

# **Building Tomorrow Report**

*A working handbook for improving Uganda's rural primary schools*

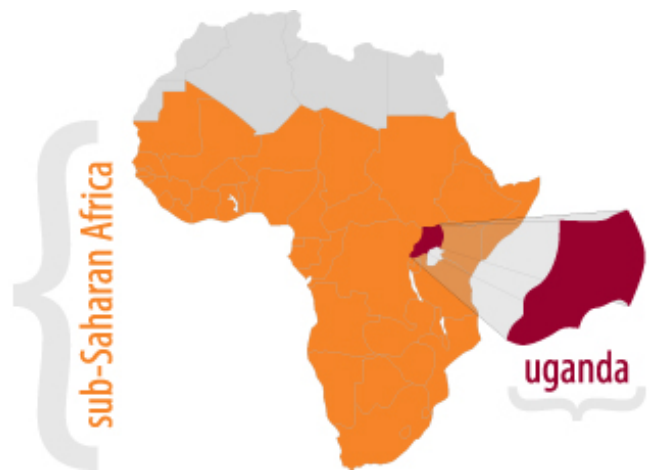
*Created through community member input*

- 1.) Introduction & Overview
- 2.) Definitions
- 3.) Presentation of Findings
- 4.) Summary of Issues
- 5.) Best Practices
- 6.) School Profiles
- 7.) Recommendations
- 8.) Appendices

*Control F to search for above keywords*

## Introduction

According to UNESCO, an estimated 31 million children lack access to primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> Thus, roughly 30% of children under the age of fifteen have no access to schooling. Building Tomorrow (BT) is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2006, to address the chronic lack of access to education in sub-Saharan Africa. Building Tomorrow works primarily in Uganda, a country in East Africa. In 2007, the Ugandan government launched an initiative to provide free universal primary education in an effort to achieve this Millennium Development goal by the target date of 2015. However, 2015 looms in our presence and Uganda lacks the infrastructure, teachers and classroom space to achieve universal primary education.



To date, Building Tomorrow has opened 15 primary schools in Uganda and has another 12 under construction. BT works with Uganda's local government to determine need, and then uses monetary donations to issue a challenge grant to partner communities in Uganda. BT will cover the cost of construction materials and skilled labor, in return for the community's promise to donate three acres of land and volunteer approximately 20,000 hours of unskilled labor. In partnership, Building Tomorrow and the local community build a ten-room academy that can educate 325 children from grades P1 to P7. According to an understanding with the government, Building Tomorrow academies are turned over to the Uganda Ministry of Education and become publicly funded schools. The government is expected to provide funding for furnishings, school materials, and teachers.

In 2011, Building Tomorrow made a commitment in partnership with the Clinton Global Initiative to construct 60 community-built, stakeholder-sustained academies and to develop the teaching capacity of 450 teachers by 2016. In order to reach this goal, BT is growing at a rapid pace.

Building Tomorrow's goal is not just to build schools, but also to provide quality education to its students. In order to ensure the quality of its schools, particularly as Building Tomorrow grows, monitoring and evaluation are critical, for they will allow BT to track its progress and ensure that it is meeting its objectives. In collaboration with Building Tomorrow, during the summer of 2014 three Notre Dame students and two students from the Uganda Martyrs University conducted an impact assessment of Building Tomorrow schools. We explored the success and sustainability of Building Tomorrow schools in comparison with other public and private

---

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://www.app.collinsindicate.com/uis-atlas-out-of-school-children/en-us>

schools. We sought to determine factors that contribute to the provision of quality education in Uganda's rural regions.

## **About this Report**

This document is intended to be a handbook of information, ideas, and best practices for success in Uganda's rural schools. The information presented in this document was gathered through a critical analysis of studies published on this topic and from site visits and interviews with schoolteachers, community leaders, and parents of six rural Ugandan primary schools.

All of the schools we visited expressed a desire for feedback. They wanted to learn what other schools were doing to address similar issues.

Building Tomorrow, particularly with the launch of its teachers fellow program, can share and promote best practices, both in their own schools and in surrounding schools, to help school leaders, teachers, and parents navigate many of the obstacles that exist in Uganda's rural primary schools and their communities.

## **Overview**

**This research project set out to answer the following questions:**

- 1.) What are the key aspects of the life of a child growing up in Uganda's rural communities in Africa that impact his or her schooling?
- 2.) What does a good school look like to a student, to a parent, and to a teacher?
- 3.) What factors contribute to student success in rural and/or underfunded schools?
- 4.) What factors contribute to the sustainability of a rural and/or underfunded school?
- 5.) What are the main areas of concern for local school staff and administrators?
- 6.) What kind of knowledge gaps exist?
- 7.) Where can feedback loops be established?

## Definitions

We determined from our field research in Uganda that there were varying definitions of the terms *success* and *sustainability* according to the parents, teachers, and students of the schools that we studied.

For this paper, we define *success* and *sustainability* as follows.

### **Success:**

- Student performance (English language level, exam scores, % of students repeating grades, availability of co-curricular activities)
- Supplementary academic programming (for example, USAID/Uganda school health and reading program, grassroots remedial programs)
- Leadership
- Infrastructure
- Community satisfaction
- Community engagement

### **Sustainability:**

- Teacher training
- Grassroots generated academic programming
- Grassroots improvements/additions/maintenance
- Community involvement/engagement
- Complementary funding
- Diversity of leadership (head teacher, SMC, community members)

From our literature reviews and interviews, we concluded that there were five broad factors to consider in analyzing the potential success and sustainability of the schools that we visited. These included the following:

### **Factors leading to school success and sustainability:**

- 1.) Community engagement (SMC)
- 2.) Parental decision-making (opportunity costs, paying tuition)
- 3.) Structure
- 4.) In-school operations (curriculum, teacher payment, co-curricular activities)
- 5.) Student appreciation (uniform, co-curricular activities)

## Overview of Schools

	BT Lutisi	Control Lutisi	BT Sentigi	BT Mpigi	Control Mpigi	BT Kyetabia
Grades	PP-P7	PP-P5	PP-	PP-P4	PP-P7	PP-P4
Total Enrollment	368	328	NA	NA	725	NA
Status	Coded	Coded	Private	Private	Coded	Private
School feeding?*	Inclusive school feeding	School feeding	Inclusive school feeding	Inclusive school feeding	School feeding	School feeding
Pre-Primary?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher plots?	Yes	Yes	No	In progress	Yes	Yes
Auto-pass?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Teacher Housing?	In progress	Inadequate	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	None
SMC Involvement?	With government	None	With parents, teachers, HM	With parents, teachers, HM	With govt (no interaction with parents)	NA
Plots for student funding/school profit	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Satisfied with quality of structure	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student motivators?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\*Inclusive school feeding means that every child received food at school even if their parents failed to make the payment to participate in the program, and these costs are absorbed by the school. School feeding means that these students who do not make the payment, do not receive food until the payment has made.

## Summary of Issues

*The following information was collected through interviews and focus groups with parents, teachers, head teachers, and school management committees from rural areas of Uganda. These are some of the primary challenges and needs brought to light in these conversations.*

### **Formal schooling fails to connect with the needs of rural communities**

In the rural communities we visited, there is a high opportunity cost to sending a child to school. Education is not necessarily viewed as a direct path to a job, perhaps due to the limited variety of jobs available in these rural areas or due to Uganda's high level of youth unemployment. To encourage parents to invest in their child's education, it is imperative that the schools teach knowledge and skills that are relevant to the community. For example, over 53% of the parents surveyed cited a desire for their children to learn handicrafts in school. Teaching handicrafts, farming, cooking, or business provides students tangible skills that can be applied in their communities, which makes education feel relevant to students and parents.

### **Need for quality teachers and for teacher support**

The parents we met expressed their concerns about the quality of teachers in their children's schools. In public schools, teachers are randomly assigned to a particular school, regardless of its location or their own experience or background. Teachers who come from more urban or well-off areas are sometimes disappointed by the living conditions or school environment. Consequently, they become demoralized, their performance in the classroom declines, and rates of teacher absenteeism increase. In some cases, this also leads to high teacher turnover. In focus groups with teachers and head teachers this issue was almost invariably discussed. Some teachers expressed their disappointment in the school's rural environment or the lack of parent engagement. Head teachers explained different methods they employed to motivate their teachers, including weekend stipends.

85% of the parents interviewed for this project stated that good teachers are the most important aspect of a school. In this area, where supplies are limited, teachers are by and large the primary resource for students. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers are motivated and dedicated to their positions and that a system is established to support them in carrying out their duties.

### **Poor government funding**

The limited amount of funding provided by the government to schools was a frequently cited issue. Moreover, teacher salaries and allocated school funds are often weeks, even months, late. The uncertainty of funding makes life difficult for teachers and head teachers in public schools.

### **Coded vs. non-coded schools**

Several Building Tomorrow schools opened under the expectation that they would become public schools, thus funded and staffed by the government, but have not yet been “coded” as public schools. Due to a teacher-hiring freeze by the Ugandan government since 2012, many Building Tomorrow schools currently operate as private schools. We noticed differing opinions on whether schools wanted to be coded or not. Some saw the poor funding received by government schools, lack of control over teachers, and meager conditions and thus preferred to remain privately funded. On the other hand, the private-public school model that Building Tomorrow now espouses seemed another good idea. These schools are considered government schools, and receive government funding, yet they charge minimal schools fees, which are used to hire additional teachers and buy supplies. The disadvantage to this, however, is that these schools do not have as much control over the teacher hiring (and firing) process.

### **School perception**

Teacher and student motivation, as well as parent engagement in schools, seemed to be significantly influenced by the community’s perception of the school. As a result, those already poorly performing schools seemed to face a downward sloping trajectory, as parents and community members were largely disengaged and unwilling to contribute to the school. Further, parents with the means would move their students to another local private or religious school.

### **The need to familiarize parents with the importance of education and their role in their child’s education**

In focus groups with teachers, and in interviews with parents, it was evident that parent support is critical to a child’s success in school. However, as many of the parents interviewed had received little to no formal education themselves, it became clear that educating parents on the importance of education and the proper materials and time that a child needs at home is critical to student success.

