

# Acknowledgements

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However, we should emphasise that the final views presented in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by those named above.

# Abbreviations

<b>AEP</b>	Accelerated education programme
<b>DEO</b>	District education officer
<b>DIS</b>	District inspector of schools
<b>ECD</b>	Early childhood development
<b>ERP</b>	Education Response Plan
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>HT</b>	Head teacher
<b>LoI</b>	Language of instruction
<b>NCDC</b>	National Curriculum Development Council
<b>OPM</b>	Office of the Prime Minister
<b>PP</b>	Pre-primary
<b>SIL</b>	Summer Institute of Language
<b>TaRL</b>	Teaching at the right level (Pratham-inspired approach to remedial needs)
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WIU</b>	Windle International Uganda

# Glossary

**Bilingual approach:** This describes any situation in the lesson where the teacher consciously uses a second language to help the children understand. In some cases they may use a third or fourth language. However, we have kept to the term bilingual to cover any situation in which more than one language is used, rather than using the term multilingual.

**Familiar language:** A familiar language is any language that the learner feels comfortable using and has a reasonable oral command of.

**Home language:** This is the language or languages that the child uses in the home. Frequently, the child will have more than one home language as their parents and they move between languages which they speak.

**Language of instruction:** The language that is used as the main language for instructions. This will be the language used for both speaking and writing in the class.

**Support language:** The report uses this term to describe any language which is used in the classroom in addition to the language of instruction to help children understand. Frequently, it will be their home or first language, but it may be a different language which they are comfortable using such as Arabic or Swahili.

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# Executive summary

This study has been conducted by the British Council at the request of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) under guidance from their taskforce on refugee education and is in response to the large influx of refugees into Uganda over the last three years. In particular, the study is the second to look at the consequences this influx has had on language, both language policy and the way language is a block to learning for the refugees. The first study (Hicks & Maina, 2018) looked specifically at the impact the influx had on language policy and language use in the classroom, and provided a description of the status quo and the key problems of overcrowding and of learners and teachers frequently having no language in common. This new study takes these issues forward and has been given the brief of looking in more detail at possible solutions to these problems.

Whereas the first study concentrated on the learners, this study looks at the teachers and the schools and how they are adapting to and coping with the situation. It sets out to look for examples of best practice within schools and intends to describe potentially successful efforts to address the enormous practical challenges that result from having such a linguistically diverse population of learners entering the education system, with a view to them being adopted elsewhere.

The study was carried out in 24 refugee-impacted primary schools, eight in each of three districts: Kampala, Kyangwali and Imvepi. In addition, 11 early childhood development (ECD) centres were also included in the study as they were attached to a school. The introduction of Kampala in the study provides a different perspective as it is the first time that attention is being paid to the situation of urban refugees within this context. The findings across the three districts will be comparable with those from Isingiru, Yumbe and Arua in the previous study, thus giving a reasonably wide range of refugee contexts.

The preparation for the study involved developing seven different survey tools that would be used to collect data, quantitative and qualitative, through lesson observations and interviews with teachers, head teachers, parents and learners as well as lead educationalists within the ministry and National Centre for Curriculum Development (NCCD). The survey collected data on both the attitudes and language skills of teachers and learners, and collected views from all in relation to what has worked for them and what suggestions are emerging within the schools and the education system as ways forward.

The tools were pre-tested in one large school in Kyangwali before being finalised. Twenty-nine enumerators had two days' training and all used the tools within a trial school as part of the training before starting on the data collection. The enumerators then worked in teams of two or three and spent three days collecting data from two schools each. They observed lessons, interviewed the head teacher and the teachers they had observed, and gave out teacher questionnaires to the other teachers. They also interviewed learners in groups of five, asking about their languages and learning experiences and assessing their spoken English. The teachers' English, both written and spoken, was also assessed on a broad five-point scale.

Finally, focus group discussions were held with parents and, in Kampala, teachers. The consultants monitored the data collection, visiting each school as data was being collected and holding informal discussions with head teachers and teachers. In total, 671 learners were interviewed and 285 teachers gave their opinions and examples of their best practices. The consultants conducted the interviews with senior educationalists in the ministry, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), NCCD and field organisations.

After analysis, the key findings confirmed many of the findings from the previous study related to overcrowded classrooms, overage learners and a multiplicity of languages (up to 51 different languages in this sample<sup>1</sup>). However, they also found that there was a range of different and effective ways of languages being used in teaching. Although there were still many teachers whose lessons were dominated by 'chalk and talk' and many who preferred to use only English, there was an increasing use of limited bilingual or multilingual approaches to teaching, with two-thirds of the lessons using two or more languages in the classroom and many teachers trying to learn the language of their pupils.

The English of the teachers was, in general, more than adequate for their tasks as teachers. Not surprisingly, almost a third were unable to speak any language used by the refugees and thus were unable to adopt any bilingual approaches. However, a surprisingly large number of teachers had made an effort to learn one of the major refugee languages and were able to talk to their pupils.

There were similarly low levels of English among the refugee children, although the language of learners in Kampala was considerably better than elsewhere. In addition, although there was a multiplicity of first languages, there was considerable homogeneity within settlements and individual schools, with most schools in the settlements having one or two languages that were easily understood by at least 70 per cent of the pupils and often as high as 90 per cent. Kakwa and Swahili were understood by a large majority of learners – Kakwa in Imvepi and Swahili in Kyangwali and Kampala.

Learners stated that they had found the best ways of learning English were through talking with friends, reading books and attending debates. Few said they had learnt from their teachers. There was an alarming shortage of good reading materials available in the schools, with schools reporting as few as a few hundred books for a school of over a thousand learners.

The study concludes with a range of recommendations, including some from the first study, but also suggesting that language policy and practice can be built around a bilingual approach in refugee-impacted classrooms given that most schools do have a dominant refugee language. It also suggests ways of helping teachers to learn the refugees' languages and cultures, and highlights the need to greatly increase the availability of English language reading materials.

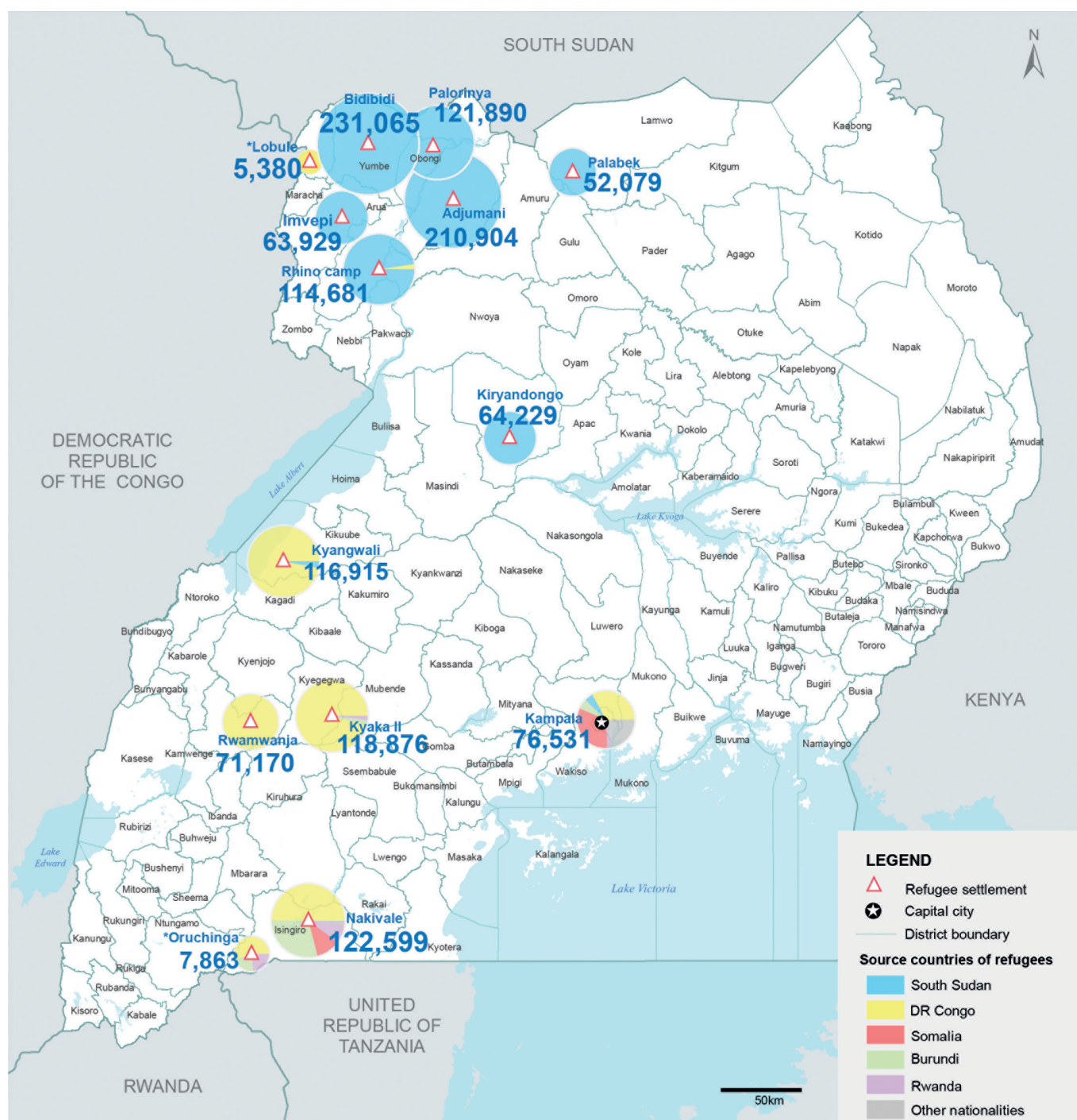
The study strongly recommends the need for a bridging course for new refugees coming into the system to address language, overage children supported by a system of accelerated promotion within schools that was described by two head teachers. It also encourages the development and use of more accelerated learning programmes for overage refugees.

Uganda, and the Ministry of Education, should be proud of the strides it is making to try and meet the needs of its large refugee population. It should be especially proud of the dedication of many of its teachers and head teachers in managing a very difficult classroom situation.

1. Exact number difficult to calculate as learners sometimes named the same language in slightly different ways with different pronunciations and spellings.

# Chapter 1: Background to the study

**Figure 1:** Refugee numbers and settlement areas (UNHCR, 2019)





Over the last two and a half years, Uganda has become home to over 1,300,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and South Sudan, among other countries. This forced displacement is the result of war and violence in the home countries, causing many to flee for safety. The largest refugee community is the South Sudanese, who are victims of conflict, insecurity and ethnic violence at home. There is a further population of protracted refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The OPM, UNHCR and other partners have been instrumental in ensuring the refugees settle and their struggles are minimised as they look for new places to reconstruct their lives. This has necessitated a Uganda country response plan which prioritises six areas of action:

1. refugee protection
2. emergency response
3. education
4. environment
5. livelihoods
6. urban refugees.

### 1.1 Context for the study

Uganda is host to an ever-increasing number of refugees – 1.381 million as of December 2019, a figure which is likely to increase due to continued instability in the region. Of these, approximately 62.4 per cent are from South Sudan and 28.8 per cent are from the DRC. A high proportion of these are children and therefore in need of schooling. This massive increase in the numbers of refugee children has put enormous pressure on schools, especially in terms of learning space and teachers (see Hicks & Maina, 2018), but also has implications for language use and language policy. Uganda has a very clear policy related to language in education which states that children in pre-school and Primary (P) 1–3 should learn in a familiar local language. They then transition to English during P4 and, from the end of P4, use English as the language of instruction (LoI). Inevitably, refugee children entering schools from a range of different language settings pose a considerable challenge both to the policy and to the practicalities of teaching in multilingual classes. Refugees come from educational systems which, in addition to English, have used French, Arabic or Swahili as well as a number of local languages as their LoI.

This survey follows on from several other studies related to language and refugees, including the study carried out by the same researchers, Hicks and Maina, in 2018 (see Chapter 2). Whereas that study aimed to describe the impact of a large influx of refugees on schools and the problems that result, in particular how language use and language policy are affected in schools, this study looks at the actual practices being used to address these challenges, especially how teachers and education leaders are managing large multilingual classes. It also looks for practical solutions that can address the challenges.

## 1.2 Objectives of the study

An initial report on the preliminary findings of this survey has already been presented in draft to the British Council. This is the full draft report that repeats and expands on those findings with the statistics having now been fully checked, reactions to this paper received and conclusions drawn with their implications discussed. This report is accompanied by two guidebooks, one that will offer advice to school teachers and one for school managers. They will outline possible solutions and approaches that can be taken at the school and district levels and are published separately to this report.

### 1.2.1 Terms of reference

The terms of reference that outlined the objectives of this survey are as follows:

1. to gain a more nuanced understanding of the range and use of languages and the challenges to learning and teaching posed by multilingual classrooms in refugee-affected districts
2. to look at LoI practices – how the teachers cope with multilingual groups of students, how they adapt or modify the educational materials, highlighting good practice and areas of weakness which will inform the content of a practical guidebook for teachers of groups of multilingual learners
3. to look at the use of and attitudes towards languages of teaching and learning in the wider community, among parents (host and refugee), head teachers, community leaders and district education officials.

### 1.2.2 Comments on the above terms of reference

In terms of gaining a more nuanced understanding of the way languages are used in multilingual classrooms, this survey builds on the findings that were reported in 2018 and confirms and refines or modifies those findings as relevant rather than revisiting the same arguments or collecting further data (see Table 11 in Chapter 5).

This survey focuses more on the extent to which teachers adapt their teaching styles and the materials they use to allow for these multilingual settings. In particular, it reports on examples of best practice in terms of both learning and teaching materials, and placing and managing new and overage children.

In addition, this survey will report on findings related to the attitudes of teachers, parents and the local community towards the use of languages and towards the placement of refugee children into the appropriate age grade, an issue that links directly to language.

Finally, the findings from this survey and their implications will be used as a basis for a guidebook for teachers and a guidebook for school management at schools that are affected by a heavy influx of refugees. The handbooks, from here on referred to as *A handbook for teachers of refugees* and *A handbook for school managers hosting refugees*, will be produced separately. They will provide useful and practical guidelines on how to strengthen the learning of the refugees, especially those arriving recently.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

There is a wide range of literature that relates to education in refugee settings across a variety of countries. There is also an equally wide range of literature related to education in multilingual settings within a multitude of contexts, both refugee and more settled settings. For the purposes of this study, we are concentrating specifically on recent studies in the Ugandan refugee setting that are directly related to language policy and language use. The following are studies that have a direct bearing on this present study and have influenced both the methodology used and the research questions asked, as well as offering findings that can be compared with or reinforced by the findings of this present study.

### 2.1 The impact of refugees on schools in Uganda (Hicks & Maina, 2018)

This study was commissioned by the British Council for the Ministry of Education and is by the same authors as the present study. It looked at the impact of refugees on schools in three districts in northern and western Uganda, with special emphasis on language use. The study used the same methodology as this study and is the basis for this present report. The key findings of this report were:

- overcrowding of schools, with average class sizes of over 100 children and many examples of classes with 200 and, in a handful of cases, 300
- a multiplicity of home languages, with 19 different languages used by significant numbers of refugees
- up to a third of refugee children had previously learnt in a language different to the one they are using in their Ugandan school
- some confusion existed as to which language to use as the LoI in lower grades, with some schools using the area language and others using English, and both claiming to follow ministry policy
- very little support was being given through the children's familiar language, and a preponderance of lessons were monolingual English lessons avoiding any translation
- refugee children were, on average, three years too old for their class and in some cases much more so

- children were being placed in the primary class based on their knowledge of English rather than their age, previous primary grade or knowledge of different subjects
- language assistants were employed but were used as full-time teachers and therefore not able to support children who did not know English
- low levels of reading and of language, with particularly low levels of phonic knowledge.

Many of these findings are reinforced by the present study. A comparison between the above findings and the findings of this study is made in Chapter 5.

### 2.2 Uwezo learning assessment adapted to refugee contexts (Uwezo, 2018)

This Uwezo study focused on learning outcomes in refugee settlements. It took a community-based approach and thus assessed and questioned families within their homes rather than at school. Its findings are based on a much larger sampling than that used by Hicks and Maina (2018) and reinforced the latter study's findings on the low levels of literacy being achieved by refugee children.

The central findings of this study, as reported in July 2018, which are relevant to this report relate mainly to learning outcomes:

- only 28 per cent of children assessed in P3–7 were able to perform using P2-level reading tasks
- only 21 per cent could be assessed as competent readers
- reading levels of both refugees and nationals were low, but refugees aged nine to 13 in the settlement schools had lower achievement levels than nationals of the same age in schools outside the settlements
- some nationalities were performing much better than others, with 65 per cent of Somalis achieving full competencies, compared to only 20 per cent from South Sudan and 13 per cent from DRC
- refugee schools were better resourced than national schools in the same districts that were outside the settlements.

The Uwezo (2018) study confirmed the broad findings about low learning outcomes among refugees in the settlements but did not study these in an urban setting. Therefore, it was decided that it was not necessary to carry out the same level of detailed assessment again in settlements. However, it was agreed that a check should be made on learning outcomes among urban refugees in Kampala as these had not been measured under either study. In addition, a brief check on oral language and on the learners' ability to read aloud would act as confirmation of the learning outcomes in the settlements in these two key areas.

