentage is high" [KIFAD_ECD_24, 2019]), and a community development officer. In other words, with the exception of the leadership council member, those who were most on the ground and involved in education were the ones who most closely predicted the accurate rate of delinquency.

Moreover, the rates varied to a dizzying extent. We found the dataset has a standard deviation of 21.5%, meaning that a typical response would deviate by 21 points from the mean value of 37.8%. Furthermore, the rates varied within close groups. As noted above, one member of a leadership council answered that the rate was 50%, while another member of the same council responded that the rate was 2%: a 48 point difference.

From an awareness perspective, this tells us that people a) do not possess accurate information about school attendance rates and about how high delinquency rates are in actuality, and b) do not discuss it with people within their own social networks, as the members of the leadership council typify.

It is ironic, then, that so many stakeholders raised the issue of awareness, or "sensitization" as many called it, and the duty of the government to raise the levels of awareness among the general public. One teacher (KIFAD_ECD_14)(who predicted the delinquency rate was 30%) identified lack of awareness by caregivers as a barrier to education,

> There are many barriers that hinder children from going to school.
> These include… lack of counseling and sensitization of parents
> about the importance of education.

Seven other stakeholders provided nearly identical answers about the need to sensitize parents in particular about the importance of education, with one teacher (KIFAD_ECD_7) (prediction: 10%) asserting, "some [parents] do not know how precious education is." In the view of these stakeholders, a comprehensive campaign to educating parents would go a long way to reducing barriers to education for children in Uganda. Stakeholders further mentioned that such a campaign should also focus on the public, ostensibly so that, almost by osmosis, parents might accept the importance of education, and that awareness should also be raised among children. If children pressure their parents to get them to attend school, then perhaps they would be able to attend. Thus many stakeholders emphasized that campaigns targeted at raising awareness among adults must also raise awareness among children. Both parties must be invested for such an intervention to work.

While many stakeholders mentioned sensitization for parents, they also discussed the problems with parents who do not accept or meet their responsibilities as parents. This is the second theme we will discuss.

Theme 2: Parental Responsibility:

Justification of Analysis: The theme of parental responsibility was the most common topic in our data, as the word cloud above demonstrates. Frequently, when a stakeholder mentioned parents, they did so in the context of the *responsibility* of the parents to their children. A typical example of this came from a local teacher who said, "Lack of motivation of parents to take care of their children is another problem" (KIFAD_ECD_7, 2019).

Analysis: Many stakeholders mentioned the duty that parents have to their children and the way in which many parents fall short of that duty. One local police officer mentioned that "parents should take their responsibilities at home seriously" (KIFAD_ECD_22) while a local elder asserted that parents should "work hard to meet their responsibilities" (KIFAD_ECD_23). Other stakeholders voiced similar sentiments. People tended to agree that parents bear a basic set of responsibilities towards their children.

Many made these beliefs known in order to castigate parents who do not act responsibly. When asked why he thought children were not going to school, one government official almost entirely blamed the parents of delinquent children. Among his responses were "lack of parental responsibility" and "parental ignorance about education" (KIFAD_ECD_21, 2019). Clearly, this stakeholder holds that some children do not attend school because their parents are not responsible enough to make the children go to school, likely stemming from ignorance on their own part. A member of the leader's council (KIFAD_ECD_26, 2019) in a local village shared similar thoughts when asked what could be done to increase enrollment in schools. She believes that:

> People should help those children whose parents cannot manage
> the responsibility of education. People should also advise the
> caregiver to work hard and take their responsibility of children
> seriously.

Like the government official, this LC member named parents as the culpable parties for children who do not attend school. Given the interview context of the question, she implies that responsible parents send their children to school while irresponsible parents keep them home.

Adults were not the only ones to voice concerns about parental responsibility. In a focus group with children in grade P7, one person stated that "parents are responsible for making sure their children go to school" (KIFAD Child Focus Group, 2019). The relationship between parents, school, and their responsibilities is not implied here; it is fully and explicitly stated. This child, who we have no reason to think is unrepresentative, and who was not corrected by any peer, believes simply that parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. Any parent who does not ensure their children attend school, in this person's worldview, is thus not a responsible parent.