### **Conditions of the school and the students’ home lives reduce students’ readiness to learn**

After dark, children need some sort of light to complete their homework. But during the hours of daylight, children are often needed to work in the fields or help their parents with chores at home. It is difficult for a parent, who has little education and who faces the need to support their family, to understand the time and resources needed for a student to complete his or her schoolwork outside of school. Thus, Building Tomorrow places a strong emphasis on sensitizing parents to these issues. Building Tomorrow staff and head teachers cited how important this is to the success of their schools.

### **English is a major barrier to student performance on end-of-year exams**

In Uganda, it is expected that schools operate in English. However, the children in these rural areas only begin to learn English when they enter school, and the parents that we met spoke little to no English. As all grade completion exams, created by the Ugandan Ministry of Education, are in English, competency in English is absolutely critical to a

child's ability to pass a grade level. This was a significant barrier to student success in these schools. During the first years of schooling, it was clear that class is conducted in a mix of English and the local language. Further, the level of English amongst upper level primary school students was elementary in nearly all of the schools that we visited.



## **Best Practices**

*The following are “best practices” in school management, programming, and policy that we gathered from interviews and focus groups with head teachers, teachers, and school management committees from Building Tomorrow schools, and the other public and private schools that we visited. Many of these initiatives were grassroots, created by the school community to address the problems that they witnessed.*

*We gathered this information because head teachers and teachers demonstrated an interest in learning about the ways that other schools addressed the same problems that they face. The following are the ideas of the teachers, head teachers, school management committees, and Building Tomorrow staff with whom we met.*

## **School Management**

### **Developing SMC connection with parents**

The effectiveness, role, and level of involvement of the SMC varied among the schools we visited. Some School Management Committees focused on government advocacy and seeking sources of funding for school improvement, while others focused on the relationship between the school and community members. We observed that one of the best contributions that the SMC can make is acting as an advocate of the school, increasing parent and school communication, and routinely visiting the schools to maintain teacher accountability and to help resolve problems that may arise. They also had a strong impact when they facilitated the process of sensitizing parents to the importance of education and the need for contributing school fees, engaging with the school, and prioritizing their child’s education in their day-to-day routine.

### **Clear coordination/organization of SMC**

The size and hierarchy varied in the different school management committees. It is important that the SMC has a clear schedule of their meetings and school visits. It is also important that they understand their role in the school community and are able to organize their leadership accordingly to meet those needs.

### **Teacher union**

The head teachers and teachers at several schools suggested the creation of a teachers union, through which they could discuss best practices, share ideas, and organize events or competitions between schools.

### **Teacher housing**

Teacher housing was an issue discussed in every school that we visited. Teacher housing is critical because it prevents teachers from having to travel long distances to school, which results in greater teacher absenteeism and teacher tardiness.

### **Government advocacy**

One of the schools we visited had recruited retired government leaders to serve on their SMC to help navigate local politics and advocate to receive timely and adequate government funding.

### **Collaborative lesson planning**

The teacher interviews at one of the schools explained that they work together and share ideas when creating their lesson plans. They attributed part of this collaboration to living at the school in teacher housing and thus being able to work together in this way.

### **James Foundation (Mpigi), teacher training**

One school noted that they work with the James Foundation, a nonprofit that provides teacher training. This program seemed to be a source of motivation for the teachers, as well as a method to gain new skills and develop new ideas.

### **STAR training**

Head teachers and teachers who had participated in teacher training through STAR spoke very highly of this program. It seemed to serve as a source of information, ideas, and inspiration for teachers.

## ***School Programming***

### **Student lunches**

A school feeding program was present in all of the schools we visited. Some schools allowed students to eat regardless of whether or not the student paid the lunch fee (we called this an inclusive school feeding program). Other schools only allowed those students who paid the lunch fee to benefit (we refer to this as an exclusive school feeding program). School lunches were an important factor for parents sending their child to school. Further, teachers remarked that the students who ate lunch were often better focused and better behaved.

### **Student breakfast**

A few of the schools also offered school breakfast, in addition to student lunches. As with student lunches, schools had differing policies as to whether these programs were inclusive or exclusive based on students paying the fee. School breakfast had many of the same results as student lunches: increased focus and improved behavior of students, attractiveness to parents, and improved nutrition.

### **PTA meetings at least once per term**

These meetings increased parent and teacher communication and provided another opportunity for parents to visit the school. The school management committees often organized these meetings.

**Open House days**

Parents were able to observe their child and teacher in the classroom. Some of the schools also had demonstrations of sports, music and student crafts.

**Compulsory hands-on practices—arts and crafts**

Some of the students in these rural schools will earn money later in life by making handicrafts, or at the very least will need these skills for use in their own homes. Lessons in handicrafts were particularly appealing to parents, and the schools funded these lessons by selling the student crafts.

**Technology innovation**

We observed a teacher using his smart phone to record students reading and then playing the recordings on a small television, which was donated to the school and was powered by a generator. This allowed students the opportunity to hear themselves read and thus make adjustments in their pronunciation. The head teacher at this school noted that this innovation had greatly improved literacy rates in the school.

**Writing clubs**

Writing clubs enhance the English level of students, encourage their creativity, and give students the opportunity to develop skills critical to their academic success.

**School government**

The creation of a student government in schools develops student leadership skills and, because students are selected for these positions due to their high achievement and good behavior, it gives students an incentive to perform in school. It was also apparent that students had a lot of pride in their leadership positions.

**School Family Initiative**

This program, created by Uganda's Ministry of Education, assigns each student a teacher who acts as a system of support for the child, emotionally and materially if necessary. At the Building Tomorrow Academy of Lutisi the teachers meet with an assigned group of students, from all levels of the school, once per week. The familial atmosphere this creates is important for the growth and development of the school's children, particularly those who confront emotional challenges at home.

**Gardens used to raise crops for school feeding**

School gardens served multiple purposes. They were also a positive indicator of a school's management, organization, and sustainability. Maximizing the use of school land by planting crops allows schools to provide food for the school feeding program, and if not eaten, to sell the crops to provide funds for the feeding program or other areas needing financial assistance.

**Teacher garden plots**

In one of the schools the teachers had a portion of this garden for themselves, which provided a much-needed second income and food source, particularly for public school teachers when their salary was paid late. These plots are also an incentive for them to continue working at the school. It is important to note that in order for teacher plots to be successful, they need to be paired with teacher housing so that teachers can adequately take care of their crops.

### **Field trip incentive**

One of the schools had planned a trip to the Entebbe Zoo. Though this may be difficult considering the financial constraints of each school, it was an added incentive for students to do well and something to look forward to.

### **Natural resources to make school supplies**

One of the schools that we visited demonstrated their resourcefulness in using natural materials for art projects and as teaching visual aids.

### **Debates between schools**

Debates held between schools helped foster healthy competition and improved students' verbal communication skills according to teachers.

### **Sports between schools**

Competitive sports games played between schools helps foster school pride, unity, and camaraderie according to teachers and head teachers. Furthermore, these games involve the larger community and thus encourage greater community engagement.

### **Health programming (PIASCY)**

Most schools that we visited clearly had active health education programs. We were particularly impressed by the USAID program, the Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth (PIASCY) . One head teacher explained to us that AIDS touches the lives of many of the students in her school, thus health education, particularly related to AIDS is imperative.

## ***School Policy***

### **Tuition fees paid in provision of foodstuffs**

Some schools allowed parents to pay portions of their school fees in foodstuffs, which was contributed to the school-feeding program. Though a school cannot survive by accepting foodstuffs alone as school fees, it helped parents going through a difficult time to keep their child in school.

### **English at pre-primary level**

The local language of the region is the language children learn at home; English is only learned once children begin school. In fact, the parents and members of the school management committees with whom we met spoke little to no English. However,

English is the country's official language, thus all grade completion exams are carried out in English. While the schools aim to carry out all classes from P1 entirely in English, this seemed a nearly impossible task from our point of view. We did note that those schools that began teaching English the pre-primary level were much more confident in their students' English language level.

### **Bringing parents to school if children do not attend**

If a child is regularly absent from school, some of the teachers shared that they will call in the parent to have a conversation about their child's absenteeism. They discuss the barriers preventing the child from attending school and work together to make it possible for the child to attend school. This was an important indicator of strong parent and teacher communication and problem solving skills.

### **Written examinations as practice for primary leaving examinations**

In class, students copy what the teacher writes on the board into a composition book and then complete the assignment from there. Schools noted that giving students a written copy of a practice examination, rather than having them copy it from the board, improved student test scores. When the actual end-of-term examination came, students were more comfortable and better prepared.

### **Remedial classes**

Many of the schools offered remedial classes in the morning before class for the upper levels, as extra practice leading up to exams. Teachers explained that such remedial programs had a significant impact on their students' progress.

### **No automatic promotion**

Contrary to government policy, which mandates automatic promotion, none of the schools we interviewed had an automatic promotion policy. If a child did not pass his or her examinations, they repeated the class. Parents and teachers were overwhelmingly in support of this policy.

### **Addition of pre-primary**

According to government policy, a pre-primary class is not part of a standard primary school, but all of the schools that we visited offered a preprimary class. These students were better prepared beginning in P1 after being introduced to and acquiring baseline skills in reading, writing, and English. These schools are able to navigate the government policy by including these pre-primary enrollment numbers in the P1 enrollment numbers.

### **Building up the schools extending from P1 to P4**

When opening a new school, particularly one that sets high standards like a Building Tomorrow Academy, first launching the pre-K through P3 levels and then continuing to add the P4, P5, and P6 levels as this first set of students age proved an effective policy. This way the school can secure a foundation before continuing its expansion.

## Promise of secondary school funding for early grades

A secondary school education is often difficult to obtain for these students because of the high cost of tuition. The promise of scholarships is an effective motivator for students to perform well on their exams. Both parents and teachers in a few Building Tomorrow schools cited that they were promised that their students would receive secondary school scholarships if they received a first grade on the end of year exams. While this was a clear motivation for them, these scholarships did not come through.

