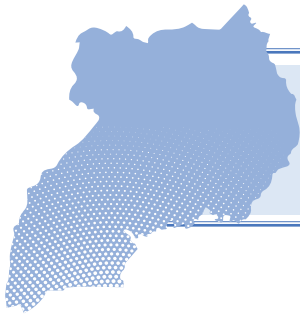




GPE KIX TUSEME – A VOICE FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) AND REFUGEE CHILDREN.



UGANDA: PHASE 2 RESEARCH FINDINGS (APRIL 2025 TO JUNE 2025)

Background

Tuseme” in Kiswahili means ‘let us speak out’. Established in 1996, Tuseme clubs have been scaled in schools across Sub-Saharan Africa with significant impact. Tuseme has achieved impact in mainstream schools, in conjunction with two additional FAWE gender focused models: Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) and Centres of Excellence (COE).

The GPE KIX: Tuseme – A voice for internally displaced and refugee children project is a partnership between the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the Higher Education Resource Services – East Africa (HERS-EA), and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), UK. This 3-year (April 2024 to March 2027) multi-country study was implemented in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, under the Global Partnership for Education’s Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX) program.

This study explored the scalability of FAWE’s Tuseme gender empowerment clubs from mainstream school settings into refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) communities by researching enabling and disabling factors of the current model, in conjunction with FAWE’s Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) and Centres of Excellence (COE).

Boys and Girls in Tuseme Club in Uganda



The project includes six phases, ranging from examining enabling and constraining factors in mainstream schools, conducting scoping studies in refugee and IDP communities, developing and piloting an adapted Tuseme model, evaluating its impact, and disseminating final learnings.



Though it is changing, still a lot of awareness needs to be done to the community on how the girls, how equality can be achieved and how this equality can be of good benefit to the whole community.”



This Country Summaries summarises findings from the Phase 2 scoping study in refugee settlements in **Uganda**. The study explored how the Tuseme model could be adapted to best support the needs of students, both girls and boys, in refugee and internally displaced communities.

Overview



The aim in the Phase 2 research was to conduct a scoping study in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugee settings to better understand key enabling factors, barriers, and limitations to the successful adaptation and scaling of the “Tuseme” model.

Methodology



Data were collected with a combination of strategies including document reviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with school children, teachers, school management and administration, parents, local government authorities, and NGO partners. The research project purposively selected two districts of Kamwenge in Western Uganda and Adjumani in Northern Uganda. The districts were selected because they host many refugees population with Adjumani as of August 2025, reported to host approximately 231,671 and more, according to UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister.

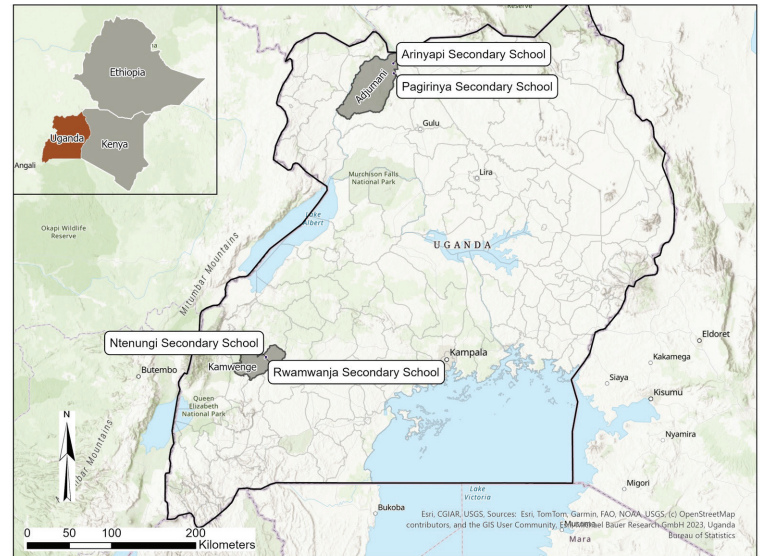
In line with the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework (4.1.2) focusing on scaling research outputs presenting insights on how to scale the impact of education innovations, this info-graphic shares enabling and disabling factors for uptake of Tuseme in refugee and IDP contexts.

231,671

The districts were selected because they host the number of refugee population with Adjumani as of August 2025, reported to host approximately 231,671 and more, according to UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister.



Figure 2: Map of UGANDA showing Location of Schools Sampled.



Key Findings and Messages

Key Findings



- **Key findings from the four schools** identify major obstacles and challenges to enhancing self-esteem, leadership and social and life-skills for girls and boys among internally displaced and refugee communities in Uganda.



- **Notably, negative attitude towards girl's education** that stem from deeply ingrained social, socio-cultural beliefs devaluing girls, prioritizing boy's education, and societal expectations for girls to focus on domestic roles and early marriage and are reinforced by issues such as:



poverty,



teenage pregnancy,



low level students' understanding due to trauma,



and rampant child abuse, make it difficult for the realization of the provision of access to and quality education for the internally displaced and refugee children.