One common barrier to education that many stakeholders noticed is the lack of responsibility of some parents. In their minds, this irresponsible behavior manifests itself in a lack of concern for their children's education, potentially stemming from their own ignorance. It is almost certainly true that some, and perhaps even most, parents are negligent and are irresponsible and as a result,

do not send their children to school. It takes only a glance at alcoholism rates in Uganda to understand that many parents start the day by drinking and have forgotten their children by dawn. However, it is *also* almost certainly true that matters are more complicated. What might cause parents to fail to send their children to school, if not blatant disregard for their wellbeing? In other words, if we give parents the benefit of the doubt, what other factors make themselves apparent that might keep parents from sending their children to school. It is to this factor that we now turn.

Theme 3: Money, Poverty, and Inability to Pay for School

*Justification of Analysis***:** The theme of money, derived from a combined mixture of themes including school fees, poverty, and other economic issues, came up repeatedly in our interviews with stakeholders. Furthermore, because one of the primary rationales for the establishment of an ECD at KIFAD was concerns about inability to pay school fees, we feel that the data justifies a look at money.

Analysis: Perhaps the single largest barrier to education concerns money. Many people simply do not have the money because of poverty to cover basic costs associated with schooling. This inability to pay was mentioned again and again by our respondents, and an undercurrent in the data suggested that if families just had the money, they could send their children to school. To underscore the concern that our stakeholders felt for this subject, the word "fees" was mentioned twenty times in our data, the word "money" twenty-two times, and the word "pay" eight times. Clearly this is an important theme for our stakeholders.

To understand why poverty would have an effect on school attendance, it is important to note that Uganda has free universal primary schooling that is neither free nor universal. While families ostensibly should not have to pay anything for their children to attend school, many hidden costs are baked into the system. Many parents have to provide transportation for their children, for instance. Many have to pay the school for lunches, scholastic materials, and uniforms, none of which are covered by the government. Furthermore, in many schools, head teachers and teachers gather and determine how much parents should pay on top of that to compensate teachers for other personal costs (KIFAD_ECD_4, 2019). One community volunteer (KIFAD_ECD_02, 2019) expressed her incredulity, "Our universal schools ask for a lot of money even though they are government schools." These fees add up quickly for families living on or below the poverty line.

These fees combined with poverty keep many children from school. Many stakeholders made blatant causal statements between school fees and child delinquency, a trend we did not find present in other themes. An elder's leader said, "some of the children in the area are orphans and

cannot have education opportunities since there is nowhere to get the financial support" (KIFAD_ECD_25, 2019). In other words, the reason that many orphans have no educational opportunities is because they do not have financial support. A member of the VSLA focus group, when asked about factors that keep children from school, likewise said, "they are not able to go to school because the tuition is high" with another stating, "Most parents do not have the funds to sustain their children in school" (KIFAD VCLA Focus Group, 2019). A community volunteer contended that "the government should talk to head teachers to reduce the fees that they are asking for food because that is what is hindering them from sending children to school" (KIFAD_ECD_2, 2019). This barrier was stated most directly by a group of local youths who dropped out at a young age. Most of them admitted that their reasons for dropping out were financial in nature; their families did not have the money to continue sending them to school (KIFAD Youth Focus Group, 2019).

More generally, other stakeholders mentioned financial difficulties as barriers to education. One noted that "lack of employment opportunities" keep families from obtaining money for school fees (KIFAD_ECD_28, 2019), and another that poverty and inability to buy scholastic materials keeps children from schools (KIFAD_ECD_14, 2019).

These findings suggest that the systemic issue of poverty is one of the largest, if not the absolute largest, reason that children do not attend schools. Put simply, if parents could send their children to school, they would. If universal free schools were actually free, then children would likely attend school at much higher rates. Some of the other factors discussed individually below-- like child labor and exploitation-- have their own roots sunk deep inside the soil of poverty. Any effort to combat child delinquency will likewise have to combat poverty.

