PROMOTING CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE IN UGANDA

A study on children's safety online and guide to enhance their safety

Encrypt UGANDA

digital HUMAN RIGHTS lab

german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by: giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About Encrypt Uganda

Encrypt Uganda is a registered Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) focused on securing information, data, and strengthening internet freedoms of human rights defenders, activists, and vulnerable populations in Uganda. The organisation offers preventive real-time solutions and seeks to strengthen the safety and security of individuals at risk by building their capacity with a view of equipping them with knowledge and skills to better protect themselves against digital security threats.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As the Covid-19 pandemic ravaged many parts of the world, Uganda moved to close all primary and secondary schools, and other higher institutions of learning – including universities on March 20, 2020. In a national address, President Yoweri Museveni noted on March 18, 2020 that it was important to temporarily disperse the 'concentration points to prevent the spread of coronavirus.' As a result, almost 15 million children in Uganda were affected by school closures due to the pandemic.

The indefinite closure of schools triggered the urgent need to find alternative ways to keep the pupils and students learning without being together in a physical class or lecture room. Some of the approaches adopted include distribution of home learning kits in hard copies and through emails and social media platforms, conducting lessons and lectures on Zoom and other conferencing applications, and class lessons on radio and television sets. Available literature review indicates that these changes have presented a number of challenges. For example, many pupils, students and schools are without reliable access to computers, smartphones, tablets, and stable electricity and internet access. As a result, there is a significant gap between those from privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds. Indeed, many are concerned that the pandemic will widen the digital divide.

Accordingly, as part of the organization's 'Children's Online Safety Project', Encrypt Uganda sought to understand the state of children's safety online in Northern and Eastern Uganda as they navigate the dramatic change to online learning. The assessment will further guide Encrypt Uganda on the implementation of the children's online safety project in the two regions to ensure that the project addresses the needs of the pupils and students.

With the support of the Digital Human Rights Lab under a funding agreement with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Encrypt Uganda conducted in-depth one-on-one interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to inform the assessment of the prevailing situation to assist in providing recommendations on addressing identified gaps.

The research study aimed to learn experiences of children, parents/guardians, teachers and schools during the rise of e-learning specifically in regard to children's safety online. The researchers achieved this by examining the preparedness of stakeholders, how they are adapting to the technology, and assessing the various threats and harm faced by children as a result of the online learning.