## Indicators

*The following chart displays the factors that we determined to affect the success or sustainability of the rural primary schools that we visited. Influencing factors are listed under the heading “Indicator.” We then provide an example of the effect of this indicator in both Building Tomorrow schools and control schools. Finally, we present the effects of this indicator on various aspects of school performance, listed under “Trends.” When a trend is marked by a “+,” the indicator yielded an increase in the listed trend. When the indicator led to a decrease in the listed trend it is marked by a “-.” For example, as seen in the first box, parent involvement led to increased student performance and decreased student absenteeism.*

Indicator	BT Schools	Control Schools	Trends
Parent involvement	In some schools, when students were absent or lacked proper class materials, children were sent home and asked to bring their parents back to meet and discuss with their teacher. During focus groups, teachers cited this as critical to improving the child's attendance and school performance.	The teachers at the Lutisi control school expressed their deep regret that parents were not involved at the school. It seemed that parent involvement would not just improve student performance, but also improve teacher performance by serving as a source of motivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student performance +</li> <li>- Student absenteeism -</li> <li>- School fees paid on time +</li> <li>- Teacher motivation/satisfaction +</li> <li>- More time on school work +</li> <li>- Healthy relationship with child +</li> </ul>
School feeding program	For students that were unable to afford the school feeding program, the BT Academy of Lutisi permitted families to contribute food supplies rather than paying the meal fee.	In all the control schools that we visited, those students who did not pay for school meals did not benefit from the school-feeding program. This was a particular hindrance to student performance, according	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance +</li> <li>- Performance/Attention in class +</li> <li>- Increases school fees –</li> <li>- Student health +</li> </ul>

		to teachers, because those students would be very distracted after lunchtime.	
Teacher incentives (Food plots, housing, pay, food) *Note: not based on performance	The BT Academy of Mpigi independently raised the money to construct teacher housing. Further, the BT Academy of Lutisi had built the foundations for teacher housing, but could not raise the funds to complete them. This is their primary goal for school expansion.	The Lutisi control school had teacher housing, but it was decrepit, and thus not an incentive for teachers but a deterrent.	- Absenteeism – - Teacher effort + - Student performance + - Job satisfaction +
Pre-primary <i>Baby Class</i> <i>Middle Class</i> <i>Top Class</i>	The BT Academy of Mpigi taught the pre-primary level in English, and we noticed a significant difference in the students' ability to speak English. Parents also consistently answered that one of the indicators of a successful education is a child's ability to speak English.	At the Lutisi control school the pre-primary class was a later addition to the school. But many families were reportedly not paying the fees needed to pay a teacher for the pre-primary level.	- Student performance in later years + - Variation: if English and mother tongue instruction, English proficiency + - Enrollment + - Socialization +
School image	The excitement surrounding the arrival of a Building Tomorrow school to a community, the building's quality, and the children's school uniforms were seen as particular motivators for parents to send their children to school and for children to perform in school, according to community members of the BT Academy of Mpigi.	The Lutisi control school reported that they were under capacity. That was not seen as a benefit due to low student-teacher ratios, but as an embarrassment because parents were sending their children to other nonprofit or religious schools in the area.	- Attendance + - Effort + - Respect in class + - School unity + - Self-esteem + - School fees + - Attractiveness of school in community +
Tuition Fees	All BT schools required students to pay tuition/school fees, regardless of whether or not they are also funded by the government. These minimal fees to supplement what the government provides allow the academies to hire	Both control schools only charged for the school feeding program, and occasionally asked for additional funding from parents for specific projects.	- Exclusivity + - Parent involvement + - Teacher motivator + - Resources + - Incentive to send students to school + - Transparency in resource management +

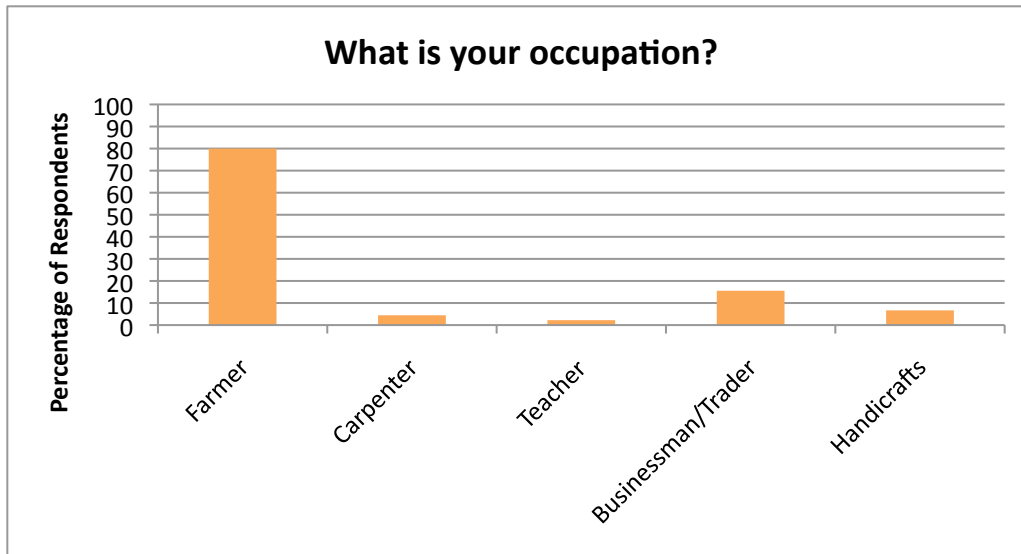
	more teachers, purchase more supplies, and encourage parents to be more invested in their children's education.		
Value of education in the community	Many of the parents we met hoped that their children would continue on to college. It was clear that where parents believed that education would lead to better employment opportunities, parents were more involved in their child's education and their child's school.	In one of the public schools that we visited, the teachers expressed utter disappointment that parents did not value education and explained the negative effects this has on their classrooms, such as student absenteeism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent involvement +</li> <li>- Student motivation +</li> <li>- Student &amp; teacher attendance +</li> <li>- Student time spent on school work +</li> <li>- Parents' willingness to contribute to the school +</li> <li>- Accountability of the school to the community +</li> <li>- Teacher motivation +</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
Performing school in proximity	BT schools neighbored by other performing schools that had debate or other competition teams would use these rivalries to motivate students to work harder.	There was low morale in the Lutisi control school because students were leaving to attend higher performing and better-funded schools that have support from outside organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance –</li> <li>- Creates competition +</li> <li>- Creates rivalry –</li> <li>- Increases level of expectation for education +</li> </ul>
Scholastic materials (teacher guidebooks, textbooks, student exercise books, written exams, classroom posters, technology)	The teachers at the BT Academy of Mpigi explained that they work together to create lesson plans and use natural resources to create materials for the classrooms.	It was evident in the control schools that we visited, particularly in Lutisi, that they had few resources for school materials. The feel of these schools was unwelcoming compared to the BT schools that we visited, as a result of bare walls and empty classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance on exams +</li> <li>- Attentiveness in class –</li> <li>- Homework completion +</li> <li>- Connection between home and school +</li> <li>- Student focus +</li> <li>- Student motivator +</li> </ul>
Co-curriculars (Music, dance and drama, handicrafts, scouting, sports, debate, writing)	At the BT Academy of Kyeitabya, we were introduced to a prefect who served on the student government. The student government provides leadership opportunities for students, and it is a source of motivation because it is an	The innovative extracurricular activities at some BT schools clearly distinguished them from non-BT schools. At most of the control schools we visited parents desired extracurricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student attendance +</li> <li>- Student motivation +</li> <li>- Places value on other talents +</li> <li>- Skill development for income +</li> <li>- Socialization +</li> <li>- Class time –</li> </ul>



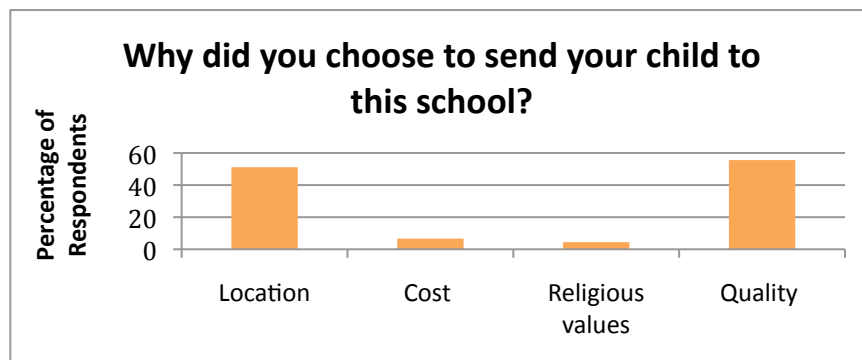
<p>competition, health, agriculture, School Family Initiative, home economics-cooking, student government)</p>	<p>honor for a student to serve on the student government.</p>	<p>that would provide their children tangible skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent involvement +</li> <li>- Community engagement +</li> <li>- School unity/pride +</li> <li>- Teacher/student relationship +</li> </ul>
<p>School Management Committee</p>	<p>The SMC of the BT Academy of Sentigi reported that SMC members visit the school unannounced to see how the school is functioning on an average day. Thus, the head teachers and teachers are accountable to the SMC, which represents the greater community.</p>	<p>We visited one public school in Mpigi that had received significant funding from private sources. The head of the school's SMC was a retired government official who provided the school with important connections and opportunities for resources. While this was not something we witnessed in other schools, it demonstrated the potential role that SMC members could play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School accountability +</li> <li>- Parent and community support of the school +</li> <li>- Access to resources +</li> </ul>

## Parent Survey Data

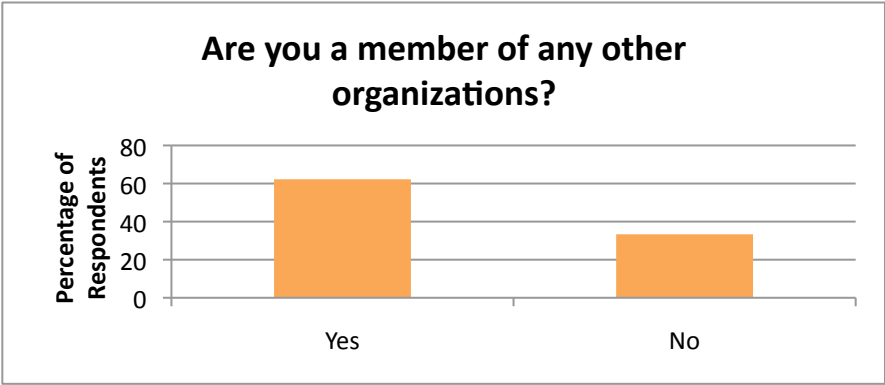
The following is an aggregation of the data that we collected in conducting surveys of the parents of the school communities we studied. This information provides us information on the variables that may affect a child's schooling, in their homes or in their communities.