For this reason, this 2019 study measures learning outcomes in terms of phonics, comprehension and reading tasks against the level expected in a P2 class among refugee children in urban areas only. Comparisons are made across the urban and rural settlement children in Chapter 6.5.

### 2.3 A bridging programme for refugee children in Uganda (Trudell et al., 2019)

Trudell et al.'s study (2019), commissioned by Save the Children and supported by the Ministry of Education and Sports, looked at the language of new refugee entrants and discussed the possible development of a bridging course. Its findings are very much in line with the findings of this study and its recommendations are integral to it. Its recommendations for the introduction of a bridging course and the form of that course, as well as the role that can be played by a local familiar language, are all incorporated into the recommendations of this report.

The key findings of the Trudell et al. (2019) study that are relevant to this one are:

- lack of an appropriate language for learning is the major drawback for refugees entering schools in Uganda
- there should be a bridging programme for refugee children as part of their placement that provides them with the language they need for study and helps to avoid the challenge of children being placed in lower primary classes due to their language ability and irrespective of age.

The proposed bridging programme intervention would focus on:

- building English language skills to allow learners to communicate fluently with their teachers and begin learning subject content in the English-medium classroom
- building learners' literacy skills in a familiar language that the learners understand well and which can be the basis for their literacy in English
- building and strengthening maths skills and facilitating the acquisition of academic language in English.

The findings of the present study fully endorse the need for the bridging intervention as a way of addressing the needs of new arrivals and of avoiding the problem of placing older children in lower grades just because of their lack of English. This is an approach mentioned in interviews by several head teachers and two district education officers (DEOs) as a solution for new refugee children. Such an intervention would solve the problems of new arrivals, provided they come in significant numbers. However, it would not directly address the needs of children already in school or of children arriving in small numbers – too small to be sufficient to make a class or tutorial group. Therefore, recommendations in this 2019 study should be seen as complementing the bridging course recommended.

### 2.4 Ministry of Education: Education Response Plan 2018 (UNHCR, 2018)

This study and its recommendations are published within the context of the ministry's Education Response Plan (ERP) and are, hopefully, a step towards fulfilling that plan. The plan envisages a very large expansion in the number of classrooms built and, already, after a year of implementation, a further 530 classrooms have been built, which will in itself help to ease the overcrowding reported in this study. In addition, the plan envisages a further 74,000 learning materials being delivered – an additional area of weakness identified in this report. Progress shown through the monitoring of the plan's implementation also identifies the need for a multilingual approach to education and teaching. This study addresses this challenge, and it is noticeable that more use of a bilingual approach is found in this 2019 study than was observed in the 2018 study (see Chapter 5).

Therefore, the plan in itself would appear to be having an impact in many areas.

The ERP is the first of its kind worldwide and represents a huge policy step forward for refugee education globally. It sets out exactly how to address a crisis where more than half a million children are out of school. Fifty-seven per cent of refugee children in Uganda (at least 353,000) and 34 per cent of local children in refugee-hosting districts (around 171,000) do not have access to education. The plan, which was developed within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) recently adopted by all nation states, confirms Uganda's leading global role. At country level, the OPM and the Ministry of Local Government, with UNHCR playing a catalytic role, co-ordinate the implementation of the framework.

Other challenges addressed in the CRRF include:

- filling teacher gaps and improving capacity to deliver quality education to refugees and host community learners
- strengthening the national- and district-level education system for effective and sustainable service delivery
- getting older youth who had dropped out of school back into education, through accelerated education programmes and vocational training
- piloting innovations in education.



# Chapter 3:

## Research methodology

This chapter outlines the research strategy, research methods, sampling frame, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and research limitations of the study.

### 3.1 Research strategy

This study employed a descriptive research design using the survey method. In addition to the data collected, a literature review was undertaken of recent relevant studies. The review entailed an analysis of existing gaps in relation to the study objectives from previous study reports, policy documents and key informants.

### 3.2 Research methods

#### 3.2.1 Qualitative research

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency.

The qualitative research was used to collect data that would reveal the practices, preferences and skills of teachers as well as inform policy recommendations through discussions with key stakeholders. These, in turn, all provided insights for the handbooks.

There were 44 key informant interviews aimed at collecting information from schools, including head teachers, as well as various bodies and stakeholders that support learning and curriculum implementation, including the NCDC, DEOs, the district inspector of schools (DIS), donors such as UNHCR, representatives from the OPM in each district, practitioners who support education, Windle International Uganda (WIU) and InterAid Uganda.

#### 3.2.2 Quantitative research

The quantitative research focused on gathering numerical data by administering tests, questionnaires and surveys, or by examining pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques and generalising it to explain a particular phenomenon (Babbie, 2010).

The study used various structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire design phase entailed reviewing past reports and meetings with key stakeholders, as well as an initial visit to Kyangwali to provide context and information that would be the basis for developing the tools.

The questionnaire design process included joint discussions with the working group members and meetings with heads of schools in Kampala and Kikuube, as well as the DEOs in Kikuube. The instruments were also piloted in one school before data collection started and changes were made in response to feedback (see Chapter 3.6). The survey employed six instruments, which are described below.

### 3.3 Methodology and key instruments used to collect data

The following survey instruments were developed and shared prior to data collection. Samples of these instruments are available in a separate annex.

#### 3.3.1 Classroom observation tool

This tool was developed for enumerators to use as they observed different classes being taught. It put emphasis on collecting data on which languages were being used, by whom and when, as well as looking at aspects of the teaching approach being used. It included an assessment of the teachers' English language competences and discussions with the teachers on their attitudes and beliefs. The teachers were then asked to write short paragraphs about their views on using different languages. These were used to assess the level of competence of the teachers' written English in addition to gathering their opinions. The teachers also self-reported on their own proficiency in other languages that they could use in the classroom.



### 3.3.2 Teacher questionnaires

An additional questionnaire was provided for teachers who were not observed so as to gather a wider range of teacher attitudes and best practice.

### 3.3.3 Learner questionnaires

Five learners were selected from each observed class and interviewed about their languages, their memories of placement and how they learned English. Their own oral language and ability to read aloud were also assessed on a 1–5 scale.

### 3.3.4 Parent and community focus group discussions

A simple format of questions related to language and placement of learners was used to guide discussions with a group of parents from each school.

### 3.3.5 Head teacher questionnaire

A specific questionnaire was used with all 31 head teachers and, where applicable, their deputies. This concentrated on their and their school's attitude to language and collected examples of best practice from each school. Alongside the questionnaire was a data collection sheet that collected numbers of learners and teachers in the school disaggregated by gender and by the number of refugees and nationals in each primary school. It also collected information on teaching materials and facilities.

### 3.3.6 Stakeholder interviews

A series of interviews were held with key informants in each district, including district inspectors, DEOs, representatives from the OPM, members of WIU and concerned individuals at the NCDC.

### 3.3.7 Kampala

Kampala was recognised as having a number of different challenges. Therefore, the questionnaires were adapted in some cases to collect separate information. For example, learners in Kampala were not asked about how they were placed in a class on arrival, but they were given additional assessments of their learning outcomes. Hicks and Maina (2018) assessed the learning outcomes of students in the settlements; it was not seen as necessary to do this again as there was sufficient evidence available from both that study and Uwezo (2018). However, no such assessments had been carried out for the refugees in urban schools. It was therefore decided to carry out an assessment of urban refugee children's reading and language skills to fill this information gap.

## 3.4 Sampling

### 3.4.1 Sampling methods

The survey employed purposive sampling. In this method, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, sampled members are selected based on their knowledge of, relationships to and expertise regarding a research subject (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). This aimed at targeting the relevant study participants in relation to our study. The schools enlisted were those supported by WIU and InterAid Uganda who had a significant number of refugee children. The classes selected were those on the timetable at that point in time for the relevant primary grades. The selection of the learners from each class was carried out in such a way as to ensure a balance across genders and nationalities so as to have a meaningful sample of each category.

### 3.4.2 The sampling size

After advice from the taskforce and WIU, three districts were selected and eight schools from each district identified using the guidelines agreed. It was agreed that the study would focus on government schools only. The three districts were Kyangwali, which only had eight government schools; Imvepi, which had 13 government schools from which eight were selected; and Kampala.

Kampala was selected in order to look into issues of urban refugees. It was recognised that these would be very different from schools in the settlements, but it was also agreed that their challenges needed to be studied if only to avoid inappropriate generalisations being made about the urban schools based on findings in the settlements. In Kampala, refugees are not placed into specific schools in the way they are in the settlement areas and so any school may have a few refugees. Therefore, eight urban schools were selected that had significant numbers of refugees, representing a range of communities.

Within each school, it was decided that Primary 2, 4 and 6 would be the focus along with the pre-primary classes if they existed within the school. Exceptions were made in a few schools where numbers were low, in which cases enumerators also interviewed learners from P3 or 5. The survey chose these classes to provide some focus and to ensure significant numbers at each primary grade; if all primary classes were straddled, the numbers would be small. In addition, as the study took place in the last month of the academic year, these classes marked the end of significant cycles:

- the end of P2 marks the stage at which children should have acquired basic literacy in at least one language
- the end of P4 marks the end of the transition to English
- by the end of P6, learners are prepared to enter the examination class and year.

In addition, this choice makes it possible to make some comparisons with the results of Hicks and Maina (2018), which focused on P3 and 5 at the start of the academic year, i.e. in February.

**Table 1:** Sample size

	Imvepi	Kyangwali	Kampala	Total
Refugee community population	Arua: 177,119	Kikuube: 116,519	75,350	368,988
No. of government schools in settlement	13	8	13*	34
No. of schools sampled	8	8	8	24
No. of ECD centres	1	5	7	13
No. of lessons observed	47	54	47	148
No. of teacher questionnaires	44	48	45	137
No. of learners interviewed	180	236	255	671
No. of FGDs (no. of schools and parents)	7 (26)	7 (33)	7 (23)	21 (82)
No. of head teacher interviews	11	8	12	31**
No. of informants interviewed	4	3	6	13

\*This is an estimate based on schools supported by InterAid. No schools in Kampala are officially 'refugee schools' and none are designated for UNHCR support, but many more than those listed have some refugee children as parents choose the school their children go to.

\*\*This includes head teachers overseeing pre-primary and, in some cases, a deputy head teacher.



From each class that was observed the enumerator, using stratified sampling, then selected five learners who participated in the learner focus group discussions. The enumerators were trained to ensure that the five selected were all refugee children, included at least two boys and two girls, and were representative of the different refugee communities in the school. In each case, enumerators conducted their own selection uninfluenced by the teacher or school. This selection procedure was practised during training to avoid bias or targeting only the brightest learners.

### 3.5 Selection and training of enumerators

Enumerators were selected by WIU. All the enumerators had post-secondary education and most of them had undergraduate degrees in social sciences but no prior experience in research. Before the data collection, a centralised two-day training workshop was carried out in each location with the primary goal of familiarising the team with the survey background, rationale, objectives, protocols, research ethics, questionnaires and data collection processes to ensure uniformity during the data collection. Day two of the training included the enumerators practising using the instruments in a school and in a class.

### 3.6 Pre-testing instruments

During the second day of training in Kyangwali, the survey instruments were piloted in one primary school as a learning exercise.

The enumerators worked in pairs or threes, watched the same lessons and interviewed the teachers and the head teacher together, and then trialled the pupil questionnaire with at least one group of learners that they had selected. The only difference between this pre-test and the actual exercise was that in the pre-test two or three enumerators observed the same lesson or interviewed the same pupils. Once they started to collect data, the enumerators would have to do this on their own to maximise the amount of data collected. Therefore, this initial exercise not only pre-tested the tools but also oriented the enumerators, trialled the data collection procedures, and checked how long data collection would take in each school.

Once they had completed an interview or observation, the enumerators compared their answers to see how far they were using the same criteria, how easily the tools could be understood, and also to make judgements on which items were difficult to interpret or ambiguous.

The supervisors and WIU representatives accompanied the enumerators during this pre-test.

Following this exercise there were further discussions on the field experience, the relevance of the questions and any misunderstandings. Unclear questions were either clarified or, where necessary, rephrased. The importance of providing complete data was highlighted through this exercise as many enumerators brought back incomplete answers. The pre-test exercise led to a number of amendments to the questions being made to ensure greater clarity and consistency.

### 3.7 Data collection procedure

The enumerators were divided into teams of two or three based on the following criteria:

- the number of languages each spoke – to ensure the team could cover all the children's main familiar languages
- the size of the school – to allow teams of three to go the largest schools to sample more classes and learners
- knowledge of schools' locations – to ensure that at least one team member knew how to find the school
- where each person lived – to allow for ease of commuting.

The enumerators collected data for three days in each district so that each of the eight schools was visited for at least one day. Each team would spend one full day in each of two schools and use the third day to finalise any data collection or conduct activities not completed on the first day. In each school each enumerator was expected to observe three lessons and interview the class teacher after each lesson, distribute and collect teacher questionnaires from any teachers they had not observed, and interview 15 learners from the refugee community in groups of five selected from the classes they had observed. Between them they shared the discussions with the head teacher, the collection of school data and the facilitation of a focus group discussion with parents. In Kampala the enumerators also held a focus group discussion with teachers and tested their reading and writing skills.

Key informant interviews were carried out by the two consultants, depending on the availability of the various key informants. They included interviews with UNHCR, DEOs, WIU staff, the NCDC director and key staff, and education-related representatives from the OPM.

### 3.8 Data analysis

The survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, while the qualitative data gathered from key informant interviews was analysed through content analysis. With this analysis, data gathered is categorised into themes and sub-themes to allow for comparability (Moore & McCabe, 2005).

### 3.9 Data quality

To ensure data quality throughout the data collection and analysis, data cleaning was conducted. This involved checking the questionnaires for completeness, clarity of responses and accuracy. To ensure quality control, the consultants and WIU staff were deployed to the various schools to monitor and, where necessary, supervise the data collection as it happened.

### 3.10 Ethical considerations

WIU drafted an introduction letter for each school that expressed the purpose of the study to the target respondents. The OPM, which is the state department responsible for refugee settlements, endorsed this.

The enumerators sought consent from each of the respondents before engaging with them. They also explained the purpose of the study. In addition, the consent indicated that participation was voluntary and confidential, and that there were no benefits, compensation or risks associated with the study.

As a measure of confidentiality and anonymity, no identifiers were used that could link individual participants with the information they provided. However, participants were informed of the intention to publish the findings of the study and use them to inform policy. All enumerators were informed about and discussed the main issues related to ethical research during the training.

### 3.11 Research limitations

1. Several respondents pulled out of the interviews or focus group discussions midway through, stating that the questionnaire was too long and they needed to attend to urgent matters – mainly teachers who had to teach their class since it was during lesson time.
2. There were several last-minute cancellations or rescheduling of appointments – this was mostly the case among the parents, who were informed late and couldn't cancel that day's commitments. However, in all cases the discussions took place either as scheduled or on the enumerator's third day of data collection.
3. Securing appointments with formal organisations/ establishments took slightly longer than anticipated; sometimes they were cancelled or conducted en route to other meetings. As a result, this stage took longer than expected and reduced the numbers consulted.
4. Extreme weather conditions, especially during the rainy season, meant that access was challenging to many, including the enumerators and consultants. This led to delays in receiving data that had to be forwarded after the consultants had left. This had a knock-on effect, delaying the finalisation of both the data and this report.
5. The scope of the study was limited to primary education but included 12 ECD centres, seven in Kampala, which were attached to the selected primary schools.

# Chapter 4:

## The findings

### 4.1 The teachers' English

Hicks and Maina (2018) concentrated on the learners and the language of the classroom rather than looking closely at the teachers, their attitudes or their language skills. This study therefore targets the teachers' attitudes and practices in terms of using language in their teaching and their own language skills. The teachers' language was assessed both by observing them in the classroom and by assessing the essays that they were asked to write in the questionnaires. This assessment approach was careful to make sure that teachers did not feel as though they were being judged – as such, the written language was assessed by questions embedded in the questionnaires about how they taught or used English. The assessment of their ability in languages other than English was based on self-assessment and self-reporting. In addition, teachers were asked to assess their own language skills, both English and the children's most familiar languages. The initial findings related to teachers are as follows.

#### 4.1.1 The teachers' language: Spoken language

There was surprisingly little evidence to suggest that the teachers' own language was inadequate for the task. In fact, the evidence would suggest that most teachers have sufficient English for teaching in the relevant primary classes and their own English competence is not the issue. Enumerators who were observing teachers in the classroom were asked to rate the teachers' spoken English across two features of accuracy and appropriacy of level for the class. To do this they were to agree or disagree with the two statements:

- the language was accurate with only occasional errors and easy to understand
- the language used was simple and at or near to the level of the learners.

During training and while trialling the tools, the enumerators practised applying these two criteria. The tools used also allowed them to write comments on the language if they felt unsure as to whether to agree or disagree with either statement. Therefore, although the enumerators were not professional language teachers or examiners, they and the consultants felt confident that they would be able to identify any teachers whose language inadequacies were interfering with the learning.