This study report uses the findings from the research to provide strategic guidance to children, parents/guardians, teachers, schools, and the government of Uganda in promoting children's safety as they increasingly engage in online learning. It identifies the key issues of concern and sets out a recommended strategy for stakeholders aimed at enhancing children's safety online.
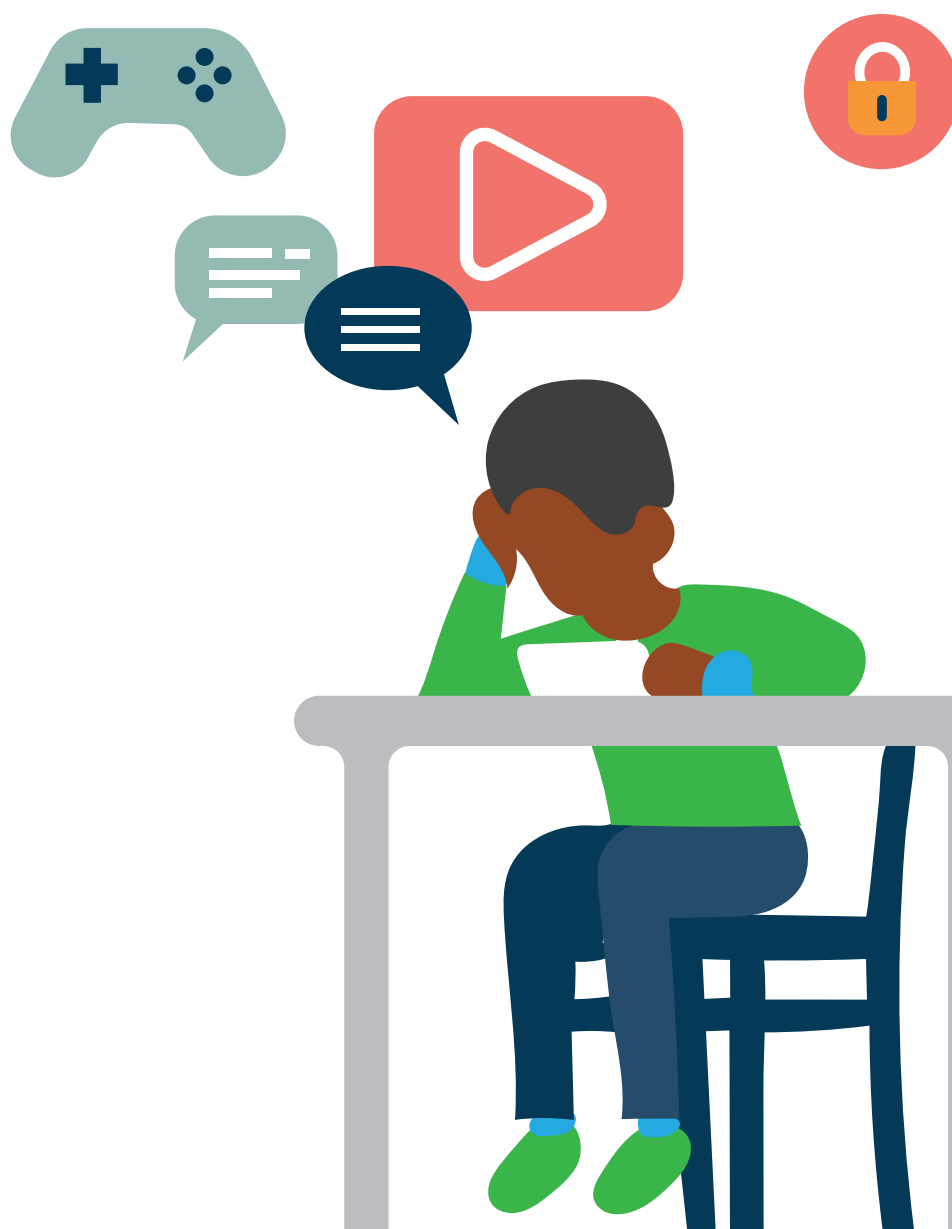
II. METHODOLOGY

This report is based on one-on-one interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Desk research was also conducted to appraise relevant literature and identify links to helpful resources for the stakeholders for purposes of the recommendations section of this report.

A total of 162 children (46 pupils and 116 students) from 20 schools were interviewed for the one-on-one interviews. 52.4 percent of the respondents in the one-on-one interviews were male while 47.5 percent were female.

40 teachers in the identified schools were further engaged in key informant interviews and their feedback forms the basis for this report. In addition, the findings are further complemented by outcomes of 8 focus group discussions with 40 parents.

All the field data collection activities for this research were conducted in the month of March 2021.

Geographically, the research was conducted in Northern and Eastern regions of Uganda in the 8 districts of Gulu, Soroti, Jinja, Arua, Tororo, Lira, Mbale and Moroto.

The report also draws on available literature on online learning in Uganda and reporting on children's safety online. While almost 15 million Ugandan pupils and students were expected to be engaged in online and remote learning from March 2020, there is a significant gap in the available scientific information about experiences of the dramatic change in which education is being conducted.

All interviews and discussions were conducted in English language. Encrypt Uganda researchers presented introduction letters to all respondents, explained the purpose of the interviews to the interviewees and purpose of the discussions to the participants, and obtained their consent to use the information they provided in this report while observing privacy and confidentiality protections.

The 40 parents who participated in the 8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were recruited into the survey through a head-hunting process with the help of local government leaders given the fact that they know the parents in their localities. The findings of the FGDs were obtained through discussing various research questions while note taking.

III. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

1. **30 percent of the 162 children interviewed for this research reported suffering abuse and threats online.** The top online threats the children reported facing are as follows:

   a. **Exposure to inappropriate content:** Many children who suffered abuse online reported being sent nude pictures, pornographic and obscene messages with vulgar language.

   b. **Online predators:** Children also reported receiving Facebook friend requests from strangers (adults) who later started sending them nude photos, intimidating messages, and threatening phone calls with an intention of enticing them for sexual and other forms of abusive exploitation. Some of the friend requests were of accounts that appeared to be of the same gender with the child, especially female, only for it to be clear later that the account belongs to the opposite gender.
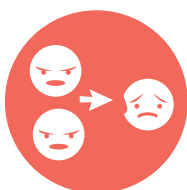
   c. **Cyberbullying:** The children who reported suffering from cyberbullying recounted receiving abusive comments on their photographs on Facebook and receiving threatening messages and calls for liking and commenting on photos on some Facebook. A boy reported being scolded by his peers for sharing a picture where he was standing with a girl.

2. **There is a high illiteracy level on children's safety online among the children, teachers and parents/guardians.** Whereas 100 children (62 percent) say they know something about children's safety online and only 62 children (38 percent) interviewed for this research say they do not know anything about children's online safety, most of them fail to identify the core aspects of children's safety online as elaborated in the notes in the appendices.

3. **The majority 115 children (71 percent) believe online studies are helpful in bridging the gap.** However, 47 children (29 percent) interviewed for this research do not believe that online studies can be a better approach to bridge the learning gap.

4. **Many children did not receive tips on how to use the internet safely.** While 88 children (54 percent) interviewed for this research note that teachers or parents provided them with some safety and security measures on using the internet during online studies, a significant percentage of 46 percent (74 children) said they were not guided or advised on how to safely use the internet when they started using the internet during the online studies. These findings were almost similar when asked whether they received any 'capacity building' on attending online studies from either their parents or teachers. 83 children (52 percent) said yes while 79 (49 percent) said no.

5. **The majority of the children note that their parents were supportive towards online studies.** 122 children (75 percent) felt their parents provided the necessary support that was within their means while 40 children (25 percent) felt they did not receive the support they expected from their parents in their quest to attend studies online.

6. **The majority of the children interviewed for this research (123 representing 76 percent) noted that they have never participated or heard of any awareness campaign on children's safety online.** Only 39 children (24 percent) have heard or participated in some form of awareness sessions on how to safely use the internet during online studies.
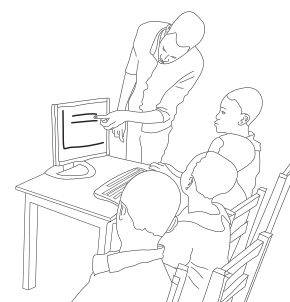
7. **Children do not feel safe online while attending to online studies.** During the research, 88 children (54 percent) observed that they do not think their safety is guaranteed online while 74 children (46 percent) said they generally feel safe. Out of the 40 teachers interviewed for this research, 31 noted that they do not think children's safety online is guaranteed during online studies. The research further indicates that the majority of children are in favour of controls and restrictions for their safety online.

8. **Despite the challenges and gaps identified above, the majority of the children interviewed (73 children representing 45 percent) recommend continuous teaching online studies given the circumstances.** 26 children 'strongly recommend' the online studies while 11 children noted that they were 'not sure' whether online studies should continue. Despite the generally positive feedback, it is concerning that a significant number of the respondents (52 children representing 32 percent) 'don't recommend' online studies.

9. **Despite the high vulnerability levels, few children suffered online abuse while attending online classes.** 113 children (70 percent) noted that they did not suffer any form of online threats or abuse while 49 children (30 percent) reported suffering from various forms of threats and abuse online. When teachers were asked about cases of online abuse reported by the children, the number was lower. Only 7 teachers (17 percent) are aware of reports of abuse online while 33 teachers (82 percent) are not aware of any reports of abuse online suffered by pupils/students. Most teachers (27 out of 40) do not know the referral pathways in case of cybercrimes.

10. **A significant number of schools do not have any rules in place on children's safety online.** Whereas 88 children (54 percent) confirmed that their schools have some form of rules to guide and protect them online, 75 children (46 percent) observed that they were not aware of any of such rules. Out of the 40 teachers interviewed for this research, 18 noted that there were no 'precautionary measures' put in place to protect children from online threats and abuse during online studies.