Theme 4: Violence, Abuse, and Exploitation

Justification for Analysis: Violence against children whether by friends, parents, and especially teachers not only arose several times in our interviews , but proved disturbing enough that we felt the need to elucidate the material here. Furthermore, the people who discussed the abuse proved fascinating and worthy of analysis.

Analysis: Before delving into the significance of the groups of people who discussed abuse, it is important to discuss the mere fact of violence, abuse, and exploitation among children in Uganda. National statistics are clear: 3 in 4 children in Uganda experience some form of violence, be it at the hands of their parents, teachers, relatives, or strangers. Child labor likewise remains a huge problem around the country. It is thus not surprising that these themes likewise appeared in our interviews.

Child labor came up primarily in response to the question "what do you think children are doing when they are not at school?" In fact, of our 27 individual respondents, fully 26 mentioned child labor in some form, whether that be making chapati (KIFAD_ECD_19, 2019), fetching water (KIFAD_ECD_10, 2019), taking care of siblings (KIFAD_ECD_13, 2019), or making bricks (KIFAD_ECD_11, 2019). Most respondents mentioned some iteration of these four activities. Child labor also appeared in each of our focus groups at least once. Some adults were not aware of child labor occuring (R5_KIFAD_ECD_VCLA, 2019), but the vast majority were aware of child labor and noted that children not in school frequently engage in such activities.

Thus it is clear that child labor is an issue in the Bulabukulu and Kiwazzi areas. This should not come as a surprise given the previous discussion on poverty. If parents cannot afford to even send their children to school, it seems likely that they might send their children to work instead. For families who are desperate for money, their children present an opportunity for supplemental income through labor or for childcare so the parents can work more.

Violence and abuse were also mentioned several times by our respondents. Of our individual participants, 11 mentioned violence and abuse of some sort. The violence fell into one of two general camps: violence by teachers and violence by relatives. The majority of those who mentioned the violence were teachers themselves.

The violence in families cause primary and secondary consequences. For example, one police officer (KIFAD_ECD_22, 2019), when asked what keeps children from attending school, mentioned "Violence in families leads to divorce so that children are neglected." In this case, the officer noted violence (primary consequence) and subsequent neglect (secondary factor). The officer mentioned that this is an issue among *families,* not just one family. A nursery-school teacher built off this concept by claiming that "some children are mistreated by guardians that are not their parents," referring specifically to orphans who live with aunts, uncles, or other extended family members.

However, violence on the part of teachers was mentioned far more frequently. Several respondents asserted that children do not go to school because they are afraid of the punishments that teachers inflict. Participants mentioned caining, a fairly common corporal punishment, and the fact that some children hate school because they are afraid that teachers will cain them. This fact should not be overlooked. According to our respondents, beating children with cains, far from instilling discipline and a love of learning, fosters rebellion and a hatred for school and education. If the government hopes to imbibe children with a love of school, then the beatings must cease, and teachers must learn to instill discipline in the classroom in other ways.

Beatings were not the most disturbing revelation concerning teachers. One head teacher (KIFAD_ECD_8, 2019) said that many teachers make children carry stones on their heads as a punishment, ostensibly to humiliate and hurt them. Others (KIFAD_ECD_13, 15, 18, 2019) claimed that the issue of rape is common enough in schools to warrant government intervention. They asserted that many children do not attend school because they fear corporal punishment, yes, but also because they believe that their teachers will rape them. Similarly, one child in a focus group (KIFAD_ECD_ChildFocusGroup, 2019) said that many of their friends do not attend school because they often are raped to and from their way to school by men who prey on lone children. Teachers also reportedly forced children into relationships with other children and sometimes the teachers themselves, such that children fear the repercussions that might occur if they refused (KIFAD_ECD_2, 16, 2019). One junior school teacher (KIFAD_ECD_16, 2019) claimed that this problem is "common" in universal primary schools.

