

Shaping Africa's Future with Evidence, Equity, and Innovation for Impact

Fact Sheet: Education in Uganda (Post-1997 Universal Primary Education)

Overview

Since the landmark introduction of **Universal Primary Education (UPE)** in 1997, Uganda has undergone a dramatic transformation in its education sector. UPE abolished tuition fees for up to four children per family (later extended to all), leading to a massive surge in enrollment. This fact sheet outlines key milestones, achievements, challenges, and current priorities in Uganda's education system from 1997 to the present.

Key Milestones & Policies

Year	Policy/Initiative
1997	Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched Remove tuition fees to achieve mass primary enrollment
2007	Universal Secondary Education (USE) introduced Extend fee-free education to secondary level
2011	Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) strategy enhanced Expand skills-based education
2020	National Teacher Policy launched Improve teacher management, training and welfare
2020	Revised Lower Secondary Curriculum rolled out Shift focus to competencies and skills over rote learning

Key Statistics & Impact

Enrollment Surge

- Primary Enrollment (1996 → 2023):** Jumped from ~2.5 million to **over 10 million pupils**
- Gross Enrollment Ratio (Primary):** Exceeds 115% (due to over-age enrollment)
- Gender Parity:** Near-equal enrollment of girls and boys at primary level

Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) Disparities

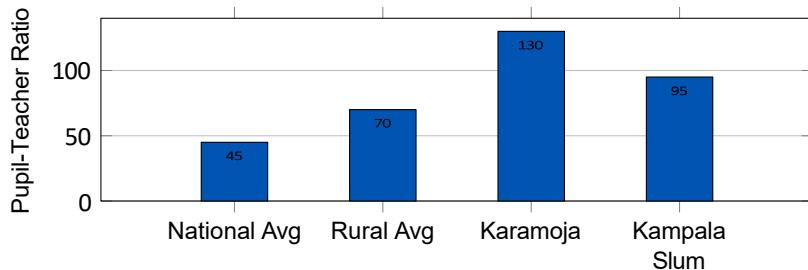


Figure 1: Pupil-Teacher Ratio Variations Across Uganda (2022 Data)

Infrastructure & Human Resources

- Public primary schools increased from ~8,200 (1996) to **over 14,000**
- Primary teachers rose from ~82,000 to **over 260,000**
- Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR):** Officially **45:1** nationally, but rural averages reach **70:1**, with extreme cases exceeding **130:1** in underserved regions like Karamoja

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Education Transition Rates (2022-23)

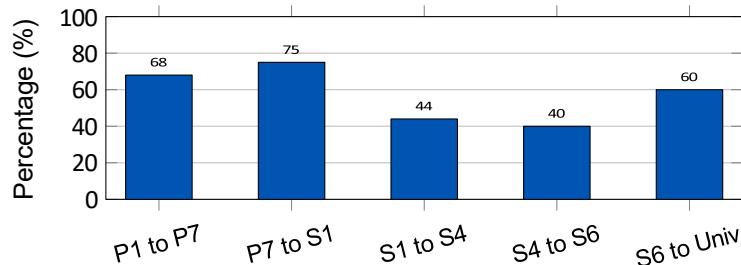


Figure 2: Education Transition Rates at Key Stages

Retention & Completion Rates

- **Primary 7 Survival Rate (P1 to P7):** ~68% (2023)
- **Transition to Secondary:** ~75% of P7 graduates enter Senior 1
- **Secondary Completion (S4):** Approximately 30% of the age-appropriate cohort
- **S6 (Upper Secondary) Enrollment:** ~400,000 students (40% of S4 completers)
- **S6 Completion:** ~360,000 (90% of S6 enrollees)
- **University Enrollment:** ~200,000 annually (55% of S6 completers)
- **University Graduation Rate:** ~65% within 5 years
- **Overall Pipeline:** For every 100 children who enter P1, only 10 reach university level

Specific High PTR Examples (Documented Cases)

District/Region	Context	Reported PTR
Napak District (Karamoja)	Severe teacher shortage; remote, hard-to-staff area	130:1
Kamuli District (Busoga)	High enrollment, low teacher deployment	110:1
Nakawa Division (Kampala)	Urban slum, high population density	95:1
Arua City (West Nile)	Strain from refugee inflows	85:1
National Rural Average	MoES estimate (2022)	70:1

Persistent Challenges

- **Overcrowded Classrooms:** High PTR strains quality, with documented cases of 130:1 ratios
- **Teacher Motivation:** Low pay, irregular salaries, high absenteeism
- **Learning Outcomes:** 2018 Uwezo assessment found **only 34%** of P3-P7 pupils could read a P2-level story
- **Regional & Gender Disparities:** Northern and rural areas trail in facilities, outcomes. Girls' dropout rises in adolescence due to poverty, early pregnancy, and child marriage

“UPE opened the school gates for millions, but the journey now is from access to quality and relevance.”

Data sources: UBOS Statistical Abstract 2023, MoES EMIS 2022, UNEB Reports 2022, NCHE 2022, World Bank Education Statistics, UWEZO Learning Assessment Reports