Who leaves school prematurely in Uganda: do predictors vary by place of residence?

Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education in 1997. As a result, primary school enrolments increased from slightly over 3 million in 1996 to close to 5.3 million in 1997. Relatedly, the net enrolment rate at primary rose from 85% in 2002 to 96% in 2016 (Ministry of Education & Sports, 2017). However, the primary education sector has been characterised by deteriorating indicators of internal efficiency, declining quality and dropouts partly due to enrolment shocks. Indeed, survival to the end of primary has averaged about 30% in the past one decade (Ministry of Education & Sports, 2017) vindicating high dropouts. The shocks have systematically eliminated some children in some households and this seems to vary by residence.
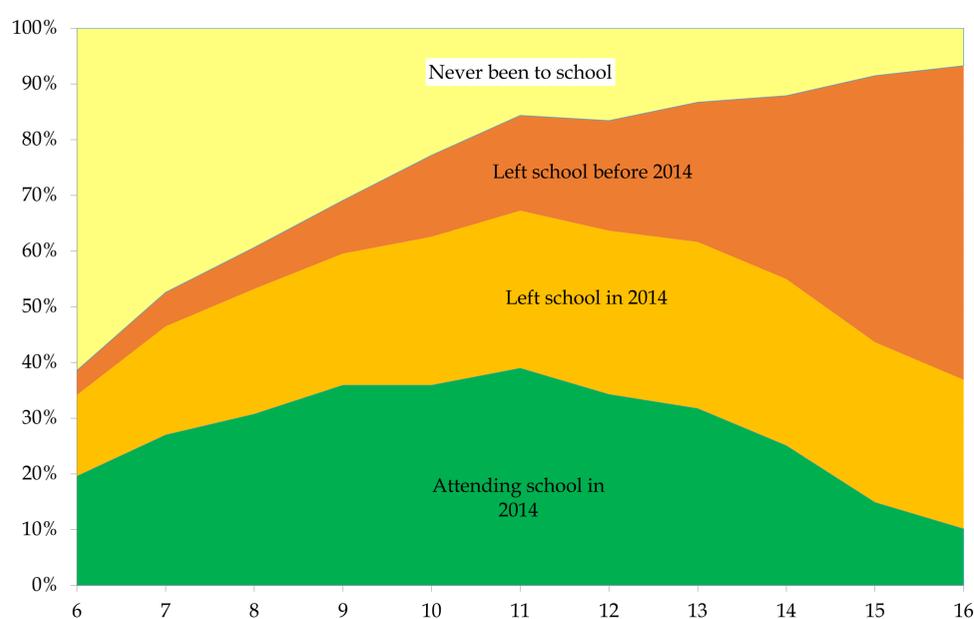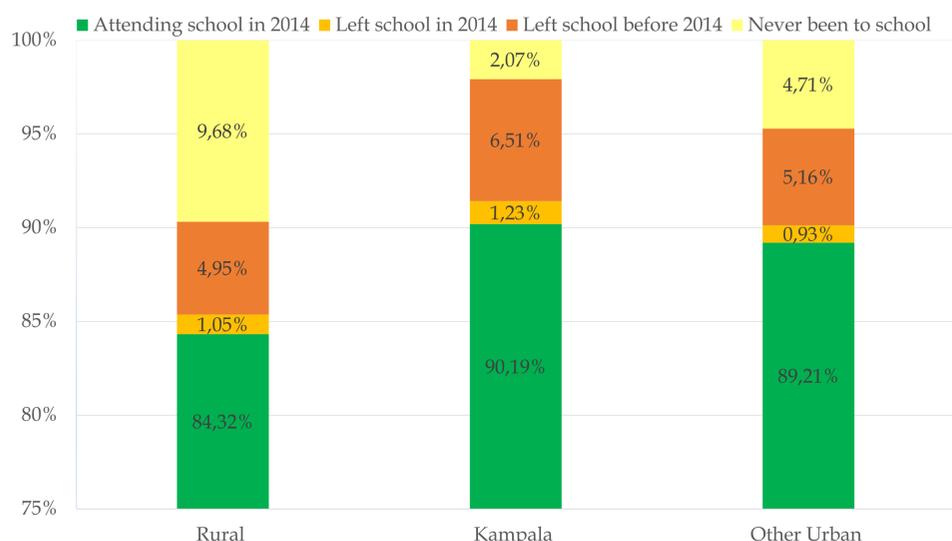
Objectives
Isolate demand factors predicting school dropouts for children (6-16 years) in Uganda by residence. Explore effect of supply factors on school dropouts

Sources
Uganda Population and Housing Census Data-2014
EMIS Data from 2014 Statistical Abstract

Methods
Logit Model to predict dropouts for i) Kampala ii) other urban areas and (iii) Rural areas
Target Population : Children aged 6-16
Binary outcome: Left school versus attending in 2014

1. School dropouts are exacerbated by age

Figure 1: School attendance status for children aged 6-16 Years

2. Predictors tend to vary by place of residence

Whereas the probability of non-enrolment declined with age, school dropouts, especially before 2014, worsened as children grew older (figure 1). School attendance status varied by residence (figure 2) and so did predictors for dropouts. Indeed, while older children were more likely to have dropped out overall, orphans and disabled children were more disadvantaged in the rural and other urban areas and not in Kampala. Girls were also less likely to have left school than boys but only in rural Uganda. Besides, while relatives and non relatives were more likely to drop out in rural Uganda, this only affected nonrelatives in Kampala. Children under more educated heads were less likely to drop out in rural Uganda and other urban areas except in Kampala. While children under catholic heads were more likely to dropout of school generally, the ones under female heads were disadvantaged in other urban areas and rural Uganda but not in Kampala. The wealth status of a household strongly predicted school attendance except in Kampala. Increased distance to the nearest private primary school explained dropouts in Kampala and other urban areas but not in rural Uganda where this was more explained by increased distance to the nearest public primary school. An increase in primary school age population predicted dropouts in only the rural and other urban areas pointing to inadequacy in supply of education space in these areas.

Figure 2: School attendance status by residence

Conclusion
Because of variations in:-geography, population composition, nature of economic activity, supply of education and levels of commitment of local government authorities in school supervision, the extent and factors affecting dropouts were found to vary by place of residence.

Policy Implications
Efforts by Policy ought to be targeted to enhance school retention for different types of children located in different areas

Reference
Ministry of Education & Sports (2017). *The Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report, Financial Year 2016/17.*

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