

# Examining the Effects of COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Uganda

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# Background on Uganda and Education

- Uganda considers education to be a powerful tool for social growth, economic development, and sustaining democracy.
- COVID-19 is posing significant challenges to educational access throughout the country.
- School enrollment and quality of education greatly differs between urban and rural areas, and these inequalities are heightened by the pandemic.

# Background on Uganda and Education (cont.)

**80%**

of school-aged children live in rural areas that are characterized by a lack of resources and infrastructure for education.

Source:  
[Education Data](#)  
[Policy Center](#)

**14%**

of children of secondary-school age in rural areas are enrolled in school.

Source:  
[Education Data](#)  
[Policy Center](#)

**38%**

of children of secondary school age in urban areas are enrolled in school.

Source:  
[Education Data](#)  
[Policy Center](#)

**85%**

of children of primary-school age in rural areas are enrolled in school.

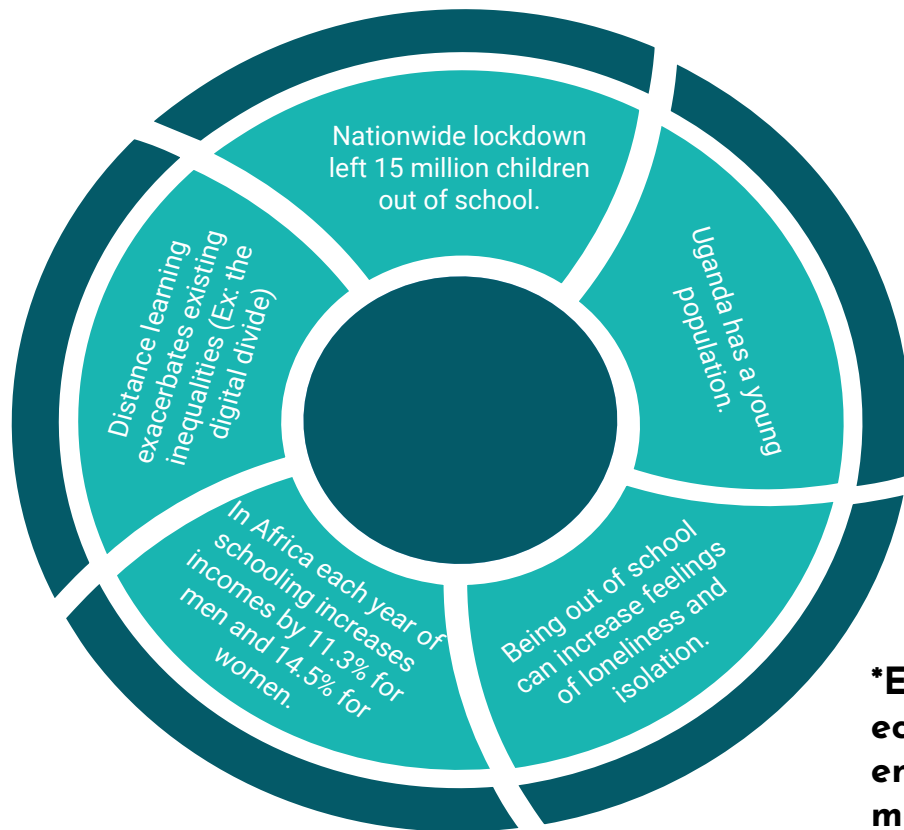
Source:  
[Education Data](#)  
[Policy Center](#)

**91%**

of children of primary-school age in urban areas are enrolled in school.

Source:  
[Education Data](#)  
[Policy Center](#)

# Why is This Topic Important?



Sources:

[World Bank](#)  
[UNDP](#)

**\*Education facilitates economic growth & encourages social and mental development among children.**

# The Digital Divide

**71.2%** of households in urban areas have access to the national electricity grid.

**8%** of households in rural areas have access to the national electricity grid.

During COVID-19, distance learning has become synonymous with technological learning, but the disparities in access will greatly contribute to economic and educational inequalities.