11. **The government has not put in place necessary measures to protect children during online studies.** Out of 40 teachers interviewed for this research, 36 noted that the government has not taken necessary steps to protect children online. 'There is no measure or effort that I can think of,' noted one of the respondents.
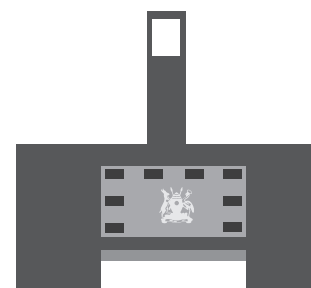
12. **Several schools are moving to integrate cyber security module in their curriculums.** Out of the 40 teachers interviewed for this research, 25 noted that there are plans in their schools to introduce cyber security classes to educate the pupils and students on how to secure their activities online and protect themselves from attacks. 'We have plans but don't have the means. We need to have enough computers and internet,' noted a respondent during key informant interviews.

13. **Most of the schools did not conduct refresher trainings for teachers on safety of children online even as they looked to scale up education activities on the digital platforms.** Out of 40 teachers interviewed, only 9 confirmed that their schools conducted refresher trainings for teachers to prepare them to safely interact with the pupils/students and guide them accordingly. 31 teachers noted that they were never trained. 'Only computer teachers are called for trainings organized by the government at the National Curriculum Development Center annually,' noted a respondent.
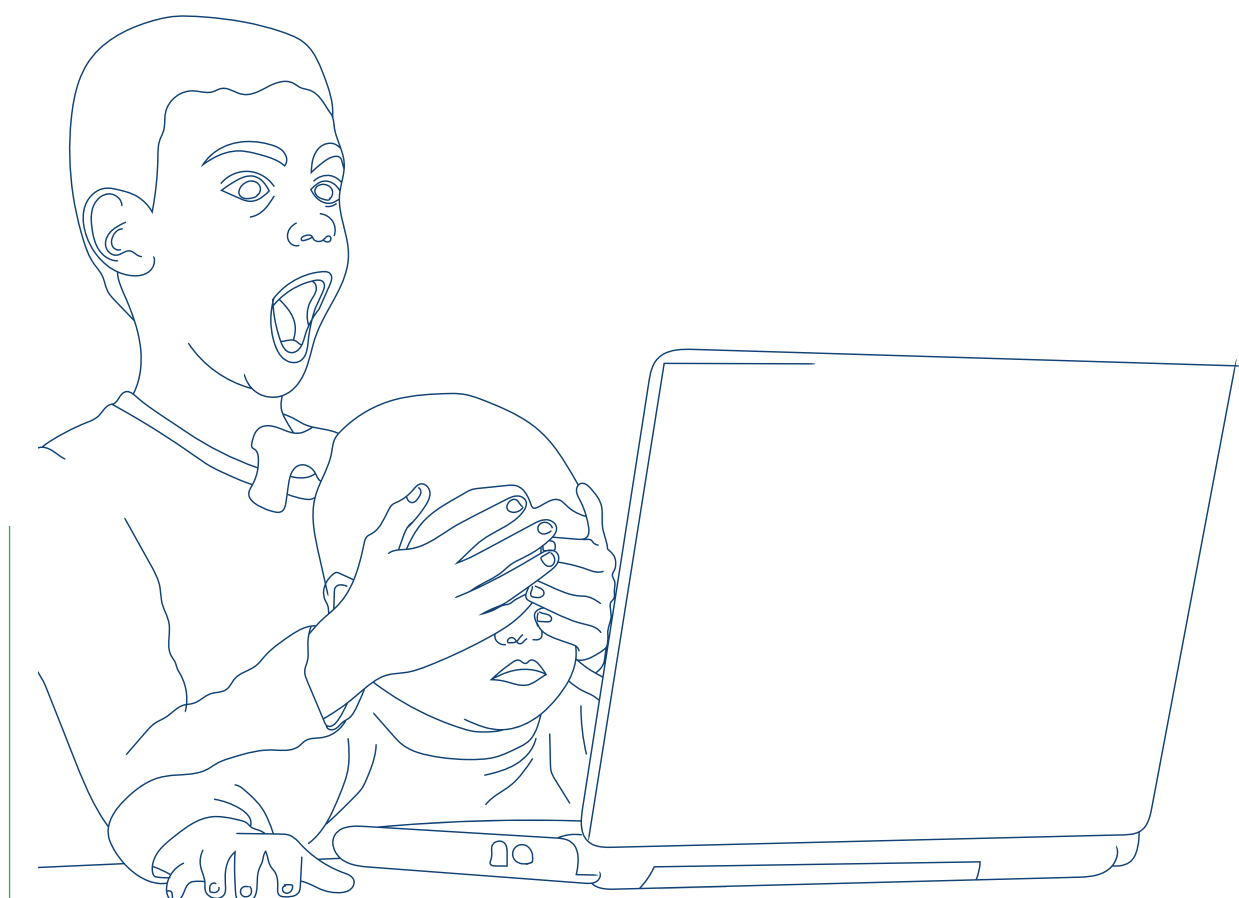
IV. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The research findings indicate that children, teachers, schools, parents/guardians, and the government are engaged in a number of activities that are not strategic and adequate in terms of ensuring the enhancement of children's safety online. For instance, whereas some computer teachers are trained by the government on online learning, most of the sessions are focused on how to use the computer and other tools of digital learning and little or no focus is placed on how to ensure children's safety online. Digital security awareness is also shallow and does not address crucial needs. In this section of the research, Encrypt Uganda proposes five strategies that are designed to guide stakeholders to ensuring safety of children online.

