

## **Uganda**

### **Poverty Assessment**



Hertie School of Governance

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source: CIA The World Factbook

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**Introduction**

1. Uganda is blessed with a beautiful landscape and therefore called “Pearl of Africa.” But this cannot hide the fact that it is one of the poorest countries in the world being ranked number 143 out of 169 countries in the Human Development Report 2010.

2. This paper gives an overview of the poverty situation in Uganda. It is based on the Uganda Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment 2006 which used data of the Ugandan National Household Surveys between 1991 and 2003. However, this paper has taken updated figures by the Ugandan National Household Survey 2009/10 if available and those of other sources.

3. Uganda is a low-income country with 85 % of its population living in rural areas and being dependent on the agricultural sector. Its government has being made enormous efforts to reduce poverty and can proudly present a poverty reduction of over 50 % between 1992/93 and 2009/10. This is not at least the result of a variety of tools to measure and to monitor the development of poverty and the willingness of the Government to integrate its civil society and to give the poor people a voice. But to enter into a middle-income country remains challenging. Particularly, the Northern region still suffers from its long-lasting civil war with all disadvantages concerning low security and little economic growth.

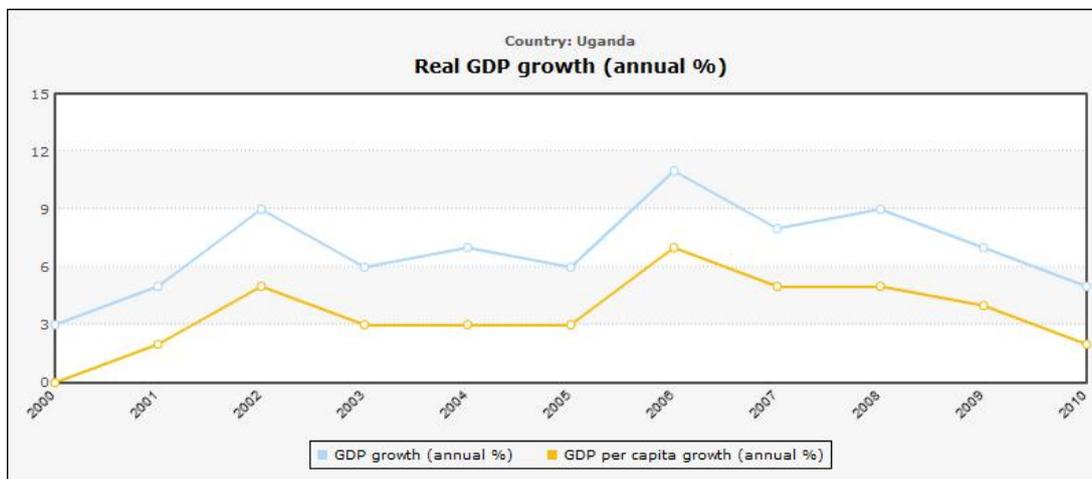
4. Poverty has many dimensions. This paper focuses on some main determinants like income distribution which seems to get more and more unequal, on labor force which increases steadily both in quantity and quality, on health system that provides an ambiguous picture, on education with the highest net primary school enrollment rates of low income countries in Africa, and it provides some information on infrastructure facilities. A short macroeconomic background introduces into the country’s situation.

**Macroeconomic Background**

5. Uganda’s real **GDP growth** rates performed impressively strong and consistent during the past decade. Figure 1 shows that with a decline in 2000 (3 %) and certain peaks from time to time, an average growth of 7.4 % could be achieved. However, a steady decline since 2008 is registered which is based on slight impacts of the international financial market crisis but also on the poor performance of the agricultural sector.

**Fig. 1 Real GDP growth**

source: World Bank Data



6. The GNI/capita in PPP (US \$ 2008) rose steadily but is still lower than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (2.050 USD). But as table 1 indicates, Uganda has a higher **HDI** value than the region which mainly results from higher life expectancy at birth and much higher expected mean years of schooling.

Table 1: Comparison of key human development indicators

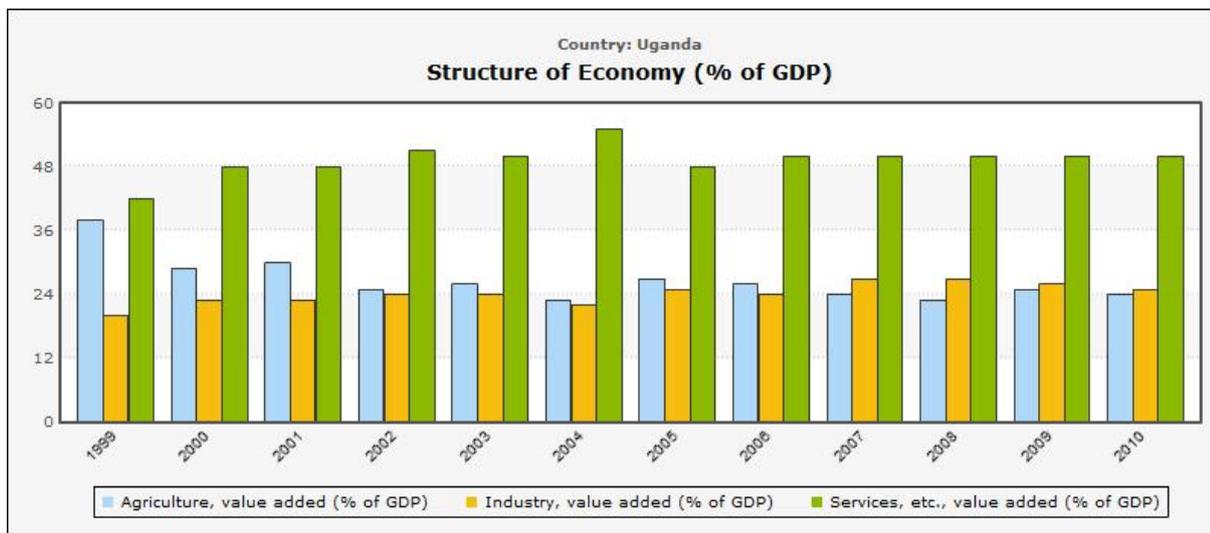
	Uganda	Sub-Saharan Africa
GNI/capita PPP (2008 US\$ PPP), 2010	1,224	2,050
HDI value, 2010	0.422	0.389
Life expectancy at birth, 2010	54.1	52.7
Mean years of schooling, 2010	4.7	4.5
Expected mean years of schooling, 2010	10.4	9.0

Source: UN Human Development Report 2010

7. Although **agriculture** is still Uganda’s most important sector with 81 % of the working population employed and a share of 90 % of all export earnings, the GDP growth is mainly driven by the industry, trade and manufacturing sectors. As figure 2 reveals, the value added of agriculture of the GDP growth declined. The civil disturbances in the Northern area and the deficient land property rights in Uganda contribute strongly to its low productivity. Less internal and external trade of agricultural products resulting from bad weather conditions, outbreak of crop diseases and price fluctuations negatively affected the sector in which the most of the poor people work.

Fig. 2: Structure of Economy

source: World Bank Data



8. A shift towards the **services** sector has taken place. This sector is characterized by many less skilled occupations, being indeed important to absorb surplus labor but not being the driver of economy growth and therefore contributes as well to the declining GDP growth rates. The high annual population growth of about 3.2 % also puts enormous pressure on the economy. But still the average annual GDP growth rates are strong enough to absorb the increasing labor force of 4.7 % on average.

9. **Corruption** is another big issue which strains the economy a lot and which is a great obstacle to poverty reduction. According to Transparency International estimates (Chêne), Uganda loses more than half of its Government's annual budget to corruption each year. The implementation gap between existing and executing anti-corruption safeguards is one of the largest in the world (see figure 3). Despite slight improvements, corruption seems to remain rampant and systematic which hampers domestic growth and foreign investments intensively.

Figure 3: Global Integrity Index

Global Integrity Index: Uganda	
2009 Ratings	
<b>Overall rating:</b>	<b>Weak (69 to 100)</b>
legal framework:	99 to 100
actual implementation:	45 to 100
implementation gap:	<b>Huge (54)</b>

source: Global Integrity Report 2009

## Poverty determinants

10. For measuring poverty in Uganda, a national and a food poverty line are defined based on research work by Appleton, S. (2001). He used the household survey data by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) between 1992/93 and 1997/98 showing the estimates of private consumption per capita. The **food poverty line** focuses on the cost of obtaining 3,000 calories a day for male adult equivalent, which corresponds to the principles of the World Health Organization (WHO 1985), and is valued in real prices. (The poorest 50 % consumed 1,373 calories per person/day, which was then scaled up to generate 3,000 calories (Ssewanyana, 2004).) For the **national poverty line** some non-food spending were added. Considering that 3,000 calories a day are pretty much, the poverty rates would be much lower when calorie requirements would be set to a lower level.

11. Uganda's national poverty line is set at 16,443 Uganda Shillings a month (1993 prices, which corresponds more or less to the US \$ 1,25/day PPP (purchasing power parity)). The food poverty line is set by 11,463 Uganda Shillings.

12. Additional to the "official" national poverty line, poverty lines for different regions are existent as well. This is very helpful to identify those regions which need the most capital investments.

13. Household characteristics are a key factor responsible for people falling into poverty. Large family size, female headship and education level of the family head are major determinants of poverty. The average size of households in Uganda comprises 5 people and has been more or less constant compared to the last survey in 2005/06. Not surprisingly, the households in rural areas are larger than those located in urban areas. The majority of households is headed by men. Polygamy is predominant among the rural population putting pressure on costs and savings, which could easily lead to poverty. 30 % of all households are headed by women. Female-headed households tend to be poorer as the reason for getting family head might be illness or death of husband or emigration and the temporary lack of sending remittances.

**Table 2: Poverty rates**

Location	Population share (%)			Poverty estimate								
				Poverty Headcount			Poverty Gap			Squared Poverty Gap		
	(2002/03)	(2005/06)	(2009/10)	(2002/03)	(2005/06)	(2009/10)	(2002/03)	(2005/06)	(2009/10)	(2002/03)	(2005/06)	(2009/10)
National	100.0	100.0	100.0	38.8	31.1	24.5	11.9	8.8	6.8	5.1	3.5	2.8
Rural	86.2	84.6	85.0	42.7	34.2	27.2	13.1	9.7	7.6	5.7	3.9	3.1
Urban	13.8	15.4	15.0	14.4	13.7	9.1	3.9	3.5	1.8	1.6	1.4	0.6
Central	29.6	29.2	26.5	22.3	16.4	10.7	5.5	3.6	2.4	1.9	1.3	0.8
Eastern	27.4	25.2	29.6	46.0	35.9	24.3	14.1	9.1	5.8	6.0	3.5	2.1
Northern	18.2	19.7	20.0	63.0	60.7	46.2	23.4	20.7	15.5	11.5	9.2	7.3
Western	24.7	25.9	24.0	32.9	20.5	21.8	8.5	5.1	5.4	3.3	1.8	2.0
Central rural	21.6	20.6	17.3	27.6	20.9	13.5	6.9	4.7	3.2	2.5	1.6	1.1
Central urban	8.0	8.6	9.1	7.8	5.5	5.4	1.6	1.1	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.3
Eastern rural	25.3	23.2	27.3	48.3	37.5	24.7	14.9	9.5	6.0	6.3	3.6	2.1
Eastern urban	2.1	2.0	2.3	17.9	16.9	18.7	4.8	4.4	3.2	2.1	1.5	1.0
Northern rural	16.8	16.9	18.1	65.0	64.2	49.0	24.3	22.3	16.6	11.9	10.0	7.8
Northern urban	1.4	2.8	1.9	38.9	39.7	19.7	13.9	11.5	5.1	6.6	4.5	1.9
Western rural	22.6	23.9	22.3	34.3	21.4	23.1	8.9	5.4	5.8	3.4	1.9	2.2
Western urban	2.2	2.0	1.7	18.6	9.3	4.2	4.8	2.0	1.0	1.9	0.6	0.4

source: UNHS 2002/03 and 2009/10

14. Poverty could be reduced steadily and significantly both nationwide and in all regions and areas which can be seen in table 2. The MDG 1 to halve the proportion of people with income less than \$1/day has already been overachieved with a poverty headcount of 56 % in 1992 to 24.5 % in 2009/10.

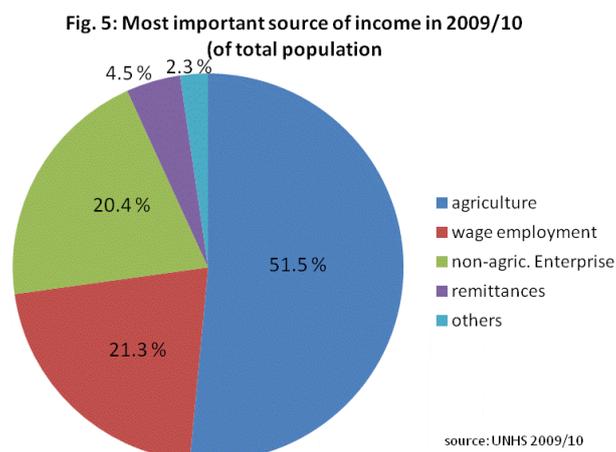
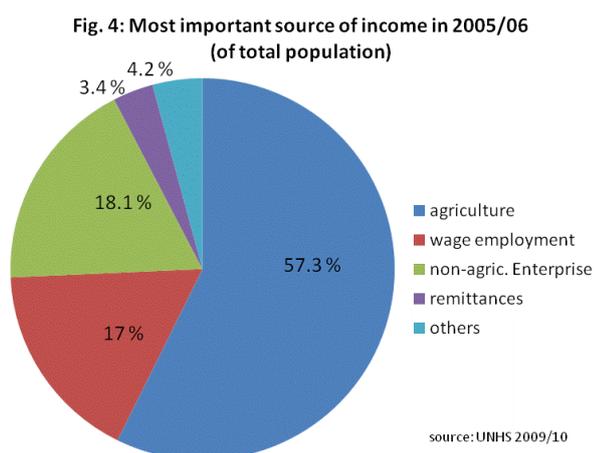
15. There is little chronic poverty in Uganda. For households with heads finding higher paid jobs outside the agricultural sector chronic poverty diminished. However, the agricultural sector remains important as a back-up income. Table 2 also shows that the development of the poverty gap, which measures the mean shortfall of the poor from the national poverty line, could be enormously ameliorated in general. However, a poverty gap of 16.6 % in the Northern rural areas is still cause for deep concern and indicates that those poor people are largely disconnected from economic and social development. Those households that moved out of poverty used to remain near the poverty line.

16. The majority of the poor people is located in rural areas and internal migration decelerated. In urban areas 10 % of the poorest quintile are migrants. The highest poverty rate is found in the Northern region with 46.2 % and here particularly in the countryside, which is impressively far above the national average. With 85 % of the population, the rural areas form 94 % of the national poverty. Expressed in nominal figures it means that 7.1 million out of 7.5 million poor people live in rural areas. But although these figures are still high, a decline of 7 % in rural areas could be gained in comparison to the last household survey in 2005/06 and a slight shift from rural into urban poverty. The least poor people can be found in the Central region. The most powerful reduction in poverty was registered in the Eastern region.

17. The squared poverty gap figures in table 2 show that the severity of poverty could be reduced, too, which indicates that the income distribution among the poor could be advanced.

### Income development and distribution

18. Figure 5 confirms that for 51.5 % of the people the agricultural sector is the most important income source. But compared to figure 4 it shows also the trend in structural change away from agriculture towards wage employment and reveals that the dependence on remittances as income source has increased although only slightly.



19. The most important determinant of poverty reduction is private consumption. Table 3 gives an overview about the mean consumption expenditures per adult equivalent which have been impressively increased since 2002/03. But it also reveals that the overall annual growth rate slightly decreased, mainly driven by the rural population, which is an indicator for decelerating poverty reduction. The urban areas, however, recovered from a decline to an enormous consumption boom during the last survey period. Comparing the consumption development with the poverty reduction trend (table 2), it seems that poverty reduction is more responsive to changes in growth rather than to changes in distribution (see table 4 and fig. 6).

Table 3: Mean Consumption Expenditure per Adult Equivalent

Location	Mean (UGX in 2005/06 prices)			Annual growth rate (%)	
	2002/03	2005/06	2009/10	2002-06	2006-10
National	49,556	55,092	62,545	3.5	3.2
Rural	40,920	47,031	52,467	4.6	2.7
Urban	103,688	99,525	119,552	-1.4	4.6

source: UNHS 2009/10

20. Between 1997/98 and 2002/03 the income distribution has worsened both within rural and urban areas and between them (see table 4), but has more or less stagnated ever since. Uganda is now well embedded in its neighbor countries with Gini coefficients of 0.477 in Kenya, 0.467 in Rwanda. Only Tanzania performs better with a Gini coefficient of 0.35.

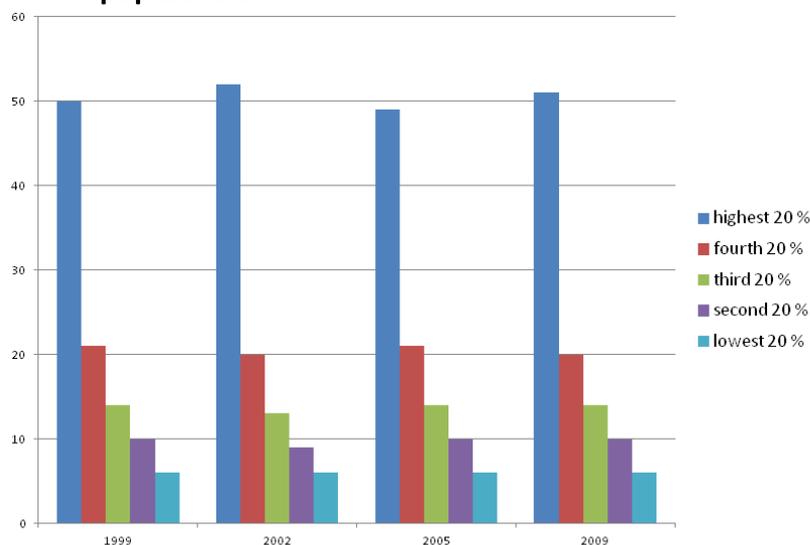
Table 4: Gini coefficient

Location	Gini coefficient				
	1992	1997/98	2002/03	2005/06	2009/10
National	0.364	0.347	0.428	0.408	0.426
Rural	0.326	0.311	0.363	0.363	0.375
Urban	0.394	0.345	0.483	0.432	0.447

source: UNHS 2009/10; Appleton, S. (2001)

21. The income gap between the highest quintile and the others has widened, mainly driven by urban areas (see figure 6). Urban areas provide differentiated and higher paid jobs in the service and industry sectors, which contribute to inequality.

Fig. 6: Income share held by quintiles of total population



source: World Bank Data

22. Further reasons for the rise in inequality are higher education level and smaller family size of richer households in general and particular in urban areas compared to the rest of the population. Young children have a stronger negative effect of household consumption in urban than in rural areas which might be caused by the probability of higher opportunity costs of having children in urban areas. For poor families in urbanized regions it is much more difficult to escape poverty.

23. Education, even a small level of education, however, has strong effects on consumption increase in both urban and rural areas. Research work shows that the likelihood of a household to never become poor rises if household heads and spouses had at least primary education. And if the head has successfully completed secondary school there is a strong negative influence on the likelihood that the household is chronically poor (Lawson, D. et al, 2003).

### **Labor force**

24. 28 % of the working population make their living with at least two jobs in parallel. Most of them are people working in rural areas hypothesizing a higher income level in urban areas. Agriculture remains the major employment sector, however, a slight decreasing trend is visible. 58 % of those who work outside agriculture earn their income in the informal sector. But the private formal sector outside agriculture was the fastest growing sector driven by manufacturing and sales (trade). As formal sector jobs are better paid and deliver more security this growth may be one reason for Uganda's good poverty reduction performance.

25. The quality of the labor force has grown as more people have accomplished secondary education and acquired a trade or technical training. Women gained a lot of the universal primary education and the female labor force with no education fell from 45 % to 29 %. These developments suggest positive impacts on long-run growth and poverty reduction.

26. Child work is a big issue in Uganda. 51 % of children between 5 – 17 years of age have been working in certain ways to support their or their family's income. In these figures seasonal jobs are included, meaning that a certain percentage is still attending school. With regard to the definition of child work provided by the ILO (International Labor Organization), 34 % of the relevant child group is not attending school but working.

### **Access to land**

27. With a population share of 85 % living in rural areas, access to land is highly correlated to vulnerability. Large family sizes have led to declining agricultural landholding per capita. From estimated 2.16 hectares in 1990/91 the figures for 2008 show an average of 0.2 hectares of arable land per capita. The result is land shortage and uneconomic subdivisions. But also limited capacity to farm large areas due to limited use of advanced technology and lack of irrigation systems were reasons for cultivating only small farms.

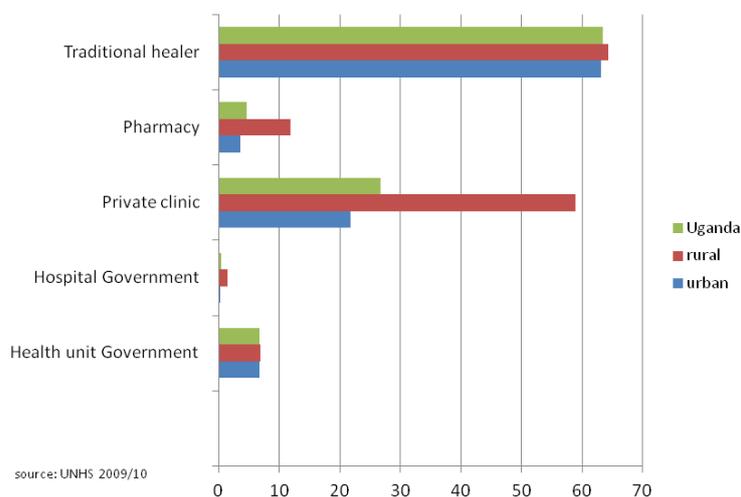
28. The deficient situation of land property rights in Uganda is an important factor for the low productivity of the agricultural sector. Most of the poor households rent land rather than buy it which makes land access easier for poor people. However, the land markets remain largely informal and with no documentary evidence of ownership causing insecurity among the households. Formal rights are written down since 1995 in the Constitution and the Land Act (1998) but implementation is pretty slow due to lack of financial and human resources that has led to a spiral of land conflicts due to a lack of functioning resolution mechanisms within the communities.

29. Women have much less access to land than men due to customs, cultures and traditions, although they account for more agricultural production. Here Uganda is well embedded into its neighbor countries' traditions.

## Health System

30. The Government abolished user fees for public health services and increased professional health training as well as the number of health units. Private clinics and pharmacies have also augmented. But figure 7 shows that traditional healers still play a major role.

Fig. 7: Health Units



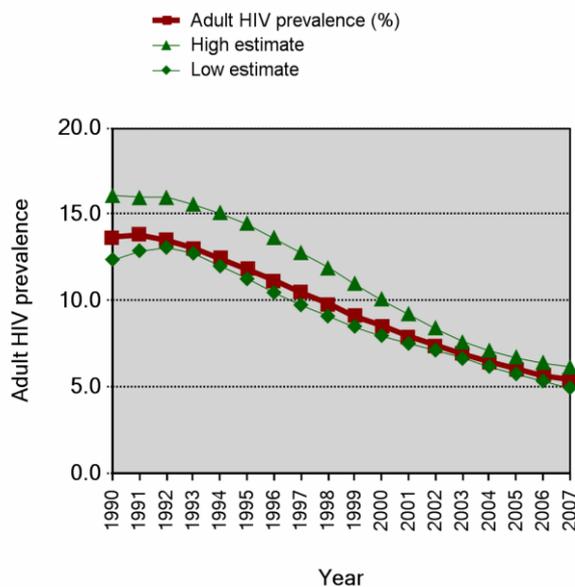
31. Although fees have to be paid for treatment in private clinics and although being located more far-off than public clinics, about 43 % of the population feeling sick have consulted medical care from private clinics in 2009/10. It's obvious that trust into the public health system is not very distinctive. Drug shortages at public health care centers suggest that poor people continue to pay for medicine. Limited skilled and motivated personnel and poor distribution of staff between rural and urban areas also contribute to the low trust level and are the result of the low share of public health expenditure (19 % to the total health expenditures).

32. A national health insurance system is not existent, only a few small community-based insurance schemes could be registered. Therefore, the poor people are highly vulnerable due to unpredictable expenditure shocks for medical treatment and drugs leading to use up savings and to sale assets.

33. In Uganda, Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are the main diseases among ill people, which is typical for developing countries in general. Uganda was one of the first countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with frighteningly high figures of people infected with HIV. This led to the fact that over 1.5 million children have lost their parents only due to **HIV/AIDS** (WHO). But Uganda is also one of the first countries that has made enormously successful efforts to fight the epidemic and could lower its very high infection rates which can be seen in figure 8. One reason is the country wide marketing for condoms which led to a nationwide increase of condom usage from 7 % to about 50 % in rural areas and 85 % in urban areas. Condoms were sold to subsidized prices or even distributed for free accompanied by sex education in school.

**Fig. 8: HIV prevalence**

Estimated adult HIV (15-49) prevalence %, 1990-2007



source: Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS, by WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, Oct 2008

34. The MDG 6 to halt, by 2015, and to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS seemed to have a good chance to be achieved. However, new data of 2010 have revealed deteriorating figures so that the progress has to be observed carefully (MDG Report for Uganda 2010).

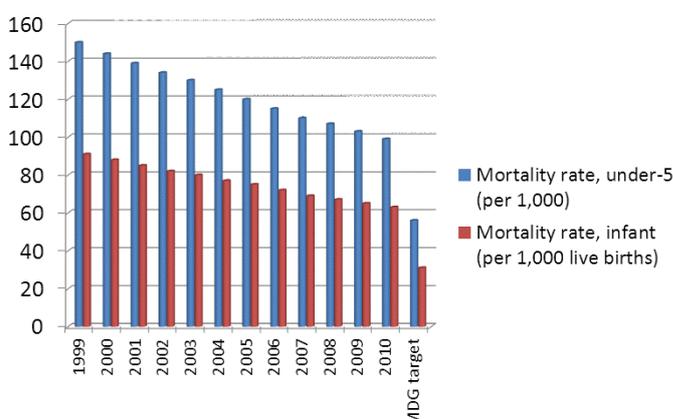
35. **Malaria** is another severe threat with 52 % of the population suffering from Malaria-fever. There is no significant difference between rural (52 %) and urban (51 %) areas. Malaria remains the leading cause of morbidity and mortality. To mention the fact that the increased usage of mosquito nets has led to a drop of 4 % of new cases compared to 2005/06 shows how helpless Uganda is in combating malaria.

