Service Delivery Indicators for Uganda – Highlights

The Service Delivery Indicators for Uganda are based on surveys of about 400 primary schools and 400 health facilities, and nearly 5,300 teachers and health providers. The indicators provide evidence that basic inputs and infrastructure—with the notable exception of textbooks and drugs—are largely available at schools and health facilities. But they also show that attention needs to be paid to the level of knowledge and effort among providers. Importantly, they uncover large regional inequalities in service delivery.

What service providers know

- There are significant gaps in provider knowledge among both public and private providers in health as well as education.
  - Only 35% of public health providers could correctly diagnose at least 4 out of 5 very common conditions (like diarrhea with dehydration and malaria with anemia). In health centers that only offer outpatient services (HC2), half (49%) of the providers could not identify more than one of these conditions. Worryingly, public providers followed only 1 out of 5 (20%) of the correct actions needed to manage maternal and neonatal complications.
  - Less than 1 in 5 (19%) of public school teachers showed mastery of the curriculum they teach. Years of education and level of teacher training were positively correlated with higher teacher scores.

- The Northern region and rural areas consistently and significantly lagged behind the other regions and urban areas in measures of knowledge and competence of providers.

What service providers do

- In both education and health, the problem of low provider effort is largely a reflection of suboptimal management of human resources. This is evidenced by the findings that:
  - More than half (52%) of public health providers were not present in the facility. Sixty percent of this absence was approved, and hence potentially within management’s power to influence.
  - More than 1 out of 4 (27%) of teachers in public schools were not at work. Of those who were in school, about 1 in 3 (30%) were not teaching. The result is 40% of public school classrooms with no teacher teaching.

- By extrapolation, the average public Primary 4 student in the North received only 50 actual days of teaching time during the school year, about 90 days fewer than her Kampala counterpart.

What service providers have to work with

- Schools and health facilities have some of the basic inputs and equipment to function properly, but a few serious challenges remain. No textbooks were used by students in 86% of the classes in public schools, and only 44% of the public health facilities had all 6 of Uganda’s essential drugs. The adequate availability of priority drugs for mothers and children remains a challenge with only 39% and 23% respectively available in public facilities.
  - While the observed use of textbooks by students in public schools was very low at 14%, public schools—contrary to expectations—actually fared better than private schools, where the use was virtually non-existent at 3%.
  - Within the public sector, rural health facilities had poorer equipment and infrastructure; however the availability of tracer drugs was higher in rural facilities.