



COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (UPE) POLICY



THEMATIC REPORT 4: EFFICACY OF SCHOOL INSPECTION IN SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF UPE



November, 2018



NATIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

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FOREWORD

This independent comprehensive evaluation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy is one of the many evaluations of Government policies and programmes to be produced by the National Planning Authority (NPA) in fulfilment to the National Planning Act (2002) and the National Development Plan (NDPII). Two decades since the UPE policy was introduced, it is important to look back and take stock of the remarkable gains attained, identify the challenges faced, and lessons learnt during the implementation of the UPE policy.

The objectives of the UPE Policy were:

- 1) To provide facilities and resources to enable every child to enter school;
- 2) To ensure the completion of the primary cycle of education;
- 3) To make education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- 4) To ensure that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans; and
- 5) To reduce poverty by equipping every individual with basic skills.

This comprehensive evaluation set out to assess the extent to which the above objectives have been achieved. In an effort to provide guided policy direction, the evaluation was undertaken along six (6) thematic areas that include:

- (i) Policy, Legal, Regulatory and Institutional frameworks;
- (ii) Efficacy of the Primary School Curriculum in Supporting the Realization of UPE;
- (iii) Primary Teacher Training for Producing Competent Teachers to deliver UPE;
- (iv) Efficacy of School inspection in Supporting the delivery of UPE;
- (v) Financing and Costing of UPE; and
- (vi) Education Modelling and Forecasting.

These Reports provide over-arching findings and recommendations necessary for improving the quality of primary education in Uganda. In particular, the reports are useful in: informing the finalization of the review of the Education White Paper; improving teacher training mechanisms and policies; improving adequacy of the curriculum; strengthening policies and guidelines regarding community participation; inspection; providing status for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education for All; and informing policy planning and the Uganda Vision 2040.

The comprehensive evaluation used both quantitative (secondary and primary) and qualitative evidence using data from; the UNHS, EMIS, UNEB, NAPE, MTEF, World Bank, UNESCO, and NPA Survey among others. The quantitative analysis was based on rigorous econometric and non-econometric models that include the: Standard Mincerian Regression; Stochastic Frontier production function; Benefit Incidence analysis, cohort analysis, ordinary least squares analysis,



logit analyses, UNESCO's Education Policy and strategy simulation (EPSSim). With respect to the qualitative analysis, we undertook a rigorous desk review of the relevant literature with benchmarked good country policy practices, various formative and summative evaluations on the UPE policy before, interviews and field work.

This comprehensive evaluation was based on the standard OECD-DAC evaluation principles which includes; relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The rating criteria is categorized into 3 decision rules namely; Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved, and Not Achieved. Overall the UPE Policy has been **partiallyachieved** based on the OECD criteria rating.

The UPE policy substantially meets the relevance principle. The policy is aligned to national priorities and policies such as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 of achieving Universal Primary education, Education Act 2008, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, NDPs and Uganda Vision 2040. Empirical evidence indicates that: 88 percent of the school going age children are in school; and equity in terms of gender parity and Special Needs Education have greatly improved.

On the other hand, **the UPE policy partially meets the effectiveness principle.** Overall, 60 percent of the UPE objectives have been substantially achieved under objective 1, 3 and 5, but with partial achievement registered on 2 and 4. This rating is as a result of performance on the following indicators; access of 88 percent, PLE completion of 65 percent, remarkable improvement in literacy and numeracy, cohort completion rate of 38 percent, dropout rate of 38.5, repetition rate of 1.5 percent.

This policy partially meets the efficiency principle in producing the maximum possible outcome given the available inputs. This is explained by the government-aided schools being away from the maximum possible outcome by only 0.38 percent when compared to their private schools counterparts at 11.8 percent. This implies that, for Government to improve learning outcomes, it should increase financing to the primary school sector. However, the evaluation notes that there are still leakages in the system among which include; poor completion, absenteeism, less time on task by teachers and low pass rates.

The UPE policy partially meets the policy impact principle. Notably, the policy has significantly impacted on the years of schooling especially on the average years of education for the household head that have increased to 10 years from 4.2 years in 1997. Empirical evidence shows that completing 7 years of primary increases household incomes by about 10.2 percent as compared to their counterparts who don't complete the cycle. Similarly, the analysis showed that an additional year of schooling improves Primary Health Care (PHC) outcomes of these households, as well as

equipping individuals with basic skills and knowledge to exploit the environment for self-development and national development.

The UPE policy partially meets the sustainability principle. The comprehensive evaluation notes that while donor financing has gone down over the years, government financing and household education expenditure have increased. Over the same period, the per capita expenditure has consistently reduced occasioned by increase in enrolment out-pacing growth in the education budget, indicating a financial sustainability constraint. Beyond that, a review of the institutions that support UPE indicates that albeit their challenges, they are technically capable of spear heading a successful UPE Programme. Moreover, Government continues to greatly support primary education amidst other education sub-sectors like BTVET and USE which compete for the available fixed resource envelope. Notwithstanding, there are other factors which hinder the sustainability of the policy, that include; high population growth rate, high dropout, negligence by parents and poverty among others.

Overall, empirical evidence indicates that the UPE policy remains relevant, pro-poor and has largely fulfilled its primary objective of increasing equitable access. However, challenges that include leakages within the system affect learning outcomes. Similarly, to attain the desired quality Universal Primary Education, the per pupil expenditure should increase to UGX 63,546 for Urban schools and UGX 59,503 for rural schools from the current UGX 10,000 that government is contributing. In fact, the demand constraints have reduced over the UPE span, with Uganda pursuing an inclusive economic growth and rapid reduction in poverty which has significantly increased the financial resources at the disposal of households. This also illustrates the increasing priority that Ugandans have accorded to these areas and the impact of the UPE policy in raising awareness and addressing cultural constraints even among the poorest households.

Indeed, Government was right on its decision to implement the policy and is therefore advised to continue pursuing this programme with improved financing and institution strengthening as indicated in the respective thematic reports.

In conclusion, I extend my gratitude to the; First Lady/Minister of Education and Sports for the overwhelming support, Parliament of Uganda and the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development for appropriating funds for the first comprehensive evaluation. Also, we acknowledge the support from; the Inter-Agency Committee, Ministry of Education and Sports, Local Governments, Schools visited, the NPA Fraternity especially the M&E Department and the Research Assistants that collected the data that informed part of the analysis.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| BRMS | Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards |
| CAO | Chief Administrative Officer |
| CCT | Centre Coordinating Tutor |
| CCT | Centre Coordinating Tutors |
| CPD | Continuous Professional Development |
| DEO | District Education Officer |
| DES | Directorate of Education Standards |
| DES | Directorate of Education Standards |
| DIS | District Inspector of Schools |
| ESA | Education Standards Agency |
| ESA | Education Standards Agency |
| FY | Financial Year |
| GWPE | Government White Paper on Education |
| LGs | Local Governments |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Sports |
| MOES | Ministry of Education and Sports |
| NAPE | National Assessment in Primary Education |
| NDPII | National Development Plan II |
| PS | Permanent Secretary |
| PTC | Primary Teacher College |
| SACMEQ IV | Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality IV |
| SMC | School Management Committee |



| | |
|-------|--|
| SNE | Special Needs Education |
| TDMS | Teacher Development and Management Systems |
| TISSA | Teacher Initiatives in Sub Saharan Africa |
| UGX | Uganda Shillings |
| UPE | Universal Primary Education |
| UTSEP | Uganda Teachers and School Effectiveness Project |
| VSO | Voluntary Services Overseas |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

School inspection is a vital link in realization of desired education outcomes. It acts as an independent control mechanism in education systems that evaluates schools' (education-providing institutions) inputs, processes and activities, and outcomes with the intent to establish the extent of conformity to established standards. In this regard, school inspectors evaluate the extent to which schools are resourced to deliver the expected education outputs and/or outcomes. Further, inspection evaluates the school and classroom processes and activities to establish whether they are relevant and adequate to yield the expected education outputs/outcomes. Also, inspection assesses education outputs/outcomes to establish whether they are of the desired quality/standard.

Besides being used as a tool to ensure standards within the inputs, processes and outcomes (education standards), school inspection is as well a crucial tool government uses for accountability. Foremost, inspections are tools to hold teachers and head teachers to account for the resources given to them. Teachers/Headteachers account for the resources through the quality of the teaching and learning process and activities that should culminate into quality learning outcomes in terms of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes as stated by the state.

At the introduction of UPE, much responsibility was conferred on the inspection function to ensure the achievement of the UPE objectives. Particularly those that are concerned with: i) ensuring that each primary school is provided with the basic requirements and minimum standards as government had promised, ii) ensuring that learners complete the primary school cycle, and iii) ensuring that learners are equipped with basic skills required to reduce poverty.

Since the introduction of the UPE in 1997, there have been various reforms in the inspection function to ensure that schools are able to implement the UPE policy and curriculum as intended. The reforms led to a departure from a previously highly centralized inspectorate to a partially decentralized inspection, with more inspection responsibilities being undertaken by the local governments. **Despite these reforms, the quality of the inputs, processes and outcomes of the country's education system remains a great concern.** For instance, Uganda's attainment in primary school Reading and Mathematics is below the average of 15 Southern and Eastern African Countries in the two subjects (SACMEQ IV, 2014). Moreover, a lot of wastage has been noticed within the system with only 32% of primary school children that enroll being able to survive until primary seven.

Increasingly, the inspection function has been suggested as a weak link within the interventions to improve education outcomes and achieve UPE objectives. This evaluation therefore sets out to assess the efficacy of the School Inspection in supporting the realization of UPE objectives.

Key Findings

Overall, in Uganda, whereas there are adequate guidelines for quality school inspection, the inspection function at primary schools is inadequate to enforce the required education standards in a way that is impactful to the realization of UPE objectives. This is mainly due to



challenges in; institutional and legal frameworks, facilitation, capacity and implementation as detailed below.