Farming is the primary occupation in the communities we visited. While many parents hoped that their children would have more job opportunities, most of the parents we met had little to no education themselves and cited that there were few other options for jobs in the area. To encourage parents to send their children to school and support them in their education it is thus imperative that they are aware of the value of education, its relevance, and its importance for their children's future job prospects.

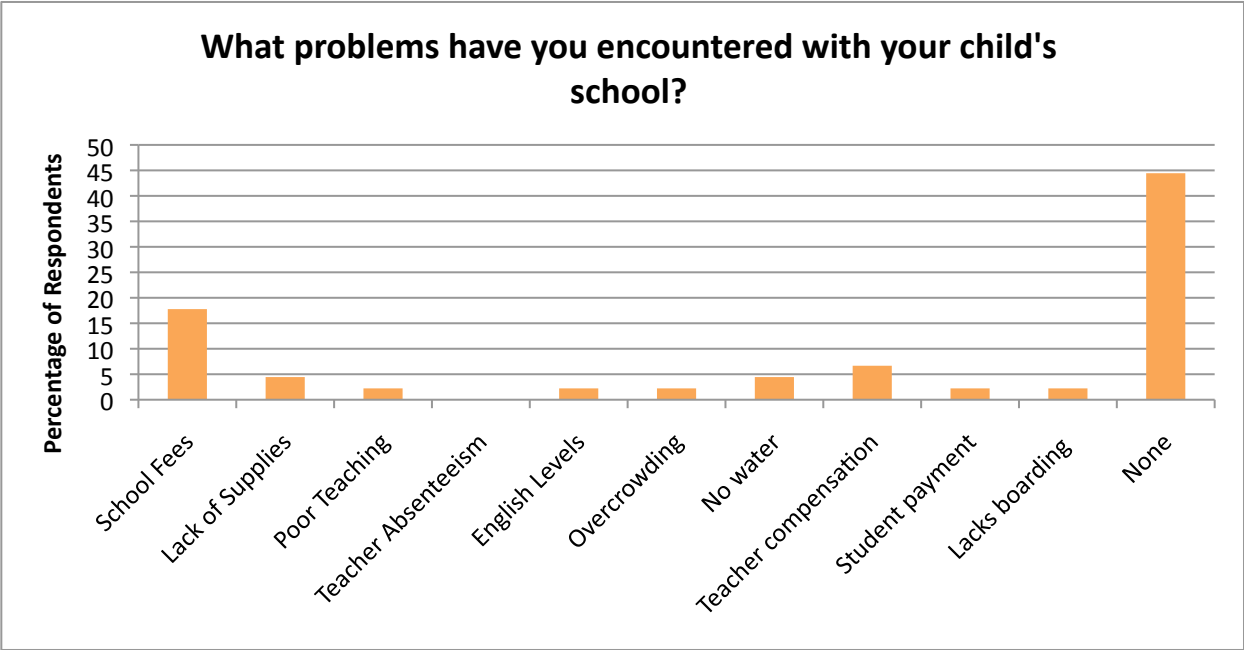


When choosing where to send their children to school, parents were first concerned with the school's quality and then its location. Only 6.66% of parents stated that they chose to send their children to a particular school because of its cost. This is important to consider, for despite the poverty we witnessed in these areas, parents are willing to contribute to support their child's education. We did find that many public schools charged minimal school fees so as to supplement the government's funding, which is generally insufficient and often arrives late.

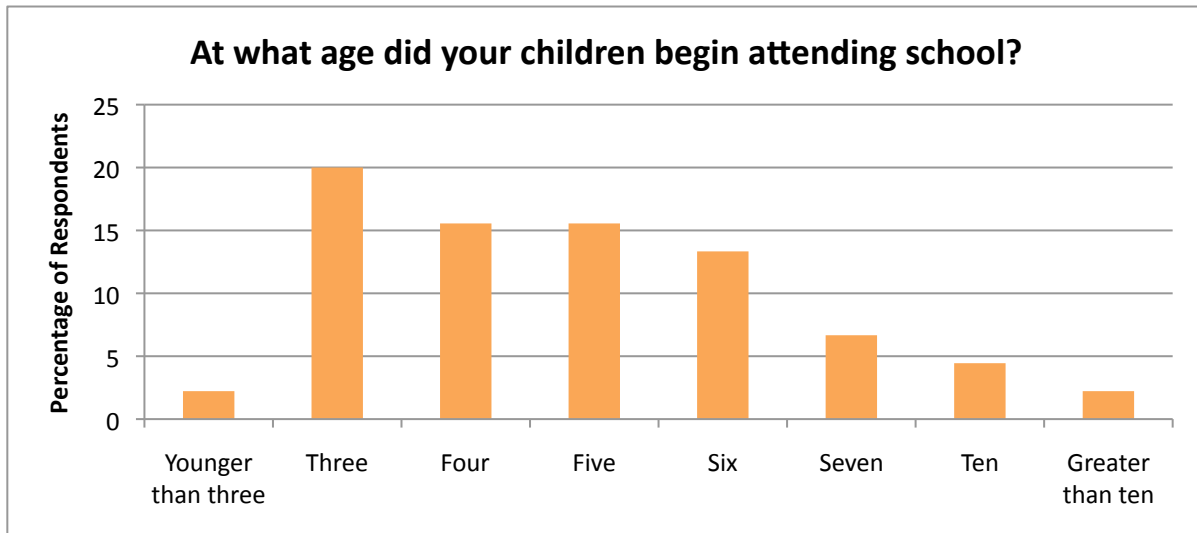


**Other organizations include:** Women’s groups, Savings and Loans, Cooperative Group Farming, Cooperative Savings, Health organization, Literacy Partnership (kamu kamu)

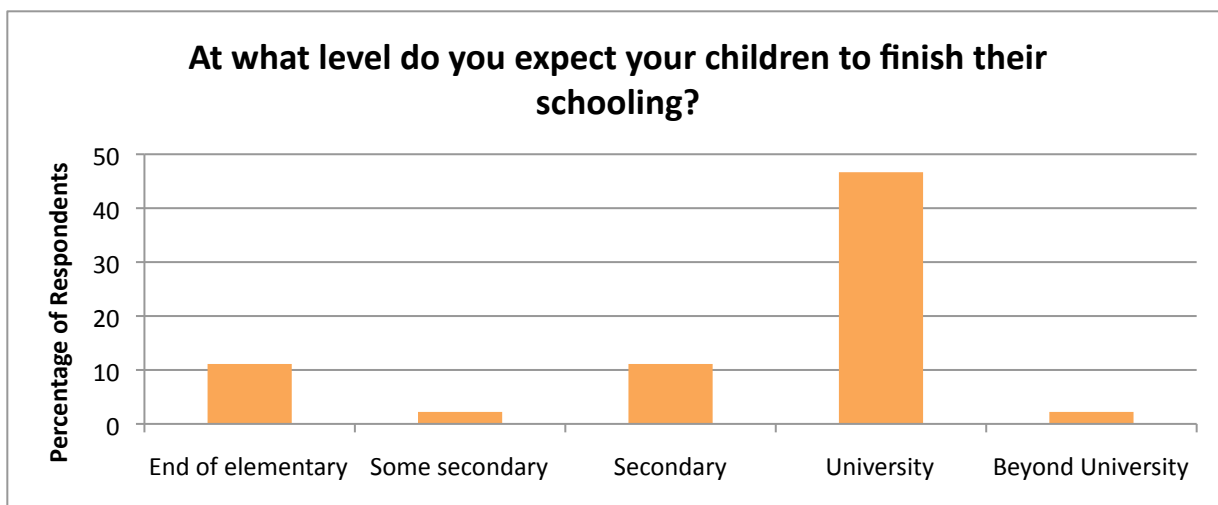
Roughly 62% of the parents interviewed were actively engaged with other organizations in the community, thus demonstrating their willingness to engage in the community and participate in education, health or savings groups.



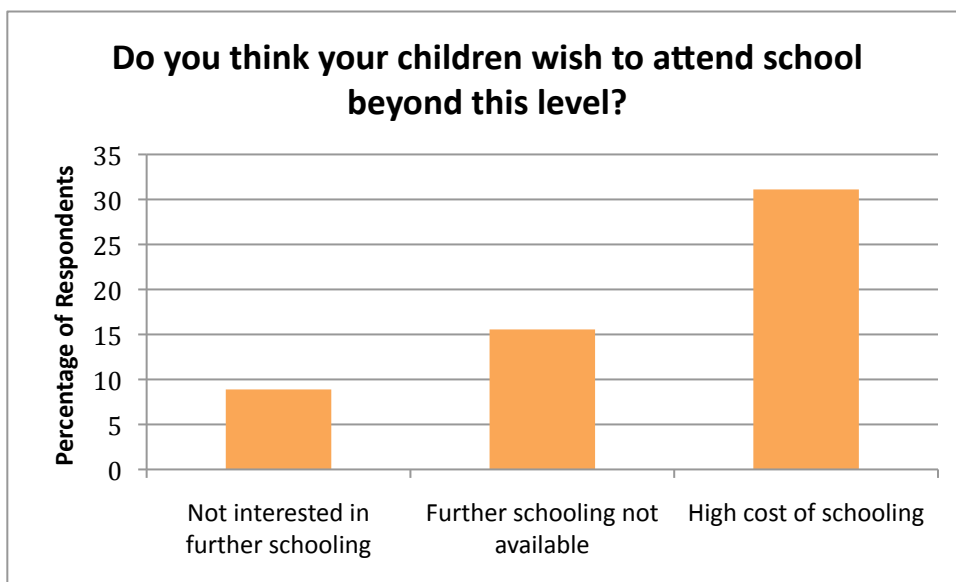
44.44% of respondents reported that they did not encounter any problems with their child’s school. However, it must be noted that respondents seemed reluctant to answer this question, perhaps because they viewed us as representatives of Building Tomorrow. Another approximately 18% of participants cited school fees as a problem with their child’s school.