The results show that, out of the 148 lessons observed, the enumerators only recorded three lessons in which the teachers used language which was not good enough, i.e. made it difficult for the learners because of their inaccuracies. There were a further 12 lessons in which enumerators recorded minor errors in the language – but none sufficient enough to make the teacher difficult to understand or to make learning difficult – and seven lessons where no record was made. This finding was reinforced by the teachers' own assessment of their English language abilities. All but two teachers assessed their own English as either near native standard or as proficient and easy to understand. This was across both the 137 questionnaires and the 148 discussions that followed the lesson observations, so reflects some 285 teachers' self-assessment.

In addition, during the lesson observations, only five of the 148 teachers observed were criticised for using language that was too difficult for the class. In six lessons, no record was made. This is a more nuanced judgement for enumerators to make. In all probability it means the language was simple enough for the enumerators to understand with ease. However, it is unlikely that – and not consistent with the lessons the consultants observed while monitoring to suggest that – teachers were able to rephrase or to simplify their language to the level of P2 or 4 English learners. Such rephrasing of language is a very necessary but advanced classroom communication skill that should, in all probability, be included in any orientation or teacher-training course for teachers in refugee-impacted schools. Probably the safest conclusion on the matter of simplicity of teachers' language is to say that, with the exception of five teachers, they did not complicate the language.

However, overall it does mean that most teachers have competent English and therefore orientation and training do not need to put the emphasis on the teachers' own language competence, as is often assumed. It also means that they are not making their English unnecessarily complicated, but there may still be a need for development of skills of simplification and elicitation at the appropriate level.

**Table 2:** 'Language of teachers was accurate with only occasional errors and thus easy to understand'

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	PP	Top PP class	Total
False	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
%	0	0	0	6.52	0	0	0	0	2.13
True	1	40	2	43	3	35	9	5	138
%	100	100	100	93.48	100	100	100	100	97.87
Total	1	40	2	46	3	35	9	5	141
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

n=148 (survey population)

n=141 (number of responses)

**Table 3:** 'Language used was always simple and at or near to the level of the learners'

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Top PP class	Total
False	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	5
%	0	4.88	0	6.52	0	0	0	3.52
True	1	39	2	43	3	35	14	137
%	100	95.12	100	93.48	100	100	100	96.48
Total	1	41	2	46	3	35	14	142
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

n=148 (survey population)

**Table 4:** Teachers' written English language competence in each district

District	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Total
Imvepi	2	4	17	14	0	3	40
%	5	10	42.5	35	0	7.5	100
Kampala	0	4	16	18	4	4	46
%	0	8.7	34.78	39.13	8.7	8.7	100
Kyangwali	0	1	7	26	0	5	39
%	0	2.56	17.95	66.67	0	12.82	100
Total	2	9	40	58	4	12	125
%	1.6	7.2	32	46.4	3.2	9.6	100

n=137 (survey population)

n=125 (number of responses)

#### 4.1.2 The teachers' language: Written language

The written answers of the teachers were not assessed by the enumerators but by an experienced English language teacher using a five-point scale with broad criteria related to the level of errors and to clarity of expression. These results were also encouraging. Of the 137 teachers who were asked to write answers in an extended paragraph, 12 failed to do so or failed to write enough to provide a basis for assessing the English. Of the remaining 125 teachers who did write answers, 12 (9.6 per cent) wrote at least part of their answers using their own language and so did not use enough English for a judgement to be made, and 11 (8.8 per cent) were difficult to understand, with errors in sentence construction and tenses. A further 40 (32 per cent) were recorded as having language errors of a minor kind, but it was easy enough to understand what they were trying to say and there were no significant structural errors. Therefore, half the teachers, 62 out of 125, were able to write clear and fluent language with only the occasional localised error, such as a spelling mistake, local singular plural error or subject–verb agreement error, which did not affect comprehension.

A comparison between Kampala teachers and those in the settlements showed that the Kampala teachers scored higher marks but only marginally so, even though the only language users classified as having near native speaker competence came from Kampala. The overall difference is approximately ten per cent on average between Kampala and Imvepi, with Kyangwali doing better than either.

#### 4.2 Teachers' abilities in other languages

The findings related to the teachers' abilities in languages they might share with the refugees other than English are based on both the teacher questionnaires and the discussions following the lesson observations. The questionnaires were only completed by teachers not involved in the lesson observations and discussions; therefore, there is no overlap. In both, the teachers were asked which languages other than English they were able to use with the refugees individually or in their teaching. In the discussions following classroom observations, 46 of the 148 teachers observed said that they did not have any language other than English that they could use with the refugee children. In addition, 36 of the 137 teachers

who answered the questionnaires said they did not know a refugee language well enough to use it in the classroom or with the children. Thus, out of 285 teachers, 82 (29 per cent) were not able to use any form of bilingual teaching even if they had wished to do so. This was particularly acute in Kampala, where most teachers listed Luganda or a similar Ugandan language as the alternative language they could use.

However, the range of languages shared with the children among the remaining teachers was encouraging. The language that the greatest number could use was Swahili. One-hundred of the 285 teachers said they would be comfortable using Swahili for teaching in the classroom. A further 14 said they were able to at least talk in Swahili with individual children. In addition, 45 teachers were comfortable using one or more of the South Sudan or DRC languages, including Bari (mainly Kakwa), Kinyabwisha and Kigegere. Twenty-five teachers specified Arabic as a language they could use in the classroom, and approximately 100 specified a Ugandan language, including Luganda, Lugbara or Runyoro. While the former was clearly useful in Kampala with refugee children, most of whom could speak Luganda (see Chapter 4.3.5), Ugandan languages not shared across the borders would not help recent arrivals. Of those who stated they spoke or used a Ugandan language, only 36 specified that language.

The language least well served is French. No teacher felt confident teaching in French, and only 15 teachers felt they knew enough French to talk to individual children in French. Teachers in Kampala specifically stated that their school needs some teachers who can speak French – though possibly some assessment of the levels of French spoken by refugees from DRC should be made to guide any strategies related to supporting those from a French-medium school.

## 4.3 Teachers' use of languages for instruction

### 4.3.1 Source of data

The findings related to the way teachers use different languages while teaching are based on three sources:

- lesson observations
- responses to the teacher questionnaires
- information collected in the learner questionnaires.

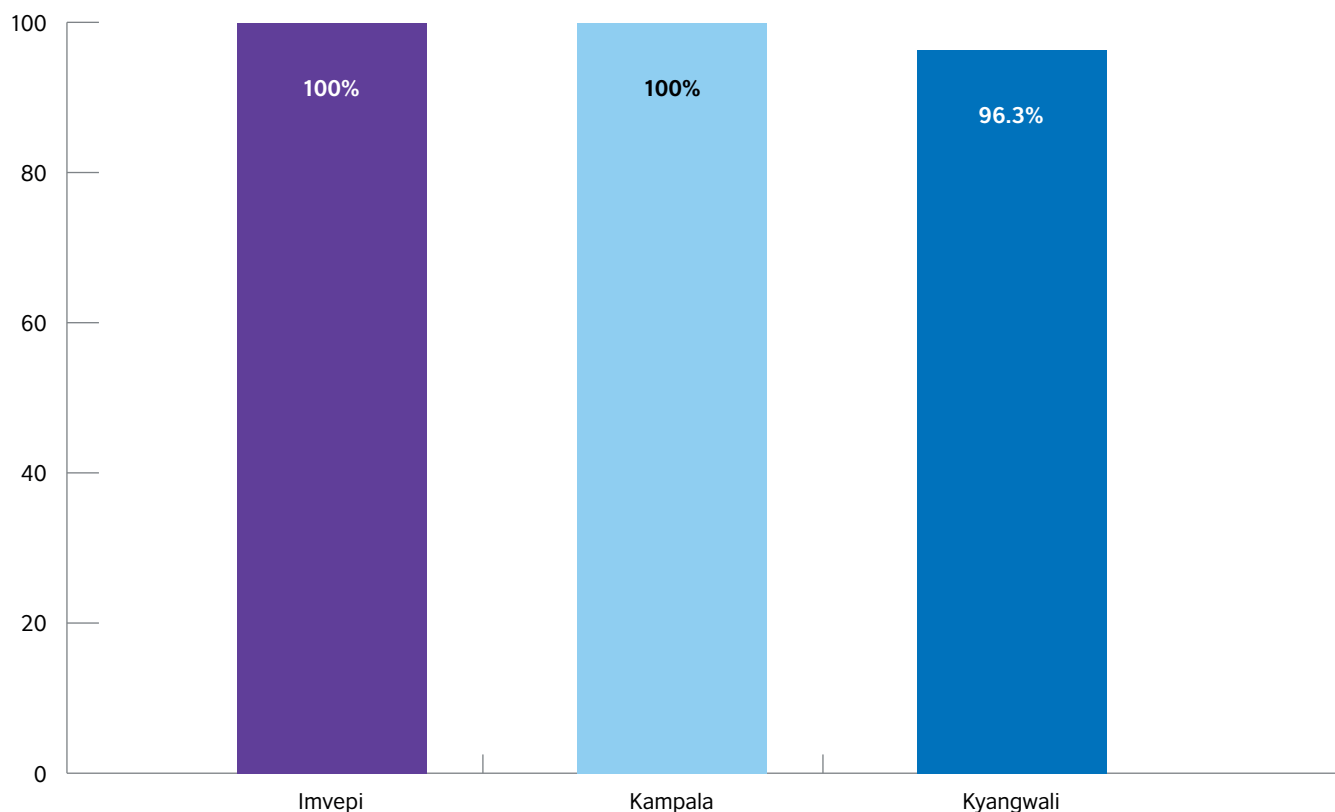
Enumerators recorded which languages (in addition to English) they observed being used in the classroom. They then asked children which additional languages

their teachers used and, finally, the teachers stated which languages they used in addition to English. The three sources were largely consistent, although the teachers claimed to use other languages more often than was actually observed or stated by the learners.

### 4.3.2 Language of instruction – monolingual or multilingual

All but two of the 148 lessons observed used English as the medium of instruction. The remaining two were both pre-schools in Kyangwali which used Swahili.

**Figure 2:** Use of English as the language of instruction



### 4.3.3 Teachers' use of a support language in the classroom

In 63 per cent of lessons observed the teacher used another language in addition to English to support learning for at least some of the time. However, of these, 31 per cent used a second language for ten per cent or less of the time, and in nine lessons the teacher used several languages. This is consistent with what the learners said in their interviews. Approximately 38 per cent of learners said that only English was used in the classroom, while 62 per cent said that other languages were used, with Swahili and Kakwa being the most frequently cited second languages.

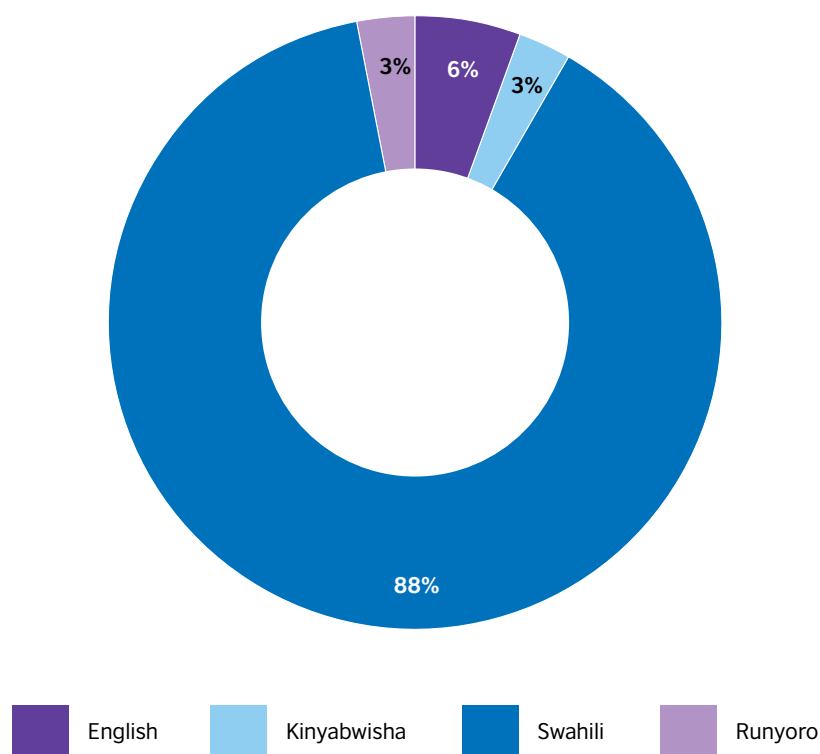
These findings are not entirely consistent with teachers' answers in their questionnaires, as only 22 out of 136 teachers (16 per cent) said that they used only English when teaching. Therefore, learners offered a different perspective to that of the teachers but a very similar

one to that recorded from lesson observations of how language is used in the classroom. In summary:

- sixteen per cent of teachers said they use only English in the classroom
- thirty-eight per cent of learners said that their teachers use only English
- thirty-seven per cent of the lessons observed were monolingual – only using English.

If we look at the support languages used in the three different locations, we get three very different patterns. In Kyangwali support languages were observed in use in 35 classes. As can be seen in Figure 3, in these classes Swahili was the dominant support language, which is consistent with the large number of refugees who were found to either use Swahili as a home language or at least feel comfortable using Swahili (67 per cent – see Chapter 4.3.4).

**Figure 3:** Support languages used in lessons in Kyangwali



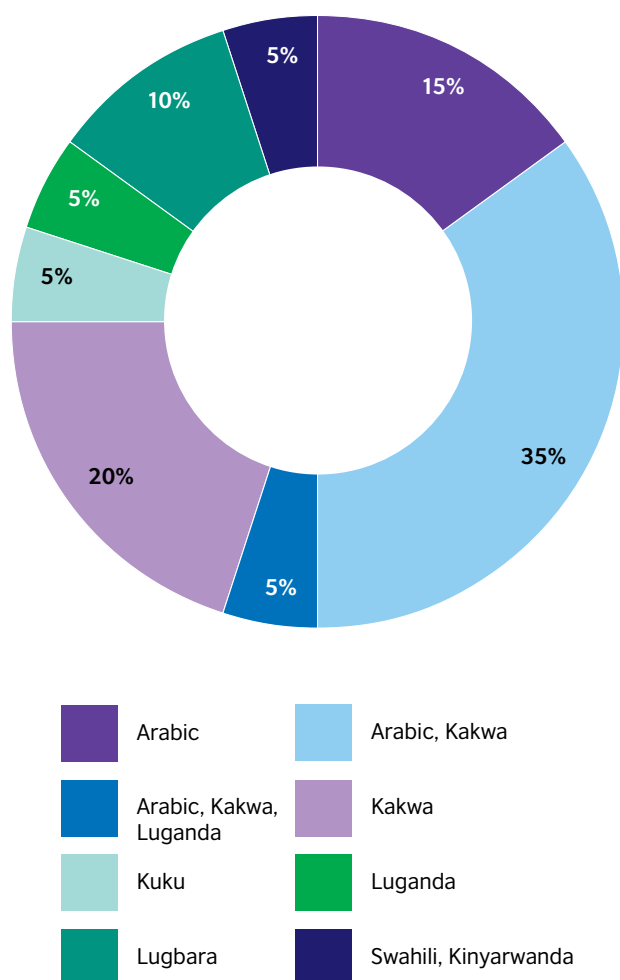
In Imvepi support languages were observed in use in 20 classes. A wider range of languages were used in support of learning in Imvepi than in Kyangwali, but Arabic and Kakwa remained the dominant languages used, accounting for 70 per cent of the lessons, with many teachers using both. This is consistent with the familiarity of languages reported by the children, with 78 per cent having Arabic or Kakwa as their home language and many knowing both (see Chapter 4.3.4).

A very different pattern emerged in Kampala, where less use was made of a support language in any lessons. There

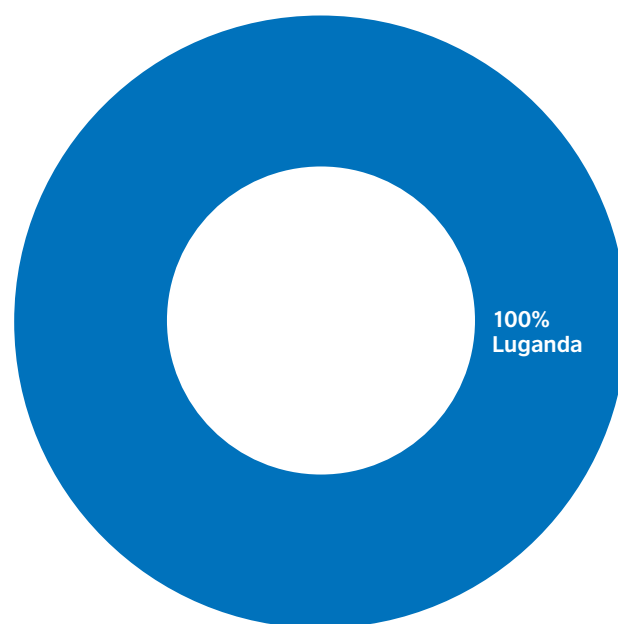
were 17 lessons in which a second language was used and in all cases the language used was Luganda. This was obviously to meet the needs of nationals rather than the refugee children, but interviews with the refugee children showed that a majority were comfortable using Luganda (see Chapter 4.3.5).

