

**REPORTING RESULTS OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENT:
UGANDA EXPERIENCE**

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ABSTRACT

Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) has been conducting national assessment, referred to as the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE), since 1996. The assessment is done annually in grades three and six in the subject areas of Literacy and Numeracy. The information emanating from the assessment is supposed to serve the following purposes, among others: Generate accurate information on what pupils know and can do in various curricular areas, provide guidelines for improving instruction and learning, evaluate the effectiveness of inputs and processes that are employed in the educational activities and provide guidelines on variables that affect achievement. However, the information is not yet being optimally used by education policy makers and practitioners.

This presentation outlines the methods which UNEB has adopted to report the results in order to make it user-friendly for the various key players: from the teacher in the classroom to the policy maker in the Education Ministry. Furthermore, explanation is made of how such information can be disseminated in a cost-effective manner so as to reach as many persons as possible within a short time.

BACKGROUND

In Uganda, the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) Report (1989) and the Government White Paper (1992) observed, among others, that there was lack of reliable and up-to-date data on education indicators, and that this had hampered planning and administration of education on scientific lines and optimum use of resources. The only assessment information used for monitoring and evaluation was based on Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results and on the examiners' reports. However, PLE being primarily a tool for selection, the emphasis is on providing information on the relative performance of pupils at the end of the course. Consequently, UNEB adopted a multi-faceted approach to respond to the national call on her to provide a more meaningful assessment, supportive of the curriculum and classroom instruction. Firstly, UNEB improved on the quality of its examinations by incorporating more questions which require higher order thinking skills. Secondly, UNEB introduced continuous assessment and national assessment, called National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE). This presentation will be confined to the mechanisms of reporting NAPE findings. Before doing so, we make a statement of the objectives of NAPE and the assessment procedures .

Objectives of NAPE

The objectives of NAPE are to: generate accurate information on what pupils know and can do in various curricular areas; evaluate the effectiveness of reforms in the education system; provide guidelines for the improvement of instruction and learning; evaluate the effectiveness of inputs and processes employed in the educational activities; provide guidelines on variables that affect achievement; and provide data that can be used in planning and research.

Procedures

Two types of instruments: criterion referenced tests of Literacy and Numeracy, based on the national curriculum, and questionnaires are used. . The questionnaires and/or interview schedules are administered to pupils who have sat for the tests, teachers who teach the English and Mathematics in the target grades and head teachers of the schools in the sample, to obtain contextual information.

Reports for Various Stakeholders

The categories of audience who need information comprise teachers, the Education Standards Agency (ESA), District Education Officers (DEOs), District Inspectors of Schools (DISs), National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), UNEB, Teacher Training Colleges, education planners and policy makers, parents, students and the public at large.

Teachers and head teachers need information that can help them in planning and improving instruction and learning at the school level. Schools are therefore given reports of results that are aggregated to the classroom level, comparing their school with other schools in the district and country. Schools also require analysis of performance per item together with the report of scorers, as well as results of the analyses by skill/ability e.g. reading and writing in Literacy; or conceptual understanding and problem solving in Numeracy. The teachers'

report also contains samples of pupils' work, examples of which are shown on page 4.

DEOs, DISs, ESA and Tutors have to provide guidelines on classroom instruction and learning to teachers and also guide, supervise and facilitate the choice and utilization of instructional materials. Findings from NAPE can indicate themes/content areas that need to be focused on in order to improve on instruction. This category gets the same report as the teachers. The assessment results prepared this way can enable the DEOs and DISs of different districts to organise joint seminars, workshops, conferences or short courses focused on particular areas.

NCDC has to review the curriculum every now and again to bring in new content/skill areas while dropping others. UNEB also reviews past question papers to improve on the quality of setting. The NAPE assessment results will point out what pupils know and can do. NCDC and UNEB therefore get a full report, similar to that of the former groups.

Education Planning Department (EPD) requires accurate and timely assessment information in order to plan the necessary inputs to redirect and fine tune educational efforts towards the desired goal. Education administrators and policy makers need tangible data and evidence on which to base their decisions. Parents and students need to have an indication of how the home environment may impact on children's learning. A concise report of major findings is prepared for these groups.

Samples of Pupils' Work

Results have shown that pupils' performance vary across skill areas of a subject. Some samples of pupils' work in Literacy and Numeracy are presented in this section as an illustration. Table 1 gives the percentages of pupils rated proficient in various questions in Reading Comprehension.

Table 1 Percentages Of Primary 6 (Grade 6) Pupils Rated Proficient In Various Questions in Reading Comprehension

Question	Percentage of pupils proficient
(a) Who is called the 'old friend' in the story?	52.2%
(b) Which test was to be done on Monday morning?	54.1%
(c) What do you learn from this conversation?	21.4%
(d) Why do you think Mr. Hyena failed to borrow money from his friends?	12%

The correct answer for (d) was: *They did not trust him to pay back.*

The responses of the pupils included:

- *because he wanted to pay tax.*
- *to look for a job.*
- *because his children will starve.*
- *because he had small money*
- *because if he have money he don't want to borrow her friends*
- *Mr. Hyena walked up and down of the river.*

In writing, pupils were better at picture story than in producing a continuous piece of writing. Example 1 shows sample answers of P.6 pupils when asked to write a letter requesting for a place in P 7 in Kiwa Primary School.

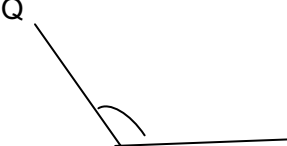

Example 1

(a) *Dear My headmistress Kiwa P/S how are you your life at home but Me I have requesting you that Next Year Your going to go to another school but I DONT HAVE MUCH TO SAY I am I.*

(b) *Dear My headmistress in kiwa primary school. How are you av there. I think you are okey For I am not okey because my head is paining. For that I want to come and see me now now.
THANKS TGO MY LOVING DOUGHTER IAM RAIMINING NAMULI GRACE*

In Numeracy, pupils were better at tasks which required knowledge of concepts than those that demanded problem solving skills. Table 2 indicates the types of errors that pupils made.

Table 2: Types of Errors P 6 Pupils Made in Answering Numeracy Questions

	Question	% Rated Proficient	Types of Mistakes	Likely explanation
a	203 + 1010 + 3565	70% (74% boys, 67% girls)	2 ¹ 0 ¹ 3 1010 <u>3565</u> 7505	Inability to do mental arithmetic. Inability to align the figures correctly.
b	In a village, there are seven hundred thirty four men, two hundred forty six women and one thousand children. How many people are in the village altogether?	34% (39% boys, 29% girls)	700 + 34 + 200 + 46 + 100 = 3700 700 + 34 + 2 + 46 + 182 734 70034 246 20046 <u>10000</u> <u>1000</u> 10800 91080	Inability to decode words to figures Inability to align figures.
c	63 ÷ 9 =	47% (48% boys, 46% girls)	63 <u>÷9</u> 91 rem 6	Lack of understanding of concept
d	Measure the size of angle QRS Q 	3% (3% boys, 3% girls)	90° - (Joined Q to S) - 4cm - 60 - 30	Lack of understanding of concept
e	Reading time (2:00 o'clock)	23% (28% boys, 18% girls)	6 minutes to 2 8 o'clock 8:00am 12:00 face on the west	Lack of understanding of concept
f	What is the name of the shape below? 	49% (50%, 49%)	Straight Tirangel Rectugal	Lack of knowledge of concept

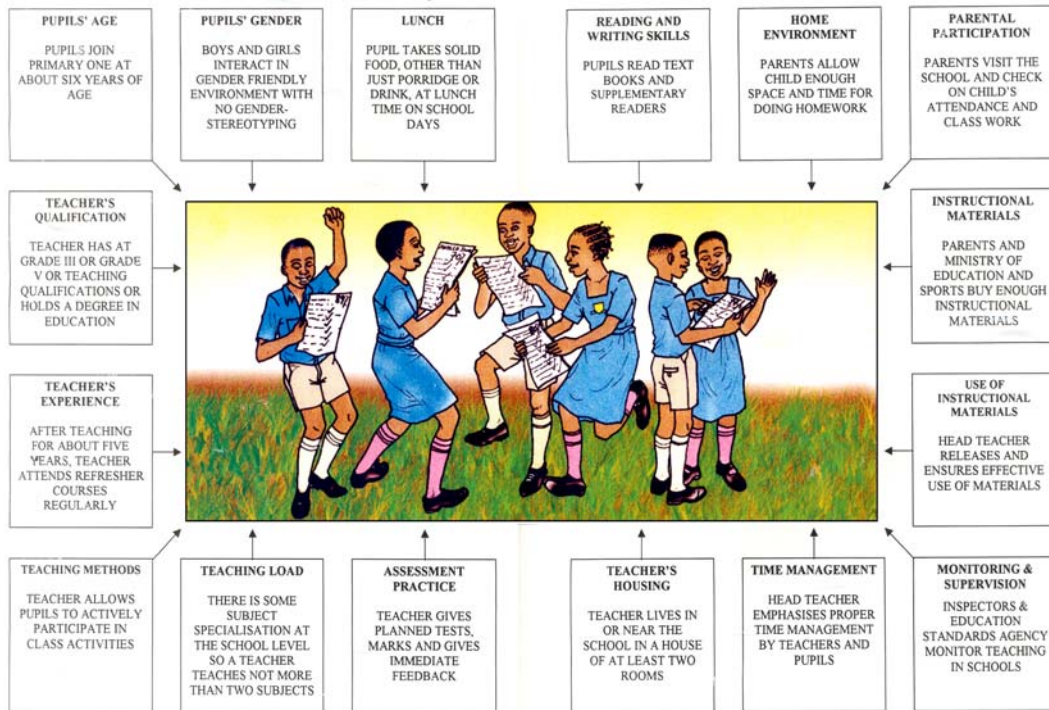
Dissemination of Results

The results of many investigations are not usually put to any meaningful use either because of inadequate circulation or late dissemination. In NAPE, a workshop is held for the key stakeholders of education - teachers, ESA, inspectors, DEOs, tutors, NCDC and UNEB plus representatives of students and parents. At the workshop, NAPE staff outline and explain the main findings in the study. Participants then converge into their various interest groups, i.e. DEOs and DISs on their own, teachers on their own etc. Within the groups, the participants extract the results that are directly related to their responsibilities. For example, the tutors could analyse the performance of pupils on different thematic areas and also the effect of the variables especially classroom practices on achievement. Each group discusses these findings to identify what needs to be addressed. Then they prepare an action plan of how the results can be used to improve their various operations so as to enhance the quality of education in the country,

Apart from the workshop, other methods of dissemination include: presenting findings at certain fora; delivering abridged reports to politicians and policy makers; mailing reports to universities and other institutions of higher learning; sending reports to parents through children at school; using the mass media and displaying posters of graphical or pictorial representations of findings. An example of such a poster is given overleaf.

FACTORS WHICH AFFECT ACHIEVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA

NAPE REPORTS (1996-2000)



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CONCLUSION

Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) in 1993 prepared a costed action plan outlining how assessment system could be reformed in order to appropriately respond to the issues and subsequent recommendations of the Government White Paper. The overall aims of the reform, among others were to:

- (a) Promote teaching in schools which meets the objectives of the curriculum through an improved assessment system.
- (b) Contribute towards an objective assessment of changes in students' educational achievement at the national level.

The Board adopted a multi-faceted approach, involving improving on the quality of all the examinations it conducted and introducing new forms of assessment within the system

One of the new forms of assessment which the Board has introduced is national assessment, referred to as the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE). NAPE is used to ascertain national levels of achievement in target subject areas and to monitor changes in achievement over time. This is done by conducting surveys which include testing in primary 3 and 6 in Literacy and Numeracy.

This paper presented the strategies that are adopted to report the findings. Two types of reports are prepared: the full and abridged reports. The full report presents detailed results of analyses of performance on each theme or unit in the test. Apart from the reports, charts and posters, representing the major patterns of achievement are produced and distributed mainly to coordinating centre tutors and schools for use during refresher courses. The findings are disseminated in a number of ways including workshops.

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