1. **Invest in digital equipment for all children:** Research shows that children who have regular and easy access to digital tools and platforms are bound to be more tech-savvy and therefore more likely to navigate online spaces safely. In addition to bridging the digital divide between privileged and disadvantaged children, the investment will also provide equipment for hands-on digital security sessions.

2. **Ensure all devices are set up safely:** It is recommended that all devices of children are set up using the child's accounts. For example, sign up a Google account/Email for your child and use it to set the device up. Be sure to use the age of the child to give Google a better chance to identify age-appropriate apps and content for your child.

3. **Use parental control software, privacy settings:** It is recommended that all parents and guardians who have purchased for their children broadband access, smart-phones and tablets download and install parental control software. During the research it was observed that few parents/guardians are aware about the various applications that can help them to monitor and control how their children utilize the internet. The recommended guidelines in this report provide a detail of the benefits of this software. Parents and guardians should also update privacy settings.

4. **Talk about staying safe:** It is recommended that more efforts are taken by parents/guardians and teachers to talk to children about e-safety issues in an interactive way. It is encouraged that you educate yourself as a teacher, parent or guardian about the latest e-safety tips so that you are able to respond to the issues raised by children appropriately. Keep the communication lines open so that the children can inform you if anything online makes them uncomfortable.

5. **Increase awareness of teachers and children on the important tips for children's safety online** through awareness campaigns, encouragement to read and keep up to date with the latest safety tips, and trainings.

This study report uses the findings from the research to provide strategic guidance to children, parents/guardians, teachers, schools, and the government of Uganda in promoting children's safety as they increasingly engage in online learning. It identifies the key issues of concern and sets out a recommended strategy for stakeholders aimed at enhancing children's safety online.

V. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES TO ENHANCE CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE

4.1. Recommended guidelines to share with children

a) Encourage children to pay attention and follow online safety guidelines issued by your parents, older siblings, teachers and schools. Help the children to understand that the controls and restrictions are for their good by showing the pitfalls of not regulating their activities online.

b) Encourage children not to reveal personal information such as phone number and home address during their activities online. Inform the children that such information can be used by strangers to target and harm them.

c) Do not write your passwords down or share them with anyone. If you do, another person can use it to access your accounts and do harmful things in your name. Children are further encouraged to use strong passwords and change them every after six months.

d) Encourage children never to agree to meet a stranger they met online without the approval and possible supervision of a parent/guardian or any other trusted adult. It does not matter how friendly the child thinks the person is.

e) Always tell a parent/guardian, teacher or other trusted adult about any threatening messages or bullying for appropriate advice and/or action. If you feel a conversation was scary, strange or hurtful, please report too. It is important to seek help before a situation worsens.

f) Children are encouraged to learn more about privacy settings on the various apps to know how to block accounts that make them uncomfortable and take other protective measures.

g) Encourage children to search safely by using safe search engines such as Kids-Search Engine and Swiggle . These safe search settings can also be activated on Google and YouTube.