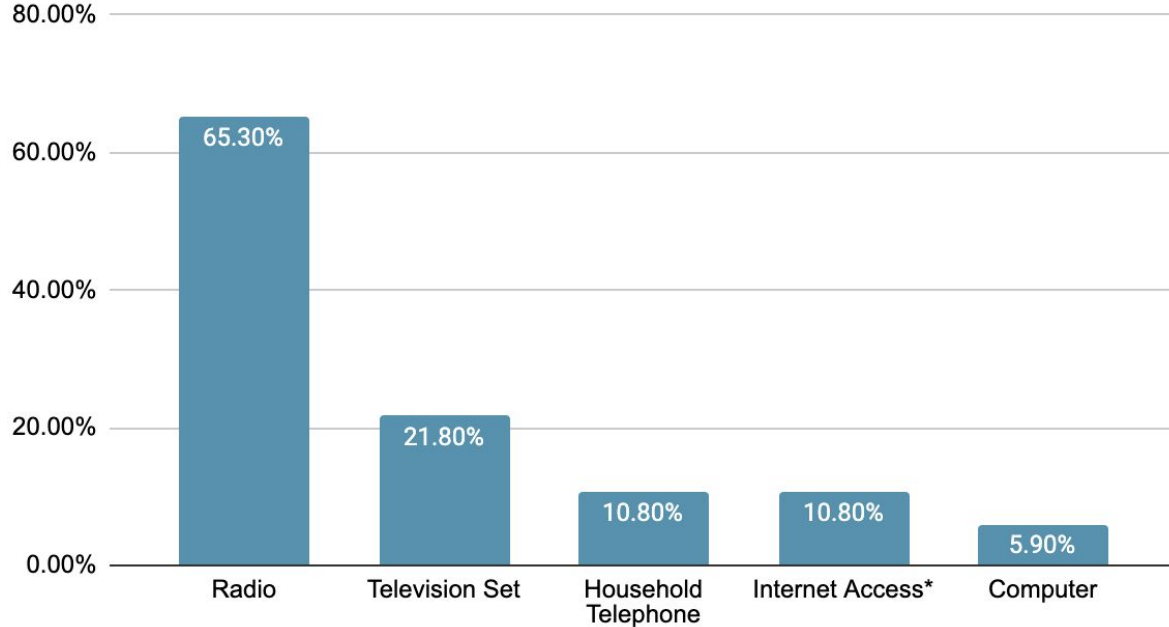
# Uganda COVID-19 Government Response

- Overall shift from learning face-to-face in the classroom to adopting distance learning and virtual teaching methods as of March 2020.
- COVID-19 response plan involves the distribution of home study kits and broadcasting lessons on both radio and television directly to learners at home.
  - Government needs to spend 336.8b ugx to purchase 9 million radios for students around the country.
  - Legislators have yet to approve purchase of radios.

Source:

[Newvision.co](http://Newvision.co)

## Technology Access



### Of households with internet access:

70.9% of all individuals owned a mobile phone

99.1% used their mobile phones to access the Internet.

\*At least 1 family member has internet access.

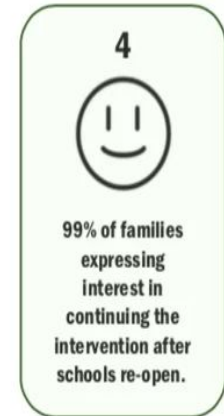
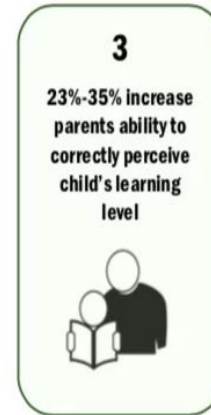
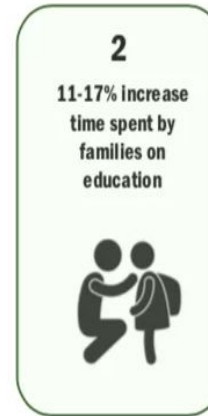
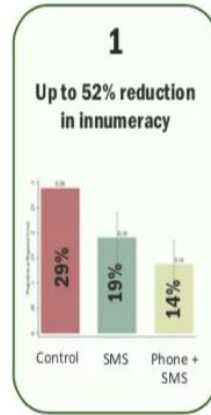
Source:  
The National  
Information  
Technology  
Survey 2017/18

# Solution to Address the Digital Divide: Potential Policy for the Ugandan Government (cont.)

Low-Tech Education Intervention in Botswana:

Young love (NGO) collected 10,000 students' mobile numbers to provide text-messages based instruction and established hotlines to answer questions.

