

# Report on Dispatch of Young Researchers to International Organisations

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# Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO)

- Established in 1985. Headquartered in England. Branches and partner organisations in multiple countries.
- Dispatches specialised volunteers (such as teachers and medical professionals) to developing countries around the world (approx. 120 countries) to provide support in areas such as education, healthcare, and livelihood assistance.
- Based on experience and data from countries where VSO operates, it conducts research and evaluation to provide policy recommendations.

# Integrated Programme to Improve Access and Learning Achievements in a Safe Environment (IPALSE)

- Remote teacher training on play-based teaching methods that utilise local resources.
- Targeted at primary schools in remote rural areas of Uganda.
- The training is conducted in a hybrid format, with participants not residing on-site.
  - Participants receive videos and interactive courses on play-based teaching methods, which they download and study offline.
  - They watch videos explaining how to teach mathematical concepts using locally available resources.
  - They receive regular advice from coaches via WhatsApp.
- Funded by UNICEF and implemented by VSO.

# Research Collaboration with VSO Uganda

- The research examines the processes and outcomes of a distance-based in-service teacher training in a low resource context in Uganda.
- The research aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of the teachers who went through the training. It also intends to examine the effect of the training on student mathematics learning.

## **Research questions:**

1. How can locally available materials be utilised in primary mathematics classes in a remote, low-resource context in rural Uganda?
2. Does ICT-based distance teacher training make a change in a way primary teachers teach in the above context, and if so, in what ways?
3. Did primary students learn differently after the above teacher training, and if so, in what ways?

# Research Collaboration with VSO Uganda (Cont.)

## **Methods (quasi-experimental mixed methods research):**

- Student test scores: Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) data of Grade 3 students
- Teacher questionnaire
- Semi-structured interviews with teachers asking teacher attitudes, knowledge and practices of play-based pedagogy, as well as locally made materials
- Pictures of teaching resources made of locally available materials and explanations by teachers and students about how they used the resources in mathematics classes
- Classroom observations by researchers

## **Participants:**

- A total of 24 teachers and around 50 Grade 3 students at 3 primary schools in a remote area of Uganda, who participated in the ICT-supported distance-based teacher training.

# Activities during my assignment

- Discussed the objectives, plans and division of roles for the collaborative research.
- Formulated the research design and developed research tools, including math tests, classroom observation tools, teacher questionnaires, and teacher interview guide.
- Conducted a baseline survey (teacher questionnaires and student math tests), performed initial analysis, and prepared a preliminary report.

# Future activities

- Following the completion of the teacher training, an endline survey will be conducted.
  - second round of student tests and teacher questionnaires,
  - teacher interviews and classroom observations.
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses will be performed on the data collected from the baseline and endline datasets to evaluate the outcome and effectiveness of the IPALSE project.
- An international co-authored paper on the effectiveness of blended teacher training in play-based pedagogy.