One would expect a decreasing use of the support languages as learners move into upper classes following Uganda's national language policy. However, this pattern is not nearly so predictable, with only Imvepi following it. This is evidenced and described more fully in Chapter 4.3.6.

**Figure 4:** Support languages used in lessons in Imvepi



**Figure 5:** Support languages used in lessons in Kampala

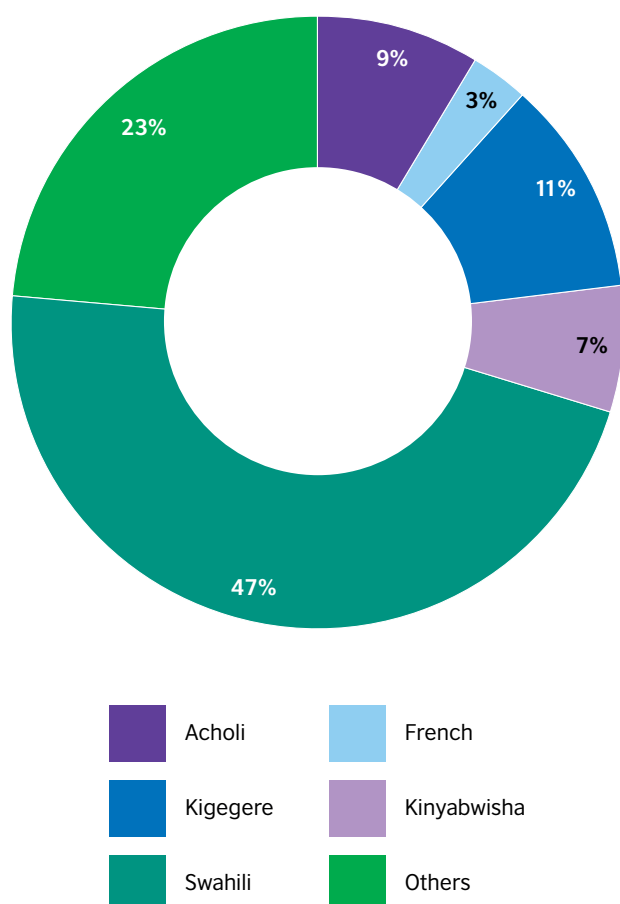




#### 4.3.4 Languages understood by learners in each settlement as a support to learning

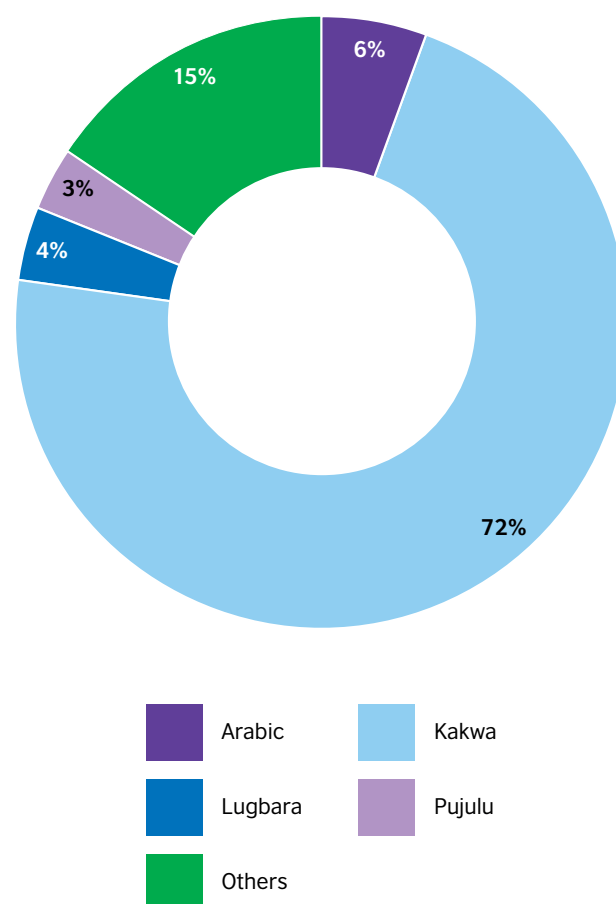
The most popular second language, i.e. language used in support of learners who didn't fully understand English, varied according to location. In Kyangwali, based on the learner questionnaires, 86 per cent of the 255 refugees came from DRC (Figure 8)<sup>2</sup> and, as a result, the teachers who used a support language used Swahili. Evidence from interviews shows that 47 per cent of all learner refugees in Kyangwali also used Swahili as their home language. In addition, a further 20 per cent said it is a language they know well. Therefore, providing support to learning in English through Swahili does benefit at least 67 per cent of the refugee children in Kyangwali.

**Figure 6:** First or home languages of Kyangwali refugee learners



In Imvepi, based on the learners' questionnaires, 100 per cent of the 180 learners interviewed came from South Sudan (Figure 8).<sup>3</sup> Thus, the teachers used Kakwa and Arabic as the support languages. Most children spoke both languages as familiar languages, with 72 per cent stating that Kakwa was a home language and six per cent stating that Arabic was a home language. Of the remaining learners, 19 listed Kakwa or Arabic as a language they knew and only 16 listed neither as known languages. Therefore, using Kakwa and Arabic ensured that 91 per cent of children were being helped.

**Figure 7:** First or home languages of Imvepi refugee learners



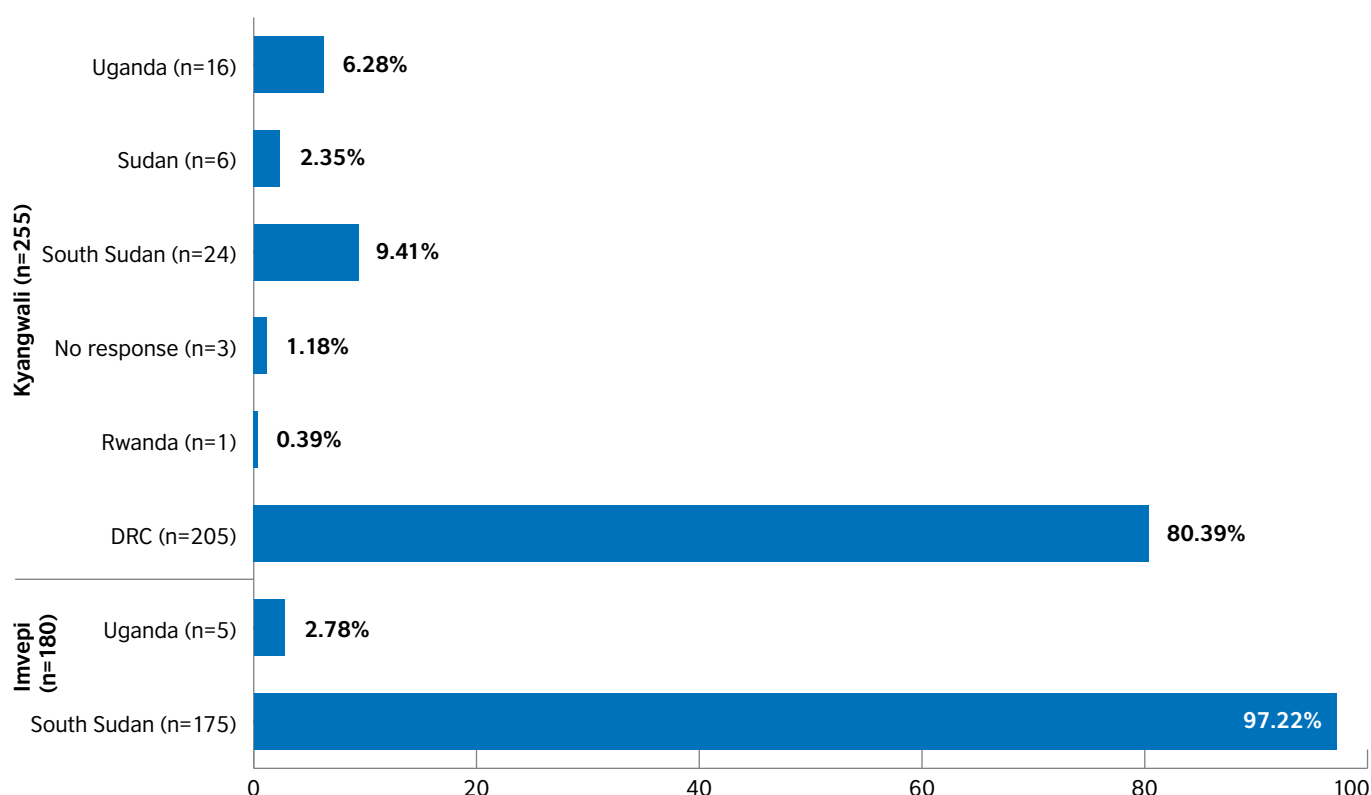
- Sixteen children stated that they came from Uganda, even though the languages spoken and other answers made clear they were refugees from DRC. This probably means they were born in Uganda in a refugee camp but legally are still classified as refugees whose country of origin is DRC.
- Five children stated that they came from Uganda, even though their languages and other answers made clear they were refugees from South Sudan. This probably means they were born in Uganda in a refugee camp but legally are still classified as refugees whose country of origin is South Sudan.

In discussions with the community in Imvepi, parents expressed a preference for using Arabic, the dialect described as Juba Arabic, rather than Kakwa, as they considered it a unifying language because it cut across most refugee communities in Imvepi. There may be a sense of historical irony that Juba Arabic can now be seen as a unifying language in this context given its history and the fact that, at present, the Ministry of Education in Juba does not recognise it as one of their national languages and does not use it as a medium of education in lower primary schools. It would therefore be necessary to have further community discussions, preferably at the school level, before deciding whether to prioritise Arabic or Kakwa as a support language given all the political implications.

#### 4.3.5 Languages understood by learners in Kampala as a support to learning

In Kampala there was no single dominant refugee community across the eight schools, though individual schools tended towards a community driven by parental locality and preferences in school selection. According to interviews with the 236 learners, the most common home languages were Swahili at 62 per cent followed by Somali at 16 per cent and Luganda at 13.2 per cent. In addition, 25 per cent stated that they used English as a home language. These figures, with 47 per cent claiming to use Luganda or English at home, may reflect the number of refugee children in Kampala who have lived most of their life in Uganda, the extent to which they have integrated and the social and economic class some have achieved.

**Figure 8:** Countries of origin – Imvepi and Kyangwali

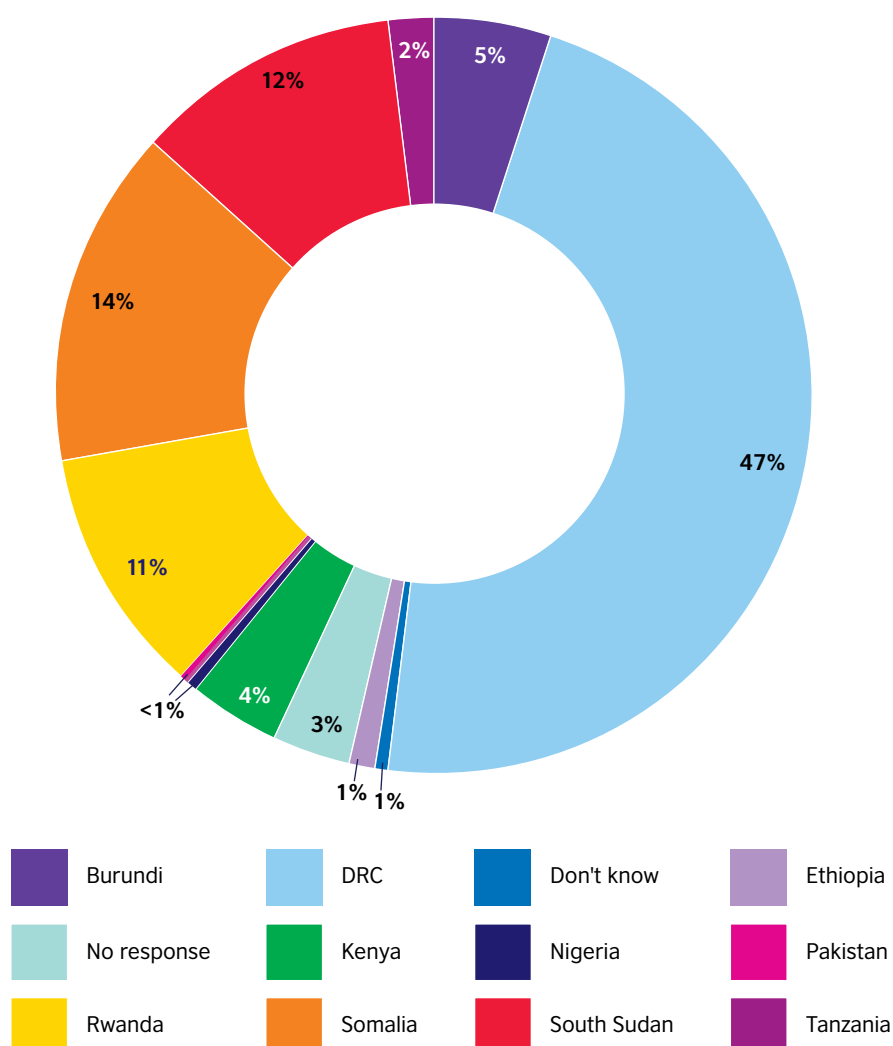


Lesson observations showed that Luganda was the most frequent support language used by teachers in the classroom – in fact, the only one according to lesson observations (see Figure 5). While this is a first language for Ugandan nationals, it is not a language refugees would have met before coming to Uganda. However, in addition to the 22 per cent of refugee children who claimed they used Luganda at home, a further 55 per cent said that it is a language they know well, and those who had difficulty with English were comfortable being interviewed by the enumerators in Luganda. So, although teachers are probably using Luganda because a majority of the national children are familiar with it, it is still a familiar language to many refugee children, and so using Luganda clearly helps a majority (77 per cent) of the refugee children.

#### 4.3.6 Multilingual practices across lower and upper primary

One might have predicted that lower primary classes would be multilingual but upper primary would follow a monolingual approach. Looking at the evidence across the three locations, the use of two or more languages in lessons was not restricted to lower primary, nor were monolingual lessons restricted to upper primary. Lesson observations recorded that 14 P2 classes were monolingual classes using only English. In P4, 28 lessons were monolingual English and in P6 24. In addition, evidence from the learners also suggests that a second language is used in P6 as well as in P2. Of the 167 children in P6 who answered the question, 91 said their teacher used a second language when teaching compared to 76

Figure 9: Countries of origin – Kampala (n=236)



who said they used only English. In P2, a bilingual approach was more common as one would expect, but, even there, 58 of 179 children said their teacher used only English and even in pre-primary there were five English-only lessons.

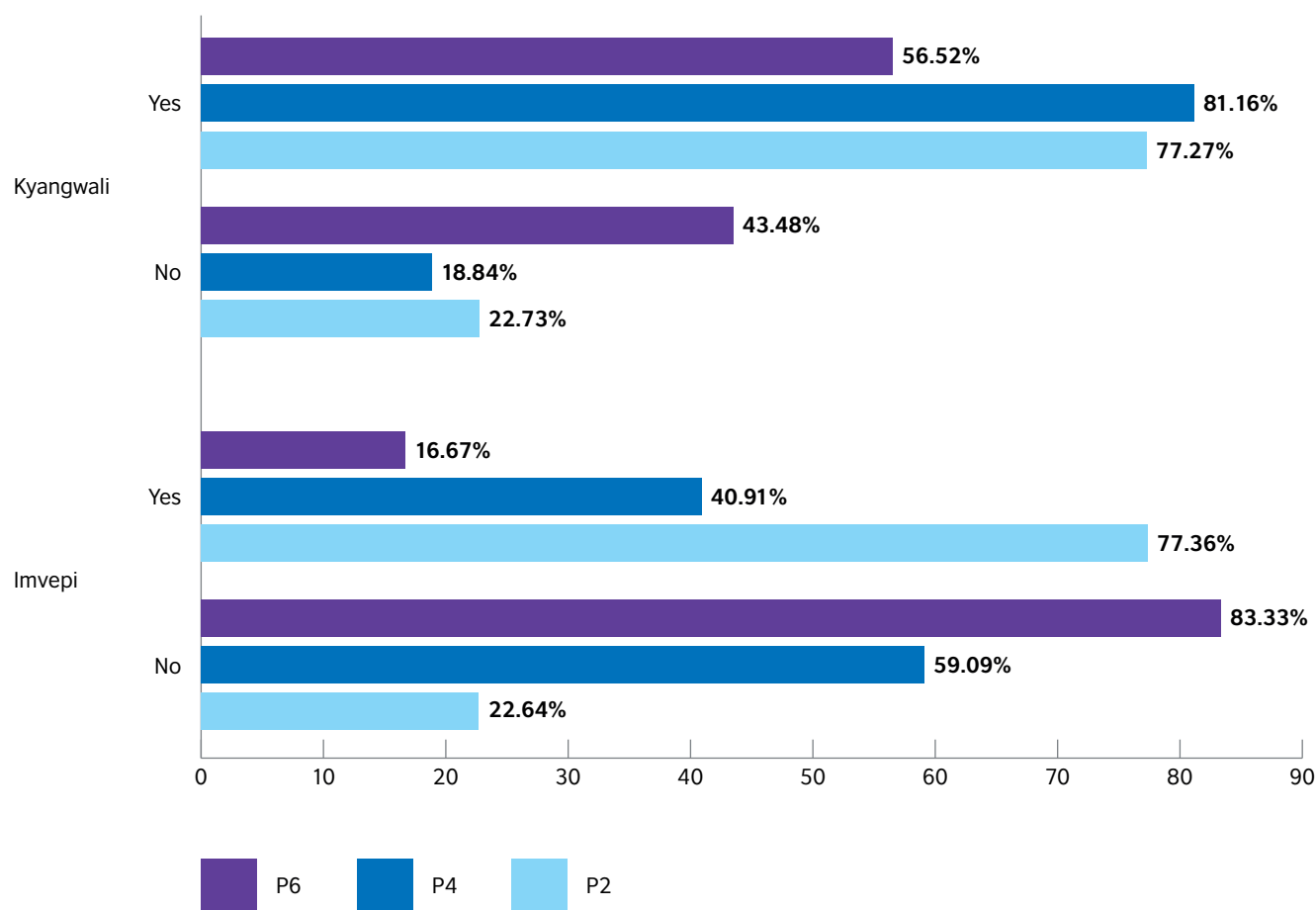
However, if one looks separately at the use of support languages in different primary grades in each district, also using the learners' responses, very different patterns emerge (see Figures 10 and 11). While Imvepi shows a diminishing but continuing use of a support language as learners get older, in Kyangwali more lessons in P4 use a support language than in P2, and in Kampala more lessons in P6 use a support language than in P2. These figures do not specify how much of each lesson is in the support language, so the figures could be a little misleading as many lessons used a second language for less than ten per cent of the lesson. But the figures certainly show that the use of support languages cuts across all grade levels and all regions.

