

Education Quality Improvements in Bushenyi

USAID, through UPHOLD, supported training in Cooperative Learning for teachers and in Education Management for Head Teachers and Deputies in Bushenyi District between August 2004 and January 2005. The training was conducted in phases; 40 primary schools were trained first, followed by another 40 schools. In total, 160 Head Teachers and Deputies and 80 primary schools participated.

Many of the teachers are applying cooperative learning techniques in the classroom. Overall, teachers are enthusiastic about the differences they see in their pupils. "It has been wonderful to see pupils succeeding in doing activities together. I also want to be seen teaching a cooperative learning lesson," a teacher described.

An innovative partnership between the district education team and Coordinating Primary Teacher's College (CPTC) produced monitoring tools. This collaboration has identified the need for deliberate monitoring of hard to reach areas in the district. CPTC staff and district education team now coordinate to serve these areas. Head Teachers, Deputies and teachers alike appreciate this collaboration between CPTC staff and the district education team that resulted in strengthened support and cohesive mentoring.

As one teacher explained, "Cooperative Learning is good, but it will be taxing for the teachers in terms of planning. But, we are now getting used to using the 3Ps which is less confusing than the phases that we have been using in our planning."

Mentoring has built capacity in teachers to apply cooperative learning techniques in the classroom with specific skills that make the techniques easier to use. Teachers acknowledged that the need for planning before class was one of the main resistances to fully adopting cooperative learning techniques. In response, mentoring is assisting teachers to structure cooperative learning activities in any given topic and plan lessons using the 3Ps principle. With the 3Ps principle, planning is simplified, making new cooperative learning methods easier to adopt.

Supervision has revealed that Head Teachers and Deputies who participated in the trainings are more confident and competent leaders. They are able to make and use school-based workplans, demonstrate improved time management, display better recordkeeping. Team building is visibly taking root in their schools.

Despite concrete achievements, challenges for full adoption of the new skills and techniques remain. The district is working with partners to address these challenges.