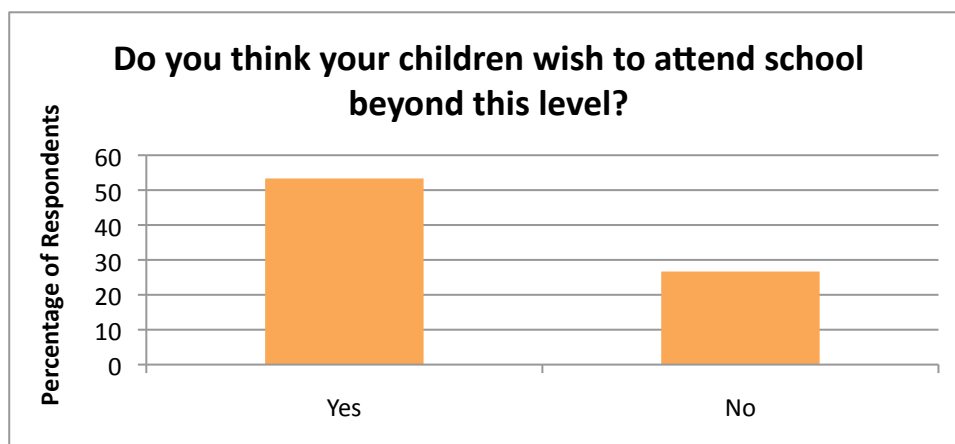
20% of respondents stated that their children began attending school at age 3, at the pre-primary level. We noted that in nearly all of the schools we visited communities decided to add a pre-primary class to the school on their own dime. On the other hand, almost 7% of respondents stated that their children began school at age 10 or older. There are no remedial programs for the students who begin school at a later age. Instead, they attend class with the younger students, which some teachers mentioned deterred these students from continuing their education.



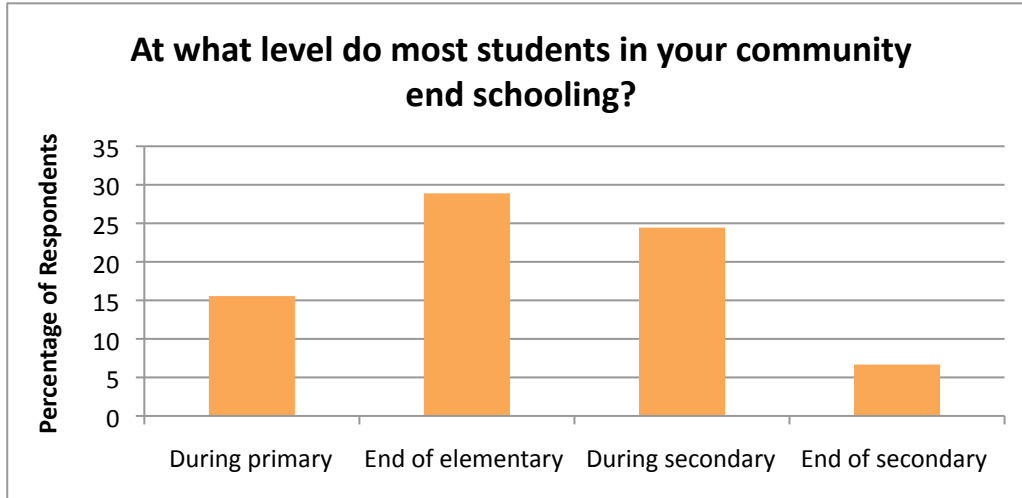
46% of the parents that we interviewed expected their children to attend University. Thus, many parents had lofty goals set for their children's education. On the other hand, 11% of parents expected their children to stop schooling at the end of primary school. There was clear variation amongst the educational expectations of parents. Accordingly, it is imperative that these schools are serving both those who will finish their schooling at the end of primary school and those who will continue on to University.



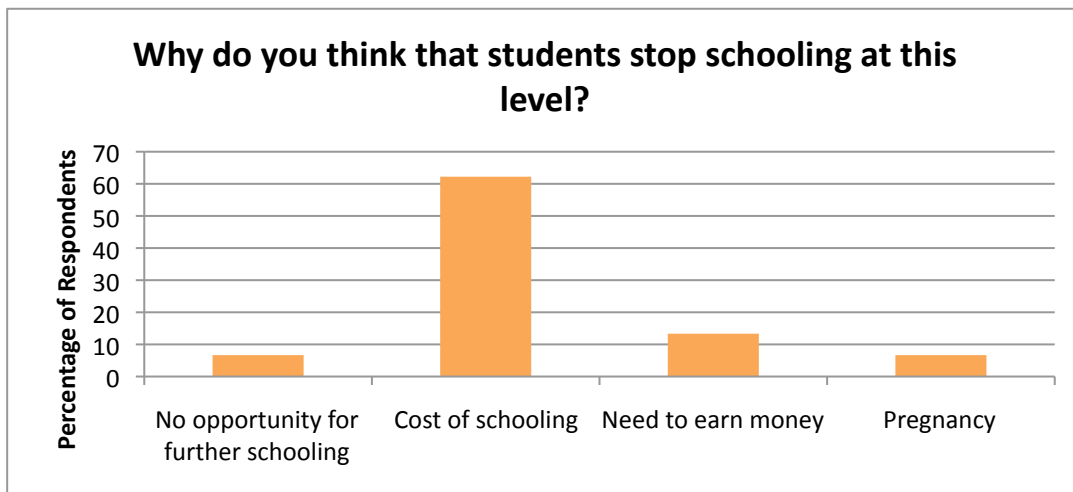
Over one-third of parents cited that the high cost of schooling is the reason why their children will not pursue further education. About 16%, though, stated that there were no other opportunities for schooling available to their children beyond this level. Thus, access to higher-level education is an issue for these communities.



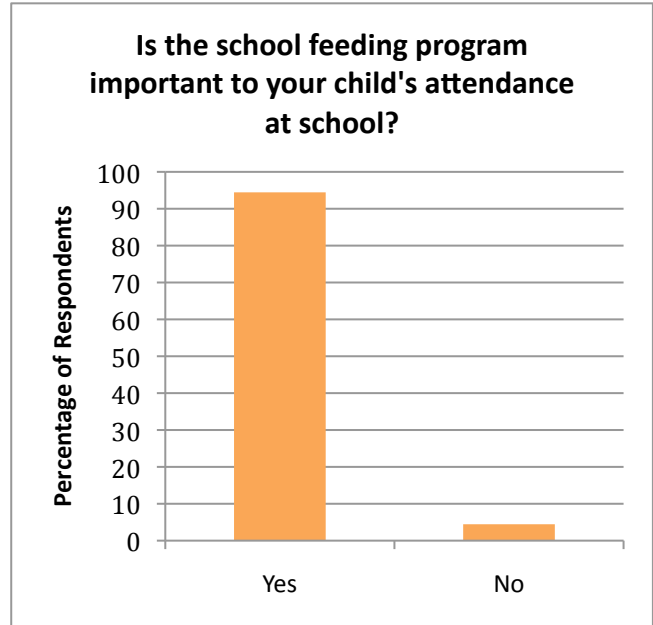
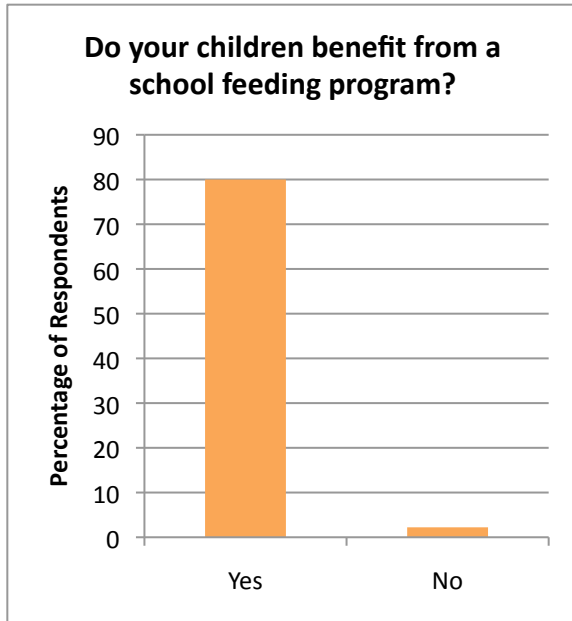
The majority of parents believed that their children would seek further education beyond that which is feasibly available to them.



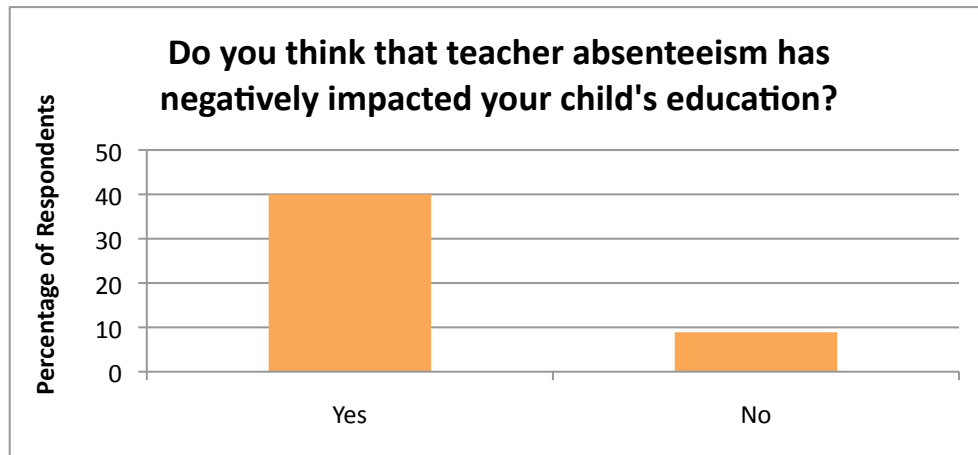
While many parents said that they expected their children to go on to University, the reality may be different. Almost 30% of respondents said that most students in the community stop schooling at the end of primary school. Further, only 7% said that most students in the community complete secondary school.