The best way to stop an epidemic of violence is awareness, but unfortunately, our data inferentially suggests that awareness may be disproportionately skewed towards victims with parents turning away from signs of trouble. Of the focus groups we conducted, two were with adults, mostly parents (VCLA and Women's), and two were with children (children and youth dropouts). The subject of violence and punishment came up in the focus groups with children and youth, but not in the focus groups with adults. Furthermore, the most senior members of the leadership councils that gave interviews did not mention violence or abuse once. The disparity between those who thus reported the violence and abuse (private school teachers and children) and those who did not discuss (adults and parents) raises difficult questions to answer. Do parents turn away from violence? Are they aware of the problem but unwilling to address it? How many parents contribute to the abuse themselves? With the most recent statistics about child violence in Uganda, the answers are probably not positive. Violence, abuse, and exploitation against children seems to be a prolific issue throughout Uganda as a whole, but also in the local communities that KIFAD serves. This violence, abuse, and exploitation undoubtedly is a barrier to education and without question keeps many children from attending school.

Theme 5: Lack of Sanitary Materials for Girls

Justification of Analysis: The theme of "lack of sanitary materials for girls," although not visible in the word cloud, is apparent when looking at tabular data. Two teachers in addition to children's focus group mention "sanitary pads" as a reason why some children, and in this case female children, are not going to school (KIFAD_ECD_14 and KIFAD_ECD_18, 2019). Research studies have been conducted in Uganda and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa mentioning the lack and importance of sanitary facilities for the female child in relation to school

attendance; thus, it would be pertinent to also mention this as a significant barrier to education heavily affecting female primary education within this region.

Analysis: Menstruation is a normal female bodily process that occurs once a month, whereby a female bleeds from the shedding of her uterine lining for a period of 2-7 days on average. Biologically speaking, this marks sexual maturity in females, which in many places around the world invariably has cultural/social implications, that often are inextricably tied to taboos. A teacher at a UPE school (KIFAD_ECD_14, 2019) recommended:

> The government should put more emphasis on the girls since they are the ones who are vulnerable for example, buying scholastic materials as well as sanitary towels.

The lack of sanitary materials for girls during this period which include towels, separate latrine facilities, washing stations for towels, and even freely available disposable sanitary napkins, reflects a larger problem of cultural stigma and unawareness of female physiology. A member of the children's focus group mentioned that some students are not going to school because of "lack of sanitary pads to use when in menstruation" (KIFAD Child Focus Group, 2019).

A study conducted in 2016 in northern Uganda on the issue of menstruation and its effects on female school attendance found that on average, most female pupils miss 1-3 days of school per month due to menstruation; this notion further translates to 24 days a year, or 11% of the learning term missed due to periods. Therefore, each term, females are missing 8 days of school, which can have drastically negative effects on the amount of material learned and reciprocally, interest in the material, potentially leading to the decreased retention noted by this and many other studies (SNV). Females generally start menstruating between the ages of 11-13, which just happens to be the point at which female drop out rates rise significantly in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 2006). Likewise, a 2017 census done in the Wakiso district by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics highlighted that 8% of children between 6-15 do not attend school, but when split into different sexes,the rate increases to 9% of females and decreases to 7% of males. Although female dropout rates might be slightly higher for many reasons, it is likely that part of the inflated number is also partly caused by poor menstruation management.

The lack of adequate sanitary materials for female students, reflects an obvious neglect for female hygiene, and in turn, female education. This neglect causes school absenteeism and normalizes the idea that females drop out and miss school regularly due to their periods. The lack of materials for females also ties into this stigma, whereby ignoring or shaming the process all together prevents acknowledgement of the issue and the subsequent installment and availability of the necessary materials for female hygiene. So far we understand that there is a causal

relationship between school attendance and lack of female sanitary facilities, but to supplement our limited information, we shall use the study conducted by SNV that included a focus group to try and elucidate why and how this relationship exists. Female students mentioned embarrassment during their periods, especially feeling dirty because they have so few resources to deal with the bleeding when it starts. Thus, females would rather miss school to prevent the embarrassment of having being publicly seen changing or staining clothes (SNV).