36. The prevalence of **Tuberculosis** dropped from 652 per 100,000 in 2003 to 350 in 2008. And incidence could also be reduced from 411 to 310 per 100,000 in the population. If the speed of reduction continues, Uganda will probably achieve the 2015 MDG of a prevalence of 103 per 100,000 in the population.

**Child mortality rate**

37. Figure 9 shows that mortality rate for children under 5 and infants (babies under 1) has steadily but slightly declined. It is well under the average of Sub-Saharan Africa (child mortality rate: 121 per 1000 births; infant mortality rate: 76 per 1000 births (2010, world bank data). Urban areas performed better than rural because the sanitation facilities and nutrition were much better off than in the rest of the country. Most of the deaths derived from Malaria, Pneumonia and neonatal causes being an indicator for insufficient preventive care.

Fig. 9: Child and Infant Mortality Rate / MDG Target



38. Improvements could be observed in vaccination rates which are crucial to reducing infant and child mortality. 46 % of children between 12 – 23 months of age have received full basic vaccination. Both the immunization against Measles and DPT Diphtheria, Polio, Tetanus, had increased from 59 % in 2001 to constant 68 % since 2006. First-born children were more likely to receive full immunization and the vaccination rates in urban areas performed better than in rural areas (UDHS 2006). The figures are strongly associated with the education and income level of the mothers.

39. Also correlated with the mothers' education level are the rates of child survival. The child mortality rate of mothers with primary education was about 12 % lower than of mothers without any education with a strong focus on infant mortality rate (babies under 1 year). The lowest rate of all childhood mortality was found among mothers with a secondary or higher education. As education is associated with higher income it is no wonder, that children of families in the highest income quintile have the lowest chance to die than those of families in the lowest quintile.

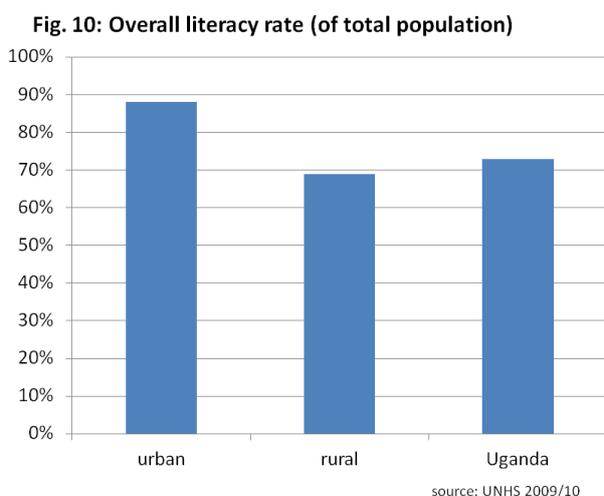
### Malnutrition

40. Another indicator for poverty is of course malnutrition. In 2006, about 16.4 % of the children under 5 years of age were underweighted, and 38.7 % were too small in comparison to the international standard (see UNDHS 2006). And here as well the most suffering children lived in rural areas and in families of the lowest income quintile with a share of 20.6% in comparison to 8.4% of families of the highest quintile.

41. Also important is the nutritional status of mothers which has strong implications to the health of their children. Productivity of underfed women is restricted which leads to lower income; they are highly at risk of infections which has negative implications to their babies through breastfeeding. 18.3 % of women of the lowest income quintile were reported to be malnourished and 4.7 % of the highest quintile (UNDHS 2006).

### Education

42. As figure 10 shows the overall literacy rate has performed well. The main progress could be made in urban areas. Not surprisingly, the Northern territories have the lowest rate (64 %) and Kampala the highest (92 %).

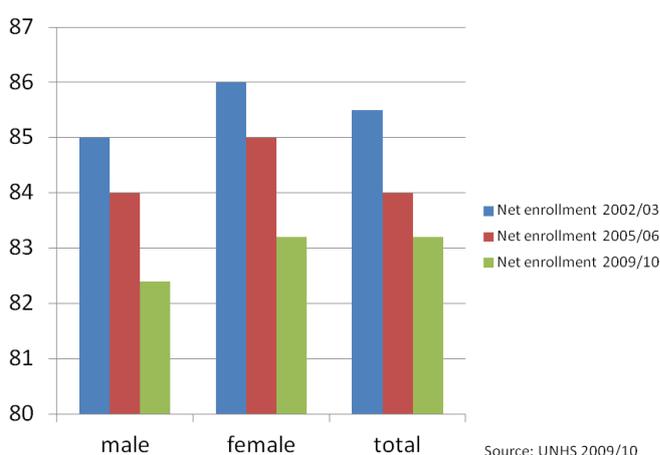


43. The government spent the largest share of its expenditures into the education sector mainly for implementing primary education. The policy reform abolished school fees and uniform constraints for primary and secondary school which were major obstacles for poor families to send their children

to school. Communities have been made responsible for education development plans and together with parents they monitor if all governmental funds reach their destinations.

44. In Uganda, the fundamental human right of education has resulted to a gross enrollment rate of 122 % for primary school. The net enrollment rates, however, have declined for both boys and girls (figure 11). But as data are not available for earlier years, it remains to be seen if the negative trend is a steady one or only preliminary. The main reasons for not attending school were the long distance to school with walking as being the most important mode of transportation, the need to work at home and education costs (boarding, school material). With 9 % of the total household expenditures the cost share for education was pretty high considering that public primary and secondary schools are for free.

Fig. 11: Primary school enrollment ratio (% , gender)



45. Big classroom sizes, teachers' low attendance, low quality of teaching led to drop-out rates of over 27 % in primary education. Salaries for teachers are so low that they have to do at least one job in addition. As staying away from school has no consequences for teachers, a change of situation is unlikely. And it remains to be seen if the gap of the actual and the expected mean years of schooling 2010 (HDI) can really be closed, as 4.7 years of schooling are not enough to increase human capital sustainably.

46. Only 27 % of the children of 12 years of age or older were enrolled in a secondary school with a higher share of boys (30 %) than girls (25 %). Due to the higher private returns after primary school, only a minority decided to stay at school for gaining a better education.

47. Interesting to see is also that the share of children attending private schools rose enormously from 13 % in primary education to 51 % in secondary education. This leads to the assumption that more children of parents with middle to high income choose a way for higher education and select schools of higher quality.

48. For the tertiary education, school fees have been maintained. The enrollment data were very low with an average of 4 % and income gaps being high.

### Infrastructure, water and sanitation

49. Despite some improvements the rural poor lack access to **infrastructure**. Although the Government has pushed the electricity sector, only 6 % of the poorest quintile had access to electricity. Road construction has been limited to certain areas and has failed to link rural areas to local markets which is a big obstacle for developing the value added share of agriculture to GDP.

50. About 64 % (2008) of the rural population had access to an improved **water source** such as household connection, public standpipe, protected well and the like (World Bank). The share of the urban population was incomparably higher with 91 %. This indicates an enormous increase of infrastructure, as in 2001 only 74 % of the urban population had access to improved drinking water sources and 18 % of the rural population.

51. The standard of **sanitation facilities**, however, is in a bad condition. As table 5 indicates, in rural areas there were still 10 % of households without any toilet facility at all but the bush. The worst situation was found in the Northern region with a share of almost 25 %. The majority of people used simple pit latrines both in rural and urban areas.

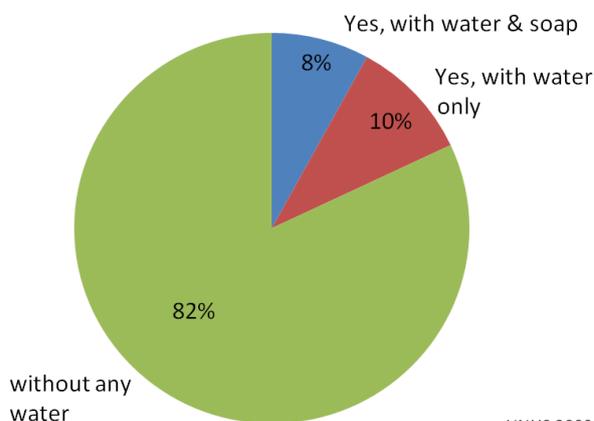
Table 5: Distribution of Households by Type of Toilet Facilities  
(%, in 2009/10)

Location	Bush toilet	Flush	Pit latrine
rural	10.3	0.3	86.8
urban	1.3	10.2	80.0

source: UNHS 2009/10

52. But having a toilet system does not necessarily mean that there is a hand washing facility available. Figure 12 shows that the vast majority of the households used toilet facilities without any opportunity for washing hands, and only very few had access to hand washing facilities with water and soap. As adequate sanitation facilities with hand washing opportunities are the main prerequisites for stemming diseases, a lot remains to be done here.

Fig. 12: Distribution of Households with Hand washing facilities (%)



source: UNHS 2009/10

**Vulnerability**

53. The average Ugandan household remains vulnerable to shocks such as health related issues, high funeral costs, crime, poor access and quality of public and private services and civil war in the Northern region. Limited opportunities for improving their economic situation are a major issue.

54. Highly affected are orphans. In 2009/10 12 % of Uganda's children were orphans due to illness or civil war. Especially in the Northern region, still shattering by civil disturbances, the population is highly vulnerable to face poverty due to lack of security.

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- World Bank: Database [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)