#### 4.3.7 Languages understood by learners as support to learning in each school

It is clear from the data above that both Imvepi and Kyangwali have dominant familiar languages that can be used to help learners (Kakwa and Swahili). To some extent, Swahili is also a dominant language among refugees in Kampala. However, the way this plays out at the school level is of greater relevance.

Table 5 shows how dominant certain languages are within individual schools. The dominance pattern of Kakwa remains in all but one of the Imvepi schools, with over 65 per cent of the learners – and in three schools as high as 80 per cent and 100 per cent – using Kakwa as their home language. Therefore, language policy within these schools can take these factors into account.

**Figure 10:** Comparing use of support languages across primary years in Kyangwali and Imvepi



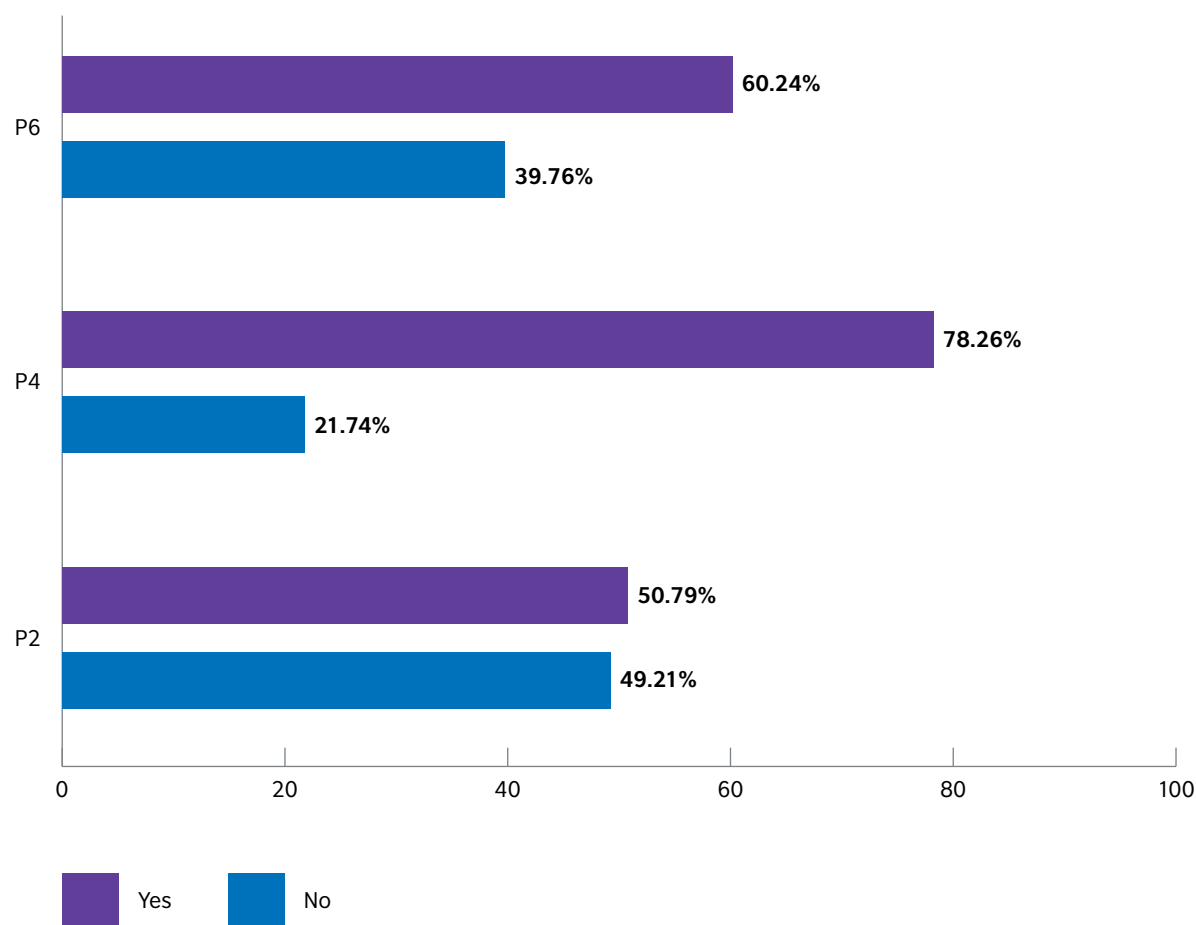
Question: In class do teachers use any language other than English?

Within Kyangwali the situation is more diverse, but, even there, 70 per cent of learners use Swahili in four out of the eight schools, and, in the fifth school, somewhat surprisingly given its location, 56 per cent use Acholi. Seventy-one per cent of learners at Maratatu school use either Swahili (36 per cent) or Kigegere (35 per cent), and 88 per cent of learners at Kinaketaka school use either Swahili (52 per cent) or Kinyabwisha (36 per cent). Such trends should be taken into account when agreeing how the schools use languages to support the learners.

Schools in Kampala are, of course, linguistically far more diverse and, apart from in Old Kampala, the refugees are already a linguistic minority. There are only three schools where the sample of refugee learners with the same home language rose above 30 per cent. This would be a much smaller percentage of all the pupils in the school if nationals were included.

It should be remembered that these figures are based on a small sample in each school. However, that sample was selected with a view to reflecting the diversity among the refugees, and so if any bias exists it would be towards understating the homogeneity of the languages used.

**Figure 11:** Comparing use of support languages across primary years in Kampala



Question: In class do teachers use any language other than English?

**Table 5:** Home languages of learners by school

School	Location	Sample size	Acholi speakers	Percentage
Ngurwe	Kyangwali	25	14	56
School	Location	Sample size	Kakwa speakers	Percentage
Annex	Imvepi	20	15	75
Awa	Imvepi	25	17	68
Equatorial	Imvepi	15	15	100
Imvepi PS	Imvepi	25	11	44
Longamere	Imvepi	45	30	67
Supiri	Imvepi	15	12	80
Unity	Imvepi	30	24	80
School	Location	Sample size	Kigegere speakers	Percentage
Maratatu	Kyangwali	55	19	35
School	Location	Sample size	Kinyabwisha speakers	Percentage
Kinaketaka	Kyangwali	25	9	36
School	Location	Sample size	Swahili speakers	Percentage
Kasonga	Kyangwali	45	20	44
Katwe PS	Kampala	30	21	70
Kinaketaka	Kyangwali	25	13	52
Malembo	Kyangwali	25	18	72
Maratatu	Kyangwali	55	20	36
Nyamiganda	Kyangwali	15	14	93
Old Kampala	Kampala	40	17	43
Rwenyawawa	Kyangwali	20	15	75
St Pauls	Kampala	25	10	40

## 4.4 Teacher attitudes to multilingual approaches

### 4.4.1 How the data was collected

Teachers were asked their opinion about the use of other languages in the class in two ways. The first was a series of statements they had to agree or disagree with. Then they were asked in longer questions to reflect in writing on how to help children with poor English and when it was a good idea to use a language other than English. The results showed clear support from a majority of teachers for using several languages where the teacher was able to do so. Some of the teachers also understood other languages and wrote a passage in the language they best understood and could read and write in, and were thus able to respond to the second question in a local language.

### 4.4.2 What the teachers said

The results show that, although in practice, based on lesson observations, half the teachers used only English, a much smaller number claimed to do so. Of the 136 teachers who responded, 13 stated that they used a language other than English as the LoL and only 16 per cent stated that they use only English when teaching. Furthermore, three-quarters of the teachers said they support a bilingual approach. Seventy-six per cent thought that using this approach, i.e. using more than one language in the classroom to help children understand, was a good idea and was beneficial to learners. When the question was reversed, however, of the 130 teachers who responded, 35 stated that they approved of a monolingual approach and didn't think that any other language should be used. Therefore, some 19 teachers contradicted themselves by saying that both a monolingual approach and a bilingual approach was a good thing. However, these statements may not be quite as contradictory as they seem because, based on their essays, many teachers approve of a bilingual approach for subject teaching but not for language teaching.

### 4.4.3 Attitudes to refugee children

Another encouraging feature of the teachers' attitudes to emerge was their very positive attitude towards having refugees in the schools. Eighty-seven per cent of the teachers stated that they agreed with the statement that Ugandan children gained from sharing their learning with refugee children. This approval was confirmed by the reverse statement, with only 14 per cent saying that Ugandan children are disadvantaged. There may be

an element of saying what is politically correct, but interaction with teachers would confirm this positive attitude among the majority of teachers.

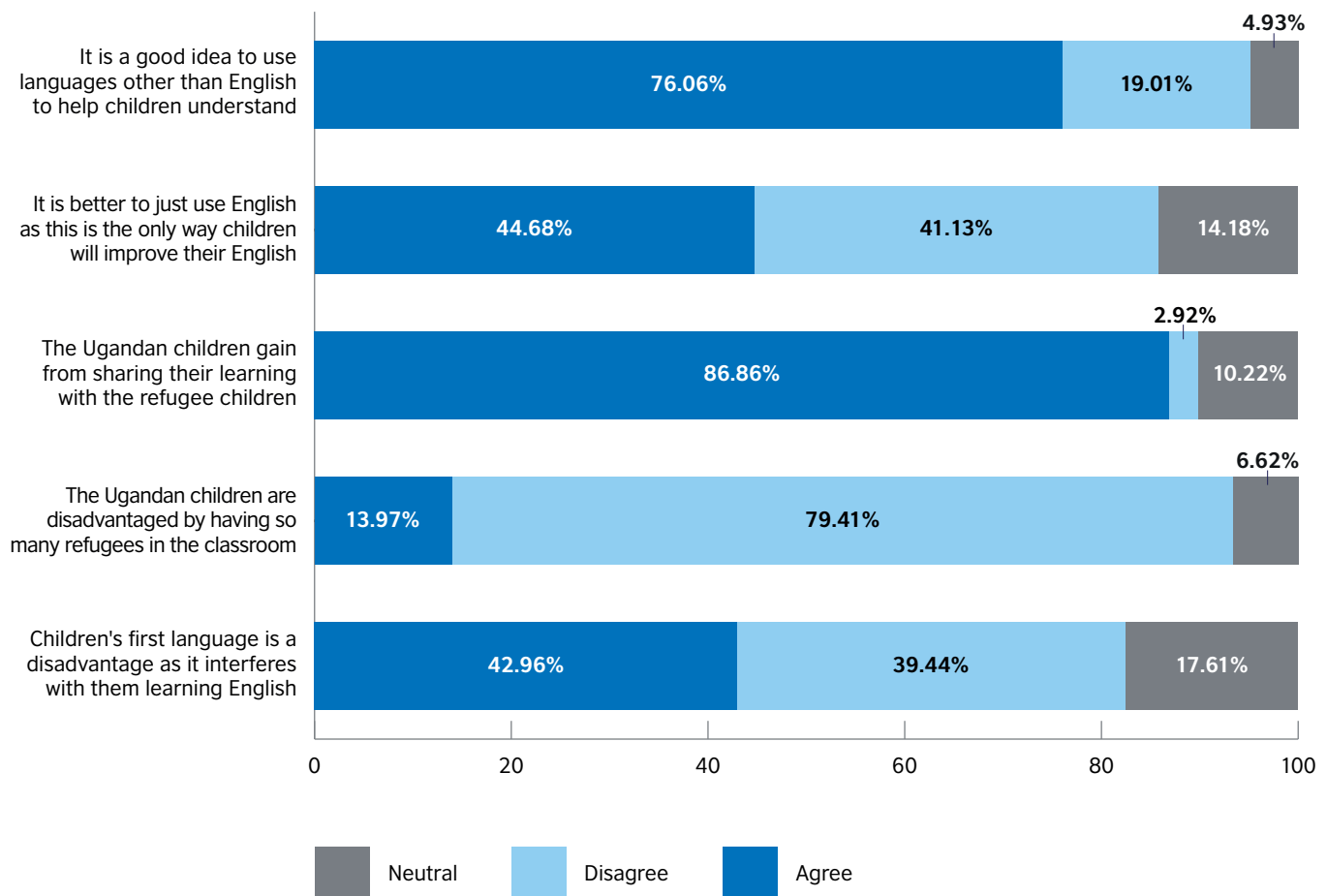
### 4.4.4 Teacher empathy and commitment

Although not directly related to their language use, having positive attitudes towards the refugee children means that the teachers empathise with them and are more likely to do everything they can to support them. This empathy was also demonstrated in conversations with teachers, many of whom were very dedicated. In particular, a number were trying to learn the refugees' languages so as to be able to better help them and to be in a better position to use a bilingual approach with the younger children and the new arrivals. Others expressed a wish to learn the refugees' languages if classes could be offered. There were several examples of teachers, including head teachers, who were now fluent in Kakwa even though they were Luganda speakers. Others had learned Swahili from the refugees and were proud of this.

### 4.4.5 Bilingual approaches – the contradictions

There are a number of contradictions in teachers' discussions on this issue, which may suggest a lack of clarity in their thinking or understanding. While a majority of teachers are supportive of some form of multilingual language use, there is a lack of clarity about the concept of a bilingual approach. This came out clearly in the essay responses, with some teachers saying that children should be allowed to use an alternative language in the classroom but not in the playground. Three teachers stated that they punished any use of vernacular and 12 stated that only English should be allowed in the playground, with three teachers saying that they punished any child heard using a local language outside the classroom.

Another common belief is that it is a good idea to use a second or third language in subject lessons such as maths or science but that English lessons should be taught through a monolingual approach. This came out in discussions as well as in the essays of at least nine teachers. Teachers stated that, while it is helpful to use a second language when teaching subjects such as maths, if you are teaching English as a subject, then you should use only English. This is obviously heavily entrenched in both teacher training beliefs and the ministry, and is a carry-over from the rigours of the direct method approach of the 1970s and 1980s which has more recently been questioned.

**Figure 12:** Attitudes of teachers towards using different languages and towards refugees in schools



## 4.5 Methodology used in the classroom

### 4.5.1 Learners asking questions

One simple but clear indicator of how learner centred a lesson is, is the number of children who ask questions during the lesson. On this measure, teaching remains very teacher centred. Out of a total of 148 lessons observed, learners only asked questions in 23 lessons and, of these, more than two learners asked a question in just two. With so little questioning by the learners, the teacher does seem to be dominating the proceedings.

### 4.5.2 Learners' activity levels during lessons

Enumerators were also asked to categorise what children were doing during the lessons observed. It is clear that if language is the problem, then teaching which relies heavily on children sitting and listening to the teacher or sitting and repeating what they hear will not be very effective as it is a methodology dependent on the children's weakest skill. Therefore, attempts were made to measure the variety of activities in each lesson and how much of the lesson was dependent on children just listening to the teacher.

One main measure was to see how many lessons involved children working independently of the teacher – in groups or individually but without just copying what the teacher gave them. Based on 137 observations, there were 105 lessons in which the children spent at least 25 per cent of the lesson doing some form of independent work. This is encouraging, though we have no record of the quality of that activity. The greatest time spent on independent activities was observed in Kyangwali and the least in Kampala.

The opposite type of lesson is where learners just have to listen to the teacher and either do nothing or repeat after the teacher without any call for understanding. Sadly, in 76 lessons, over half, children spent at least half the lesson just listening as the teacher talked. In addition, in 79 lessons children spent at least 25 per cent of their time just copying from the blackboard. Therefore, the typical lesson tended to be teachers talking while children listened and then copied from the blackboard, neither of which is likely to allow for any originality or language practice, followed up by some independent work.