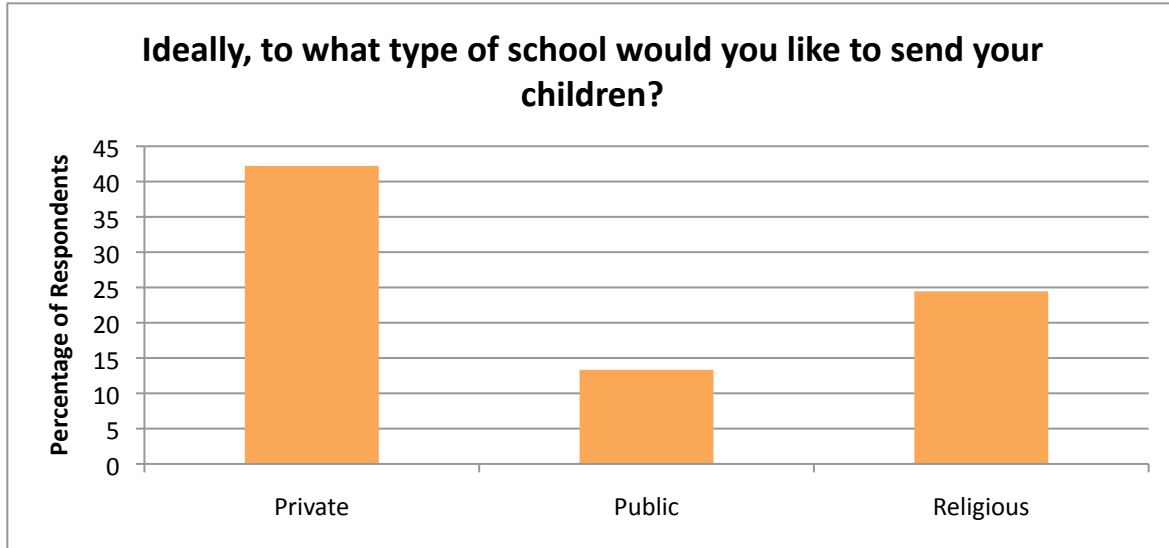
Overwhelmingly, when parents were asked about why students in the community stop their schooling, respondents shared that the cost of schooling was the issue. Others cited that youth need to earn money or that young girls drop out because of pregnancy.



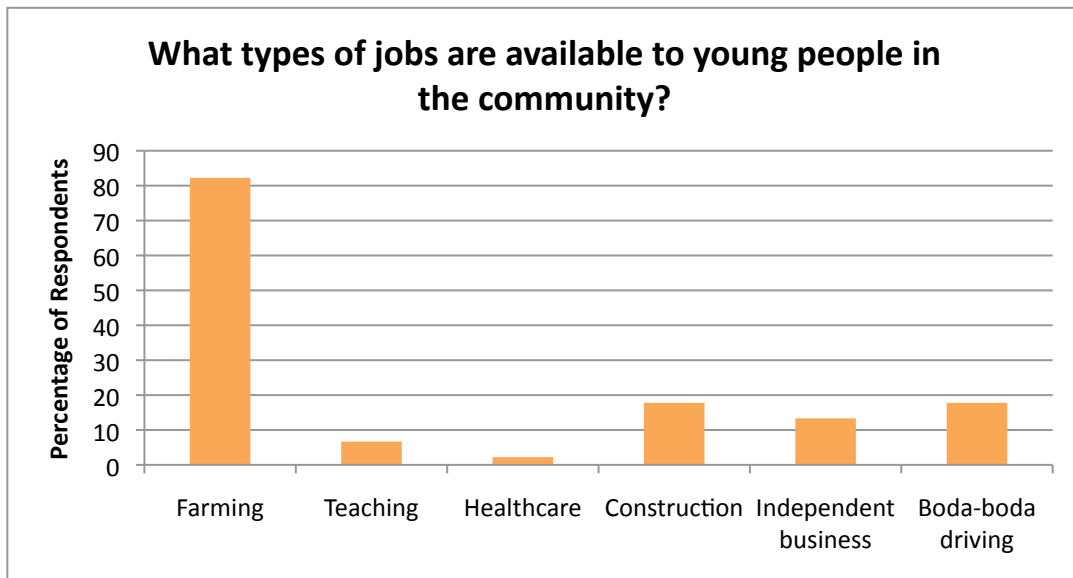
The vast majority (80%) of the parents that we surveyed cited that their children benefitted from a school feeding program. Further, 94.4% of parents said that these school feeding programs were important to their children’s attendance at school.



40% of parents cited that they believe teacher absenteeism is negatively impacting the education of their children. Teacher absenteeism was a common issue amongst the schools that we visited. There are many methods to address this issue. Studies have shown that a well-built latrine is the most important piece of infrastructure that contributes to higher teacher attendance at school. Furthermore, incentive schemes, social accountability, monitoring, or punitive capacity could be put in place.

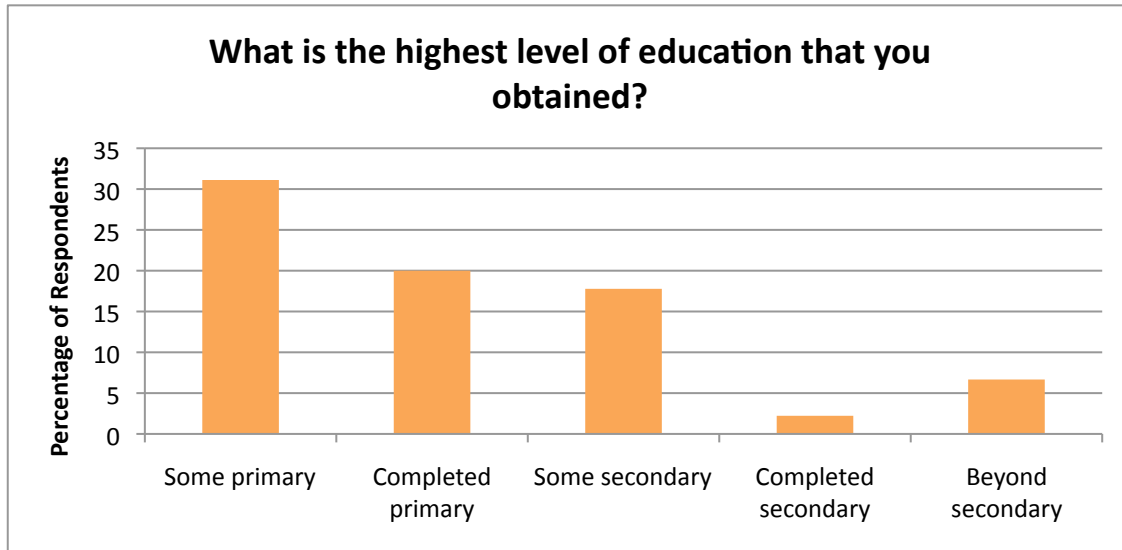


In the communities we surveyed, private schools were widely considered to be of better quality than public schools. Note, though, that almost 1 in 4 respondents stated that they would prefer to send their child to a religious school.

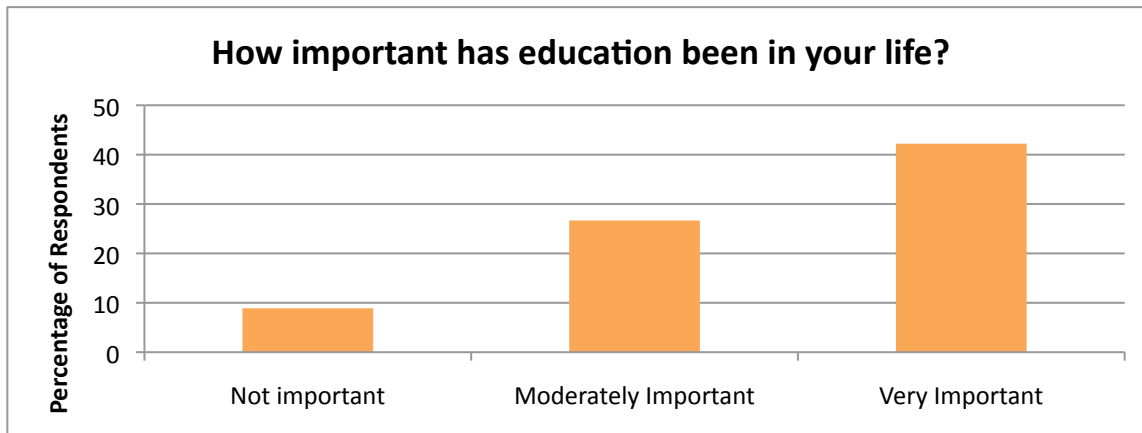


There are few job opportunities for young people in the communities that we surveyed, particularly beyond farming. As students do not typically concentrate on agriculture in school, it is important that students and parents understand both the relevance and the importance of schooling. A process of sensitization, which Building Tomorrow has put in place in its schools, may be the best method to create that understanding.

