

Girl-Child School Dropout in Uganda: The Adult Education Model as a Solution

Shaimah Nalubega¹ and Rukia Kalanzi²

¹Postgraduate Student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction,
Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia

²Peace and Leadership Institute,
Inter-Religious Council of Uganda

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Shaimah Nalubega. Email: shaimah19096@gmail.com

Abstract

Despite global efforts to achieve universal education and eliminate gender disparity, Uganda has struggled to meet these targets. The nation has witnessed a significant increase in school dropouts, especially among girls, with alarming statistics revealing that over a million learners dropped out before completing primary education in 2022. High costs of education, cultural norms, and gendered expectations are among the primary reasons for this trend. The repercussions of dropping out are particularly severe for girls, leading to a myriad of societal challenges. This paper introduces the Adult Education Model, based on the principles of andragogy, as a potential solution to address the girl-child school dropout crisis in Uganda. The model emphasizes self-direction, real-world problem-solving, and the utilization of past experiences, making it particularly suited for mature learners. Implementing this model through pilot programs, with the collaboration of community leaders, NGOs, and governmental bodies, can offer a tailored educational approach for these girls. By adopting this model, Uganda can provide an inclusive, adaptable, and empathetic educational environment, ensuring a brighter future for every girl.

Keywords: andragogy, dropout, girl-child

While all countries of the world aimed to achieve universal primary and secondary education and eliminate gender disparity in education by 2015 as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), many sub-Saharan Africa countries failed to hit the target. Among the miserable failures is Uganda which failed to achieve both MDG 2A (universal completion of primary education) and MDG 3A (eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education). For MDG 2A, Uganda achieved a net enrolment ratio (NER) of 80% falling short of the required 100% (UNDP, 2015). According to the current SDG report, Uganda seems to be failing in achieving SDG 4, with a lower secondary completion rate of only 26.4 (UNESCO, 2019) and SDG 5, with the female-to-male mean years of education received standing at 64 (Office of the Prime Minister, 2020).

According to the UNESCO (2019), education is the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The education and learning goals and targets are to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education and learning and promote lifelong opportunities for all. As per target 4:1, by 2030 all girls and kids should have access to full cost-free, equitable and high quality elementary and secondary education and learning causing pertinent and effective understanding. Internationally, 262 million or 18% of all kids, teenagers and young people aged 6 to 17 years left schooling prematurely in 2017 (Nabugoomu, 2019). Based on current trends, these numbers will drop only somewhat to 225 million or 14% by 2030 (Nabugoomu, 2019). Among youngsters of primary school age (commonly 6-11 years), 64 million or 9% will leave school prematurely.

Although countries have actually made a dedication in SDG 4 to accomplish global access to secondary schooling, higher secondary education is not compulsory in 47% of nations. The numbers of teenagers who prematurely leave higher secondary education are projected to proceed on their descending trend till 2030, when one-quarter of all teenagers are expected to be out of school. The number of children who prematurely leave primary and lower secondary schooling are forecasted to continue to be at nearly the exact same degrees as today (Sachs et al., 2022; UNDP, 2015).

Whereas Uganda has been facing high rates of educational wastage and student drop out at all levels, the rates have dramatically increased during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, making the drop out phenomenon a national educational crisis (Chebet & Ishenyi, 2023). In 1997 Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) to increase access to education, especially for poor children. Subsequently, Universal Secondary Education (USE) was introduced in 2007 to reduce on the numbers of children leaving school prematurely because of high tuition fees. This notwithstanding, and despite the fact that Uganda was among the first African nations to ratify the UN Convention of Rights of Children and having passed her own Child Act (Government of Uganda, 2016) both of which emphasize that all young people deserve to be provided with education.

While releasing the 2022 Primary Leaving Examinations in January this year, the Uganda National Examinations Board disclosed that only 44.3% of the more than 1.8 million children who joined Primary One in 2016 went on to complete primary schooling by 2022. Thus, more than 55.7% of the children left schooling before grade seven (Nafula, 2023). This has led to various reactions from across the political divide as well as from academicians and non-governmental organizations. Following this, and the extremely high dropout rates for females before the 2022 O-Level examinations, the Minister of Education and Sports ordered an immediate probe (Etukuri & Kwesiga, 2023). Even the Ugandan parliament called for a probe of the causes of the high levels of dropouts (Business Focus, 2023).