Although it is depressing to see that so much of the lesson is still passive, these teachers are teaching very large classes, with many children unable to understand the teacher's English. In such a setting, keeping the learners passive may be the only survival tactic open to the teacher, especially when being observed, as any other approach has clear risks to discipline and control.

### 4.5.3 Teaching English as a subject

While it is clear that two-thirds of teachers used a support language where they could, many seemed to think that teaching English as a subject was an exception. In their extended paragraph responses, teachers stated that when English was the subject they preferred a monolingual methodology. Lesson observations showed this was largely born out as, of the 46 English lessons observed, 19 used no language other than English and a further 12 used a different language less than ten per cent of the time.

Therefore, the way one or more language is used is dependent more on the teacher and pupils than on the primary level or the subject or strand, with the exception of English as a subject.

## 4.6 Findings related to learners' use of languages outside school

In terms of the learner, the study looked at the languages refugee children used at home and had used in their previous school. The study also looked at their levels of English, especially aural English, and examined their experiences as refugees of learning English both in and outside the classroom. It was hoped that the study would show correlations between learners' language learning outcomes and their best practices and experiences. This section also reports on refugee children's experiences of and attitudes to their placement on arrival in Uganda.

#### 4.6.1 Home language and previous language experiences

In response to questions about home language, the 671 learners listed up to 51 different languages as their home language. However, across the three locations, 33 per cent gave Swahili as their home language and a further 22 per cent, all of them in Imvepi, specified Kakwa (see Chapter 4.3.4 and Figures 6 and 7).

In Kyangwali, the dominant language was Swahili at 47 per cent, with Kigegere at 11 per cent (see Chapter 4.3.4 and Figure 6). In Kampala the dominant home language was Swahili at 62 per cent (though many use it as one of several home languages), followed by Somali at 16 per cent and Luganda at 13.2 per cent (see Chapter 4.3.5).

When asked which language they had used as the Lol in their previous schools, English was the most common, with 57 per cent across the three locations saying they had learned in English, a majority of these in Imvepi. However, some learners, especially those now in Kampala, may have previously been in Uganda schools. Across the three locations, 33 per cent said they had used French in their previous school and six per cent said Swahili. (Again, these were mainly in Kyangwali, where 62 per cent of children had come from French-medium schools.) The remaining four per cent had used one of the many local languages.

This is very similar to findings from previous studies, although the percentage of English is higher than previously, and the fact that two languages cover such a high proportion of the home languages – over half the children – does offer some guidance for selecting languages that can be used as Lol or as support languages within a bilingual approach (see Chapter 4.3.7).

#### 4.6.2 Need for support teaching or tuition

There were questions in the learner and teacher questionnaires and in the focus group discussions concerning extra tuition, other language support and the need for a bridging course. One-third of all learners interviewed across the three locations said they had been given some form of tuition or language support. It wasn't always clear to what extent this was the usual subject tuition aimed at exams which all learners had to attend and to what extent it was specifically focused on the language needs of the refugees.

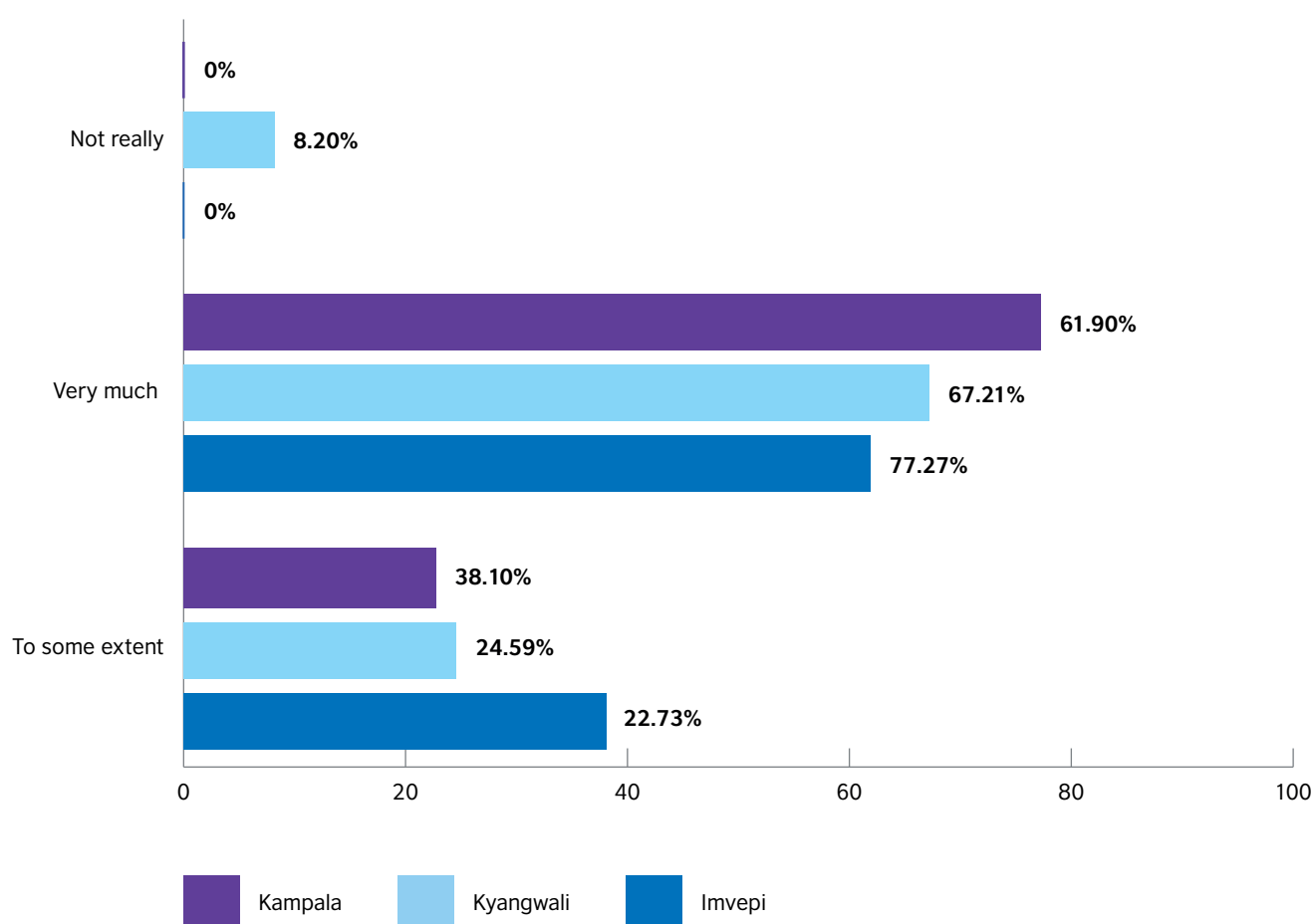
But, clearly, some schools did seem to be providing extra language-specific lessons for those with problems in English. Seventy-one per cent of learners said that the extra tuition was free. However, just under a third, all in Kampala, had to pay for the extra lessons. In addition to the paid tuition reported by 54 learners in Kampala, 42 stated they had received free tuition. In terms of success, 72 per cent of the learners who had received these lessons across the three locations said that they had been very useful, and only seven per cent, most of them in Kyangwali, considered them not very useful.

When we compare those who did have tuition and those who didn't, there is a clear correlation in Kyangwali and Imvepi between tuition and success in speaking English. In Imvepi, 40 per cent of P2 learners who had extra tuition in English scored 4 or 5 in spoken English, compared to only 17 per cent of those who didn't. Seventy-five per cent of P4 learners who had attended extra tuition scored 4 or 5 compared to 45 per cent of those who hadn't. However, P6 showed a negative correlation between tuition and spoken English: 100 per cent of those who hadn't attended scored 4 or 5, while only 47 per cent of those who had attended scored 4 or 5.



**Table 6:** Free tuition compared to paid tuition

	Imvepi	Kampala	Kyangwali	Total
Free	22	42	68	132
%	100	43.75	100	70.97
Paid	0	54	0	54
%	0	56.25	0	29.03
Total	22	96	68	186
%	100	100	100	100

**Figure 13:** Triangulation of free tuition against perceived success

Question: Was tuition helpful?

In Kyangwali, 13 per cent of learners in P2 scored 3 or more compared to eight per cent of those who didn't attend extra tuition. In P4, 38 per cent who attended extra tuition scored 4 or 5 compared to 32 per cent of those who didn't attend. In P6, 73 per cent of those who attended scored 4 or 5 against 46.6 per cent of those who didn't attend.

When we combine the scores for the two settlements and look at their reading scores, (Table 7), for example, 13 per cent of those in P2 who received tuition also scored 4 or 5 out of 5, whereas only five per cent of those who didn't have tuition scored these marks. Similar correlations can be seen for P4 (50 per cent compared to 40 per cent) and P6 (80 per cent compared to 56 per cent).

In contrast, there seemed to be a negative correlation among learners in Kampala at P2 level. Just 16.7 per cent of those who attended extra lessons scored 4 or 5 compared to 45 per cent of those who didn't attend. However, the correlation was positive for the higher classes. In P4, 80 per cent of those who had tuition scored 4 or 5 compared to 53 per cent who hadn't. For P6, 93 per cent of those who attended extra tuition scored 4 or 5 compared to 82 per cent of those who didn't attend.

It should be made clear that such correlations may not be significant, as other factors – such as selecting the weakest learners for tuition or learners being selected because their parents can pay for tuition – may cause the correlations rather than the effectiveness of tuition.

**Table 7:** Correlations between tuition and reading ability in Imvepi and Kyangwali

	Reading ability scores	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Tuition attendance							
P2	No	33	36	10	7	2	3	91
	%	36.26	39.56	10.99	7.69	2.2	3.3	100
	Yes	3	4	3	4	1	1	16
	%	18.75	25	18.75	25	6.25	6.25	100
	Reading ability scores	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Tuition attendance							
P4	No	5	7	20	13	23	9	77
	%	6.49	9.09	25.97	16.88	29.87	11.69	100
	Yes	3	2	4	5	4	10	28
	%	10.71	7.14	14.29	17.86	14.29	35.71	100
	Reading ability scores	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Tuition attendance							
P6	No	0	5	8	7	12	13	45
	%	0	11.11	17.78	15.56	26.67	28.89	100
	Yes	0	3	2	4	9	27	45
	%	0	6.67	4.44	8.89	20	60	100

#### 4.6.3 Learners support each other in class

In the lesson observations, enumerators noted that on many occasions within classes the children were supporting each other as they sat in informal language groups. Thus, the learner who had understood would explain to their partners or those in the group in their familiar language. It was difficult to record how often this happened without walking round the class and listening in on lots of conversations, which could have been disruptive. However, the enumerators recorded this happening in 54 out of 148 lessons, and, while the teacher wasn't specifically encouraging this, it was accepted as part of the lesson. Although difficult to evidence without being too intrusive in the lesson, it would seem that this was largely learner initiated but tolerated, even encouraged, by the teacher.

### 4.7 English language competences of the learners

#### 4.7.1 How their competences were assessed

Approximately 32 per cent of the learners said that they found English a problem and difficult. This percentage was confirmed by the actual performance in the listening, speaking and reading assessments used. The assessments were made by the enumerators and are intended as broad based and indicative of performance levels against which correlations of learning behaviour and background can be set. Enumerators used a set of five criteria to assess learners' oral/aural skills and a similarly broad set to assess their ability to read a few sentences of a P2-level text aloud. The emphasis of the speaking test was the learners' ability to understand the questions being asked during the interview. If the interview could be carried out in English, then a score of 4 or 5 was appropriate. Where learners' English was not strong enough for the interview, a more basic question and answer style was recommended so as to assess marks at the lower levels.

#### 4.7.2 Levels of oral/aural language competencies

Across the three locations only eight per cent of P2, compared to 37 per cent of P4 and 73 per cent of P6, were able to score 4 or 5 on speaking skills and so could clearly operate in English. Twenty-eight per cent of P2, seven per cent of P4 and six per cent of P6 were meanwhile ranked as 'unable to communicate in English, or only able to respond with little more than yes or no'.

A higher number, 50 per cent, of P2 learners were unable to read the passage 'apart from sounding out an occasional word'. However, 75 per cent of P6 and 37 per cent of P4 were sufficiently competent at reading a passage aloud and at understanding the questions being asked. The reading assessment did not attempt to assess comprehension as this had been assessed in the previous study. While these scores are reasonably encouraging, it still means that 26 per cent, even in P6, are not able to operate in English in any way. And although one is not surprised that 50 per cent of P2 could not read the passage, one has to remember that this is the end of P2 so the learners will be in P3 within two months.

These overall scores, however, hide a considerable disparity between performance in Kampala and the settlements, especially Kyangwali. For example, 87 per cent in P4 in Kampala were able to operate and be interviewed in English and scored 4 or 5. This was only true of 37 per cent in Kyangwali and 48 per cent in Imvepi. This difference, with twice as many in the top band in Kampala, is consistent throughout the assessment of different competences.

#### 4.8 Useful activities for improving English according to learners

In the interviews, 32 per cent of learners stated that they found learning in English difficult (see Chapter 4.7.1). Those that had learned English were asked what had helped them most. By far the greatest number (38 per cent) said that reading storybooks and textbooks had been the biggest help to them. This was followed by talking with friends or interacting with peers (15 per cent), and then attending lessons (13 per cent) and debating (13 per cent). It might be a little concerning to English teachers that they come so low down in the list of what helped children learn English.

It does, however, reinforce the need to make sure children have enough to read if they are to learn English as reading is seen as the most useful strategy. Using English with friends, including friends in higher classes, was also seen as a very useful strategy. If we look at the correlations between these strategies and the children's success in reading and speaking, we find a close correlation between those who selected practising English with friends and high scores in speaking and reading.

In Kampala, 82 per cent of them scored 4 or 5 and, in Kyangwali and Imvepi, 60 per cent achieved the same scores. There was also a strong positive correlation in Kampala between those who said reading was the greatest help and high scores – 64 per cent of learners scored 4 or 5 – with a lower but still positive correlation in Imvepi and Kyangwali. This may well be a reflection of the lack of reading materials in the settlements, meaning that while reading helped, the learners were not able to read very much. There is a negative correlation between those in the settlements who selected the teacher in the classroom as the most helpful factor, with 48 per cent scoring 0 or 1 in speaking. The numbers for this are small, which may not really be a reflection on the teacher but more on the learners who did not attempt any other strategies to strengthen their English. These correlations, and the selections made by learners, however, do emphasise the importance of using English outside the classroom if they are to improve, be it by reading, debating or speaking English in their friendship groups. It also underlines the need for reading materials to be available. Table 8 shows the availability of textbooks in the respective districts.

**Table 8:** Distribution of English language textbooks across districts and grades

District		Pre-school	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Kikuube	No. of schools	2	6	6	5	6	6	6	4
	Total no. of books	0	891	512	485	762	437	261	173
	Av. no. of books per school	0.0	148.5	85.3	97.0	127.0	72.8	43.5	43.3
Arua	No. of schools	1	9	9	9	8	5	5	4
	Total no. of books	7	356	343	386	472	203	217	229
	Av. no. of books per school	7.0	39.6	38.1	42.9	59.0	40.6	43.4	57.3
Kampala	No. of schools	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	3
	Total no. of books	40	559	348	416	434	520	875	319
	Av. no. of books per school	20.0	111.8	69.6	83.2	86.8	104.0	175.0	106.3