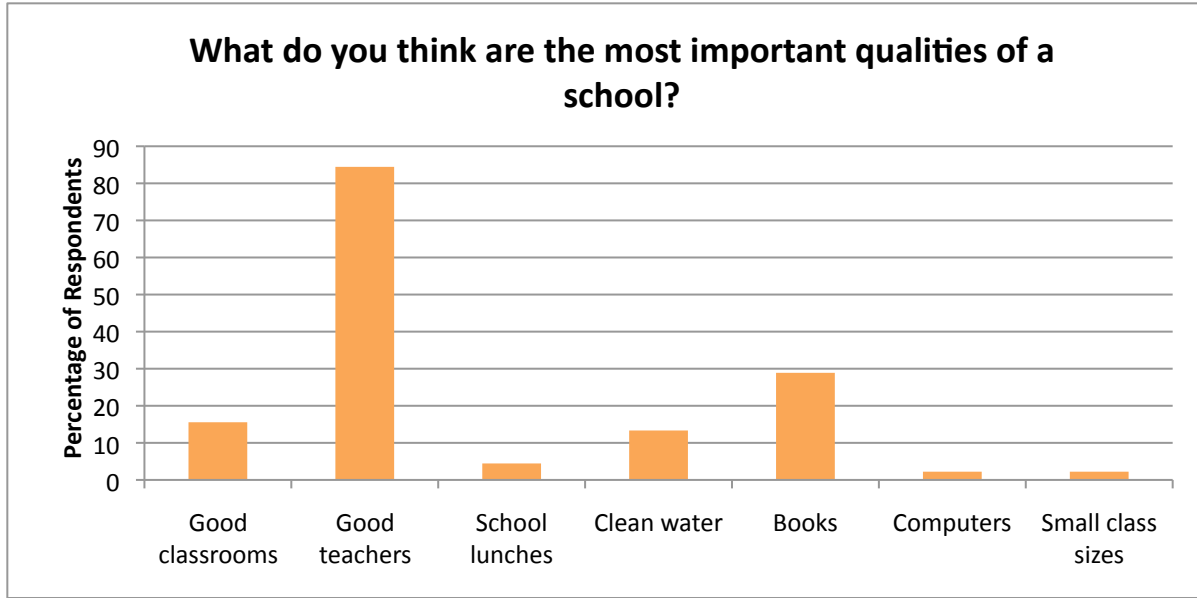




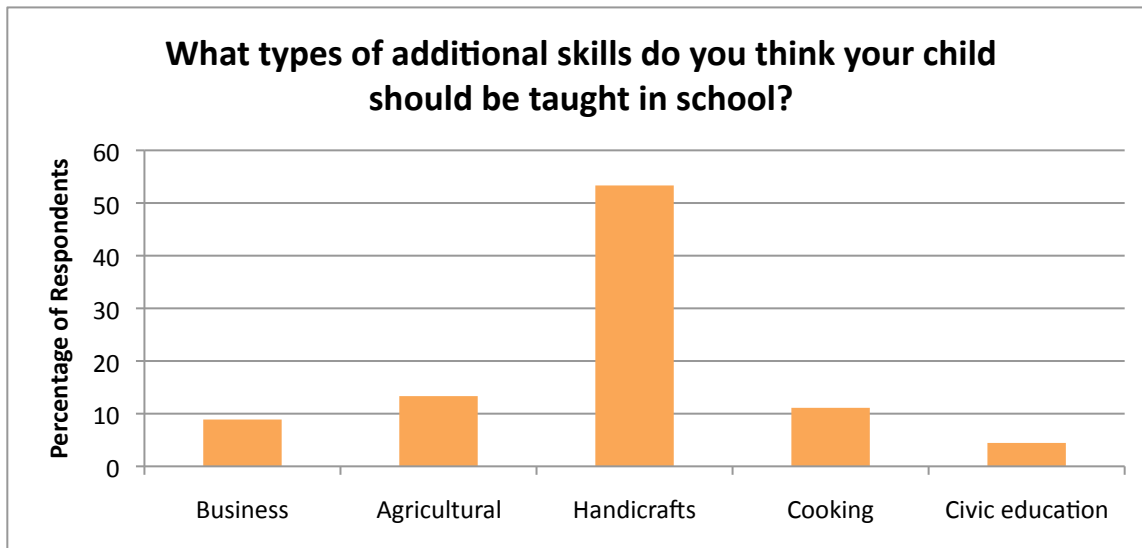
The majority of parents that we surveyed (51.1%) received some primary education or had completed primary school. Only 8.88% completed secondary school or continued on past this level. Considering the generally low levels of education amongst parents in this region, it is imperative that parents have the opportunity to engage with their child’s school in order to understand the role of education and what teachers require of their child in terms of schoolwork and class materials.



Despite generally low levels of education in the communities we visited, 42.2% of those surveyed cited that education was very important in their lives. Clearly, these communities place a certain value on education. Armed with this knowledge, schools should build upon the community’s value in education by encouraging the parents to engage with the school more and motivate their students.



Overwhelmingly, parents cited that good teachers are the most important aspect of a school (84.44%). 28.89% of parents stated that the availability of schoolbooks was the most critical quality of a school.



The majority of parents that we surveyed thought that it would be beneficial for handicrafts to be taught in their child’s school. Others cited that cooking (11.11%) would be a beneficial addition, as well as agriculture training (13.33%).

## Conclusion

This report, based on fieldwork conducted in Uganda, presented the information that we gathered from an assessment of the schools constructed by Building Tomorrow and other public and private schools in Uganda's rural regions. This document first presented the goals of this project, the primary issues these schools confront, and the best practices these schools have developed to address such issues. Further, it presented the data collected from surveys conducted of parents of the school communities in an effort to provide important context to understanding the barriers students face to achieve an education in these regions. The parent surveys addressed issues such as their own background and educational level, as well as their opinions on the failures and successes of their child's schooling, their future opportunities, and the importance and relevance of education in their lives.

We believe that all schools in these rural areas of Uganda should be catering to the needs of the students who will stop their schooling during the primary or secondary level, while also preparing students for schooling beyond this level. Further, to ensure that schooling feels relevant to both students and their parents, teaching tangible skills such as agriculture or handicrafts at the primary school level is very beneficial. On the other hand, schools should also be actively engaging families to sensitize them as to the importance of education and what is required of a student and his or her parent to develop a strong educational foundation.

A school's long-term success is dependent on its sustainability. For instance, Building Tomorrow was founded in 2006 and many of its schools that we visited were built in the last few years. There was evident enthusiasm and excitement surrounding these new schools, but what will these schools look like in 5 years? In 10 years? How will the school appear physically? Will the school have grown to include other facilities such as teacher housing, a community garden, etc.? Will the school be providing valuable and relevant education to the community's children? What opportunities will be available for them after school? Will the community still be engaged in the school? Are they supporting school projects and maintaining pride and ownership of the school?

In order to ensure the sustainability of these schools, it is imperative first to institutionalize the best practices that develop in these schools so that they outlast a given head teacher, teacher, school management committee, or student body. Further, feedback loops should be established so that the school continues to progress based on feedback from stakeholders.

While more grassroots feedback loops can be put in place, continuous monitoring and evaluation is one form of feedback loop that is critical to the success of a nonprofit, to ensure that it is meeting its goals and to support further investment.

## **How to Improve the Study**

In order to improve this study, the sample size of both the number of schools and the number of community members interviewed at each school should be expanded. Further, the surveys should be conducted first in a pilot community and adjusted as necessary before the surveys are implemented more widely. Moreover, the villages selected to take part in this study, and the parents asked to participate at each site, should be systematically randomized.

Our team was composed of three American students from the University of Notre Dame, two Ugandan students from Uganda Martyrs University, and local Building Tomorrow staff members. In an effort to ensure data consistency, more thorough enumerator training to foster the uniform delivery of surveys and interviews would improve the accuracy of the data collected. Furthermore, one drawback of our team composition was that the responses we received from those who participated in the study may have been biased due to the fact that some community members viewed us as potential donors or representatives of the nonprofit.

In addition, it is important to note that in focus groups certain personalities dominated. For instance, male teachers almost ubiquitously dominated the floor over female teachers. In meetings with the School Management Committees, committee leaders were much more forthcoming than other members. While our team made a concerted effort to draw responses and opinions from all focus group participants, structuring focus groups so as to limit dominant voices and ensure that all participants felt comfortable to participate equally would be beneficial to the study.

Finally, gaining the perspectives of the students would add an important element to this study. Due to the complications of working with youth as a result of Institutional Review Board policy, we were unable to interview students. Students are the prime consumers of education and thus have an important perspective to bring to this study.

## **Follow-up**

During our fieldwork, and in particular in discussions with the Building Tomorrow staff in Uganda, the need for a follow-up study was apparent. The teaching and management systems of these schools should be reviewed more thoroughly in order to determine the gaps that exist. There is always an area that will require improvement, whether that is in extracurricular activities such as sports and recreation or in life skills, teaching methods, or school management.

The question thus arises, how can these schools be assessed continuously? A method to establish continuous assessment of these schools so that the gaps can be addressed is imperative to the continued progression of these schools.

## **Building Tomorrow Marketing**

After spending time observing the BT staff and visiting the different schools, we had a new appreciation for the work of Building Tomorrow in Uganda. As BT club leaders, our work is focused on rapid fundraising to reach the goal of constructing 60 schools by 2016.

We believe that a more effective marketing strategy for Building Tomorrow, particularly at the college chapter level, would be to focus on explaining the Building Tomorrow model and mission, rather than emphasizing the dash to fundraise to achieve the target goal of 60 schools by 2016. The Building Tomorrow educational model is changing the face of Ugandan education. We saw the incredible difference that the BT model makes in Uganda's hardest-to-reach communities, and we do not think this is adequately understood or appreciated by college chapters and BT supporters. Moreover, the private-public hybrid model that has naturally evolved in BT schools is a distinct and effective model. It addresses many of the common challenges of rural education, from dealing with delays in funding from the government, to ensuring a school's success beyond its connection to an NGO.

# Appendices

## Parent Survey questions

*Lyantonde, Uganda - Summer 2014*

### **SURVEY OF LOCATION (Completed by researchers):**

**Region:**

**County:**

**Sub-Country:**

**Parish/Ward:**

**Town/Village:**

### **Are the following services present in easy walking distance?**

1. Post Office
2. School
3. Police Station
4. Health Clinic
5. Market stalls (selling groceries/clothing)

### **Thinking of the journey here:**

Was the road:

1. Paved
2. Tarred
3. Concrete
4. Dirt

## **VOLUNTARY CONSENT**

### *Adult Informed Consent*

Good day. My name is (insert name here). I am a student at (insert relevant school) and am completing a research project with a team of students from Notre Dame in the USA and Uganda Martyrs University. We are studying the role of education in rural communities of Uganda and we will provide recommendations to Building Tomorrow, the nonprofit that constructed the Building Tomorrow Academy in your community. We would like to ask you questions regarding your own background, community, and educational history. We will keep all this information confidential. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this survey and, once begun, the survey can be stopped at any time.

If you have any questions or issues regarding this study, please contact *Liana Cramer at LCramer@nd.edu or 001(703) 965-9887* or the University of Notre Dame's Institutional Review Board at *ORhelp@nd.edu or 001(574) 631-7432*.

By signing below you are agreeing to take part in this study.

---

### *Minor Informed Consent*

We are doing a research study about education in rural villages in Uganda. A research study helps us to learn new things. We want to learn about the school that you attend and your education.

We will ask you a few questions about your school, the classes you take, and your dream career.

You do not have to participate in this study. You can say "No," without any problem. If you say "Yes," you can always say "No" later. You can say "No" at anytime during the survey.

