



School Inspection: What are the key Issues?

Overview

The Inspectorate function under the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) has a core mandate of ensuring quality education in both public and private primary and secondary schools in Uganda. According to the Public and Private Primary Schools Education Act (2008), inspectors of schools have a key role of quality control in schools as appointed by the Education Service Commission or District Service Commission.

The Government of Uganda allocates funds to the Inspectorate function through the District Local Governments to ensure thorough inspection of schools in the country for quality education.

This policy brief investigates the key issues in inspection and proposes policy options for consideration. Use is made of monitoring findings from the Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) as well as other education sector data sources.

Introduction

The Local Government Act 1997 (Cap.243) transferred delivery of the Primary and Secondary Education services to Local Governments. The district staff have a mandate to engage in planning, budgeting, spending, accounting, monitoring and evaluation.

Among the conditional grants to Local Governments (LGs) are the School Facilities Grant (SFG)/Consolidated grant - development,

Key Issues

1. The School Inspection Grant receives the least share (2.4%) of the funds transferred to Local Governments. In addition, this is received late, thus compromising quality education. The funds are grossly inadequate to cover the many schools in a district.
2. The inspectorate function has inadequate staff to conduct inspection.
3. Districts including those in hard-to-reach areas still lack transport to conduct inspection.

teacher salaries for primary and secondary schools, Universal Primary Education (UPE) capitation grants, the Instructional Material Grant (IMG), and the Inspection grants. The key focus of this policy brief is on the Inspection Grant.

School Inspection Grant

The Inspection grant is used to facilitate the inspection of all schools, both private and government aided although priority is given to the government aided primary schools, majorly due to the limited budget and the large number of primary schools. By FY2016/17 the total number of government aided primary schools was 12,433.

Inspection in schools is centered on pupil and teacher attendance/absenteeism, punctuality of the teachers and pupils, the pupil to teacher ratio, hygiene including the latrines and availability of water for use and drinking; Preparation of lesson



plans among teachers, records of work done, staff housing and staff welfare; Parents involvement in the school for instance provision of meals for their children; level of involvement of the School Management Committees including evidence of sitting for meetings, approval of budgets and appropriate use of funds.

Financial Performance of the School Inspection Grant

The annual budget for the inspection grant FY 2016/17 was Ug shs 4,779,000,000, of which Ug shs 2,389,500,000 (50%) was disbursed to all districts by 31st December, 2016. This grant also includes the District Education Officers’ (DEOs) facilitation. In spite of the great contribution that the grant plays to enhancement of quality education, the Inspection Grant consistently constituted the least share of educational grants to LGs as compared to other transfers as indicated in table 1 and figure 1.

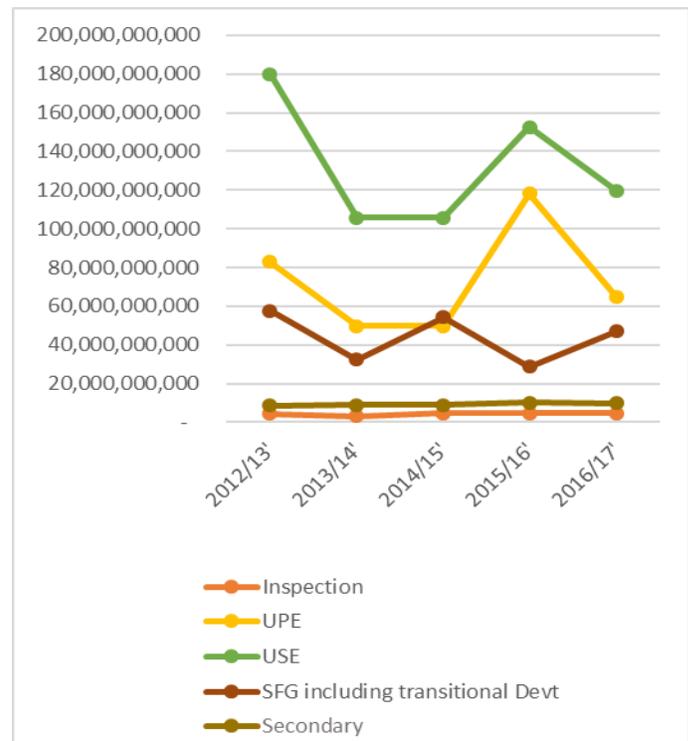
Table 1: Share of LG Education Budget by Grant for FY 2016/17

Grant	Approved Budget (Ug shs Billion)	% share of the budget	Release (Ug shs Billion)
UPE Capitation	22.840	11.590	15.210
USE Capitation	127.053	64.470	84.617
Inspection	4.780	2.430	2.390
Transitional Development Grant	32.509	16.500	21.651
Secondary Development	9.880	5.010	4.117

Source: Field Findings

As indicated in table 1; in FY 2016/17 the inspectorate function received only 2.4% of the share of the local government development budget. This has been the trend in the previous years as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Trend of Share of LG Education Budget (Ug shs) by Grant from FY 2012/13-2016/17



Source: IFMS

The inspection grant disbursements have fluctuated between Ug shs 4.3billion, and Ug shs 4.6billion from FY2012/13 to FY2016/17. The grants were for inspecting UPE government aided schools, secondary, and private schools.