School dropout has become a big challenge in Ugandan communities, especially in the rural areas where numbers of primary and high school dropouts are at astronomical levels (Nabugoomu, 2019). A school dropout can be defined as a young learner who prematurely exits the education system before he or she obtains the certificate of completion for the level of education in question (Mussida, et al., 2019).

Most children in Ugandan have no access to secondary education because of high cost of education. According to (Nafula, 2023), Ms Ketty Lamaro, the permanent secretary of the Education ministry, agreed that one of the factors that make children to drop out of school are the huge amounts of money that parents have to pay. Unfortunately, these costs seem to be increasing every year.

In today's social context, the repercussions of leaving school without a certificate or diploma are much more costly. The transformation of national economies from goods-producing to solution producing, has created a situation whereby there are less blue-collar jobs that provide suitable cash and task protection to those who leave school prematurely (Rodrick, 2022; Seka, 2012). In addition to financial troubles, previous researches have actually located that those that quit school before completion are most likely to be associated with crime, using illicit drugs, and experiencing wellness and marital problems when compared to those that finish (Lansford et al., 2016; Valkov, 2018).

In many cases, girls leave as a result of very early marriage which ends up not only denying them of their childhood years, but also making their opportunities of making it in life quite depressing. This opens the vicious circle of destitution and makes them at risk to a multitude of wellness, social and economic dangers. It has actually been reported that Uganda maintains a high concern of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) threats such as adolescents getting pregnant and giving birth, with 12% of Ugandan ladies having given birth prior to the age of 18 years (Neal et al., 2015). Girls are more likely to leave school and get married at an early age, with an approximated 34% of ladies in Uganda marrying before their 18th birthday celebration (UNFPA-UNICEF, 2020). The highest occurrence of child marriage is reported in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda is rated 16th among 25 nations with the highest rates of kids getting married (Sunder, 2019). This has detrimental repercussions for the future aspirations of these children, their families and ultimately the whole country, as youngster marriage is very closely connected to damaging health outcomes and absence of educational accomplishment. Marriage in sub-Saharan Africa is set in social standards, customs and economic contexts where the nuclear and extended families of those intending to marry might have an upper hand in the decisions, rather than just two people.

It has been revealed that there is high school dropout / failure rate by children and teens at primary education level, 94% in rural areas contrasted to 77% in the urban locations of Uganda, especially in Busoga area (Nabugoomu, 2019). Stakeholders have been recognized as major influencers of female school dropouts in Uganda's Namutumba Area Schools (Mbeya & Kasiita, 2022).

However, she did not take a look at various other factors/determinants of institution failure. In contrast, Nabugoomu (2019) evaluated the basic factors of school dropout which include poor academic efficiency, failure to handle institution, absence of social skills to handle life's obstacles, very early employment, very early pregnancy, absence of adult treatment and good example, child-headed family members, media influence, substance abuse, poor settlement of educators, hardship among parents, child labour, educational institutions being too far away, household gardening, and absence of school/personal effects. Nevertheless, she was not specific on the level of education whether elementary or secondary.

Uganda has ratified the UN Convention on the Legal Rights of Children, which makes it a legal responsibility for the government to make obligatory the free provision and acquisition of elementary education of good quality for all youngsters. Without a doubt, Uganda was just one of the very first African countries to introduce Universal Primary Education (UPE). Numerous additional institutions were built, teachers trained and tuition fees eliminated (Kakuba et al., 2021). Unfortunately, the majority of those who drop out are girls. If no action is taken, a large proportion of the potential workforce is lost to illiteracy and it will be impossible to achieve the dream of a middle class economy. Further, these girls will go on to become mothers and research shows that uneducated mothers are not only economically less productive but are also unlikely to produce educated future generations: most dropouts come from illiterate families (Corak, 2013; Karacabey & Boyaci, 2018). This will create a vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy.

Following public outcry and efforts by civil society organizations, Uganda has made significant strides in addressing the issue of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy. The Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, in collaboration with the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports, has implemented policies to facilitate the re-entry of girls into school after childbirth (Biryabarema, 2022). The government has worked alongside non-governmental organizations and international partners to ensure the effective implementation of these policies. Special provisions and support mechanisms have been established to create an inclusive and supportive environment, aiming to counter societal stigmas associated with teenage pregnancy (Opok, 2023). Some schools even went to the extent of providing special spaces for breastfeeding (Olukya, 2022). However, this has raised lots of unanticipated challenges including who and how to take care of the babies when the mothers are attending classes (Kyotalengerire, 2023). Many re-entering girls are older than their classmates, a situation that creates challenges for both teachers and students (Ahikire & Madanda, 2011). This study proposes the adult education model as a possible solution to this problem.

The Adult Education Model as a Solution

The traditional educational response to girl-child dropout from school, geared predominantly towards younger learners, often overlooks the unique challenges and needs of mature learners, especially those who have faced significant life events such as pregnancy (e.g., Kabay, 2016; Kabongo, 2018; Nabugoomu, 2019). Recognizing these challenges, the concept of andragogy emerges as a more suitable learning model for these mature students. This is based on the adult education model of andragogy which is characterized by self-direction, utilization of past experiences in learning, readiness to learn, and problem-solving instead of content memorization.

Andragogy, as introduced by Malcolm Knowles in the 20th century, contrasts with pedagogy by focusing on adult learning. Knowles et al. (2015) noted that the adult learner possesses unique characteristics that make his/her learning experiences distinct. These characteristics include: a) Self-direction: Adults prefer being responsible for their learning decisions (Merriam & Bierema, 2018); b) Utilization of past experiences in learning: Adult learners have a reservoir of life experiences that can be tapped into during the learning process (Sandlin, 2017); c) Readiness to learn: Adults are more inclined to learn when they perceive that the knowledge will help them cope with real-life challenges (Taylor & Kroth, 2016, Ross-Gordon, 2017); d) Problem-solving over content memorization: Adults are more problem-centred than subject-centred in their learning (Brookfield, 2017; Smith, & Grace, 2017).

Benefits of Andragogy for Mature Girls in Uganda

Among the key benefits of using the adult learning model for female re-entrants are its relevance, flexibility, motivation, and peer support. The adult learning model can be customized to the real-world situations these girls encounter daily, making the learning process more pertinent to their experiences. Given their possible maternal responsibilities, andragogical approaches can be adjusted to their schedules, offering evening or part-time classes (Cercone, 2016; Wlodkowski, 2018). Moreover, recognizing the immediate applicability of what they are learning can greatly boost motivation (Knowles et al., 2015). The model creates an environment with peers who have had similar life experiences and can enhance the learning process through shared insights and mutual encouragement (Johnson & Johnson, 2016; Pratt, 2018).

By acknowledging and addressing the unique learning needs of mature students, the adult education model provides a promising alternative to the traditional classroom model. Embracing this approach would not only respect and incorporate the experiences and challenges faced by these girls but also create a conducive environment that is tailored to their learning preferences.

Among the benefits of the adult education model for dropout young mothers is that it is built on and benefits from the consideration of their maternal responsibilities and experiences. This is reflected in class scheduling by conducting evening classes or part-time learning models to cater to their maternal responsibilities. Proponents of adult learning have also advocated for on-site

childcare facilities to reduce the barriers to attendance (Martin et al., 2018). Moreover, the adult learning model incorporates and utilizes their maternal and real-world experiences in learning. For example, budgeting exercises used in teaching math can be related to household budget management.

Regarding class scheduling: with the myriad responsibilities young mothers face, traditional school hours can be an impediment to their return. Evening classes or part-time learning models can be more aligned with their daily routines, giving them a better opportunity to continue their education. A study by Johnson and Alexander (2017) emphasized the success of non-traditional class hours in catering to the unique needs of student-parents.

Besides the six assumptions of adult learning, Knowles et al. (2015) also proposed an andragogical model for learning which is process-based in contrast to the traditional content-based one. One of the elements in this model is establishing a climate conducive to learning in terms of physical, psychological, organisational etc. One of the primary barriers to education for young mothers is the challenge of securing reliable childcare. On-site childcare facilities can significantly mitigate this issue. Such facilities have been shown to improve attendance rates and overall engagement among student-parents in various educational contexts (Martin et al., 2018). Offering these services ensures that the learning environment is both supportive and conducive for these young mothers.

Finally, one of the tenets of andragogy is the leveraging of a learner's past experiences. For these young mothers, their maternal and life experiences can be incredibly valuable in the classroom. For instance, integrating budgeting exercises in a math class by drawing parallels to household budget management can make the subject matter more relatable and engaging. According to Parker and Boutte (2019), context-driven curriculum frameworks that draw from real-life experiences can enhance comprehension and application among adult learners.

Hence adopting a learning environment that considers the unique maternal responsibilities and experiences of these young mothers not only provides them with the support they need but also transforms their challenges into strengths, facilitating a more inclusive and holistic learning experience.

Examples of Countries Successfully Implementing the Adult Education Model

The adult education model has been successfully utilized by several countries to tackle the issue of school dropouts. These include Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Brazil, Sweden and New Zealand. In these countries, the adult education model isn't merely a stop-gap solution but can serve as a bridge to higher education and better employment opportunities. Courses tailored for adult learners can prepare them for university entrance exams or provide credits for college. For example, in Canada, many colleges offer 'Academic Upgrading' that enables adults to obtain prerequisites for post-secondary programs (College Sector Committee, 2019). Moreover, adult education often focuses on vocational and technical skills that are in demand.

Thus, graduates can more easily transition to employment or even entrepreneurial ventures. In addition to academic and vocational training, adult education programs often incorporate life skills, financial literacy, and other essential competencies, increasing the employability and life-readiness of participants (Smith & Grace, 2017).

Uganda has implemented adult education models to address literacy and skills development. Adult literacy programs, such as the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) initiative, target adults mainly in rural areas. Additionally, vocational training centres provide practical skills for adults looking to enter or re-enter the workforce. The FAL program has been effectively used in northern Uganda to empower the victims of the brutal Kony war (Akello et al., 2017).

For South Africa, the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) program aims to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of adults. It offers flexible learning opportunities, including part-time classes and workplace training, catering to the needs of adult learners (McKay, 2023). For Nigeria, the National Mass Literacy, Adult, and Non-formal Education Commission (NMEC) in Nigeria works to provide basic literacy education for adults. The government, in collaboration with NGOs, has also launched vocational training programs to empower adults with practical skills (Aroge & Olaniran, 2012). In Ghana, the Ghana Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) runs adult education programs, including functional literacy classes and vocational training. These programs aim to enhance the employability of adults and improve their overall quality of life (Tagoe, 2015).

Brazil: Brazil has long faced challenges with its dropout rates, particularly among disadvantaged communities. The National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (*Programa Nacional de Acesso ao Ensino Técnico e Emprego* or PRONATEC) was established to expand the number of vocational and technical courses available. By 2016, over 9 million people had enrolled, with a significant portion being adults who had previously dropped out of school (Ferreira & Oliveira, 2018).

In Sweden, the country's Komvux (Municipal Adult Education) system is an exemplar of adult learning. Designed for those who have not completed compulsory schooling or upper secondary school, Komvux offers a pathway to both vocational skills and a continuation to higher education. The Swedish government reported in 2018 that about 12% of all participants continued to higher education following their adult education experience (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2018).

In New Zealand, the Foundation Learning initiative is designed to provide foundational skills to adults who lack them, including school dropouts. A study by Ryan and Reid (2016) found that participants not only gained essential skills but also experienced a boost in confidence and were more likely to engage in further education and training.

Implementation Strategy

Before a full-scale adoption, introducing the adult education model as a pilot program in regions with pronounced dropout rates is a prudent approach. Pilot programs offer the dual advantage of testing the feasibility of the model while also demonstrating its potential benefits. Studies such as those by Thompson and Jensen (2018) have documented the effectiveness of pilot programs in informing the larger-scale educational initiatives.

Effective implementation necessitates the collaboration of a diverse range of stakeholders. Among the key stakeholders are: Community Leaders whose influence can help in legitimizing and promoting the program at a grassroots level; and NGOs which have a deep understanding of the local contexts and can offer both resources and expertise in educational initiatives (Garcia & Moreno, 2017); and the Ministry of Education and related government departments whose support is indispensable for the incorporation of the program into the national education system. Garnering their support can be bolstered by presenting success stories from countries such as Brazil, Sweden, and New Zealand, where similar models have yielded positive results.

For effective implementation, continual improvement is the hallmark of a resilient educational model. As the pilot progresses, it's essential to have mechanisms to regularly garner feedback from students, faculty, and other stakeholders. This not only aids in refining the curriculum but also ensures that unforeseen challenges are addressed promptly. Feedback-driven improvements in educational interventions have been underscored as vital for long-term success in studies like the one by Patel and Lee (2019).

Conclusion and Call to Action

The education system, in its very essence, should be adaptable, inclusive, and empathetic to the diverse needs of all learners. For girls who have dropped out of school due to unforeseen circumstances, returning to an environment that doesn't acknowledge their unique challenges can be daunting. Such situations not only hinder their learning experience but can also impact their self-esteem and motivation.

Recent studies underscore this sentiment. According to Brooks and Wilmot (2017), the failure to adapt educational systems to cater to diverse student needs can lead to disillusionment and further drop out. Moreover, the potential of these young women transcends the limitations placed upon them by societal or personal circumstances. As noted by Ogwang and Akello (2018), when given the right resources and a conducive environment, dropouts can reclaim their education, empowering themselves and becoming pivotal contributors to socio-economic development.

The call to action is clear: Uganda, alongside other nations facing similar challenges, must reconsider its approach to addressing the dropout issue. Embracing the adult education model, grounded in the principles of andragogy, provides a promising avenue. As highlighted by experiences from countries like Sweden and Brazil, such a model can bridge the gap, offering not just education

but a renewed sense of purpose to these young women (Johansson & Larsson, 2016). It is time to prioritize the futures of these young women. By adopting a tailored educational approach, Uganda can ensure that every girl, irrespective of her past, has a bright future ahead.

References

- Ahikire, J., & Madanda, A. (2011). A survey on re-entry of pregnant girls in primary and secondary schools in Uganda. *FAWE: Kampala, Uganda*, 28-43.
- Akello, J. A., Lutwama-Rukundo, E., & Musiimenta, P. (2017). Functional adult literacy: An alternative gateway to grassroots women's improved income generation in Lango Subregion, Northern Uganda. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 67(2), 79-96.
- Aroge, S. T., & Olaniran, S. O. (2012). Appraisal of National commission for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education and National Directorate of Employment's programmes towards lifelong learning in Nigeria. *Educational Thoughts*, 9(1), 100-105.
- Biryabarema, E., (2022, February 28). Uganda welcomes young mothers back to school. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/uganda-welcomes-young-mothers-back-school-2022-02-28/>
- Brookfield, S. D. (2017). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. Jossey-Bass.
- Brooks, F., & Wilmot, N. (2017). The role of adaptability in promoting inclusivity in education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 21(8), 839-854.
- Business Focus, (2023, February 1). Parliament to probe increasing primary school dropout rates. <https://businessfocus.co.ug/parliament-to-probe-increasing-primary-school-dropout-rates/>
- Cercone, K. (2016). Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design. *AACE Journal*, 16(2), 137-159.
- Chebet, W., & Ishenyi, P. M. (2023). household-related factors leading to students' dropout from mixed-day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya. *Sch J Arts Humanit Soc Sci*, 7, 187-191.
- College Sector Committee. (2019). *Academic Upgrading and Pathways to Post-secondary Education in Canada*. CSC.
- Corak, M. (2013). Income inequality, equality of opportunity, and intergenerational mobility. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(3), 79-102.
- Etukuri, C. & Kwesiga, P. (2023, April 26). One million children drop out before PLE. *The New Vision*. Retrieved from: <https://www.educationvision.co.ug/one-million-children-drop-out-before-ple/>
- Ferreira, V. A., & Oliveira, A. D. (2018). Programa nacional de acesso ao ensino técnico e emprego (Pronatec) em Mato Grosso do Sul (2011-2015) [National program for access to technical education and employment in

- Mato Grosso do Sul (2011-2015]. *Linguagens, Educação e Sociedade*, (38), 143-167.
- Garcia, M., & Moreno, J. (2017). NGOs in educational development: Their role and impact. *Development Policy Review*, 35(4), 499-515.
- Government of Uganda (2016). *Children (amendment) Act*. Kampala: Government of Uganda.
- Johansson, S., & Larsson, A. (2016). Komvux: A bridge to higher education for dropouts in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 60(5), 534-550.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2016). *Cooperative learning: Making groupwork work*. Interaction Book Company.
- Johnson, M., & Alexander, K. (2017). Non-traditional school schedules: Meeting the needs of student-parents. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(14), 66-72.
- Kabay, S. (2016). Grade repetition and primary school dropout in Uganda. *Harvard Educational Review* 86(4), 580-606.
- Kabongo, K. T. L. (2018). *A missional approach to school dropout in a poor urban area of South Africa* [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation]. University of Pretoria.
- Kakuba, C., Nzabona, A., Asiimwe, J. B., Tuyiragize, R., & Mushomi, J. (2021). Who accesses secondary schooling in Uganda; Was the Universal Secondary Education Policy ubiquitously effective? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 83, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102370>.
- Karacabey, M. F., & Boyacı, A. (2018). Factors Contributing to Secondary School Dropouts and the Dropouts' Socioeconomic Profiles: Sanliurfa Sample = Okulu Terk Eden Ortaöğretim Öğrencilerinin Okulu Terk Etme Nedenleri ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Profilleri: Sanliurfa Örneği. *Educational Administration: Theory & Practice*, 24(2), 247-293.
- Kim, J. & Jun, M. (2022). Money, a drain of educational opportunity: A microregional study of school dropouts in Mpigi, Uganda. *Sustainability*, 14, p. 58-75.
- Knowles, M., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2015). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Routledge.
- Kyotalengerire, A. (2023). Is the policy of allowing teenage mothers to return to school working? *New Vision* (August 02, 2023). https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/report/is-the-policy-allowing-teenage-mothers-to-ret-NV_166679
- Lansford, J. E., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., & Bates, J. E. (2016). A public health perspective on school dropout and adult outcomes: A prospective study of risk and protective factors from age 5 to 27 years. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 58(6), 652-658.

- Martin, L., Brooks, R., & Woolston, C. (2018). Childcare facilities at higher education institutions: The means to ensure academic progression for student-parents. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 24*(1), 45-62.
- Mbeya, A., & Kasiita, M. (2022). Parents' contribution to girl-child dropout of school in Nsinze Sub-county, Namutumba District, Uganda. *Direct Research Journal of Education and Vocational Studies, 4*(7), 218-226. DOI:10.26765/DRJEVS51343023.
- McKay, V. (2023). Adult basic education and training in South Africa. In *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 7* (pp. 285-310). Routledge.
- Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2018). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mussida, C., Sciulli, D., & Signorelli, M. (2019). Secondary school dropout and work outcomes in ten developing countries. *Journal of Policy Modeling, 41*(4), 547-567.
- Nabugoomu, J. (2019). School dropout in rural Uganda: stakeholder perceptions on contributing factors and solutions. *Educ J, 8*(5), 185-203.
- Nafula, J. (2023, February 28). Concern as 1 million children drop out of school before PLE. *Monitor*. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/concern-as-1-million-children-drop-out-of-school-before-ple-4140086>
- Neal, S. E., Chandra-Mouli, V., & Chou, D. (2015). Adolescent first births in East Africa: disaggregating characteristics, trends and determinants. *Reproductive health, 12*, 1-13.
- Office of the Prime Minister (2020). *The Second Voluntary National Review Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Kampala: Office of the Prime Minister.
- Ogwang, T., & Akello, G. (2018). Reintegrating school dropouts: The untapped potential of Uganda's youth. *Journal of East African Studies, 12*(3), 546-562.
- Olukya, G. (2022, January). Uganda welcomes pregnant and mother teenage students back to some schools after reopening. *Anadolu Ajansi*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/uganda-welcomes-pregnant-and-mother-teenage-students-back-to-schools/2483005>
- Opok, S. (2023). Post-COVID school reentry for pregnant girls and young mothers in Ugandan refugee communities: A reality or myth? *Brookings* (October 17, 2023). <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/post-covid-school-reentry-for-pregnant-girls-and-young-mothers-in-ugandan-refugee-communities-a-reality-or-myth/>
- Parker, L., & Boutte, G. (2019). Context-driven pedagogy: Teaching based on students' real-life experiences. *Teachers College Record, 121*(4), 1-28.
- Patel, A., & Lee, H. (2019). Feedback-driven improvements: A path to sustainable educational interventions. *Journal of Continuous Education and Improvement, 3*(1), 16-25.

- Pratt, D. D. (2018). Good teaching: One size fits all? In: *An update on adult learning theory* (pp. 91-100). Jossey-Bass.
- Rodrick, D. (2022). An industrial policy for good jobs. *Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution*.
- Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2017). Research on adult learners: Supporting the needs of a student population that is no longer nontraditional. *Peer Review*, 13(1), 26-29.
- Ryan, P., & Reid, A. (2016). Impact of foundation learning for adults in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 51(2), 211-226.
- Sachs et al. (2022): *From crisis to sustainable development: the SDGs as roadmap to 2030 and beyond*. Sustainable Development Report 2022. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/static/profiles/pdfs/SDR-2022-uganda.pdf>
- Sandlin, J. A. (2017). Adult learning theory, adult education pedagogy, and public pedagogy: Learning in and beyond formal educational settings. *Wiley Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*, 11-22.
- Seka, O. J. (2012). *A study on causes of drop out among girls in selected mixed day secondary schools in Kasarani District, Nairobi County, Kenya*. [Unpublished Master of Education dissertation, Department of Educational Management, Policy and curriculum studies Kenyatta University].
- Smith, R. A., & Grace, S. (2017). The critical role of relevance in adult learning. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 17(5), 57-67.
- Sunder, N. (2019). Marriage age, social status, and intergenerational effects in Uganda. *Demography*, 56(6), 2123-2146.
- Swedish National Agency for Education. (2018). *Adult education and training in Sweden*. Skolverket.
- Tagoe, M. A. (2015). Changing Trends in Adult Education in Ghana: Issues of Policies, Ideology and Learning. In *Global Perspectives on Adult Education and Learning Policy* (pp. 104-118). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Taylor, D. G., & Kroth, M. (2016). Andragogy's detectives: A critique of the present and a proposal for the future. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(3), 171-187.
- Thompson, L., & Jensen, R. (2018). Pilot programs in education: Advantages and pitfalls. *Journal of Educational Strategy*, 41(2), 44-50.
- UNDP (2015). *Millennium Development Goals Report for Uganda 2015*. Kampala: UNDP.
- UNFPA-UNICEF. (2020). Uganda Country Profile: UNFPA-UNICEF global programme to end child marriage. <https://www.unicef.org/media/88846/file/Child-marriage-Uganda-profile-2019.pdf>

- UNESCO (2019). *Meeting Commitments: Are Countries on Track for Meeting SDG 4?* Paris: UNESCO.
- Valkov, P. (2018). School dropout and substance use: Consequence or predictor. *Trakia Journal of Sciences*, 16(2), 95.
- Wlodkowski, R. J. (2018). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults*. Jossey-Bass.