Do you have any questions about participating in the survey? You can also contact the investigator *Liana Cramer at LCramer@nd.edu or 001(703) 965-9887* or the University of Notre Dame's Institutional Review Board at *ORhelp@nd.edu or 001(574) 631-7432* if you have any other questions.

After we talk, please write your name below. This shows we talked about the research and that you want to take part.

---

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Respondent Number:

Interviewer:

Recorder:

Date:

Location of interview:

Interview Start Time:

### ***Demographic Information***

**Respondent ID:**

**Gender:**

**Age:**

### ***Household Information:***

Type of Dwelling (Observation):

1. One room mud hut
2. Multi-room mud hut
3. One room brick home
4. Multi-room brick home
5. Other
6. Declined to answer

### **Services Available:**

Water collection system

Running water

Toilet/latrine

Sewage system

Electricity

Cell phone service

### ***Biographical Information***

**What ethnic group do you belong to?**

Buganda

Basoga

Bagisu

Banyoro

Banyankore

Banyarwanda



Bakiga  
Batoro  
Lango  
Lugbara  
Iteso  
Karamojong

**Language:**

- What language do you speak at home? Check all that apply.

English  
Luganda  
Lusoga  
Kiswahili  
Alur  
Lugbara  
Masaba  
Kinyarwanda  
Runyankole  
Lunyoli  
Teso  
Runyoro  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Economic Activity:**

What is your job?

1. Farmer  
2. Carpenter  
3. Teacher  
4. Businessman  
5. Driver  
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Education Level:**

What is the highest level of education that you obtained?

**Religion:**

- Is religion important in your life?

1. Not at all

2. Moderately
3. Very important

- What religion do you identify with?

1. Christian only
2. Roman Catholic
3. Orthodox Catholic
4. Protestant
5. Baptist
6. Seventh Day Adventist
7. Pentecostal (Born again)
8. Independent (African Independent Church)
9. Jehovah's Witness
10. Muslim only
11. Other \_\_\_\_\_

- How often do you attend religious ceremonies?

1. One time per week
2. Greater than once per week
3. Once per month
4. On religious holidays
5. Other
6. NA/Declined to answer

- Are you a member of any other organizations?

1. Yes
2. No

If so, what other organizations?

Generally, how often do you go to community meetings?

***Information regarding Children's Education and Career Path (for Parents)***

- How many children do you currently have?

1. 1
2. 2

3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Declined to answer

- What is the range of ages of your children?

- Do/Did your children attend school?

*If yes, what type of school (Observation)?*

1. Private
2. Public
3. Religious School

*If yes, why does he or she attend this type of school?*

1. Location
2. Cost of education
3. Religious values
4. Quality of education
5. Most students attend that school
6. Other

*If no, why not?*

1. Cost of education
2. Need to work
4. Long distance
5. No access to a school
6. Schooling not needed
7. Other
8. Declined to answer

- Which of these problems have you encountered in your local school?

1. School fees too expensive
2. Lack of textbooks or other school supplies
3. Poor teaching
4. Teacher absenteeism
5. Overcrowded classrooms
6. Poor conditions of school facilities
7. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. None

9. Declined to answer

- In what grade level are your children in school?

1. P1
2. P2
3. P3
4. P4
5. P5
6. P6
7. P7
8. Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Declined to answer

- Have any of your children repeated a grade level?

1. Yes
2. No
3. IDK/Declined to answer

- If yes, why?

1. Absences
2. Illness
3. Overcrowding
4. Lack of teacher competency
5. Other
6. Declined to answer

- Has your child ever failed a grade level finishing exam?

1. Yes
2. No

*If yes, do you think your child should have repeated a grade level?*

*Why or why not?*

- At what age did your children begin attending school?

1. 3
2. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. IDK/Declined to answer

- At what grade level do you expect your children to finish their schooling?

1. P1
2. P2
3. P3
4. P4
5. P5
6. P6
7. P7
8. Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Declined to answer

- Why do you expect your child to stop schooling at this level?

1. Cost of schooling
2. Need to work
3. Lack of interest
4. Schooling not available
5. Completed schooling
6. Other
7. Declined to answer

- Do you think your children wish to attend school beyond this level?

1. Yes
2. No

- Why or why not?

- At what level do most students in your community end schooling?

1. P1
2. P2
3. P3
4. P4
5. P5
6. P6
7. P7
8. Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Declined to answer

- Why do you believe that students from the community end schooling at this level?

1. There is no opportunity for further schooling nearby
2. School is costly
3. They need to earn money
4. Further schooling is not needed
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. Declined to answer

- Do your children benefit from a school feeding program (Observation)?

1. Yes
2. No

-If yes, is this program important to their attendance to school?

1. Yes
2. No

Why or why not?

- What type of jobs are available in this community?

1. Farming
2. Teaching
3. Healthcare
4. Construction
5. Independent Business
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

- What employment opportunities are available for women and girls in this region? Check all that apply.

1. Farming
2. Teaching
3. Healthcare
4. Service industry
5. Independent Business
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

-Do you expect your child to leave to pursue a career elsewhere?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

- If your child could pursue any career, anywhere in Uganda, what career would you like to see your children pursue?

1. Government
2. Religious vocation
3. Farming
4. Education
5. Healthcare
6. Construction
7. Independent Business
8. Community Development
9. Other \_\_\_\_\_
10. Declined to answer

- What career do you expect that your children will pursue?

1. Government
2. Religious vocation
3. Farming
4. Education
5. Healthcare
6. Construction
7. Independent Business
8. Community Development
9. Other \_\_\_\_\_
10. Declined to answer

### ***Education Ideals***

-Where did you attend school?

-For how many years did you attend school?

- How important has education been in your life?

- To what extent has school been helpful in your life?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Moderately

4. Very important

- Please explain your answer.

- What do you think are the most important qualities of a school? Select three.

1. Good classrooms
2. Good teachers
3. School lunches
4. Clean water
5. Books
6. Computers
7. Small class sizes
8. Other \_\_\_\_\_

- What types of skills does the school not provide that would be beneficial for students?

1. Business
2. Agricultural
3. Handicrafts
4. Cooking
5. Civic education
6. Construction
7. Other

- What barriers do students from this community face that may prevent them from attending primary school?

1. School fees
2. Need to work at home
3. Illness
4. Does not like school
5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***Infrastructure Ideals***

**Home**

- Where do you get your water? (Check multi)

1. Borehole
2. Well
3. Spring
4. Rain water collection system
5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_



- From what time do your children spend carrying out chores a day?
  - Before school
  - After school
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- From what time does your child spend on schoolwork a day?
  - Before school
  - After school
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **School**

- Ideally, where would you like to send your child to school?
  1. Private
  2. Public
  3. Religious
  4. Other
  5. Declined to answer

### ***Community Ideals***

- Now I'm going to list actions that some people take in their communities. Please tell me whether or not you have participated in these during the past year. And if you have not, would you do so if you had the chance?

1. Attended a community meeting
  2. Attended a parent-teacher conference
  3. Attended a political meeting
  4. Attended a religious meeting
- 
- What would you like to change about your community? Select three.
    1. Sense of community involvement
    2. Access to water
    3. Availability of food
    4. Distance to nearest school
    5. Employment Opportunities
    6. Access to a town/city
    7. Access to healthcare
    8. Roads
    9. Infrastructure

10. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you think can make this change in your community?

1. Community members
2. Local government leader
3. National government leader
4. Religious leader
5. Nonprofits
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

How interested are you in being involved with the local school?

1. Very interested
2. Interested
3. Somewhat interested
4. Somewhat disinterested
5. Disinterested
6. Very disinterested
7. IDK/Declined to answer

What financial contributions do you make to the school?

1. School fees
2. Food stuffs
3. None
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you donate your time to the school? (Labor, school events, schools projects, etc.)

1. Never
2. Once per year
3. Once per school term
4. Once per month
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. IDK/Declined to answer

### **Building Tomorrow Academy Specific Questions**

Are you at a BT school? (observer)

### **Community Ideals**

Who took the initiative to bring a Building Tomorrow school to the area?

1. Due to initiative taken by the local district education officer
2. Due to initiative taken by local community leaders
3. Head master
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

*(If the individual has a child that attends the school)*

- Do you participate in the parent-teacher meetings?

1. Yes
2. No
3. N/A

- Do you contribute to fund your child's education?

1. Yes
2. No

- If yes, how?

1. School fees
2. Donations to the school feeding program
3. Sewing school uniforms
4. Construction of school
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Educational ideals**

- Did any of your children attend a different school previous to the Building Tomorrow Academy?

1. Yes
2. No

- If yes, why did your children switch schools to attend the Building Tomorrow Academy?

1. Closer to home
2. Lower school fees
3. Better quality of education
4. Better school facilities
5. Better teachers
6. Involvement of community
8. Other \_\_\_\_\_

- Do you think that teacher absenteeism affects your child's education?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

- Do you think that the Building Tomorrow school has provided the education necessary for its students to enter secondary school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Why or why not?

- What barriers do students from this community face that may prevent them from attending secondary school?

1. School fees
2. Need to work at home
3. Illness
4. Does not like school
5. Entrance exams
6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Structural Ideals**

- Do you think it is important that your community took on the building process?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Why or why not?

- Were you involved in the construction process of the Building Tomorrow school?

1. Yes
2. No

- What did you learn from building the school?

1. Technical skills
2. Community building
3. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- Have you used this skill since?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

- How much do you like the look of the school?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. It is nice
4. I love it
5. No strong feeling either way

- How well does the school function as a school building?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Okay
4. Not well
5. No opinion

- How is the school used outside of normal school functions? Select all that apply.

1. Parent-teacher meetings
2. Community gatherings
3. After- school student programming
4. Parent programming
5. Other
6. Declined to answer

- How often is the school used outside of normal schools functions?

1. Every day
2. Over three times a week
3. Once a week
4. Once a month
5. Rarely
6. Never

- In terms of infrastructure, what do you think should be added to the Building Tomorrow school?

1. Teacher housing

2. Washrooms
3. Gardens
4. Kitchen
5. Water collection
6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- What materials do you think a school should be built with?

1. Brick
2. Wood
3. Mud
4. Does not matter

Which other projects have you started as a community to bring about development?

Interview End Time:

