

## **Government of Uganda introduced a Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy in partnership with the Private sector To boost enrolment at the secondary level**

### **Summary:**

In 2008, Uganda's secondary education gross enrolment ratio (GER) was 33. Access to the few secondary schools was limited largely to upper income children in urban areas. The Government of Uganda introduced a Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy to enhance enrolment at the secondary level in February 2007. A fixed per student subsidy was provided to private schools which were contracted.

### **Objectives and Rationale:**

In order to cater to the secondary education needs of the population, the Government of Uganda paid a subsidy for each student enrolled in an eligible private secondary school. Only low-fee private schools that were in areas with limited access to government and/or government aided schools participated in the programme.

### **Key Stakeholders:**

Private schools apply to participate in the USE programme. The Ministry of Education and Sports is responsible for reviewing these applications against the eligibility criteria.

### **Implementation Strategy:**

Students obtaining a minimum score in the primary school leaving examination (PLE) have access to secondary education through this policy. Private secondary schools are paid a subsidy of US\$ 47,000 (INR 1,200) per student per term under the policy. Parents provide students' uniform, stationery and meals.

The implementation of USE began with S1 (equivalent to Class 7 in India) in 2007, and subsequently one standard per year was added to the programme. All four standards of secondary school were covered under USE by 2010. By 2010, almost **a third of the secondary school enrolment was in private schools** running the USE programme. The capacity of private secondary school at 1,785 is also double that of the 1,008 government secondary schools. The grant disbursement by the government requires submission of the annual work plan and budget by the school's board of governors. Further, the operator is also required to submit progress report cards and work plans for the next term. The disbursement and participation in the programme is subject to very strict norms of financial management to ensure accountability.

### **Key Challenges and Lessons Learnt:**

Strict norms of financial management are followed by the Operator to make reimbursements through systematic, robust and transparent processes. Financial management and auditing arrangements must be robust. The focus is on the quality of student learning outcomes while achieving scale.

### **Replicability and Sustainability:**

The programme has shown an impact on its primary goal of increasing access. The number of schools under USE has almost tripled since its introduction in 2007. The programme started with 363 schools and 42,000 students and by 2013, 879 schools were

implementing the USE programme with 8,06,992 students. One of the most significant benefits of USE has been the increase in enrolment of girls from economically weak families, in secondary schools, who previously would have dropped out due to prevailing gender bias and poverty.