While it is certain that the lack of sanitary materials for females is a significant barrier to education, to obtain more context specific data within the Wakiso district, a more focused study on menstrual management as it pertains to education should be conducted. However, there are enough resources to point to the severity of this issue within Uganda in addition to the mere mention of the neglect of sanitary facilities for females from our own study.

Theme 6: Lack of Accessible Universal Primary Schools

Justification of Analysis: The justification for examining this theme is twofold. First, many respondents mentioned the lack of local universal primary schools, and that merits analysis in its own right. But second, as noted above, Uganda claims to have free and universal primary school. We found that these schools are not truly free, keeping many children from education. We should also investigate the claim that schools are universal in light of our findings.

Analysis: Individuals across our interviews and focus groups expressed discontent at the lack of local, accessible schools for their children to attend. Many mentioned the long distance that children must walk to get to school, with one member of a local leadership council (KIFAD_ECD_27, 2019) asserting that "school is too far for young children to walk" as a reason why more children do not attend school.

This theme likewise appeared in our focus groups. One respondent (R5, KIFAD_ECD_VCLA, 2019) told the group that she thinks that many children stay home from school in Bulabakulu because Bulabakulu does not have a UPS, and the cost of transporting children to another school is too high for parents to shoulder. Similarly, one child in our children's focus group (KIFAD_ECD_ChildrenFocusGroup, 2019) claimed that some of their friends do not attend school because of the "long distances that kids have to walk, which is risky." The riskiness that this child alluded to was clarified by another child, who confessed that many of their friends did not like walking to school because men sometimes rape them while they walk. A causal relationship was also inferred in the women's focus group (KIFAD_ECD_WomenFocusGroup, 2019) when one respondent alleged that "schools are far, and children get tired of moving every day, so they drop out of school."

The lack of local schools shows that universal free education in Uganda is not actually universal or free. The distance that children must walk or travel to attend other primary schools is not merely an inconvenience through which families can persevere, but is rather a crippling economic burden for families and poses danger for children who must walk past predatory men every day to and from school. When asked what should be done about educational issues, many picked up on this problem, and claimed that the most immediately helpful action the government could take would be to build new schools in the community (R2, KIFAD_ECD_VCLA, 2019). A private school teacher (KIFAD_ECD_10, 2019) concurred, saying that "nearby schools should be set up so as to overcome the long distances that children walk in this area." Indeed, few barriers are more fundamental than a simple vacuum of possibility. The onus cannot just be on local communities to solve their delinquency rates. They can fight poverty, educate and raise awareness, teach parents, and collect materials as much as they like, but unless a school actually exists to which they can send their children, those actions will only go so far.

Conclusion

Our study of the barriers to education in the Wakiso district has elucidated 6 clear themes or barriers including, "lack of awareness," "parental responsibility," "money, poverty, and inability to pay for school," "violence, abuse, and exploitation," "lack of sanitary materials for girls," and "lack of accessible universal primary schools." While this list is not exhaustive of the barriers that do exist in this area, it lays a solid foundation in understanding what the key educational barriers are in this area of Uganda. This report should be used for further advocacy, especially in trying to obtain both community and governmental support for the eradication of said barriers. We hope this report serves as groundwork for future legislative efforts to increase educational attainment in Wakiso and in Uganda.

Recommendations

Given our findings in this report, we make the following recommendations:

1. Advocate with the government for a local school in Bulabakulu
2. Conduct parenting classes focused on discipline specifically
3. Empower children in the community, and especially in the ECD, to know their legal rights and how to report those that violate them. For instance, teach them how to report teachers that abuse them.
4. Conduct a more in depth study of menstruation management in public schools within Banda

5. Conduct community sensitization and awareness campaigns focusing on the number of children not attending school. This should be aimed at getting the community involved and aware of the problems within their own community.

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