1. **Weaknesses in the Inspection Function's Institutional and Legal framework limit the effective and efficient realization of the function mandate.** These weaknesses exist mainly in accountability mechanism/channels between the Centre and Decentralized functions as detailed below:

i) **The existing law (the Education Act 2008) does not provide an accountability mechanism for results between the Centre (policy makers) and Local Governments (implementers of policy).** The central agency responsible for school inspection, policy and guidance is Directorate of Education Standards (DES) while Local Governments (LGs) implement the policy in a decentralized framework. However, there is no legal requirement for LGs (implementers of inspection policy) to share inspection reports with DES. For instance, the inspectorate at the district reports and is accountable to the DEO and the latter reports and is accountable to the CAO, without legal basis for reporting and accounting to DES. Indeed, the reporting relationship between the two levels is just out of courtesy and not guaranteed. Without guaranteed access to complete inspection reports from the LGs, DES cannot develop quality education indicators database to aid school improvement monitoring and policy formulation. This has limited DES ability to monitor and enforce education standards. This gap in the legal framework limits the effective and efficient execution of the inspection function.

ii) **At the Centre, the accountability mechanism for the inspection function provides a conflict of interest that limits effective accountability for results.** At the Centre, DES is required to report and is accountable to the Ministry of Education Permanent Secretary (PS). This is a conflict of interest since the PS is responsible for the delivery of the education services and at the same time quality assurance functions that are being performed by the DES. This compromises the quality of inspection and education standards. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the PS would implicate him/herself for failures in the inspection function. Besides the current practice is contrary to international best practice where school inspectorates in countries with good education systems are always independent non-ministerial entities reporting to Parliament and the Minister of Education. This is aimed at elevating them to a position where they can have the required budget and authority to undertake objective inspection. It is also meant to ring-fence them from likely undue interferences and influences in the due course of operations.

2. **The inspection function is acutely under-resourced both in terms of Human and Financial resources to effectively and efficiently deliver its mandate:**

i) **In terms of financial resources, DES and LGs are acutely under-financed to undertake school inspection as required by the inspection guidelines.** Currently, the budget provision for the inspection function is UGX 56,000 per primary school. This is just about a third (1/3) of the actual (adequate) estimated cost of UGX.152,292, independently estimated by this study. It is thus not surprising that inspectors particularly at the LG's work in a very constrained environment characterized by poor

and failing transport facilities, limited funds for maintenance and mileage, and congested office spaces without the basic secretarial facilities for typing and copying of documents. These have negatively affected the morale and effectiveness of inspectors.

- ii) **In terms of Human resources, despite a marked improvement in the national average for inspector-to-primary school ratio (currently at 1:60), LGs and DES are understaffed to effectively execute their mandates.** Even with the staff establishments being already lean, LGs and DES are operating at a national average of 73% staffing levels. This national average conceals severe understaffing in some areas as staff gaps vary nation-wide. For instance, in extreme cases, the inspector-to-school ratios is 1:450 compared to the internationally recommended 1:40. This is because the current criteria for allocation of inspectors do not fully take account of the number of schools in the inspector's area of jurisdiction. Rather, the criteria mostly emphasize the LG's geographical size. A similar trend is noticed at DES where each region is allocated the same number of inspectors (12 inspectors) without due regard to the number of schools.
 - iii) **Additionally, the professional capacity of inspectors is questionable as recruitment does not require an accredited school inspection qualification.** The current profile for school inspectors as defined in the scheme of service is not sufficient as a basis for recruitment of a competent inspector of schools. For instance, according to the profile, it is neither a requirement for one to have undertaken an accredited course in school inspection nor is there an institutionalized arrangement for mandatory specialized training to re-orient newly recruited inspectors and turn them into professional inspectors, beyond the usual Continuous Professional Development workshops (CPDs).
3. **As a result of under investing in Inspection Function, the quality of inspection and the corresponding reports is poor, limiting the realization of Inspection mandate.** There is limited inspection in primary schools which cannot facilitate the achievement of UPE quality objectives. Contrary to the requirement that schools should be inspected at least twice a term, on average most of the primary schools (71%) are inspected only once in two terms. However, this national average covers up severe under inspection as there are significant national school inspection variances. For instance, while some districts reported impressive coverage rates, some rural-based districts had only inspected 12% of the schools in two terms, contrary to the requirement that schools should be inspected at least twice a term. In terms of the quality of inspection, there are critical gaps in the inspection process leading to poor quality inspection reports. For instance, only 1 in 5 inspection reports submitted by LGs in 2017 are rated good and with relevant evidence to inform remedial actions for school improvement. Poor quality inspection is partly explained by the tendency for inspectors to regard it as a policing and fault-finding exercise and in disregard of the available guidelines.
 4. **The findings and lessons from Inspection reports are not used to inform School Improvement Planning.** Contrary to the inspections' guidelines, primary schools do not have improvement plans detailing the agreed upon interventions and actions to address the areas of weakness arising from a school inspection. This implies that school inspection is regarded as an end and not a means.



5. **Additionally, Schools and the community are not aware of and are not conducting school self-evaluation as a form of internal inspection.** School self-evaluation as a more cost-effective complement to external inspection is not being optimized by DES and the schools. As well, there is remarkable ignorance amongst school staff on how to conduct school self-evaluation. This contradicts the strategic direction that requires that head-teachers should be the first-line inspectors of their schools besides the external inspections.

Key Recommendations

1. **Revise the relevant laws (particularly the Education Act and Local Government Act), to make it mandatory for inspectors at all LGs to avail inspection reports to the DES' respective regional offices.** For avoidance of doubt, the LGs inspectors should be required to report to both the LG hierarchy and the DES' regional offices to ensure that DES is always abreast with the inspection status in the country.
2. **In line with International best practice, consider elevating DES to an independent non-Ministerial entity reporting directly to Parliament.** Furthermore, at the local authority level, the inspectorate should be a directorate independent of the general education office to separate delivery (implementation) and quality assurance of the education service, such that the directorate of school inspection should report directly to district council and the Chief Administrative Officer.
3. **Adequately fund the Inspection function to at least cover the actual cost of inspection.** The average cost of inspecting a school should be raised to a minimum of UGX.152,292.
4. **Fill the staffing gaps in the Inspection Function by urgently recruiting an additional 163 inspectors in order to lower the inspector-school ratio to at least 1:44 ratio.** Similarly, staff shortage at DES (16 vacancies) needs to be urgently filled. Further, **Staffing levels for school inspectors within LGs and DES should primarily be determined by the number of schools.** But where data permits, a risk-based approach should be adopted to provide for more inspectors in LGs that have more schools that fall below the basic minimum standards (at risk).
5. **The minimum qualification for Inspectors should be an accredited inspection qualification and DES/MoES should ensure that all existing inspectors are retrained to attain this minimum qualification.** Besides the baseline teaching qualifications and teaching experience, it should be mandatory for candidates to either hold accredited qualifications in school inspection/supervision and or school improvement planning; or to commence training on recruitment. Furthermore, to ensure sustainable training, a National Institute of Teacher Education and Professional Development should be established to provide leadership for professional training for school inspectors, and all the other teachers. One of the primary teachers' training colleges or any other existing institution could be elevated to undertake this role.
6. **In light of the budgetary and human resource constraints, school self-evaluation should be optimized to complement external inspection.** DES should urgently develop the school-self

assessment evaluation framework to guide schools on how to undertake self-evaluation in an objective manner.

7. **The MoES should provide leadership to fast-track the development of school improvement plans arising from the inspection and self-evaluation reports.** Every school must have an updated improvement plan clearly highlighting the interventions that the school stakeholders are to undertake to ameliorate the identified weaknesses during inspection with the overall objective of improving the teaching and learning processes in the school to achieve the UPE objectives.
8. There is urgent need to integrate ICT in inspection to standardize the inspection process and enhance real-time data transmission for prompt monitoring of school level quality indicators. To this end, there is need for the MoES to fast-track the roll-out of the ICT-based inspection system being piloted under the UTSEP project.

Conclusion

In general, whereas school inspection remains one of the most critical interventions for improving and upholding education standards, this evaluation reveals that the inspection function in Uganda is very weak to execute its mandate. It is clear that the institutions directly charged with inspection are significantly incapacitated to effectively execute the inspection function. This threatens the achievement of the UPE objectives. Going forward, to improve the realization of UPE objectives, strengthening the Inspection function so as to effectively and efficiently execute its mandate will be vital.

1.0. Introduction

School inspection is an external control in education that entails the evaluation of school inputs, processes and activities, and outcomes within education-providing institutions with the intent to establish the extent of conformity to the established standards. School inspectors are concerned with the extent to which schools are resourced to deliver the expected education outputs and or outcomes. Similarly, inspection looks into the school and classroom processes and activities to establish whether they are relevant and adequate to yield the expected education outputs/outcomes. Moreover, education outputs/outcomes are a subject of inspection to establish whether they are of the expected quality/standard.

Besides being used as a tool to ensure standards within the inputs, processes and outcomes, school inspection is as well a crucial tool government's use for accountability. Foremost, inspections are tools to hold teachers and headteachers to account for the resources given to them. Teachers/headteachers account for the resources through the quality of the teaching and learning process and activities that should culminate into quality learning outcomes (cognitive and non-cognitive) as desired by the State. Unfortunately, some reports indicate that inspections tend to be overly obsessed with the quality of cognitive outcomes of the education system such that schools that produce higher pass rates are favorably assessed than those that do not.

Increasingly, governments are using school inspection as a framework to monitor achievement of the national aims and objectives of their education systems. The current study derives from this particular underlying function of school inspection. Just like many other countries, Uganda has prioritized human capital development as one of the thrusts towards the attainment of vision 2040 and lower middle-income status by 2040 and 2020 respectively. To this end, inspection is one of the avenues the country has set out to ensure that the education system responds to the sector and national development agenda. Nonetheless, the reported continued declining education standards particularly in primary education in Uganda would partly imply a weak inspection function.