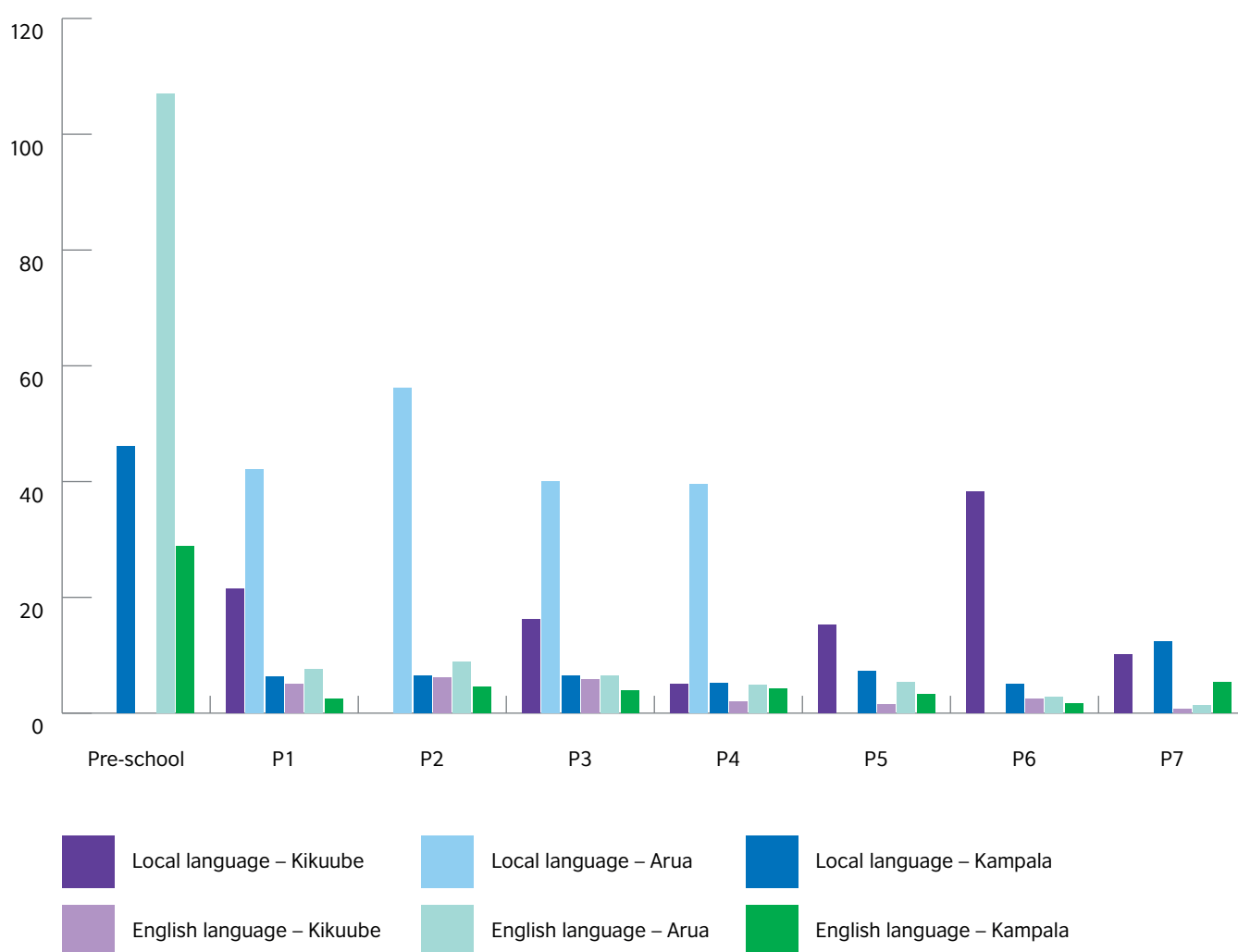
## 4.9 Admission procedures

### 4.9.1 Basis for the findings

The findings related to placement are most pertinent where children arrived recently and therefore the procedures used are fresh in their memory. This applies to children in the settlements but less so in Kampala, where children tend to have been in Uganda for longer and, in many cases, have only experienced schooling in Uganda as they were born here or arrived before they started school. Methods of placing new refugee children into a primary year were studied because of the frequent occurrence of overage learners among the refugees, especially in P1–3. Hicks and Maina (2018) reported on

the large numbers of overage children in the settlement schools and the dropout challenges that this could cause. The present study looks in more detail at both how new refugees in the settlements are placed and the attitudes of the learners and their parents to their placement using the learners' and their parents' answers to the questionnaires. This does not include parents in Kampala, because they are able to choose their schools.

**Figure 14:** Comparison of availability of English and local language textbooks



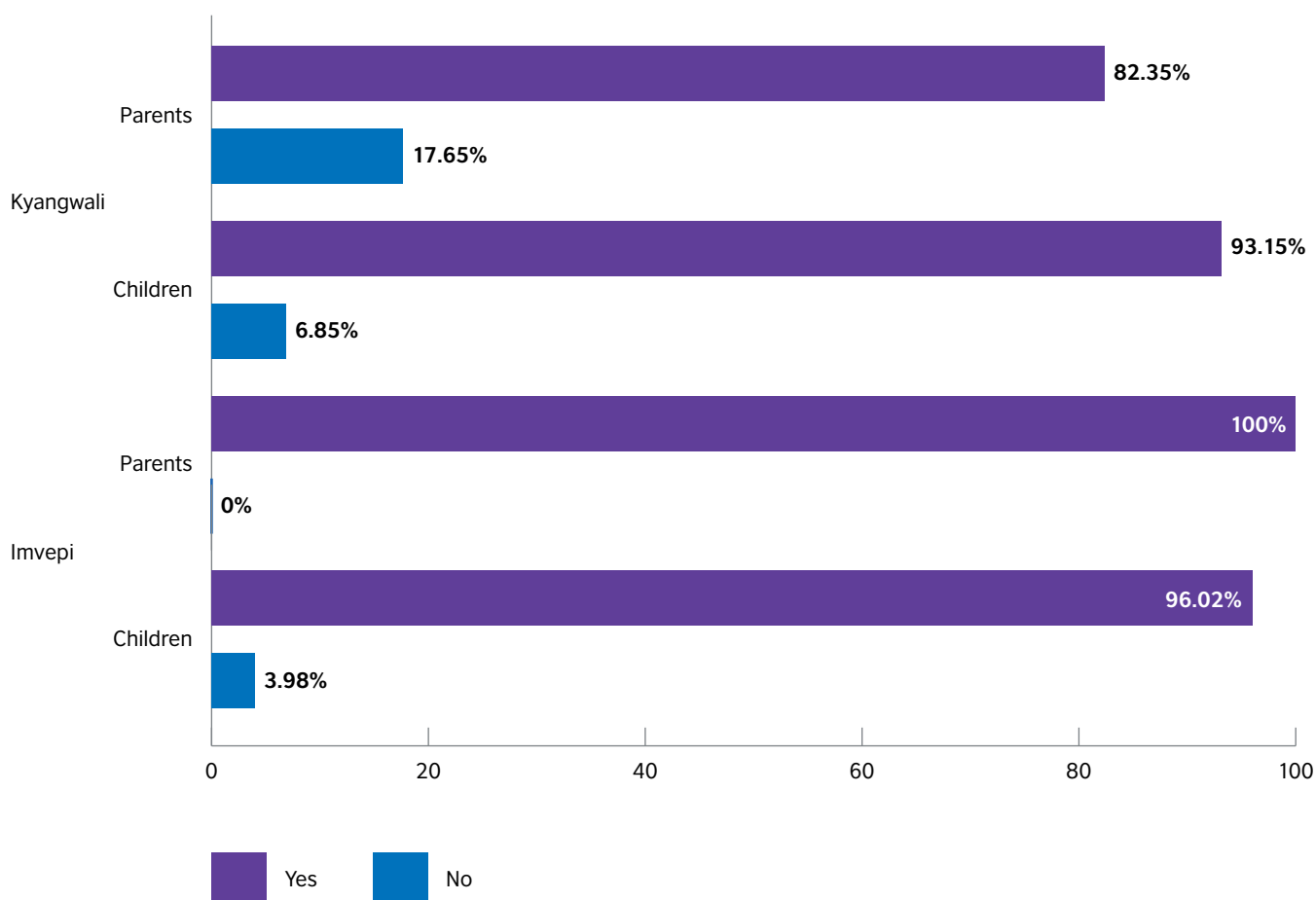
#### 4.9.2 Levels of satisfaction of children and parents with their primary grade placement

When the learners in their interviews, and parents in the focus group discussions, were asked if they were happy with the primary grade in which they had been placed, only 5.5 per cent of the children across both locations had any complaints. The parents, however, were less happy, especially those whose children had been placed in lower classes. In Kyangwali, 17.7 per cent of parents and seven per cent of children expressed dissatisfaction with their placement. Parents also expressed the view that there had been no discussion and the child's previous work had not been taken into account. A number of parents said that there should be extra tuition given to children when they arrive to help them with the language. In contrast, Imvepi parents were mainly content.

#### 4.9.3 Basis for deciding placement in primary grade

According to the children, a majority of placements (60 per cent) were based solely on a school decision or on a school decision that was backed up by an interview or a written test. This was confirmed by the parents. According to approximately 26 per cent of the children, their placement was based on their parents' decision or recommendation. A further 16 per cent said it was based on evidence from a previous school. However, this was not confirmed by the parents, as only six per cent (five out of 80) said that the school had used evidence from their children's previous school or listened to them as parents when deciding on their children's primary grade. One suspects that the parents' information on this issue is more reliable than the children's, as the latter would expect their parents to be in control of their future and interests.

**Figure 15:** Children's and their parents' satisfaction with their placement



Questions: Were you happy with the class you were put in? Were your children put in the correct classes when they first arrived?



**Table 9:** How learners' placements were decided\*

Placement method	District		Total
	Imvepi	Kyangwali	
Based on a written test in English	11	21	32
%	6.29	9.72	8.18
Based on grade in previous school	46	16	62
%	26.29	7.41	15.86
Based on interview in English	9	9	18
%	5.14	4.17	4.6
Based on both interview and written test	4	4	8
%	2.29	1.85	2.05
Can't remember	0	16	16
%	0	7.41	4.09
Interview used another language	4	6	10
%	2.29	2.78	2.56
Parental decision	45	52	97
%	25.71	24.07	24.81
School decision only	56	92	148
%	32	42.59	37.85
Total	175	216	391
%	100	100	100

\*This information is based on interviews with learners.

#### 4.9.4 Attitudes of schools to placement

In terms of the schools, most head teachers did not seem to consider that overage children were an issue, even though some 60 per cent of children interviewed were more than three years older than is standard for their grade. Only two head teachers actually said that they consider the child's age when placing them. Several heads did, however, say that overage children in classes sometimes leads to bullying and teasing, with both the older child bullying the younger and being teased by others because of their age. Head teachers also agreed that these children were less likely to complete their education. The same two head teachers as previously, said that they did consider placing overage children in their accelerated education programme (AEP), while others said that this was not possible because the children in question were too old for AEP.

#### 4.9.5 Number of overage refugee children

This study was conducted near the end of the academic year. Based on the assumption that a child at the end of P2 should be seven years old, those in P4 nine years old and those in P6 11 years old, 97 per cent of children interviewed in Kyangwali and Imvepi and 79 per cent of those interviewed in Kampala were overage. While being overage by a year would not perhaps be a major issue (and understandable after the disruption of becoming a refugee), as stated above, 60 per cent of children interviewed were at least three years overage. If the child is ten years or older when finishing P2, they will be at least 16 before they enter secondary school. The older the child at this stage, the more likely they are to drop out of school before finishing their education.

Table 10 is based on the assumption that these are the correct ages: P2 = seven years, P3 = eight years, P4 = nine years, P5 = ten years, P6 = 11 years and P7 = 12 years.

#### 4.10 Teaching assistants in the schools

Overall, half the schools employed teaching assistants. However, the role of the teaching assistant in Kampala and in the settlements were very different. Within the eight Kampala schools, four used teaching assistants. But in three of these the teaching assistants were all Ugandan nationals and were the traditional teacher support. Only one school in Kampala employed any teaching assistants of refugee origin, and from the lesson observations no teaching assistants in any schools played a role in support of language and they used only English in the lessons observed.

In the settlement schools, 38 teaching assistants of refugee origin and 13 Ugandan nationals were employed according to the school statistics. Out of the 16 schools, eight had employed teaching assistants. One of the schools observed employed ten teaching assistants and they were very focused on language support and were used to translate as necessary. This had been very much at the initiative of the head teacher.

Out of a total of 144 lessons, teaching assistants were observed in 23 lessons, of which 15 were in the settlements. In eight of these lessons the teaching assistant was observed using a support language other than English to help with the learning.

Therefore, it would appear that the use of teaching assistants is not widespread, and where they are being used, only a few are providing any language support other than in English. Only one primary school recognised the value that teaching assistants could have in helping children in their own language if they did not understand English.

**Table 10:** Overage learners in the settlement schools

Imvepi					Kyangwali				Kampala			
Grade	Overage	Right age	Underage	Total	Overage	Right age	Underage	Total	Overage	Right age	Underage	Total
P2	53	0	5	58	78	2	1	81	52	3	1	56
%	91.38	0	8.62	100	96.3	2.47	1.23	100	92.86	5.36	1.79	100
P3	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	10	1	4	15
%	100	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	66.67	6.67	26.67	100
P4	66	0	0	66	80	0	0	80	67	15	3	85
%	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	100	78.82	17.65	3.53	100
P5	11	0	0	11	6	0	0	6	1	0	0	1
%	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	100
P6	35	0	1	36	64	3	2	69	53	5	4	62
%	97.22	0	2.78	100	92.75	4.35	2.9	100	85.48	8.06	6.45	100
P7									1	0	2	3
%									100	0	0	100
Total	169	0	6	175	228	5	3	236	184	24	13	221
%	96.57	0	3.43	100	96.61	2.12	1.27	100	83.26	10.86	5.88	100





# Chapter 5:

## Findings from 2018 compared with these findings

To avoid repeating the details of Hicks and Maina (2018) or the same data collection, Table 11 summarises the main findings of that study and confirms the extent to which

those findings have been confirmed by this new study and where any changes or adaptations were noticed.

**Table 11:** Comparing 2018 and 2019 research findings

Main findings of 2018	Comparison with findings of 2019
<b>Classroom overcrowding:</b> Class sizes of up to or over 300 with an average of 100 per class.	Very similar average class size of 101, with 55 classes over 100 but fewer classes with more than 150. None over 150 in Kampala. There were four classes with 300+ in one school and a further seven with 200+ – all in settlement schools.
<b>Variety of languages</b> used by the children, with 19 languages used by significant numbers of children.	Similar complexity with up to 51 different home languages recorded by learners, but both the settlements and individual schools have greater homogeneity than suggested in earlier studies (see Table 5).
<b>Monolingual lessons</b> , with over 50 per cent of lessons using only English. Hicks and Maina (2018) particularly highlighted this practice and reported that many teachers emphasised that one should not mix languages.	These findings are more nuanced with the following attitudes emerging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a greater acceptance of multilingual approaches by teachers and stakeholders than in 2018</li> <li>• teachers are aware of their own lack of skills in new refugees' languages and some wish to learn the refugee languages</li> <li>• many teachers believe English as a subject should be monolingual but subject lessons should be bi- or multilingual.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher-centred approaches to lessons:</b> In most lessons the teacher dominated, with teacher talk and questions and answers as the main techniques.	Very little change in this area, but specific examples of best practice recorded included self-help between learners and learners working independently more often.
<b>Overage children</b> in all schools partly caused by placement procedures, with refugee children on average three years older than they should be for their class.	No real change on this, with approximately 60 per cent of refugee learners more than three years older than they should be for their class and several 17-year-old learners in P2, which is ten years older than the correct age for the class. However, more strategies and best practice examples are being used to address this, with two head teachers recorded as aware of the dangers of children being overage.
<b>Teaching assistants</b> doing excellent work but working as teachers and not language assistants.	As before, but with few having a role in language support. In fact, few see this as their role, especially in Kampala.

# Chapter 6:

## Conclusions related to Kampala – urban refugees

Kampala is clearly different from the schools in the settlements in many ways. As a result, and because exposure to English in the urban areas is very different and more extensive than in the rural areas, the study instruments were adapted with some additional questions about exposure to such things as television and films. The main findings that relate to refugees in Kampala have largely been described under the general headings in Chapter 4 which include and compare them with the same findings related to those in the settlements. However, it would be very unwise to generate conclusions about refugee children in urban areas based on findings from the settlements. Therefore, this chapter attempts to separate the conclusions that are specific to Kampala so that recommendations that relate to urban refugees can also be separated.

The differences between urban refugees and those in the settlements are many. Some arise from government policy and others from the very reasons why these refugees chose to settle in an urban area rather than going to the settlements where they would be given assistance by UNHCR. Some of the most important differences are set out below.

### 6.1 Government policy and economic status

A crucial policy decision made by the government is that those registered as refugees in Kampala must be able to sustain themselves economically and will not be offered any welfare assistance. If they are not self-sufficient they should move to a settlement where they can receive assistance. This has several implications. It means that children of urban refugees, on average, come from relatively better off families and in some cases are clearly well off. This means many can afford learning materials and have access to tuition. In addition, families may wish to hide their refugee status, especially if not self-sufficient, for fear of having to return to a settlement. As a result, although on average they are better off than those in the settlement, a few will be desperately poor and hiding the fact that they are refugees. This may have affected our sampling of children as the least well-off urban refugee children may be hiding their refugee status.

### 6.2 Length of stay

Families, and therefore children, who have settled in Kampala may on average have been in Uganda longer than those in the settlements. The learners interviewed in Kampala had been in Uganda on average for 6.5 years and for 30 per cent of them their first school was a Ugandan school, while those in Imvepi had on average been there for three years and had in most cases started schooling in their country of origin. However, a surprisingly large number of those in Kyangwali had been in Uganda for almost as long as those in Kampala.

**Table 12:** Average number of years refugee learners had been in Uganda

	Average number of years
Kampala	6.49
Imvepi	2.96
Kyangwali	6.30

### 6.3 Numbers of refugees within a school

Whereas in settlements the refugees were in the majority, often a very big majority, in their schools and their class, in Kampala they were almost always in the minority. Old Kampala is the only school that had more refugees than nationals and only marginally at 53 per cent. Several schools in our sample had ten per cent or lower. Police School recorded only three per cent of its pupils as refugees.

## 6.4 Acceptance of refugees within the schools

There was also some evidence, mainly anecdotal and from informal conversations, of greater resistance and more antagonism between refugees and the host community in Kampala than in the settlements. One head teacher complained when interviewed that the refugees would fight in class. This tentative conclusion is also based on comments from other teachers such as:

- '[the national group] are always so aggressive'
- '[...] can't be disciplined'
- 'we need advice on how to help such traumatised children'.

This attitude, which was not reflected in the settlements, would reduce the ability and willingness of refugees and nationals to learn each other's languages. It would also lead to them having fewer opportunities to learn through friendships and might also affect how some teachers look on them.

## 6.5 Language levels among urban refugees

All the above factors affect refugees' language levels and use of familiar languages. Many could speak Swahili but had also learned Luganda. A large number were able to speak in Luganda and the enumerators were able to interview them in Luganda. Twenty-five out of 78 learners used Luganda as well as or instead of English in the interviews (see Chapter 4.3.5). In the lessons observed, the enumerators noted that Luganda was the only language other than English that they observed in use as a support language.

As neither the Hicks and Maina (2018) nor the Uwezo (2018) assessments had looked at the basic competences of the refugee children in Kampala, a test similar to that in Hicks and Maina was administered to the children selected for interview in Kampala. It consisted of children identifying five letter sounds, sounding out five words and then reading five sentences silently in the form of short questions and answering them to show comprehension. The reading scores at the letter, word and sentence levels were considerably better than those in the settlement schools in Arua, Yumbe and Isingiru in 2018. The following

results are from those learners who were interviewed and therefore consist of an equal mix of P2, P4 and P6 learners.

Comprehension was particularly strong, with all but eight out of 78 (90 per cent) able to understand and respond in writing to at least five of six written questions. Sixty-seven per cent of learners interviewed in Kampala were also able to recognise five or six letters, and 87 per cent were able to recognise five or six words. This is in comparison with 15 per cent and 34 per cent who could perform the same exercises in the settlement schools in 2018. While this still leaves just over half who have not acquired phonic knowledge, it is a much healthier picture than in the settlement schools. It also mirrors the results reported earlier in terms of oral/aural skills (see Chapter 4.7.2), i.e. refugee learners in Kampala overall are significantly outperforming the refugee children in the settlements. They are also outperforming the national average across Uganda outside Kampala. Uwezo (2018) found that 50 per cent of learners at P4 level were able to recognise a certain number of words compared to the 87 per cent of refugees in Kampala recorded across P2, P4 and P6 in 2019.

There will be many causal factors for these higher learning outcomes, including the refugee learners being more exposed to English, having a wider range of opportunities for improvement, better access to learning resources and better chances of tuition. When asked what had most helped them learn English, the most frequent answer was reading, with 29 saying this was how they learned English.

However, during interviews with the head teachers and teachers, and when completing the questionnaires, they all specified language and lack of communication as the biggest problem when refugees arrive in the school. They also stated that they are giving help through tuition offered by the schools, but mainly at a fee.

Therefore, we can conclude that language remains a challenge, especially in the first year and is also a reason for overage learners and for dropping out. However, many do seem to overcome this, and we were given examples of very successful refugee children who had been promoted rapidly through the classes once they had learned the language and, in two schools, had become head prefects or head boys.



## 6.6 Recommendations specific to urban refugees

While many of the recommendations given in Chapter 8 apply equally to those in Kampala, two conditions are very different. First, there seems very little likelihood of being able to provide any refugee languages as support languages within the formal schools when Luganda is the local language most often used because the refugee children are always a minority and often a very small linguistic minority. They will therefore need to accept an English-medium, often monolingual classroom.

However, because Kampala is a large capital, the total number of refugees may be small in number in specific schools but form a considerable number across a cluster. In addition, there are a very large number of out-of-school urban refugees. These factors mean that the use of a bridging course for refugee children is both logistically easier than in the settlements as the numbers are large and can be combined with a drive to get out-of-school refugee children back into school. A bridging course for both new refugee children and out-of-school children is even more essential than in the settlements as it is far more difficult to provide support languages within the schools. Therefore, a bridging course such as that recommended by Trudell et al. (2019) or that which is already being implemented by Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID) is the single most important strategy for helping urban refugee children get into school at an age-appropriate level.

Alongside this strategy, consideration should be given to making the language tuition that is on offer free to refugee children in need.

In addition, the questionnaires showed that 90 per cent of the refugees watched television and films at least once a week. Therefore, opportunities exist to use either television or film to provide structured exposure and language activities through these media, especially for newly arriving refugees. While radio would also be a possible medium, only half the learners interviewed ever listened to the radio.



# Chapter 7: Conclusions

A main aim of this study was to identify examples of best practice. In this chapter, the implications of these findings are drawn together into conclusions under three headings: first, general conclusions and implications; second, those that provide guidance on the best practices already in operation in some schools, or at least being recommended by key stakeholders; and, finally, recommendations that can be drawn from the findings which have not yet been actioned or are not part of policy. The report concludes by reviewing the findings of Hicks and Maina (2018) and Trudell et al. (2019), and clarifying how they complement the present findings.

## 7.1 Conclusions based on teacher-related data

The findings suggest that most teachers are able to operate in English comfortably and without any significant errors that could affect learning in English (see Chapter 4.1). Therefore, if learning outcomes are not being achieved, the problem is not teachers – or at least not teachers' English. Few children would benefit if teachers' English language competence could be improved. There is, however, an argument for developing their classroom language and, in particular, their ability to explain, simplify and elicit responses. That said, that is true of teachers in many contexts and is based on the observations of the consultants rather than the evidence from the enumerators. It also requires an intervention at the intersection of language and teaching skills.

At least a third of teachers did not or could not use any of the refugees' languages and so could only use English in the classroom (see Chapter 4.2). As such, whatever their attitude, a third of teachers would not be able to use a bilingual approach even if they wanted to. In addition to not knowing any languages that they could use with refugee children, between a quarter and a third of teachers (depending on how the question was phrased) also stated that they did not approve of using any language other than English (see Chapter 4.4.2).

Only two out of 144 lessons used any language other than English as the LoI, but nearly two-thirds of the lessons observed made use of another language for at least ten per cent of the lesson, and one-third used a familiar language for a significant amount of the lesson. More than a third of lessons were, however, monolingual English lessons (see Chapter 4.3).

While more teachers and stakeholders now accept the value of using a bilingual approach when teaching than in the last study (Hicks & Maina, 2018), this has not affected the thinking of all. At best we can say that there has been a shift in thinking and bilingualism is becoming 'politically' correct. In several interviews, it was clear that the stakeholder was trying to work out the interviewer's attitude towards this question before committing to a statement.

In addition, many teachers have made great efforts to learn the refugee children's languages and others were keen to do so if given the opportunity. This is shown by the number of teachers able to speak Swahili (over a third), including many from Central Uganda who would not normally have learned Swahili. There were also a number of teachers who could speak Kakwa who would not normally have learned it (see Chapter 4.4.4). Teachers' commitment to and empathy with refugee learners is highly commendable and a human resource to be valued.

The teachers' methodology remains very teacher centred (see Chapter 4.5), with very few learners asking any questions. There were only two lessons in which more than two children asked a question. In addition, the greatest amount of teaching time is still taken up by children sitting and listening to the teacher, followed by children listening and repeating or copying from the blackboard. The lack of a common language is one driving force for this, as teachers avoid 'communication' when they have no language to communicate in, and if children cannot understand what has been said then at least they can memorise it. However, there was an increase in the amount of lesson time in which learners were working independently – at least 25 per cent in two-thirds of the lessons (see Chapter 4.5.2).

## 7.2 Conclusions based on the learner-related data

Overall, learners represented up to 51 different language groups (see Chapter 4.6.1). However, each settlement tended to have a significant proportion of one language. For example, 72 per cent of refugees in Imvepi spoke Kakwa as their home language; 47 per cent of refugees in Kyangwali spoke Swahili as their home language; and a further 20 to 30 per cent in each settlement were familiar with each language (see Chapter 4). In addition, language groups tended to cluster in certain schools, resulting in many schools within the settlements having a large proportion of a single language group among the refugee children. Therefore, in Kyangwali three schools were over 80 per cent with one language and seven schools could account for over 80 per cent covered by two languages (see Chapter 4). However, dominant languages can change over time, reflecting changes in where insecurity is in South Sudan or DRC.

Learners confirmed that over a third of lessons were only in English. Many confirmed that this was a challenge for them as learners, especially in P4 where over a third stated that it was a problem. This was confirmed by lesson observations, which showed that 37 per cent of all lessons were monolingual. A further 31 per cent used another language ten per cent of the time or less, so approximately 32 per cent could be described as using a bilingual approach. Although more local languages are used in the lower grades, monolingual classes are also common in P2 and bilingual classes in P6. In fact, in Kampala more lessons in P6 used two languages than in P2 (see Chapter 4.3.6).

English language subject classes are in most cases monolingual. It is many teachers' belief that an English lesson should use only English (see Chapter 4.4).

In Imvepi, 97 per cent of learners come from schools that officially used English as the LoI. The remainder used Kakwa. However, in Kyangwali, 62 per cent of all learners interviewed came from schools using French as the LoI and a further six per cent from schools using Swahili (see Chapter 4.6).

The language competencies of refugee children in Kampala was much higher than in the settlements. During the learner interviews, twice as many Kampala learners could operate in and respond to interview questions in English. The same was true of their reading abilities, with twice as many Kampala learners able to read words and sound out letters compared with refugee children in Isingiru, Yumbe or Arua (see Chapter 4.7.2).

## 7.3 Conclusions related to placement

Most placements were based on the schools' decisions and remained largely dependent on the children's ability in English. Only two out of 31 head and deputy head teachers stated that age was a consideration when placing children (see Chapter 4.9.4). According to the children, 60 per cent were based on the schools' decision. This is most likely on the low side, as only six per cent of parents said that they had any say in their child's placement. As a result:

- children, especially those from a French medium, find themselves being 'demoted' by several years and in a class with much younger children
- most children are overage – approximately 60 per cent are more than three years older than they should be for their primary grade; this, in turn, is likely to lead to early dropout
- many parents feel largely ignored in discussions about their children's education.

## 7.4 A summary of best practice drawn from discussions and data

### 7.4.1 Best practice according to learners

A high percentage of pupils stated that their teachers did use a second language for part of the time and this was useful. Others also stated that they would like the teacher to use a more familiar language for some of the lesson.

Those learners who said they no longer had any difficulty with English were asked to state what most helped them learn. Only a proportion answered the question, but those who did put a strong emphasis on reading and debating, with some 34 per cent specifying reading in some form and 13 per cent specifying debating as the most helpful activities in developing their English.

Others stated that interacting with friends had been useful. Therefore, encouraging friendships between children, setting up debate clubs or similar, and ensuring that children have plenty of opportunities to read English language materials are all examples of best practice.

As reported above, learners also specified that additional English lessons had been very useful. Therefore, tuition, already arranged by some schools, should be seen as an example of good practice. A clear correlation between additional language tuition and English competence was evidenced in the settlements, but less so in Kampala where under half the extra lessons were free.

Clear positive correlations between all these practices, e.g. using English with friends and reading, and higher scores in English were shown (see Chapter 4.8).

### 7.4.2 Best practice according to schools and teachers

- Teachers, as well as learners, specified remedial language tuition as a practice that they thought helped or would help.
- Three head teachers and several stakeholders identified the need for a bridging course prior to placement. YARID, Young African Refugees for Integral Development, in Kampala is an excellent example of good practice, as are the recommendations in Trudell et al. (2019).
- There has been a move towards the greater use of familiar languages and the need for an informed use of more than one language in the classroom to support learning. This has increasingly become part of best practice in certain schools.
- Two schools specified including age as a factor when considering the placement of new refugees to avoid overaged children in lower classes.
- Several schools practised 'rapid promotion', i.e. although they might place older children in P2, they would enable them to be promoted after a month or two – provided their language was improving. This, combined with language support, is a possible strategy to address both overage and lack of English.
- Two schools are at present using the AEP as a way of meeting older children's needs.
- Some efforts had been made in one school to help teachers learn the language of the refugees, and several teachers had on their own initiative started to learn Arabic and Swahili.
- At least one school had arranged for refugee teachers and national teachers to work together on schemes of work so that the refugee teacher could guide the national teacher on key words and concepts that would need to be translated and build these into their lessons. This is a simple idea but clearly a very useful way of addressing problematic language.

# Chapter 8:

## Recommendations based on data and observed best practice

### 8.1 Address placement and language problems

#### 8.1.1 Implement a bridging course as recommended by Trudell et al. (2019)

This should be aimed at all newly arrived refugee children who have not attended an English medium school and/or whose English is below the level required for their age cohort. It should also target out-of-school refugee children.

#### 8.1.2 Adapt the bridging materials for other refugee contexts

Materials once produced under the bridging initiative should be made available so that they can be adapted for use when tutoring children who are already at the schools or who enter the schools without being given the opportunity to attend a bridging course.

#### 8.1.3 Use accelerated promotion

Apply accelerated promotion to all children who cannot attend a bridging course and are therefore placed in a class below their age level due to their lack of English. Such children should be supported with language-specific tuition outside of class hours.

#### 8.1.4 Provide language tuition

Provide language tuition at the school level for refugee children whose subject knowledge and skills are at an appropriate level but who are being held back by their lack of English. Such tuition could use material adapted from the bridging course.

#### 8.1.5 Provide remedial or catch-up classes using TaRL

Using the TaRL model, provide remedial or catch-up classes at the school level for refugee children in upper primary classes who are assessed to be lacking basic literacy or numeracy skills.

#### 8.1.6 Ensure that all schools are aware of the recent relaxation of the rules around entry to AEPs

Encourage schools to allow overage children entry to these programmes where available, including to children who have not been out of school for two years but whose education has been disrupted by their refugee status.

### 8.2 Address language policy and language of instruction challenges

#### 8.2.1 Language of instruction

In schools where a single language is spoken by a majority of children and there are sufficient staff to teach in that language, use that language as the main LoI in pre-primary and Primary 1–3. However, encourage the use of supplementary languages to support children who speak minority languages.

Where no such majority language emerges, use English as the primary LoI – but in a flexible way that allows the use of other languages as support languages.

#### 8.2.2 Encourage schools and teachers to use a principled bi- or multilingual approach to teaching

This should include using more than one language if they have the necessary linguistic skills to do so across all subjects. While this approach is particularly relevant in pre-primary and lower primary, limited use of familiar languages remains appropriate in upper classes where there are learners who can benefit and whose understanding of English is limited.

Orientate teachers to the principles behind a bilingual approach to teaching language and subjects within multilingual contexts.

### 8.2.3 Strengthen the language competences of teachers in the refugee languages

This can be done in two ways:

- by pairing national teachers with refugee teachers or assistants to provide support, including language support and support in planning schemes of work and lessons
- by encouraging language classes for teachers so that they can learn the language of the refugees; such classes should have two aims:
  - » to acquire a basic level of the language so that teachers can talk to and empathise with individual children and make them feel included in the class and in lessons
  - » to be able to use the language to explain particular concepts and give classroom instructions.

### 8.3 Prepare the teachers

Expand teacher orientation prior to them being posted to refugee-impacted schools, and hold refresher training with teachers in the school. This should include:

- multilingual and bilingual approaches to teaching different subjects, including English
- an initial introduction to both the culture and languages of the refugees in the school in which they are to be posted
- support on developing teaching activities and approaches that are more learner centred, more deductive and less dependent on language and teacher talk
- advice on more activity-based approaches to teaching English through using the language
- support on teaching in large classes
- training on how to teach early-grade reading and writing.

### 8.4 Provide a rich language and literate environment

- Provide sufficient textbooks and reading resources in English at the right level so that all children have access to English language materials and are encouraged to read in English. This will involve considerable investment in materials but has already been planned in the Education Response Plan 2018 (see Chapter 2.4) to raise the present ratio of books to learners, especially in large schools in settlement areas.
- Develop reading buddies or small reading groups in school, supported by reading materials, so that such reading can be encouraged in and out of school.
- Make libraries accessible to all age groups with appropriate supervision and supported by suitable materials. They should be open outside class time if they are to be used appropriately.

### 8.5 A review of recommendations from Hicks and Maina (2018)

The recommendations made by Hicks and Maina (2018) remain relevant for this report, as the present findings have, in the main, only complemented and reinforced those findings. In particular, this report would like to re-emphasise the following:

#### 8.5.1 Language assistants

*Recommendation 9: Develop a cadre of lower-level language assistants.*

The need for such a cadre of support remains very high. Such lower-level language assistants would play a language and a psychosocial role but not be in a position to take over as teachers. The consultants were informed that at national level the Education in Emergency Working Group has agreed that teaching assistants should be community members rather than teachers. However, this does not yet seem to have affected their recruitment, and a more active approach, with some basic guidelines on training such community members, may be needed.

### 8.5.2 Increase the employment of teachers from the refugee community

*Recommendation 8: Accept teachers who are qualified in their own country but not in Uganda (or equivalence not yet validated) as temporary class teachers, and put in place systems to ensure further training or validation and equivalence of their qualifications in Uganda, possibly through observed teaching practice.*

This is a particular challenge with teachers from DRC, as their qualifications are very difficult to benchmark given that they come from a different education system.

### 8.5.3 Develop non-fiction bilingual readers

*Recommendation 6: Develop language and curriculum support learning materials.*

This should include non-fiction readers that can be used to fill gaps that exist between the Ugandan curriculum and the curriculums of the refugees' countries of origin.

### 8.5.4 Reduce class sizes

*Recommendation 10: Use the double shift system and temporary buildings.*

Reducing class sizes could be achieved by building more classrooms, as proposed in the ERP, and by expanding double shift systems as a short-term solution.





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