## Results





# Solution to Address the Digital Divide: Potential Policy for the Ugandan Government (cont.)

Figure 1: Intervention SMS Text Message Example

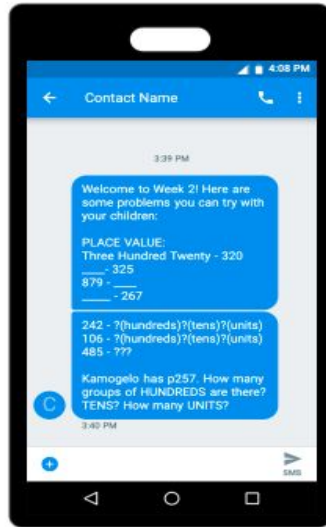


Figure 2: Sample phone call introduction



Source:  
[Low-Tech  
Intervention  
Botswana Study](#)

# **Solution to Address the Digital Divide: Potential Policy for the Ugandan Government(cont.)**

- Ensure that education is a core part of the COVID-19 response and is adequately funded from the start.
- Align funding and activities to support government response plans.
- Support alternative/informal learning to continue while schools are closed.

Sources:

[The World Food Program](#)

[UC Berkeley](#)

[Sandra Goulding](#)

# Education system supports youth

## Physical

•  
100,000 children



## Social

•  
role models  
&  
peer support

## Emotional

•  
stress management  
&  
prosocial behavior

Absence of school + lack of technology  
=  
worrisome prognosis  
for Ugandan youth

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49%

# The negative implications from absence of schooling:

## *lack of nutrition*

Effect on mental health:

Findings from Mash and Wolfe (2010) suggest lack of nutrition in childhood enhance risk factors for Intellectual Disability and Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder, as well as increases anxiety and depression<sup>1</sup>.

Effect on economic health:

It is estimated that the total cost of child undernutrition in Uganda is equivalent to a staggering 5.6% of the country's gross domestic product<sup>2</sup>.

\$1,500,000,000<sup>3</sup>

Sources:

1. Textbook-Abnormal Child Psychology (2010)
2. The World Food Program
3. The World Bank

# The negative implications from absence of schooling: *social isolation*

Loades et al. (2020) conducted a study on children and adolescents in isolation as a result of COVID-19 and found data that suggests children are, “more likely to experience high rates of depression and most likely anxiety.”

Matthews et al. (2015) found data that suggest, “social isolation and mental health problems co-occur in early childhood” and children who “exhibit problematic behaviors may struggle to cope with social challenges that accompany their progression” through childhood.

# Emmanuel's Experience

“Most children received most of their daily nutrition at school” - Emmanuel

“The parents noticed children get disconnected from learning, growing and developing socially, morally, intellectually and physically (through games and sports). Activities such as playing games, reading books and playing sports are highly missed” (Millicent).

Source:

Primary source surveys conducted by Emmanuel



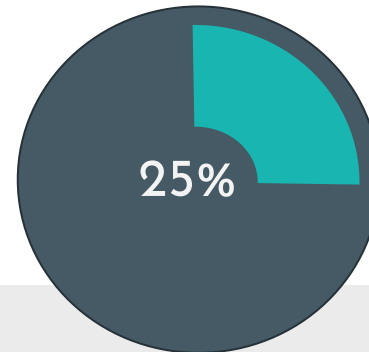
# The negative implications from absence of schooling: *permanent disenrollment from education*

Early marriage may lead to exploitation & domestic violence:

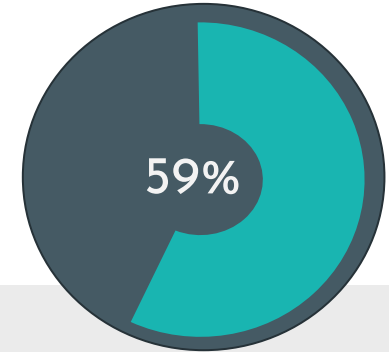
*"I fear that Uganda will register its highest rates of primary and secondary school dropouts and teenage child marriages in 2020 and 2021. There will also be additional burden on girls, who at home often absorb extra work of caring for other children and are more exposed to domestic violence."*

Stephan Wandu Bimo (I CAN)

Early marriage



Early pregnancy



Sources:

ICAN - Stephan Wandu Bimo

Academic Journal: Empowering adolescent girls in developing countries: Gender justice and norm change





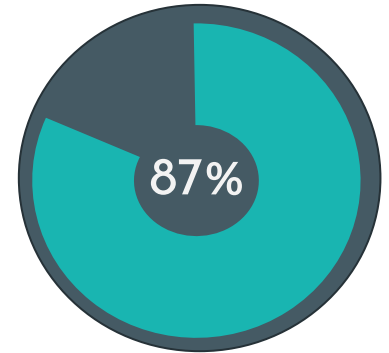
Source: Brookings Institute

# The negative implications from absence of schooling: *permanent disenrollment from education*

## Agriculture

Heifer International's recent Uganda COVID-19 Impact Report, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in more than 87 percent of farmers surveyed reporting that their income has been cut in half since March