In 1997, the government of Uganda rolled out UPE to among others provide quality relevant education that would enable Ugandans acquire the required skills to actively participate in the economic and social development of the country. This policy move led to exponential increments in enrolment amidst inelastic resources at the time. This conferred a critical role to the inspectorate arm to, within the prevailing circumstances; enforce quality standards of particularly the primary education to enable the achievement of the UPE objectives. To this end, the current evaluation is aimed at a critical assessment of the efficacy of current inspection regime for achieving the desired goals of the UPE. This report is expected to inform the ongoing comprehensive national evaluation of the policy impact of the UPE.

1.1 Scope of the Evaluation

The overarching objective of this evaluation is to assess the efficacy of the current state of School Inspection in supporting the delivery of quality education outcomes as envisaged within the UPE objectives". Specifically, the evaluation is limited to the following:



- i) Undertake a critical situation analysis of the current school inspection regime in light of its ability to enable the achievement of UPE objectives.
- ii) Highlight gaps identified within the current inspection policy and institutional architecture, inspection resourcing and inspection practices; arising from the above analysis
- iii) Make recommendations based on the analysis and lessons learnt from benchmarking of best practices on how to improve school inspection as a means to achieving UPE objectives.

1.2 Structure of the Report

The report is structured in such a way that it starts with brief background, highlights the scope, the methods used to undertake the evaluation, the current status and gaps within school inspection and conclusions and recommendations.

2.0. Methodology

This report arose out of two kinds of data, that is, secondary and primary data. Secondary data was gathered through documentary reviews of particularly inspection reports from the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) and National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) reports from UNEB and data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of the MoES. Primary data was collected through a survey procedure elaborated below.

2.1 Sample

The sample for the study consisted of 91 district education officers (DEO) and 66 District Inspectors of Schools (DIS) selected from various districts across the country. Before sample selection, all districts of Uganda were grouped into 10 regions including West Nile, Acholi, Karamoja, Bukedi, Busoga, Central I, Central II, Greater Kampala (GKMA), Western and South Western regions. From each region, 6 districts were randomly selected and the DEOs and DIS' of the selected districts were automatically selected for interview. Also, key informants from the MoES, DES, and National Curriculum Development Centre were interviewed. Different tools were designed for each of the respondents' category. The data tools focused on areas of inspection, facilitation for inspection, cost of inspection, challenges of inspection, and curriculum implementation.

3.0. The State of Primary School Inspection in Uganda

Summary of Evaluation Findings

1. *The current state of primary school inspection was found to be weak and unable to facilitate the provision of quality UPE.*
2. *There is limited and poor inspection in primary schools which cannot enable the achievement of UPE quality objectives.*

3. *The DES and LGs are acutely under-resourced in terms of staffing and finances to effectively and efficiently undertake school inspection as required by the inspection guidelines.*
4. *The current criteria for allocation of inspectors do not fully take account of the number of schools in the inspector's area of jurisdiction. Rather, more emphasis is placed on the LG's geographical size.*
5. *The current profile for school inspectors as defined in the scheme of service is no longer sufficient as a basis for recruitment of a competent inspector of schools.*
6. *Inspection invokes negative connotations in the minds of those that are inspected. Head teachers and teachers regard inspection as being synonymous to policing. This is on the backdrop that a great deal of inspection reports carry recommendations aimed at disciplining or punishing poor performers.*
7. *The current institutional architecture of the inspection function where the inspectorate at the district reports to the DEO and the latter reports to the CAO and without any legal basis for making such reports to be made available to the Directorate of Education Standards (DES), has weakened the inspection function.*
8. *The requirement that the DES reports to the PS MoES, has been implicated as negatively impacting on the quality of inspection and education standards. This is on the backdrop that there is no separation of roles between the delivery (implementation) function and the quality assurance function in providing UPE.*
9. *Inspectors of schools particularly at the LGs work in a very constrained environment characterized by poor and failing transport facilities, limited funds for maintenance and mileage, and congested office spaces without the basic secretarial facilities for typing and copying of documents. All these have negatively affected the morale and effectiveness of inspectors.*
10. *Inspection is not leading to school improvement planning. This implies that inspection is taken to be an end and not a means towards school improvement.*
11. *School self-evaluation as a more cost-effective complement to external inspection is not being optimized by the DES and schools*

3.1 Policy Architecture of school inspection in Uganda

School inspection was introduced in Uganda by the Missionaries in the late 19th Century, after the introduction of formal education, as the quality assurance function. The personnel involved were referred to as school supervisors. After independence in 1962, two critical offices, that is, the office of the chief education officer and the office of the chief inspector of schools were charged with overseeing school administration and school supervision services respectively (see Education Act,



1970). The inspection function was managed from the centre with staff deployed at regional and district level. However, the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) (1989) recommendations and the subsequent education law reforms led to significant shifts from the colonial system and operational modality. Most of the EPRC recommendations were carried in the Government White Paper on Education (GWPE) of 1992. With regards to inspection, the GWPE recommended that inspectorate be made autonomous or semi-autonomous to make it more effective in quality assurance of the education system. This was operationalized in 2001 with the establishment of Education Standards Agency (ESA). However, the semi-autonomous position of the ESA was rescinded when ESA was re-converted into a Directorate of Education Standards (DES) in the revised Education Act 2008. The structure and functions of ESA are now being implemented by DES which reports to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). This policy reversal is against the original intent of the GWPE and could be taken to be the source of conflict of interest in the operations of the inspection function. Rarely would someone expect independence where the inspection function is merely a directorate of the Ministry reporting within the same Ministry and recourse is as well expected from the same Ministry.

Further complications were introduced into the inspection practice of Uganda by the Local Government Act (1997) and the Education Act (2008). The Act devolved the inspection function, particularly of primary schools to the local authorities. However, there is no legal basis for district inspectors of schools to report to the DES. The Education Act (2008) requires the DES to only incorporate the district and municipal inspectors as mere associate assessors in all its regional or national inspection programs as the need may arise. This in effect implies that DES would be in position to carry out its own inspection and only co-opt LG inspectors as and when need arose. However, in practice, DES overly depends on the LG inspectors for school inspection and reporting albeit there being no legal requirement for LGs to report to DES.

The DES' mandate derives from the Education Act and requires the directorate to *“provide a rational system of setting and defining standards and quality of education and training and to monitor the achievement of such standards and quality for continually improved education and sports in Uganda”*. This mandate is executed through inspectors in the DES based in the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) operating from the centre and the four regional offices (Mpigi, Mbale, Mbarara and Gulu); and the Local Government (LG) school inspectors based at the districts and municipalities. The School Inspectors are mandated by the law (Education Act 2008) to enforce quality assurance in the whole education sector. The inspection function is supported by the Coordinating Center Tutors (CCTs) based at Core Primary Teacher Colleges who serve as outreach teacher educators to provide Continuous Professional Development (CPDs) to primary school headteachers and teachers in their areas of jurisdiction.

Just as earlier highlighted, the law (Education Act 2008) hints on the need for the DES to collaborate with the LG inspectors in conducting the school inspections. Unfortunately, the legally defined relationship between LG inspectors and DES is volatile and temporal. For instance, LGs relate with DES at a level of being mere associate assessors who are only to be called upon by DES to assist in school inspection and monitoring. This weak provision has left the DES without complete school inspection reports from districts given that LG inspectors only report to the DEO who is required to report to the CAO. The MoES acknowledges that:

“The current structure arrangement of the inspection function where the inspection at the district report to the CAO and not Director DES has impacted negatively on the quality of education in schools” [Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2017-2020 pg 17].

3.2 Institutional Organization of Inspection

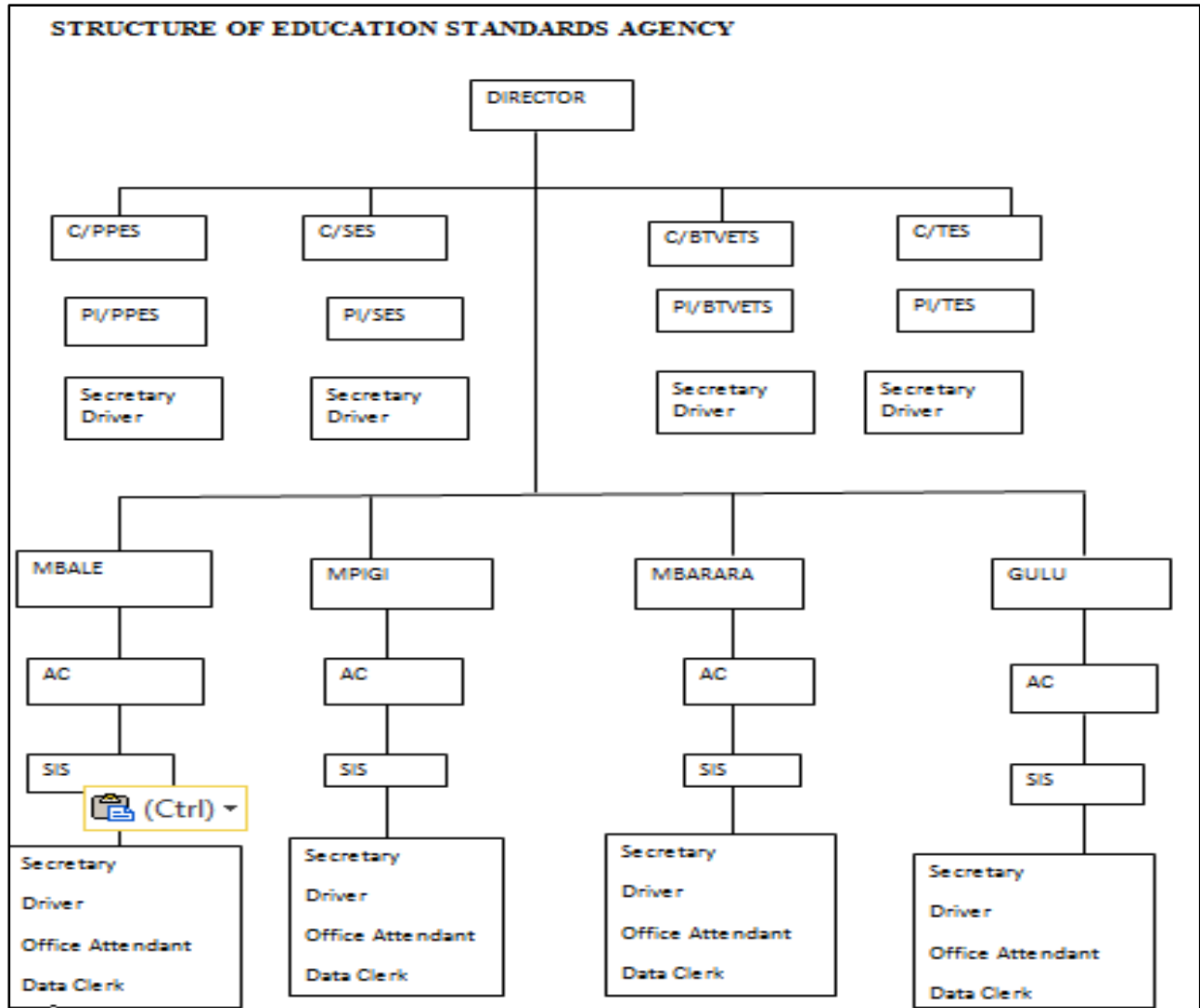
The Education Act gives the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) the mandate to set, enforce and monitor education standards in schools. The ministry uses the DES in collaboration with Local Governments (LG) to undertake inspection. This evaluation undertakes to assess the capacity of the key institutions responsible for inspection to conduct the required inspections for the achievement of UPE objectives.

