

Uganda's Health and Educational Systems

Health System

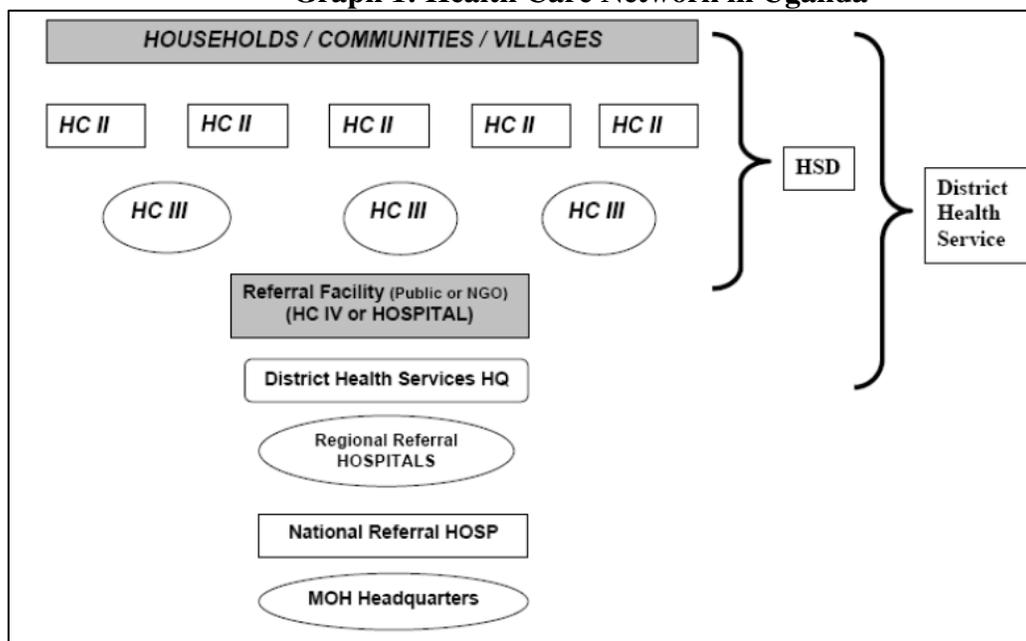
Main/Principal Health Indicators

The reconstructive efforts of recent years to address the deterioration brought by 2 decades of civil unrest have brought progress with documented gains in most health indices in the past 5 years. Communicable diseases continue to be the leading cause of morbidity and mortality, with chronic diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease and cancer on the rise. Despite gains, the health of Ugandans is poor. Uganda has an infant mortality rate of 81 deaths per 1,000 live births, a maternal mortality rate of 435 per 100,000 live births, and an adult HIV prevalence of 4.1 %, a rate that has stabilized in recent years. The top five causes of death are HIV/AIDS, lower respiratory infections, malaria, diarrheal diseases, and perinatal conditions. Seventy percent of overall child mortality is due to malaria, acute respiratory infection, diarrhea and malnutrition. Life expectancy has increased from 45 years in 2003 to 52 years in 2008. Furthermore, it is estimated that 70% of the disease burden in Uganda can be prevented through health promotion and disease prevention (1).

Health care facilities

Government health care services are provided through the tiered network of facilities depicted below. Facilities are severely understaffed and often lack necessary basic equipment. Referral facilities (HC IV) are the first level staffed by a doctor with a target population served of 100,000 (2).

Graph 1: Health Care Network in Uganda



The Ministry of Health provides slightly over half of the country's health care. Public health services are decentralized with district jurisdiction over all staffing below the district hospital level. The central MOH has responsibility for regional and national referral hospitals. The private system includes Not for Profit and For Profit organizations, private health practitioners, and traditional and complementary medicine practitioners. Sixty percent of Uganda's population seeks health care from traditional and complementary medicine practitioners (3). Over one quarter of the population lives more than 5 km from the nearest health facility, presenting a barrier to access to allopathic health care.

Human Resources for Health

Uganda's healthcare workforce shortage, maldistribution, and working conditions are dire. The country has one doctor, nurse or midwife per 1818 inhabitants, placing Uganda among the 57 countries worldwide with a critical shortage of health service providers (4). For physicians, specifically, there is one doctor per 8,373 Ugandans (12 per 100,000 [5]). In the rural areas, these ratios are even worse. Government figures from 2009 report that 70% of doctors, 80% of pharmacists, and 40% of nurses and midwives are urban-based, serving only 12-16% of the population (1). Only slightly over one half of the approved positions at existing health facilities are currently filled, and of those filled there is an estimated 40% physician absenteeism rate (1).

The decentralization of services described above necessitates that positions below the level of regional hospitals are filled at the district level in a cumbersome, slow system of hiring with no national coordination. Living accommodations for health workers in the districts are poor; salaries are low and often go unpaid for months. Currently, mechanisms for linking health service requirements (skills, cadres, etc) to education and training outputs do not exist (6). Training of medical doctors and other health workers is governed by multiple institutions (MOH, MOE, a variety of training institutions, Professional Councils) which are not coordinated; in fact, often decisions made by one sector negatively impact the others. As the population has grown in the last ten years, there has been no commensurate increase in medical school enrolment.