Decreased wages + lack of structure (no school) = youth entering agriculture



# On the Ground with Emmanuel



## Early Marriage and Pregnancy

*"Since lockdown up to today, I have not seen my classmates. I have heard that some have gotten married. They used to give me hope and joy, but I am worried that most will get pregnant during the lockdown and I may never see them again at school."*

- Angelina

## Agriculture

*"Since farming is one of the backbone economies in Uganda, so many children perceive farming as an important activity, especially because they got engaged in farming during the pandemic through growing tomatoes and beans, and rearing poultry birds"*

- Milly & Lorna

Sources:  
Oxfam  
Primary source surveys conducted by Emmanuel

Our solution:  
The Friendship Hub

# The Friendship Hub: 3 core elements



# The Friendship Bench

Founded by Dr. Dixon Chibanda

- Depends on community elders as backbone of caregivers
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy training for grandmothers in the community
- Therapy combined with activity scheduling and peer led support
- One-on-One therapy → Circle Kubatana Tose (CKT)

Practical implementation

- Once children receive treatment, they move to a group led by local teachers
- Teachers facilitate discussions and administer education packets
- Provides structure, role models, and a support system which are benefits of a schooling environment

FRIENDSHIP BENCH®



# YouBelong Uganda



*"Fundamental human need for belonging to one's family, community, and culture, and an understanding that helping individuals to meet this need is a required foundation for human wellbeing, and active engagement in community life."*

- First Line of YouBelong Staff training

- Community based support system built off trust
- Model for community engagement and access to knowledge
- Access to mental health advisors and medication
- Helps raise awareness of mental health issues and combat stigma

# EkoCenter

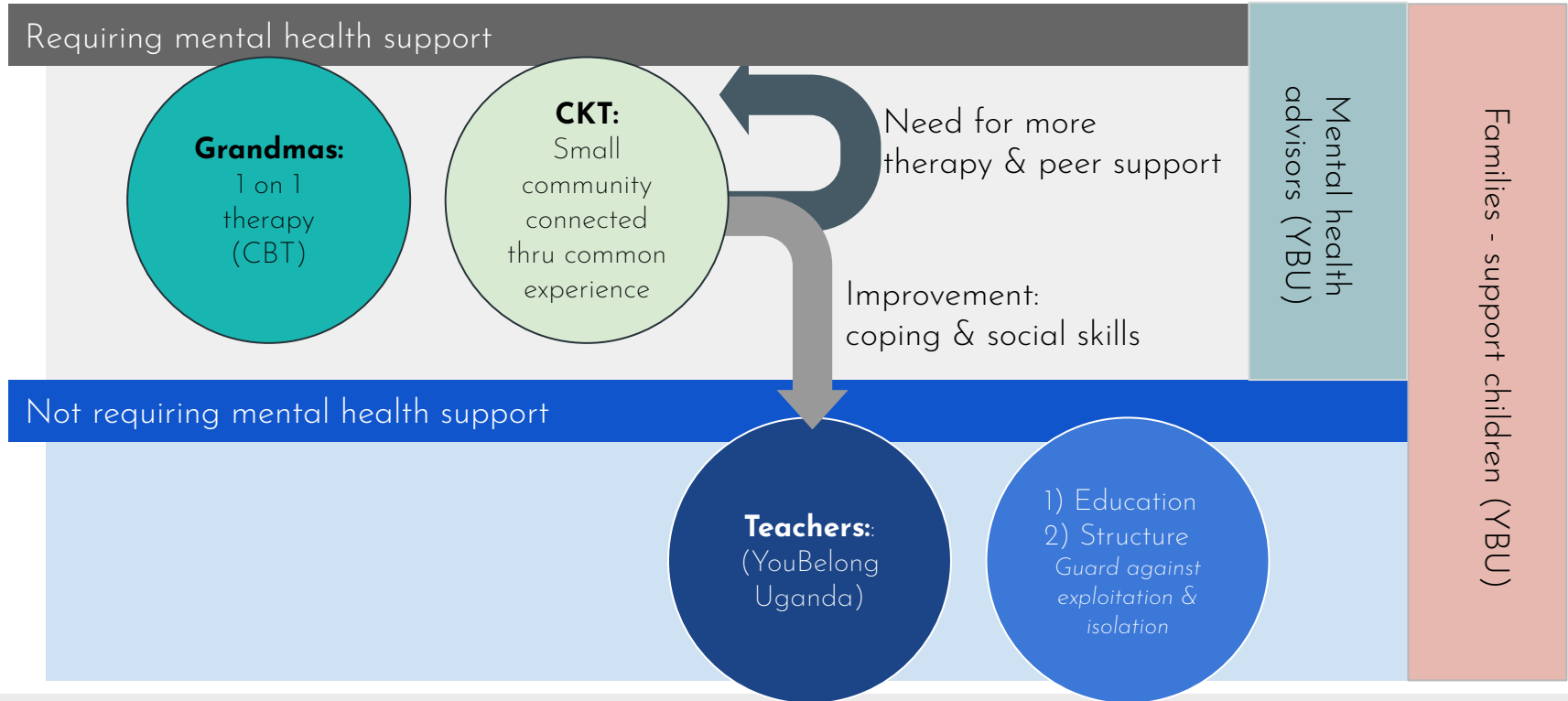
Developed by Dean Kamen in partnership with Coca Cola

