

This study investigated the reasons for non-enrolment of children for Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Uganda. The central research question of the study was based on the fact that in Uganda some children who registered for UPE have still not gone to school.

The study's objective was to find out the reasons why some of the children who registered for UPE are not enrolled in school.

The study was carried out in Asuret sub-county in Soroti district. This was a descriptive qualitative study that used interviews, focus group discussions, observation and document analysis for obtaining its information. The data analysis was qualitative.

This study revealed that poverty is the main cause of non-enrolment in UPE in Asuret sub-county. Due to poverty, parents/guardians cannot afford to buy school uniforms and stationery, pay examination fees and other fees usually required by the schools. The parents advocated for an absolutely fee-free UPE programme as one of the ways of increasing enrolment rates in Asuret sub-county. This would particularly support the orphans who usually receive no financial support for school education from their guardians. This would call for the government providing uniforms, examination fees, lunch-time meals, stationery, and other school requirements.

This study recommends that in order for the orphans and children from very poor families to get education, the government should provide completely free primary education to all "its UPE children". They should also continue with its efforts to eradicate poverty in the country and to improve the teaching-learning facilities in the schools, as this would encourage parents to send their children to school. A clear policy must be made on the exclusion of uniforms from school requirements, and it must be ensured that schools follow this guideline.

Areas for further research include investigating the extent to which the UPE programme in Uganda has brought orphans access to education and contributed to the enrolment of girls for primary education.