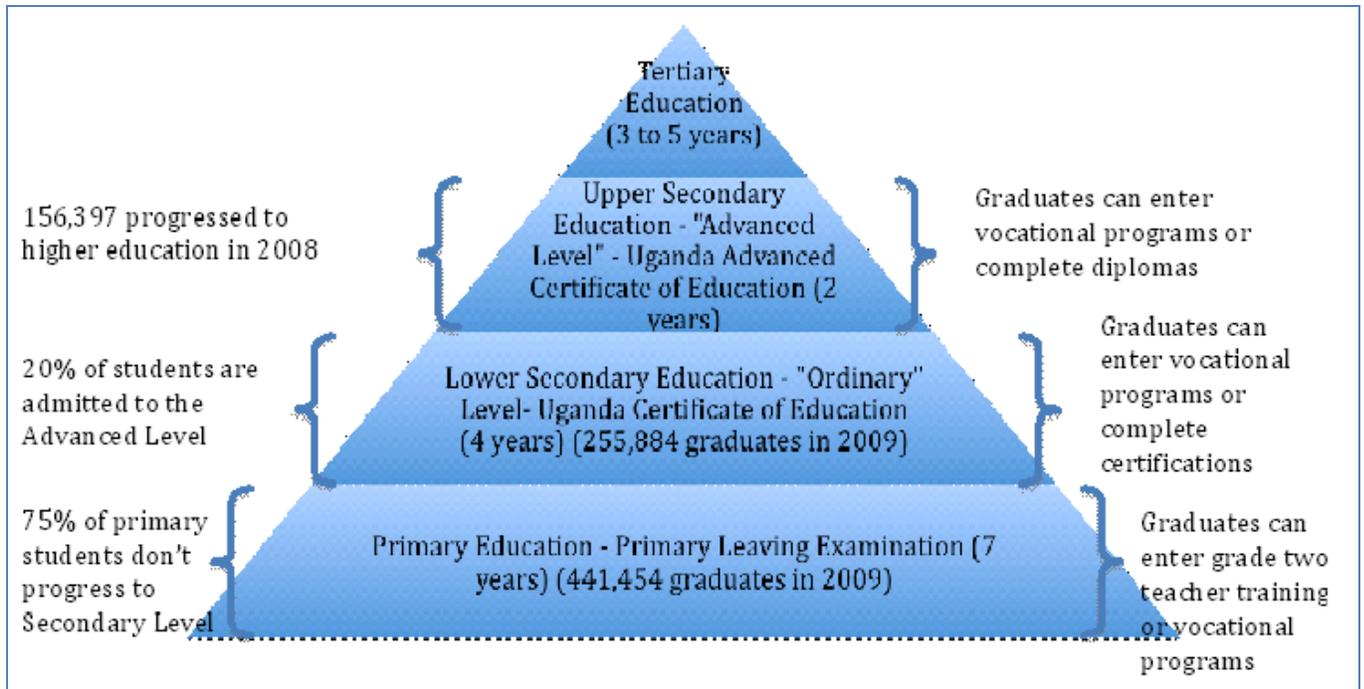
References

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2. Planning Department, Ministry of Health 2009
3. Ministry of Health (2009) "National Health Policy: Reducing poverty through promoting people's health [draft].
https://www.health.go.ug//index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66&Itemid=85
4. World Health Report, 2006
5. Health Cadre Rationalization Study, MOH Uganda, September 2007
6. The Republic of Uganda, The Uganda Human Resources for Health Strategic Plan 2005 – 2020; January 2009 (Consultant: Dr. Joseph Herman Kyabaggu)

Source: Directly from the SAMSS Makerere Site Visit Report

Educational System

In 1997 Uganda launched the Universal Primary Education program providing free public education to all primary students. In 2007 the Government further extended the program to cover the first two years of secondary education. However a significant challenge for Ugandan students and the general population that desire to advance their education is that there are limited opportunities to pursue diverse higher education, as illustrated in the following summary of the Ugandan education system.



In FY2007/08 the gross enrolment ratio for higher education was only 5% per the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports. In addition to minimizing the high school drop out rates, the IAL-U considers that it is important for students and the general population to be provided quality alternative higher education programs. From one university institution in 1987 Uganda today has the following number of higher education institutions as reported by the 2008 Uganda Education Statistics Abstract:

S/N	Type	Private	Public	Total	
				No. of Institutions FY 2007/08	Enrolment FY 2007/08
1	Agricultural & Forestry Colleges		5	5	1882
2	Commerce/Business Colleges	60	5	65	20,726
3	Co-operative Colleges		2	2	374
4	Hotels and Tourism		2	2	163
5	Health Colleges	6	9	15	3,570
6	Law Centres		1	1	912
7	Media and Communication	3	1	4	1683
8	Meteorological Colleges		1	1	44
9	Management/Social Dev Institutions	10	3	13	4,738
10	National Teachers College	3	6	9	12,537
11	Study Center	1	1	2	689
12	Theological Colleges	11		11	1,252
13	Universities	25	5	30	109,794
14	Aeronautical	1	1	2	0
15	Technical Colleges	2	5	7	2,257
Grand Total		90	46	169	156,397

Source: Directly from <http://www.ialuganda.ac.ug/inportance.html>