3.2.1 The Directorate of Education Standards (as an institution)

The DES structure is dual with headquarters structures and regional structures. The headquarter controls and coordinates inspection in terms of planning, advice and reporting. DES is headed by a director and assisted by four commissioners, that is, for Pre-primary and Primary Education Standards; Secondary Education Standards; Business Technical Vocational Education and Training Standards; and Teacher Education Standards. Below the commissioners are the subject specialists at the level of principal inspectors of schools.

The DES headquarter is supported by four regional offices located in Mbarara (Western); Gulu (Northern); Mpigi (Central) and; Mbale (Eastern). On the other hand, each of the regional offices is headed by an Assistant Commissioner, assisted by a senior inspector of schools (see figure: 1). As earlier hinted, the LG inspectors are not reflected anywhere in the structure of DES and this means that neither are they obliged to report to DES, nor is DES mandated to monitor LGs inspection activities.

Figure 1: Organization chart for DES



Notes

- PPES Pre-primary and primary education standards
- SES- secondary Education standards
- BTVETS Business technical vocational education & training standards
- TES teacher education standards
- SIS senior inspector of schools
- PI Principal Inspection

3.2.1.1 Staffing of the DES

Currently, DES has a staff of 45 Inspectors against an establishment of 61 (73% staffing level). These are based both at the headquarters, and regional offices. This implies that the DES operates on a very lean structure such that even when fully constituted cannot cope with the task ahead of it. Accordingly, DES heavily depends on the LG inspectors of schools for actual inspection.

Table 1: Staffing levels of DES

| Department | Current staff | Establishment | Gap |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----|
| Headquarters | 10 | 13 | 3 |
| Western Region | 9 | 12 | 3 |
| Northern Region | 7 | 12 | 5 |
| Central Region | 10 | 12 | 2 |
| Eastern Region | 9 | 12 | 3 |
| Total | 45 | 61 | 16 |

3.2.2 Local Governments

LGs are legally mandated to ensure that schools implement the curriculum through quality assurance mechanisms including inspection and local legislation (ordinances). LG inspectors are independent of the DES and are recruited by LGs hence being answerable to the District Education Officer (DEO) and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Ideally, every District and Municipal LGs are expected to employ school inspection cadres at various ranks. Within the public service scheme District LGs Inspectorate may be constituted by the Senior Inspector of Schools, and Inspector of Schools. Similarly, Municipal Authorities are expected to employ Principal Inspectors of Schools and Inspector of Schools. It is critical to note that rarely do local authorities recruit all the required inspectorate establishment.

3.2.3 Recruitment and Training of school inspectors

DES staff is recruited through the Education Service Commission while that for LGs is done by the District Service Commission. The two staff have completely different lines of reporting structure. In this evaluation, it is of interest to understand the general profile of an Inspector of Schools' job with the intent to assess the extent to which the profile maps with the actual inspection tasks. By doing so, we would be answering the question as to whether the inspectorate has the right people with the right experiences, skills and qualifications. According to the Public Service Job profiles, all school inspection jobs have cross-cutting person specifications in terms of qualification and competences. The jobs only vary on experience, with senior ranked jobs (ie Principal Inspector of schools) requiring much more years of experience. Generally, for one to be a Senior Inspector of Schools, they should be able to satisfy the following criteria:

i) Qualifications

- a. Should hold an Honours Bachelor's Degree with Education from a recognized university or
- b. Institution.
- c. Either a Post Graduate Diploma in Education Planning and Management or Human Resources Management or Public Administration and Management or other related Managerial fields from a recognized University or Institution.

ii) Competences

- a. Delegation;
- b. Human resource management;
- c. Managing employee performance;
- d. Concern for quality and standards;



- e. Accountability;
- f. Teamwork; and
- g. Communicating effectively.

iii) Experience

At least three (3) years working experience in the teaching profession and education management as Education officer.

The above profile is expected to perform the following tasks/functions:

Key Functions

- i) Undertaking school inspection and preparing reports thereof;
- ii) Preparing monitoring and evaluation reports;
- iii) Conducting teacher staff development programmes in collaboration with other Stakeholders;
- iv) Tendering technical support and guidance to educational institutions;
- v) Promoting collaboration with key stakeholders;
- vi) Coordinating co-curricular activities;
- vii) Interpreting and disseminating educational policies to stakeholders;
- viii) Supervising county school inspectors; and
- ix) Approving operation of private education providers.

The most obvious weakness with the way inspectors are recruited is in the mismatch between the functions they are to undertake and the qualifications and competences they possess. While it is clear that the functions for the inspector of schools are highly specialized and would require a specialist, this is not provided for in the defined profile. To illustrate, it is neither a requirement for one to have undertaken an accredited course in school inspector/educational supervision nor is there an institutionalized arrangement for mandatory specialized training, beyond the usual CPDs) for whoever is recruited as a school inspector. Even when inspectors are highly experienced “good” head teachers, the fact that they are entering into a career that requires them to: have knowledge of modern trends and developments in the field of education; have knowledge of Government educational policies, rules and regulations; and offer technical support and guidance to educational institutions; is all justification for highly specialized training beyond mere experience from being a teacher/headteacher.

3.2.4 Adequacy of Inspectors of Schools

Originally, districts were expected to recruit school inspectors based on the number of counties in the district and number of schools for municipalities. However, it is clear that the latter criterion has not been strictly adhered to. A similar trend is noticed in the way DES inspectors are distributed within the regions. In the current arrangement, each region is allocated the same quota of inspectors (12) regardless of the number of schools in the region. This criterion to distributing inspectors is not responsive to the inspection needs of the districts and or regions. At the minimum, school inspectors’ distribution should be a function of number of schools to be inspected. However, only considering the number of schools is not sufficient given that schools within districts are not homogenous, that is, some can be classified as “failing schools” while others are above the basic minimum requirements and standards. To this end, the most ideal criteria would be a risk-based approach such that besides number of schools, allocation of

inspectors should as well be a function of the number of schools in the district that do not meet the basic requirements and minimum standards (BRMS). The basis for a risk-based approach lies in the need to provide for more inspection support to districts that have more risky or failing schools. This is on assumption that failing schools would require more time of inspection, support supervision and monitoring. It is however crucial to note that in as much as the risk-based approach would be the most ideal for allocation of school inspectors in LGs, data constraints in terms of the disaggregated numbers of schools below the BRMS may make it hard to operationalize.

Within local governments, on average each District and Municipal authority has at least 2 inspectors but with significant variations based on mainly other factors than number of schools. Currently there are 338 inspectors for the entire local authorities that inspect about 20,305 primary schools.

This implies an inspector-to-school ratio of 1:60 (for only the primary education subsector) which is significantly higher than the internationally recommended 1:40 (Un, 2012). The table below illustrates variations in inspector-to-school ratio in selected LGs.

Table 2: Some of the Districts with Highest and Lowest Inspector-to-School Ratio

| District | Total Primary Schools | No. of Inspectors in District | School-Inspector Ratio |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| KALANGALA | 25 | 2 | 13 |
| NAPAK | 51 | 4 | 13 |
| AMUDAT | 13 | 1 | 13 |
| NAKAPIRIPIT | 44 | 3 | 15 |
| MOROTO | 33 | 2 | 17 |
| BUVUMA | 55 | 3 | 18 |
| NTOROKO | 58 | 3 | 19 |
| KOTIDO | 39 | 2 | 20 |
| KWEEN | 83 | 4 | 21 |
| BUKWO | 90 | 4 | 23 |
| KAPCHORWA | 73 | 3 | 24 |
| KABAROLE | 123 | 5 | 25 |
| KUMI | 103 | 4 | 26 |
| DOKOLO | 78 | 3 | 26 |
| BUTEBO | 53 | 2 | 27 |
| JINJA | 163 | 6 | 27 |
| MASAKA | 172 | 6 | 29 |
| MBARARA | 316 | 11 | 29 |
| MOYO | 87 | 3 | 29 |
| MUBENDE | 507 | 5 | 101 |
| OMORO | 102 | 1 | 102 |
| BUSHENYI | 217 | 2 | 109 |
| KIRUHURA | 218 | 2 | 109 |
| KAYUNGA | 249 | 2 | 125 |
| LUWERO | 391 | 3 | 130 |
| SEMBABULE | 269 | 2 | 135 |
| PALLISA | 135 | 1 | 135 |
| KIRYANDONGO | 136 | 1 | 136 |
| IGANGA | 279 | 2 | 140 |
| KAKUMIRO | 282 | 2 | 141 |
| ISINGIRO | 296 | 2 | 148 |
| KAGADI | 356 | 2 | 178 |
| KANUNGU | 240 | 1 | 240 |
| MITYANA | 258 | 1 | 258 |
| WAKISO | 1392 | 5 | 278 |

Source: NPA survey, 2017.

Note: Only Primary Schools were Considered

The above table (table 2) reinforces our earlier hypothesis that allocation of school inspector does not depend on the number of schools. In fact, the correlation between number of schools and number of inspectors a district has is only 0.38 implying a very weak relationship. This translates into a coefficient of determination of 0.144, implying that that only 14.4% of inspector staffing within the local authorities

is based on number of schools while 85.5% is based on other reasons independent of number of schools (see table 3).

Table 3: Correlation between number of inspectors and number of schools

| Correlations | | No. of schools |
|---|---------------------|----------------|
| No. of Inspectors | Pearson Correlation | .380** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 116 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) | | |

The obtaining situation with regards to the distribution of school inspectors casts a very pessimistic outlook on all the efforts aimed at achieving UPE objectives through inspection. For instance, in the current sector strategic plan, the MoES suggests that a school/institution should be inspected (short routine inspections) at least 2 times a term as one of the strategies to improve quality standards of education. For this strategic direction to be towed, more manpower is required as seen from our projections.

3.2.5 Estimating the current school inspector requirement within the local governments

Our estimations are based on critical assumptions informed by the dire need to upscale the inspection function for improved education quality as a precondition for achievement of UPE objectives. We propose as follows:

Table 4: Assumptions taken in projecting number of inspectors required

| Assumptions | Numbers |
|--|---------|
| Recommended termly inspections per school (based on NDPII) | 3 |
| Estimated inspection days in a term | 66 |
| Recommended schools to be inspected daily per inspector | 2 |
| Inspections per inspector in a term (arising from the above assumptions) | 132 |
| Every additional 44 schools will require an additional school inspector | 44 |

Based on the above assumptions, we derive the required additional number of inspectors as follows:

$$I_r = N/N_o - I_o$$

I_r = Required additional number of inspectors per district

N = Total number of primary schools in a district

N_o = Threshold of schools that one district inspectors can inspect in a term (assume 44 schools)

I_o = Current number of inspectors in a district

Note

1. Negative value of I_r indicates existence of excess number of inspectors in that district (If recruitment was centralized, these would be reallocated to districts with shortage)

Table 5: National scenario for number of inspectors required (only based on Primary Schools)

| No. of Inspectors currently employed at local authorities (I_0) | Total no. of primary schools (N) | Threshold of schools to be inspected by one inspector (N_0) | Excess inspectors in some districts | Inspector Allocation | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| | | | | Total Required Inspectors | Additional Inspectors Required assuming a possibility of transfer from areas of excess | Additional Inspectors Required assuming with <u>no</u> possibility of transfers from areas of excess |
| 338 | 20,305 | 44 | 40 | 461 | 123 | 163 |

Source: NPA survey, 2017

Notes: The projections are 100% based on number of schools in the country/local authorities

It can therefore be concluded that to adequately inspect all the schools in the country, the local governments need about 461 inspectors implying a shortage of 123 inspectors. It should be noted that, this gap is very conservative and based on our assumption that some districts have been allocated excess inspectors and many gains could be made through transfers from districts with excess to those with acute need, a principle that is unrealistic and contradicts the current policy that restrains transfers of local government employees between districts. If the re-allocative assumption is stayed, the shortage of inspectors increases to 163.

3.2.6 Conditions of Service within the Inspectorate

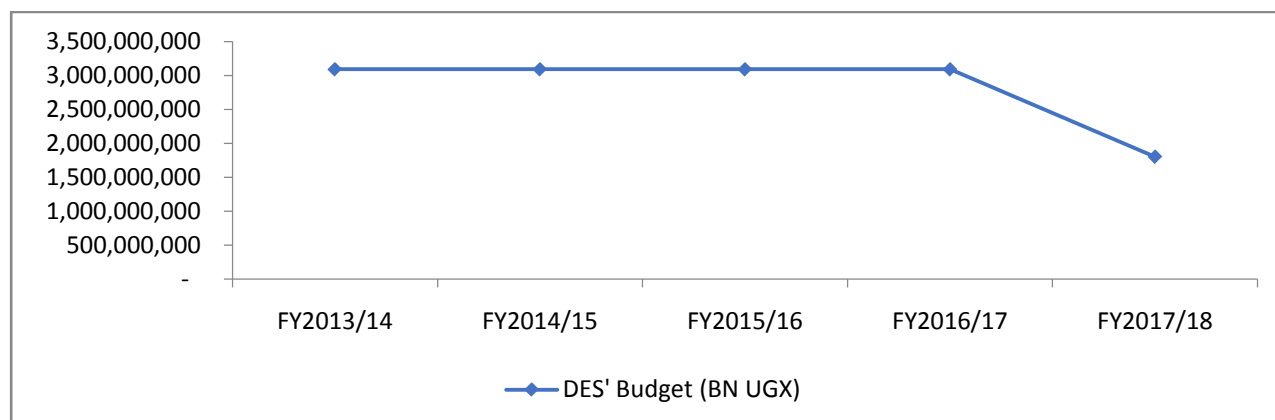
The working conditions of inspectors of schools are punctuated by inadequate funds, inadequate transport, understaffing, and hard-to-reach areas; all of which make it almost impossible for inspectors to effectively perform their duty. It was found that most of the motorcycles given to the DIS’ had become obsolete in most of the LGs and it was as well reported that most LGs do not have means of transport. This has affected the rate of inspection. The situation could be slightly changing for the better with the recent decision allowing the local authorities to use part of the school facilitation grant to procure transport for the education department at the district. Even then, the DIS’ maintain that such cars are used by senior cadres at the district to their exclusion, hence maintaining a status quo.

Financial constraints were a cross-cutting challenge to all local authorities and the DES. Funding for DES¹ had stagnated at around 3Billion Uganda shillings for the last 4 years since 2013/14 before being cut by 42% to 1.8 billion in FY 2017/18. This trend paints a pessimistic picture about the

¹ Which maintains the entire inspection budget

likelihood of increasing funding to the inspectorate, yet many new schools that need inspection keep emerging.

Figure 2: DES' budget allocations (Billions UGX)



Source: DES Records

According to the MoES, the cost of inspection of a primary school is about UGX 56,000 and UGX 346,000 for a post-primary school/institution. These costs mainly cover day's allowance and fuel. The significant difference in cost of inspection between primary and post-primary institutions is mainly explained by the fact that DES inspectors, who mainly inspect post-primary institutions, are entitled to higher allowances compared to LG inspectors who primarily inspect primary schools. For instance, currently, DES inspectors are entitled to daily field allowance of between UGX.110,000 and UGX.150,000 compared to UGX.12,000 for LG inspectors.

This evaluation finds that the current cost of inspecting a primary school (at UGX.56,000) does not reflect the cost of inputs needed to undertake an effective inspection. The current survey proposes a minimum unit cost of inspecting a primary school to be UGX.152,292 (per visit) broken down as follows:

Table 6: Estimating the unit cost of inspecting a primary school for one visit

| Unit cost of inspecting a primary school | | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------|-----------|---------------|
| Item | Unit | Quantity | Unit Cost | Total Cost |
| a) Safari Day Allowance (SDA) | | | | |
| Inspector | Allowance | 1 | 17,000 | 17,000 |
| Associate Assessor or CCT | Allowance | 1 | 17,000 | 17,000 |
| Sub-Total | | | | 34,000 |
| b) Printing Inspection Materials | | | | |
| Management tool (8-10 pages) | Copy of the tool | 1 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Classroom observation tool (6-10 pages) | Copy of the tool | 3 | 2,000 | 6,000 |
| Feedback tool (8-10 pages) | Copy of the report | 8 | 2,000 | 16,000 |
| Sub-Total | | | | 24,000 |

| c) Inspection report writing | | | | |
|---|--------|----|-------|----------------|
| Per school share of the cost of Report preparation and submission | - | - | - | 3,042 |
| Sub-Total | | | | 3,042 |
| d) Transport allowance to schools | | | | |
| School within easy to reach (atmost 20Km from District) | Litres | 10 | 3,650 | 36,500 |
| School in hard-to-reach (atmost 80Km from District) | Litres | 40 | 3,650 | 146,000 |
| School over 50km (Average) | Litres | 25 | 3,650 | 91,250 |
| Summary primary school inspection cost | | | | |
| Easy-to-Reach school | | | | 97,542 |
| Hard-to-Reach school | | | | 207,042 |
| Average school inspection cost | | | | 152,292 |

Source: NPA projections

Further, office space remains a predicament to inspectors. In fact, in most of the local authorities visited, the education department had the most dilapidated office space/building. It was noticed that DIS’ stayed in congested offices which sometimes puts confidential inspection records at risk. Also, most DIS’ offices lack the basic office equipment such as computers, printers, wall units etc to store data, write and print reports from the field. This inhibits the effectiveness of school inspection and it could partly explain the poor quality of inspection reports submitted by inspectors (see DES report, 2017).

3.3. The School Inspection Process

According to the Guidelines for Inspection (2012), school inspection entails a purposeful visit to an educational institution to provide an independent external evaluation of the quality of education being provided. To this end, inspectors are ideally expected to investigate:

- the quality and standards of teaching and learning;
- how well the institution is being managed; and
- the levels of attainment and overall achievements of the learners

Any inspection starts with planning and followed by a cycle of activities including actual school visit, report writing and follow-up/after supervision support. The same guidelines state that the primary focus of every stage of inspection should be on whether the schools are successfully meeting the learners’ learning needs. In other words, every inspection must attempt to answer the question “*is every child learning as expected?*” This implies that inspection is central to the implementation of the UPE policy, which is the essence of this report.

Besides inspection, which is mainly an external evaluation of schools, it is expected that schools carryout self-evaluation of the quality of education they provide. This is referred to as internal evaluation. It is supposed to involve all members of the school community: headteachers and staff, foundation and governing bodies, parents’ representative and learners.

Standardized tools have been developed by the DES for use by the inspectors to collect evidence on standards and requirements and standardized reporting templates have as well been developed by DES to ensure consistence in reporting. Ideally, a school is expected to be inspected at least twice a term² and each inspection is expected to focus on the key quality indicators as indicated in the BRMS. The indicators are organized around various thematic areas including:

- i) Teachers' planning
- ii) Teaching and learning process
- iii) Use of resources and classroom environment
- iv) Assessment, recording and reporting
- v) Teachers' knowledge
- vi) Learners' understanding and attainment
- vii) Leadership
- viii) Financial management
- ix) Management of resources
- x) Supervision of teaching and learning
- xi) Management of co-curricular activities
- xii) Access and equity
- xiii) Climate and relationships
- xiv) School governance Community relations
- xv) School sanitation, nutrition and health
- xvi) School safety and security

Triangulation of evidence is the cornerstone of inspection. Inspectors are required to corroborate evidence through:

- i) Gathering data
- ii) Observation
- iii) Seeking people's views i.e. learners, head teachers, school staff, parents, governing bodies.

During the course of inspection, inspectors are required to ensure that the core principles of inspection are adhered to in order to yield quality results. Specifically, the inspector must:

- i) Make sure the climate of inspection is right;
- ii) Treat people fairly and courteously;
- iii) Involve them in inspection activities;
- iv) Organize inspections efficiently; and
- v) Make sure the inspector focuses on the right things, especially teaching processes and learning outcomes for learners.

Finally, at the end of inspection, inspectors are expected to give feedback to the school and its stakeholders in form of an agenda for school improvement. Equally, inspectors are expected to write inspection reports to be submitted to schools, local authorities, and as well share with the

² This is according to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2017/2020.



DES. The DES is expected to use such reports to monitor the state of standards in schools and for preparation of national inspection report for submission to the PS MoES.

3.4 The current practices and processes of school inspection in Uganda

In the previous section, a basic description of what the guidelines say about what inspection should be and how it should be done has been given. The intent for this is to try and use it as a basis for evaluating the current inspection processes on ground in order to establish the extent to which inspection practices meet the minimum standards as the precondition for the achievement of the UPE objectives. We start by indicating how the inspectors and the inspected perceive the inspection process. This is key given that the way people perceive inspection has a greater bearing on how they implement it.

3.4.1 How do the inspectors and the inspected perceive the process of inspection?

Inspection invokes negative connotations in the minds of those that are inspected.

Head teachers and teachers regard inspection as being synonymous to policing. This is on the backdrop that a great deal of inspection reports carry recommendations aimed at disciplining or punishing poor performers. Consequently, there are increasing cases of resistance by school staff to being inspected (District School Inspection Reports, 2016). This is in stark contrast with how the inspection guidelines regard the inspection function, that is, from the supportive lens as opposed to a policing and vindictive role.

With regards to internal school evaluation, it was found that the concept has not been fully embraced by schools. DES acknowledges that the process has been limited to the usual rituals entailing head teachers signing performance agreements which are never executed. Yet, headteachers should be leading staff through self-evaluation exercises to identify areas of weaknesses and strengths and coming up with improvement strategies to ameliorate the weaknesses. Much as the school leaders have been blamed for not emphasizing internal school evaluation to complement external inspections, DES has not fully guided schools on how to effectively conduct self-evaluation evaluations and come up with a school improvement plan. This evaluation learnt that attempts by DES to disseminate guidelines on self-evaluations were thwarted by the loss of financial support which was to come from the Uganda Teacher School Effectiveness project due to restructuring of the project.

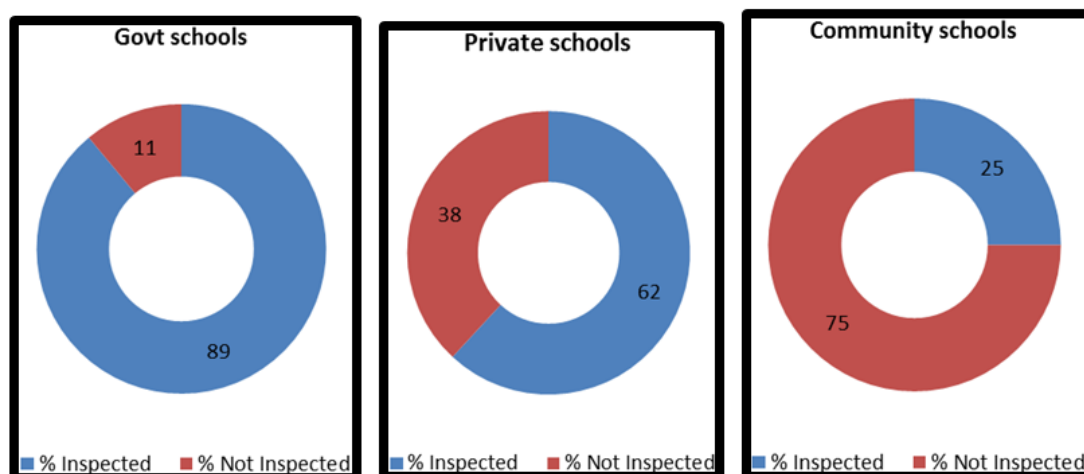
Other stakeholders including the School Management Committees (SMCs) and parents who are expected to actively engage in internal school evaluation, do not perceive inspection as being part of their role. This evaluation reveals that in as much as SMCs regularly meet (at least termly), school self-evaluation does not feature very much on their agenda. Rather, most of the SMCs agenda focuses on finances. On a positive note, 65% of the members of the SMCs interviewed indicated that they are actively sensitizing parents to engage in school supervision.

3.4.2 How often are schools inspected?

Ideally, the regulations require that a school is visited twice a term. Nonetheless in reality, this is not happening. The survey found that in the financial year ending June 2017, 71.2% (of 19,449) primary schools were reported to have been visited at least once. It was not possible to establish the number of primary schools that had been inspected more than once, mainly due to poor records keeping and retrieval processes. Also, it was not possible for respondents to disaggregate school visits by type of visit ie full inspection, routine inspection, flying visit, and or follow up inspection.

From the findings, it is clear that more government aided schools (88.6%) were inspected at least once by the end of FY2016/17 compared to only 62% and 25% of private schools and community schools that were inspected at least once, respectively. This trend, arises out of the fact that inspectors feel more compelled to inspect a public school. On the other hand, it was observed that limited supervision in private schools is partly due to lack of cooperation by private schools.

Figure 3: Proportion of schools inspected at least once by the end of FY2016/17 by ownership



Source: NPA Survey 2017

There are also significant variations within the local governments in terms of the percentage schools inspected by the end of FY2016/17. From the survey, some districts performed below the national average while others performed well above the national average (see tables 7&8)

Table 7: Worst performing districts in terms of schools inspected at least once by end of FY2016/17

| District | % primary schools that were reported to have been inspected at least once by June 2017 |
|----------|--|
| Mukono | 12.4 |
| Buikwe | 17.8 |
| Rakai | 24.5 |
| Arua | 35.5 |
| Mpigi | 35.5 |
| Kampala | 37.3 |



| | |
|----------|------|
| Kabarole | 40.1 |
| Kasese | 41.9 |
| Buyende | 44.1 |

Source: NPA Survey 2017

Table 8: Best performing districts in terms of schools inspected at least once by end of FY2016/17

| District | % primary schools that were reported to have been inspected at least once by June 2017 |
|-------------|--|
| NAPAK | 100.0 |
| KIRYANDONGO | 100.0 |
| KIRUHURA | 100.0 |
| KIBAALE | 100.0 |
| BUSHENYI | 100.0 |
| ABIM | 100.0 |
| KALUNGU | 99.7 |
| IBANDA | 99.1 |
| SIRONKO | 97.9 |
| LAMWO | 96.1 |
| MITYANA | 93.1 |
| LIRA | 92.7 |
| NAKASONGOLA | 91.4 |
| OYAM | 91.0 |
| NTUNGAMO | 90.1 |
| KAMULI | 89.1 |
| NAKAPIRIPIT | 87.5 |

Source: NPA Survey 2017

It is however critical to note that the results above are based on the responses of the district education officers and the evaluators had no other means of verifying the authenticity of the reported numbers.

3.4.3 Focus of inspection

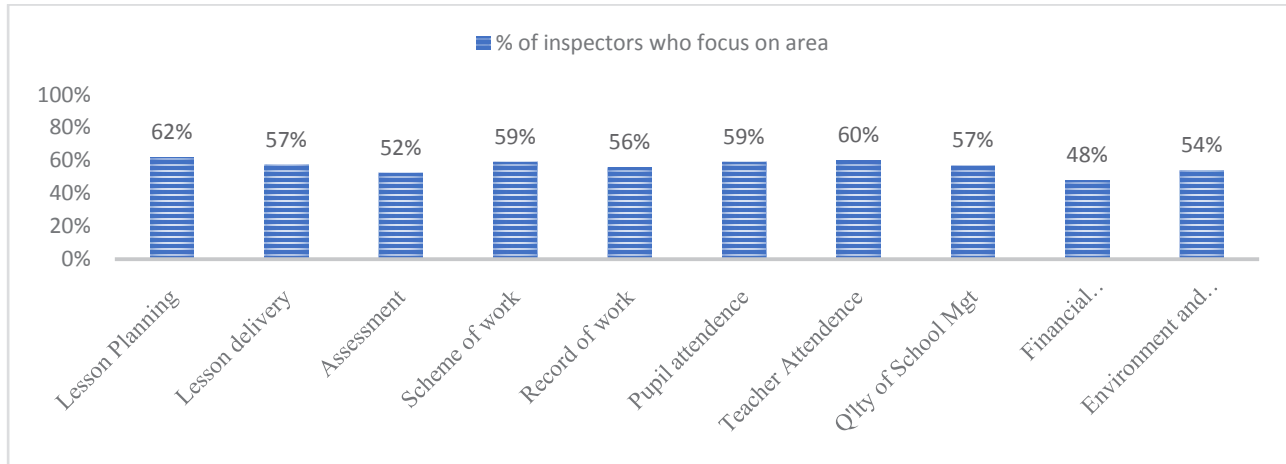
Inspection guidelines focus on the quality of inputs, teaching and learning processes, school management, community relations and learning outcomes. This is reflected in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2017), which has geared inspection towards quality of leadership, management, teaching and learning process and learner achievement.

From the survey it was found that most of the inspectors of schools are focusing on the teaching learning processes. As highlighted in figure 4 the areas of focus by most of the inspectors in order of importance include:

- i. Lesson Planning
- ii. Teacher Attendance
- iii. Scheme of work
- iv. Pupil attendance
- v. Lesson delivery
- vi. Quality of School Management

- vii. Record of work
- viii. Environment and Sanitation
- ix. Assessment
- x. Financial Accountability

Figure 4: Areas of focus by inspectors during inspection



Source: NPA Survey, 2017

The areas of focus are aligned to the strategic direction as highlighted in the sector plan which overly focuses attention on the processes that lead to better learning outcomes. Nonetheless, contrary to the inspection guidelines, it is clear that inspectors do not regard internal school evaluation (self-evaluation) as priority in inspection. Similarly, school improvement planning is missing in the list for areas of focus yet it is one of the critical outcomes from an inspection.

3.5 Quality of Inspection and Reporting

3.5.1 Quality of Inspection

The DES acknowledges that whereas school inspection in 20% of the sampled LGs was good and consistent with the inspection guideline, in 80% of the LGs quality remains poor. In as much as the guidelines are clear on the procedures for quality inspection, DES continues to observe that many inspectors do not strictly adhere to them. To illustrate the reports (DES Report, 2017) indicate and that many inspectors do not plan for inspection. It was also noted that during actual inspection, many inspectors are unable to collect relevant evidence to be analyzed to inform valid conclusions and remedial actions. From the guidelines, the lifeline for quality inspection is triangulation. Triangulation requires that inspectors cross-examine evidence provided by a source through among others observation; review of available records including pupil notebooks; and available statistical data and seeking other people's views. Unfortunately, this critical procedure of inspection is on many occasions ignored as observed by DES.

Some of the factors that were highlighted for perpetuating poor-quality inspection included:



i) *High attrition rate of school inspectors*

DES acknowledges that there is a high attrition rate of school inspectors partly caused by poor terms of service and hence the desire for inspectors to get better job satisfaction in terms of pay and social status. For instance, a significant number of school inspectors (20%) are not in substantive appointments. Further, whereas some inspectors who once served as head teachers choose to become inspectors of schools in search of professional and economic progression, they get frustrated by the reality. For instance, LG inspectors and head teachers of primary schools earn the same salary scale (U4).

ii) *Incompetency of school inspectors*

The level of competence of school inspectors vary between districts as a result of work experience and exposure. The fact that school inspectors are former classroom teachers, they have little experience in managerial and leadership roles. Unfortunately, there are yet to be institutionalized mechanisms for professional renewal for inspectors. This negatively impacts on the whole inspection value chain.

To illustrate, DES reports that over 80% of school inspection reports submitted by local governments depict inefficiencies by local government inspectors. For example, some inspectors are unable to plan inspection activities and submit inspection work plans as required by the inspection cycle; some inspectors cannot collect relevant evidence to be analyzed to inform conclusions and strategies for improvement; and some inspectors cannot write clear reports to communicate inspection findings and act as basis for further intervention.

iii) *Limited resources (Human and money)*

This constraint was ranked number one by DEOs and as earlier on indicated, the DES and the LGs are acutely understaffed amidst an ever-increasing number of educational institutions that require inspection. This over stretches the few staff on ground such that they are not able to conduct a quality inspection but conduct it as a ritual by ticking the boxes. This evaluation has also provided evidence of a stagnant inspection budget from DES, which according to the frontline inspectors, cannot enable them have the facilities needed to carry out the inspections on time and regularly. Moreover, given the limited resources from locally raised revenue, over 40% of the LGs reported that they rely only on inspection grants from the central government. Unfortunately, this survey learnt of instances of where school inspection is not prioritized in allocation of such funds grants. In other instances, it was reported that inspection funds had occasionally been diverted by the LGs to what they consider priority areas.

iv) Slow progress towards mainstreaming of ICT into the inspection function

Technology is key to an objective and standardized inspection process. Moreover, ICT is critical to providing information in real time and yield standardized reports. Unfortunately, this evaluation did not come across any efforts to proliferate ICT into inspection.

v) Disjointedness of the Institutional and legal framework for delivering Inspection

As earlier on indicated, this evaluation observes that the weak link between the operations of LGs and DES creates room for poor inspection given the fact that DES does not have the mandate to directly supervise LG inspectors as a way to ensure that inspection is done according to the guidelines. Second, the treatment of LG inspectors as mere associate assessors by the Education Act (2008) completely weakens the relationship between the central inspection and LG inspection. Third, by having the inspectorate function as a mere directorate within the ministry of education, reporting to the PS compromises the quality of inspection as there is no independence.

3.5.2 Tools used for Inspection

Our findings indicate that DES has developed a number of tools for use in both national and LG school inspections. These include:

- i) Inspection tools ie such as Form eR01/DES/HT which is used for evaluating head teacher's performance; Form eR02/DES/PPL for evaluating pupil achievement; Form eR02/DES/TR for evaluating teacher performance; and Form eR02/DES/C for evaluating performance of school community relations;
- ii) The Hand book for School Inspectors,
- iii) The Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards booklets,
- iv) Guides for school improvement booklets (Six booklets on different aspects),
- v) Leadership and management,
- vi) The teaching and learning process,
- vii) Learner achievement, learner support (equity) and inspection.

These materials are expected to guide inspectors to plan inspection, undertake inspection, and gather evidence to inform the post-inspection activities including reporting and support to schools. Nonetheless, the earlier finding of the DES that highlighted that only 1 in 3 inspections was rated good, implies that, either the tools for inspection are not helpful or inspectors do not know how to use them for quality inspection. It may as well highlight non-proliferation of the tools within the LGs.

The tools for inspection are quite elaborate and comprehensive. They are somehow comparable to inspection tools used in other parts of world. However, it is clear that some of the question items within the tools are mainly obsessed with the presence of artifacts and policies for purposes of ticking the boxes but with limited attention to gathering evidence of application of such existing artifacts and policies to impact teaching and learning processes for better learning outcomes. For instance, just because a school has in place relevant statutory policy documents, and mission and

vision statements is no evidence of application of the same to improve teaching and learning processes. Additionally, the inspection tools are quite inadequate with regards to gathering first-hand evidence for the extent to which schools are implementing the national curriculum. This evidence is critical at a time when 80% of the district inspection reports indicate that schools teach without following the national curriculum. Further, and most importantly, there is no evidence to illustrate that the available external evaluation tools complement the internal evaluation tools. For instance, there are virtually no question items (within the external inspection tools) that try to review evidence on whether internal evaluations have been undertaken by the schools and the matters arising therein. The above weaknesses within the inspection tools present a case for the need to review them and as well train the frontline inspectors on how to effectively use them during inspection.

3.5.3 Feedback and Inspection Reports

The inspection guidelines require inspectors to provide feedback to schools in form of summarized observations immediately after the inspection, followed by a written elaborate inspection report. On a monthly basis, inspectors at LGs are expected to consolidate all reports for schools inspected into a report submitted to the DEO. On the other hand, DES inspectors are expected to submit inspection reports to their respective regional heads. The DEOs (for LGs) and the DES regional offices consolidate the monthly reports from field inspections into quarterly reports for submission to the CAO and DES headquarters respectively. The CAO is expected to share copies of the report with the DES headquarters. Finally, the DES headquarters consolidate the regional quarterly reports and those shared by LGs into quarterly and annual inspection reports for submission to and approval by the Permanent Secretary MoES.

Our findings indicate that local authorities did not prepare and submit the inspection reports as required by policy. The status of submission of inspection reports by LGs to DES is even worrying as illustrated in table 9 below.

Table 9: Matrix for submission of Inspection Reports for FY 2016/17

| Details | Quarters | | | | All quarters |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | 1 st | 2 nd | 3 rd | 4 th | |
| LGs that submitted quarterly inspection reports to DES | 44(30%) | 46(32%) | 43(%) | 32(30%) | 22(15%) |
| Total LGs | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 |

Source: DES, 2017 with author's computations

Table 9 above demonstrates perpetual poor reporting patterns by the LGs to the DES as fewer LGs are submitting their quarterly reports to the DES. This trend is implicit of three scenarios. First, LGs may not be writing reports as expected and therefore have nothing to submit to DES. Second, LGs could be writing inspection reports but given that it is not a legal requirement to submit reports to DES, most likely they choose not to. Third, LGs may not be conducting school inspection and therefore have nothing to report. Whichever the case might be, it is very worrying in that DES, which is the custodian of inspection in the country, has limited access to inspection reports from LGs. These findings show that not much improvement has been registered in inspection reporting at LGs and even at DES. For instance, the value for money evaluation of inspection in Uganda by the Auditor General (2010) found that only 9% of LGs had a written inspection report of some kind. The same report found that no DES regional office had prepared quarterly reports.

Besides the low rates of inspection reporting, there is evidence highlighting poor quality of even the few reports submitted. For instance, over 80% of school inspection reports submitted by LGs to DES reflect inadequacies by LG inspectors. The reports do not carry relevant evidence required to inform school improvement planning and national policy formulation and reviews.

This evaluation got anecdotal evidence to suggest that whereas the wider school community including parents, local community and the learners are occasionally involved in the inspection process, they are on many occasions left out of the feedback loop. District education offices do not have clear mechanisms to regularly report back to parents, local leaders and learners about the findings from the inspection. This is in contravention of the inspection principles that require that parents, key stakeholders from the local community and learners be actively involved in the inspection process value chain to the tail end. This is because by doing so would empower such stakeholders to use inspection feedback to hold school leaders accountable to interventions agreed upon for improving the school.

3.5.4 School improvement planning as an outcome of Inspection

This evaluation did not find any evidence to suggest that any school had a prepared School Improvement Plan (SIP). This is contrary to the framework for school inspectors which requires that each school inspection culminates into a School Improvement Plan clearly identifying the strengths and areas that need improvement and the strategies that the school has put in place to maintain its strength and improve on the areas of weakness within a given timeframe. This was as well the finding carried by the Auditor General in 2010 where no school was found had a SIP. This is not surprising given the realization by DES that the concepts of School Performance Review and School Improvement Planning have not been fully grasped by teachers. This is evidence to suggest that headteachers are not implementing recommendations arising out of inspection. Unfortunately, SIPs have been vulgarized to mean school performance agreement that is signed between the sub-county chief and the headteacher. Yet, each of the approaches has its own place and basis within the process of school improvement none of them should be taken to subsume the other.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Weaknesses in the Inspection Function's Institutional and Legal framework limit the effective and efficient realization of the function mandate. These weaknesses exist mainly in accountability mechanism/channels between the Centre and Decentralized functions as detailed below:

- i. **The existing law (the Education Act 2008) does not provide an accountability mechanism for results between the Centre (policy makers) and Local Governments (implementers of policy).** The central agency responsible for school inspection, policy and guidance is Directorate of Education Standards (DES) while Local Governments (LGs) implement the policy in a decentralized framework. However, there is no legal requirement for LGs (implementers of inspection policy) to share inspection reports with DES. For instance, the inspectorate at the district reports and is accountable to the DEO and the latter reports and is accountable to the CAO, without legal basis for reporting and accounting to DES. Indeed, the reporting relationship between the two levels is just out of courtesy and not guaranteed. Without guaranteed access to complete inspection reports from the LGs, DES cannot develop quality education indicators database to aid school improvement monitoring and policy formulation. This has limited DES ability to monitor and enforce education standards. This gap in the legal framework limits the effective and efficient execution of the inspection function.
- ii. **At the Centre, the accountability mechanism for the inspection function provides a conflict of interest that limits effective accountability for results.** At the Centre, DES is required to report and is accountable to the Ministry of Education Permanent Secretary (PS). This is a conflict of interest since the PS is responsible for the delivery of the education services and at the same time quality assurance functions that are being performed by the DES. This compromises the quality of inspection and education standards. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the PS would implicate him/herself for failures in the inspection function. Besides the current practice is contrary to international best practice where school inspectorates in countries with good education systems are always independent non-ministerial entities reporting to Parliament and the Minister of Education. This is aimed at elevating them to a position where they can have the required budget and authority to undertake objective inspection. It is also meant to ring-fence them from likely undue interferences and influences in the due course of operations.

4.2 The inspection function is acutely under-resourced both in terms of Human and Financial resources to effectively and efficiently deliver its mandate:

- i. **In terms of financial resources, DES and LGs are acutely under-financed to undertake school inspection as required by the inspection guidelines.** Currently, the budget provision for the inspection function is UGX 56,000 per primary school. This is just about a third (1/3) of the actual (adequate) estimated cost of UGX.152,292, independently estimated by this study. It is thus not surprising that inspectors particularly at the LG's work in a very constrained environment characterized by poor and failing transport facilities, limited funds for maintenance and mileage, and congested office spaces without the basic secretarial facilities for typing and copying of documents. These have negatively affected the morale and effectiveness of inspectors.

- ii. **In terms of Human resources, despite a marked improvement in the national average for inspector-to-primary school ratio (currently at 1:60), LGs and DES are understaffed to effectively execute their mandates.** Even with the staff establishments being already lean, LGs and DES are operating at a national average of 73% staffing levels. This national average conceals severe understaffing in some areas as staff gaps vary nationwide. For instance, in extreme cases, the inspector-to-school ratios is 1:450 compared to the internationally recommended 1:40. This is because the current criteria for allocation of inspectors do not fully take account of the number of schools in the inspector's area of jurisdiction. Rather, the criteria mostly emphasize the LG's geographical size. A similar trend is noticed at DES where each region is allocated the same number of inspectors (12 inspectors) without due regard to the number of schools.
- iii. **Additionally, the professional capacity of inspectors is questionable as recruitment does not require an accredited school inspection qualification.** The current profile for school inspectors as defined in the scheme of service is not sufficient as a basis for recruitment of a competent inspector of schools. For instance, according to the profile, it is neither a requirement for one to have undertaken an accredited course in school inspection nor is there an institutionalized arrangement for mandatory specialized training to re-orient newly recruited inspectors and turn them into professional inspectors, beyond the usual Continuous Professional Development workshops (CPDs).

4.3 As a result of under investing in Inspection Function, the quality of inspection and the corresponding reports is poor, limiting the realization of Inspection mandate. There is limited inspection in primary schools which cannot facilitate the achievement of UPE quality objectives. Contrary to the requirement that schools should be inspected at least twice a term, on average most of the primary schools (71%) are inspected only once in two terms. However, this national average covers up severe under inspection as there are significant national school inspection variances. For instance, while some districts reported impressive coverage rates, some rural-based districts had only inspected 12% of the schools in two terms, contrary to the requirement that schools should be inspected at least twice a term. In terms of the quality of inspection, there are critical gaps in the inspection process leading to poor quality inspection reports. For instance, only 1 in 5 inspection reports submitted by LGs in 2017 are rated good and with relevant evidence to inform remedial actions for school improvement. Poor quality inspection is partly explained by the tendency for inspectors to regard it as a policing and fault-finding exercise and in disregard of the available guidelines.

4.4 The findings and lessons from Inspection reports are not used to inform School Improvement Planning. Contrary to the inspections' guidelines, primary schools do not have improvement plans detailing the agreed upon interventions and actions to address the areas of weakness arising from a school inspection. This implies that school inspection is regarded as an end and not a means.

4.5 Additionally, Schools and the community are not aware of and are not conducting school self-evaluation as a form of internal inspection. School self-evaluation as a more cost-effective complement to external inspection is not being optimized by DES and the schools. As well,



there is remarkable ignorance amongst school staff on how to conduct school self-evaluation. This contradicts the strategic direction that requires that head-teachers should be the first-line inspectors of their schools besides the external inspections.

5.0 Key Recommendations

- 5.1 **Revise the relevant laws (particularly the Education Act and Local Government Act), to make it mandatory for inspectors at all LGs to avail inspection reports to the DES' respective regional offices.** For avoidance of doubt, the LGs inspectors should be required to report to both the LG hierarchy and the DES' regional offices to ensure that DES is always abreast with the inspection status in the country.
- 5.2 **In line with International best practice, consider elevating DES to an independent non-Ministerial entity reporting directly to Parliament.** Furthermore, at the local authority level, the inspectorate should be a directorate independent of the general education office to separate delivery (implementation) and quality assurance of the education service, such that the directorate of school inspection should report directly to district council and the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 5.3 **Adequately fund the Inspection function to at least cover the actual cost of inspection.** The average cost of inspecting a school should be raised to a minimum of UGX152,292.
- 5.4 **Fill the staffing gaps in the Inspection Function by urgently recruiting an additional 163 inspectors in order to lower the inspector-school ratio to at least 1:44 ratio.** Similarly, staff shortage at DES (16 vacancies) needs to be urgently filled. Further, Staffing levels for school inspectors within LGs and DES should primarily be determined by the number of schools. But where data permits, a risk-based approach should be adopted to provide for more inspectors in LGs that have more schools that fall below the basic minimum standards (at risk).
- 5.5 **The minimum qualification for Inspectors should be an accredited inspection qualification and DES/MoES should ensure that all existing inspectors are retrained to attain this minimum qualification.** Besides the baseline teaching qualifications and teaching experience, it should be mandatory for candidates to either hold accredited qualifications in school inspection/supervision and or school improvement planning; or to commence training on recruitment. Furthermore, to ensure sustainable training, a National Institute of Teacher Education and Professional Development should be established to provide leadership for professional training for school inspectors, and all the other teachers. One of the primary teachers' training colleges or any other existing institution could be elevated to undertake this role.
- 5.6 **In light of the budgetary and human resource constraints, school self-evaluation should be optimized to complement external inspection.** DES should urgently develop the school-self assessment evaluation framework to guide schools on how to undertake self-evaluation in an objective manner.
- 5.7 **The MoES should provide leadership to fast-track the development of school improvement plans arising from the inspection and self-evaluation reports.** Every school must have an updated improvement plan clearly highlighting the interventions that the school stakeholders are to undertake to ameliorate the identified weaknesses

during inspection with the overall objective of improving the teaching and learning processes in the school to achieve the UPE objectives.

- 5.8 **There is urgent need to integrate ICT in inspection to standardize the inspection process and enhance real-time data transmission for prompt monitoring of school level quality indicators.** To this end, there is need for the MoES to fast-track the roll-out of the ICT-based inspection system currently being piloted under the UTSEP project.

6.0 General Conclusion

In general, whereas school inspection remains one of the most critical interventions for improving and upholding education standards that are said to be on steady decline, this evaluation reveals that the inspectorate function in Uganda is in a very weak state to execute its mandate as required. The evaluation finds that the legal and institutional architectures perpetuate a weak and disjointed inspectorate; schools are not inspected as required; the inspectorate is acutely understaffed and underfunded; and that there is inadequate school improvement planning within the schools meaning that the recommendations from the routine inspections are not addressed or followed up. We conclude that the current state of inspection in the country is a significant threat to the attainment of UPE quality objectives and to the current strategic direction that emphasizes universal access to quality education as the critical pathway to a quality human capital which is a fundamental to our national development.



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