Key Messages



- **Promoting a conducive learning environment** is likely to influence access and retention in education for girls and marginalised communities.



- **Advocating for more parental engagement** could be a pivotal determinant of school success



- **There is a need for greater alignment between NGOs, ministries, and community interventions.**



- **The need for follow-up support, policy translation tools, and shared monitoring frameworks is emphasised.**



- **Recruiting and training more teachers** can importantly enhance the adaptation of innovations and the quality of education.



- **Cultural and traditional beliefs and practices** significantly affect not only access and retention of children in schools but also the adaptation of innovation in schools as well.

Justification of this Study

- 1 **Access and retention for girls** and marginalised learners remain inadequate in Uganda.
- 2 **Major barriers include financial constraints**, overcrowded and poorly resourced schools, and rural–urban disparities.
- 3 **Child marriage, teenage pregnancy**, and child labour continue to pull children, especially girls, out of school.
- 4 **Evidence from Tanzania and Malawi** shows Tuseme improves academic performance, reduces dropouts and pregnancies, and positively shifts attitudes.
- 5 **These successes highlight the need to research and adapt the Tuseme model for Uganda's** refugee and IDP settings.

Phase 2 Schools sampled in Uganda

209

A total of **209 participants** were engaged across four secondary schools: Pagirinya Secondary School and Arinyapi Secondary School in Adjumani District, and Rwamwanja Secondary School and Ntenungi Secondary School in Kamwenge District (Table 1).



10

Participants were drawn from **10 stakeholder categories**, including students, teachers, parents, PTAs, BOG/PTA representatives, para-social workers, camp leaders, and national and local government officials in each of the four Uganda schools.



GPE KIX TUSEME
A Voice For The Internally Displaced and Refugee Children
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
28th August 2016

Table 2: Uganda: Participants by category, Secondary School (SS) and gender

Participant category	Pagirinya S.S.		Arinyapi S.S.		Rwamwanja S.S.		Ntenungi S.S.		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Students	11	10	10	10	10	9	8	8	76
Teachers	5	4	0	6	4	3	3	6	31
Parents	5	5	3	4	3	3	3	3	29
PTA	4	5	4	5	3	3	2	4	30
BOG/PTA	0	5	2	3	4	3	3	0	20
Para-social workers	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	8
Camp leaders	2	4	0	0	0	0	3	2	11
National Officials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Local Government Officials	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Total	28	34	19	29	24	21	24	28	209

Recommendations and Implications for Adaptation: UGANDA



1) Pervasive Poverty & Material Needs:

Challenge: Financial strain and lack of basics (**sanitary pads, school materials**) directly impact participation, often forcing students out of school (Pagirinya, Arinyapi, Rwamwanja, Ntenungi).

Adaptation: Tuseme must integrate with or link to **material provision programs** (e.g., sanitary pad making in clubs). This offers tangible benefits and eases financial pressure, aligning with Parkes et al. (2016).



2) Entrenched Cultural & Gender Biases:

Girls are perceived as **marriage assets**, boys' education and leadership are preferred, and **early/forced marriages are common**, hindering girls' agency (Pagirinya, Arinyapi, Rwamwanja).

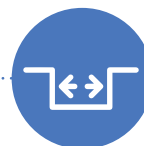
Adaptation: Tuseme needs active community sensitisation (Ntenungi), **engaging influential figures (faith leaders, mothers, BOGs) to shift mindsets**. It must leverage "safe spaces" (Bali & Mbise, 2018) to empower girls to challenge norms.



3) Psychosocial Impact of Displacement:

Trauma, absenteeism, and low motivation from conflict/displacement are prevalent. Teachers are often overwhelmed and untrained to provide adequate support (Pagirinya, Rwamwanja, Ntenungi).

Adaptation: Tuseme must integrate **robust psychosocial support, delivered by trained staff or mental health partners**. This creates a therapeutic space where learning and agency can thrive despite distress.



4) Resource & Infrastructure Gaps:

Overcrowded classes, lack of dedicated club budgets, and insufficient materials for hands-on activities demotivate students and hinder club effectiveness (Arinyapi, Rwamwanja, Ntenungi).

Adaptation: Tuseme requires **practical resource provision and systemic support** for club activities, including teacher training and financial/logistical aid. This addresses the "fragmentation and poorly aligned curricula" (Tikly et al., 2020).

Key Insights & Adaptation Implications:

Key Message: Based on comprehensive cross-country findings

The following recommendations propose strategic adaptations for the Tuseme model. They aim to **enhance its effectiveness, reach, and sustainability in IDP and refugee communities** across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

Core Focus Areas for Adaptation:

01 Integrate Basic Needs & Holistic Support



02 Contextualize Curriculum & Facilitation



03 Strengthen Teacher Capacity & Incentives



04 Cultivate Multi-Scalar Engagement & Collaboration



05 Advocate for Policy Integration & Sustainable Resource Allocation



06 Prioritize Institutional Memory & Sustainability Mechanisms



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