Inspection Grant allocations to districts

Allocations to the Inspector’s function for selected districts in Quarter 1 (Q1) FY2016/17 was reviewed for selected districts. As shown in table 2, limited funds are allocated to inspect the so many schools in a district.



Table 2: Allocation of funds by number of schools in Districts

Local Government	Number of Schools (Primary and Secondary)	Inspectors Facilitation for Q1 FY 2016/17
Adjumani District	74	3,149,111
Apac District	119	4,425,606
Arua District	278	8,475,170
Bugiri District	151	5,346,778
Bundibugyo District	119	4,363,826
Bushenyi District	138	5,671,981
Busia District	133	4,737,585
Gulu District	61	2,755,983
Hoima District	149	6,302,699
Iganga District	187	6,863,336
Jinja District	110	4,737,585
Kabale District	209	7,016,401
Kabarole District	143	5,017,904
Kaberamaido District	106	4,176,947
Kalangala District	26	7,437,169
Kamuli District	192	6,527,029
Kamwenge District	167	6,536,298
Kanungu District	160	7,447,334
Kapchorwa District	30	1,863,598
Kasese District	277	10,437,402
Katakwi District	88	3,335,991
Kayunga District	186	8,451,810
Kibaale District	58	2,669,623
Kiboga District	95	4,433,906
Kisoro District	153	5,404,351
Kitgum District	79	3,274,142
Kotido District	15	1,431,799
Kumi District	85	3,446,862
Kyenjojo District	143	6,910,056
Lira District	109	3,943,348
Luwero District	276	9,035,808
Masaka District	96	4,597,425
Masindi District	73	3,733,109
Mayuge District	164	6,209,259
Mbale District	128	5,087,983

Mbarara District	178	6,396,138
Moroto District	17	1,583,998
Moyo District	79	3,289,271
Mpigi District	138	5,695,341
Mubende District	220	7,333,054
Mukono District	223	6,629,737

Source: IFMS

The inspection funds are majorly used for fuel to monitor the different schools, many of which are far apart in the district. In addition, each facilitator should receive not more than Ug shs 12,000 allowance per day for inspection, the same funds are used for stationery to photocopy detailed inspection reports; and to facilitate the outsourced human resource due to the limited number of inspectors to cover schools in a district. These include; Associate Inspectors who are usually retired teachers; Sports Officers, Special Needs Officers who are co-opted to the team to fill the staffing gap.

General Challenges Facing the Inspectorate Function Include;

- **Late receipt of inspection funds** for some districts. Bushenyi district received Q1 inspection funds on 26th September, 2016; Isingiro district received towards the end of August; whereas Mbarara district received inspection for Q2 on 25th November, 2016 towards time for school holidays. Districts had to improvise by borrowing in order to undertake the inspection for term II.
- **Inadequate inspection budget at district level** to cover all schools. Most districts conduct only one inspection per school per term instead of at least three times. Some districts have a wide geographical coverage and schools are spread over long distances. The Inspectorate Department of Nakaseke indicated that the money sent 10 years ago is still the same amount sent in 2017, yet there is need for an increment. The number of inspections is



influenced by the available resources and distances between primary schools and the District Education Office.

- **Understaffed district education departments** with mainly 2 or 3 staff (DEO, District Inspector of Schools (DIS) and one Education Officer). Ibanda, Luwero, and Agago districts for instance had only two staff in the Inspection Department. For quality inspection to be done in a school, only two schools are recommended per day per inspector. The few staff therefore cannot inspect all schools. Moreover, the associate inspectors who are usually brought on board do not usually command the respect of inspector since they are retired teachers.

- **Most districts still lack transport** for the Inspectorate Unit. For instance, in Mbarara district, the inspectorate had 5 field staff but no official vehicles to transport them to carry out this function. Nakaseke district, a hard-to-reach area with some schools over 120km away had no means of transport for inspection. Schools in the sub-counties of Kinoni, Ngoma, Kinyogoga, and Wakyato are hardly accessible and yet the inspectors only have means of a motorcycle to access them.

Conclusion

The Government recognizes the role of the Inspectorate function towards ensuring quality delivery of the education service through constant monitoring and supervision of schools. Achievements however have been compromised by inadequate and late release of funds, poor staffing in the inspectorate departments and

inadequate transport facilities to carry out inspection.

Recommendations

- The MoES should enhance allocations to the Inspectorate function based on the number of schools in a district.
- The MoES should ensure timely release of inspection funds by advising the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) accordingly.
- The District Service Commission should employ more staff to facilitate the District Inspectorate function. Each coordinating center should at least have an inspector to conduct inspection in that area.
- The MoES should facilitate the purchase of at least one vehicle for the inspectorate office to facilitate inspection in hard-to-reach areas; and two motorcycles to travel to relatively nearby schools.

References

1. Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development-*Semi Annual Budget Monitoring Report (FY 2012/13-2016/17)*
2. Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development *Ministerial Policy Statement*
3. Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary Education Act 2008
4. <http://www.education.go.ug/data/smenu/6/Directorate%20of%20Education%20Standards.html>