- Stems the digital divide
- Offers:
  - a. WiFi access,
  - b. Clean water
  - c. Nutrition
- Opportunities:
  - a. Access to mental health advisors and education programs
  - b. Provides a "homebase" for the action plan





# Practical implementation



# **Other Implications to Consider For Potential Future Projects**

# Main Sources of Funding for Education

Figure 5.2: General Structure of education funding

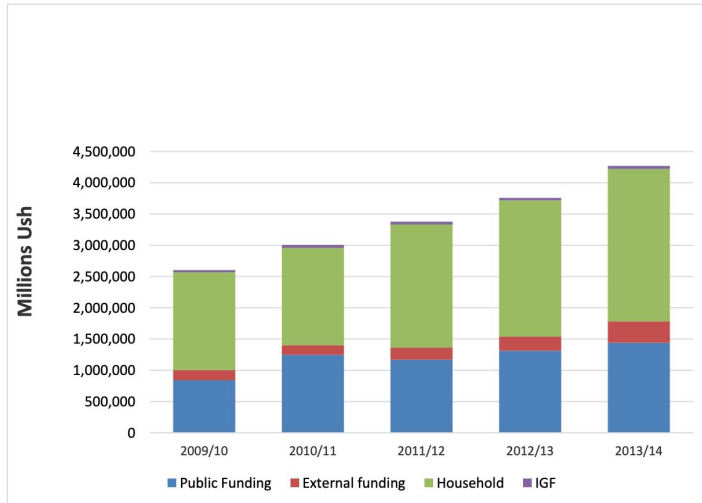
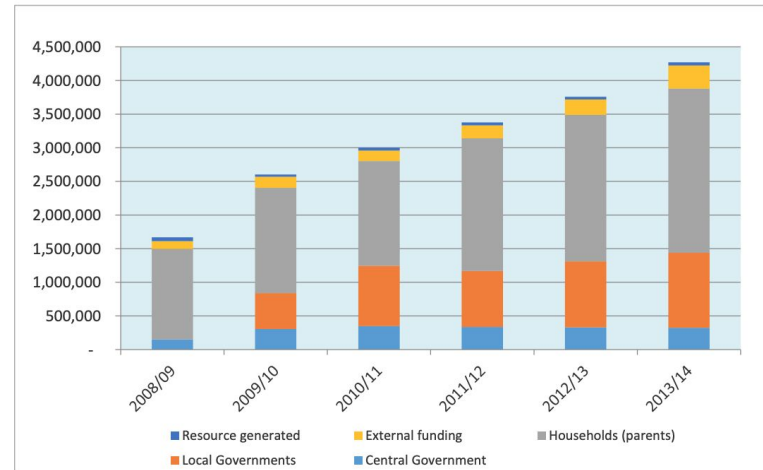


Figure 5.3: Trend in the Education Funding Structure



Source: [Ministry of Education and Sports](#)

# Funding & Implications

Households contribute more than **50%** of educational funding.

How will the pandemic affect the ability of households to contribute to educational funds? How does this impact the types of interventions and services that the government can provide?

# Conclusion

A group of approximately 15-20 children of various ages are gathered outdoors in a rural setting. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. Some are wearing school uniforms, including light blue and green dresses, and a blue polo shirt with grey shorts. Others are in casual clothing like t-shirts and patterned skirts. The background shows a red wall on the left and a dirt ground. The text is overlaid on the image in a semi-transparent white box.

Children are society's greatest resource

Inaction will lead to devastating consequences for Uganda's future

Utmost importance to provide a supportive and stable environment