4.2. Recommended guidelines for teachers and schools

a) Create and enforce rules safeguarding pupils and student's safety online. Talk to the children to help them understand that the rules are for their own good to minimize resistance and attempts to bypass the controls.

b) Build the capacity of all teachers on online learning and stay up-to-date with latest technology to

c) Raise awareness about user privacy online for pupils and students. Teach them about digital footprints and how information is stored online and why they need to stop authorized persons from gaining access to their information.

d) Use SafeShare.tv to safely share YouTube and Vimeo videos without adverts, links to other potentially inappropriate content, and other distractions. To create a 'SafeView' link, you simply copy and paste the URL of a YouTube or Vimeo video on the site. This website further enables a teacher to enable privacy controls, share video directly to Google Classroom, and allows a teacher to trim videos to show only the part you care about.

e) Create safe spaces by setting up a support system in the school against cyberbullying. The group should encourage pupils and students to speak up and report bullying online to receive support and accountability.

f) Accounts for pupils and students to study online should not require names, photos, and other personally identifiable information (PII) during log-in sessions. It is advisable that the children only be required to log-in using a unique registration number to protect their identity in case of a safety breach.

4.3. Recommended guidelines for parents/guardians

a) Take an active role in your child's internet activities and keep abreast of what you need to know about the social media apps. This will make it possible for you to teach children the appropriate online behaviour for their safety.

b) While setting up your child on a smartphone or tablet, ensure that you use their Google Account/Email address which was set up using their actual age. If the child does not have a Google Account, sign up one for them. Never sign in using your account because that will grant them general access to adult content.

c) Put yourself in control. Install 'Google Family Link for Parents' mobile app or other parental control apps on your phone and pair it with the devices used by your children. The app, which is free, will enable you to:

- See the location of your child's device.
- Receive email notifications of all apps installed on the child's device and remotely exercise powers to block an app that you consider inappropriate.
- Monitor activity and time spent on each app on the child's device on daily, weekly and monthly rates.
- Set limits on access to the apps.
- Set daily limits or bedtime hours for the child's device.
- Review privacy practices.
- Activate filters on Google Chrome and Google Search Engine by turning on 'SafeSearch' button to help filter sexually explicit and violent results.
- Activate controls on Google Play.
- Control settings on YouTube. It is advisable to activate only 'YouTube Kids' for young children and if your child is a pre-teen and older, you can allow 'YouTube (Parent supervised)'
- Control Google photo sharing on the child's device.

Set up parental controls for your child's Apple devices (iPhone, iPad or iPod touch) , for Google Play , for YouTube Kids , for Facebook , for Twitter , and for Netflix .

d) Videos that are not age appropriate can still make their way into your child's feed on YouTube Kids app even if you have turned on the 'Safety Mode' on YouTube. If you have a YouTube video which you want a child to watch online, copy the URL and paste it on SafeShare.tv to create a 'SafeView' link to increase safety of the children.

e) Keep the communication line open and make sure the child feels comfortable to turn to you when they have any challenges online. When he or she reports to you about an uncomfortable experience online, take them seriously and make sure to check it out and take necessary appropriate action. In all situations, it is recommended to pay attention and follow the following four steps: -

- Remain calm and find out more about the issue;
- Talk to your child in a calm and open conversation;
- Take action by discussing with someone you trust and knows more about the subject, and finally;
- Seek support for yourself, if necessary, from a friend or relative who understands the situation.

f) Watch out for the following warning signs of a child being targeted online and take steps to talk to find out:

- Unusual withdrawal from family life.
- A child suddenly turns off the computer or phone when you walk into the room or go near them.
- When a child spends long hours online.

4.4. Recommendations for the Government of Uganda

a The Parliament of Uganda should enact a law on children's online safety/protection to help provide a legal framework for the protection of children when they are online and create offences for the abuse of children's privacy and safety online.

b Develop a national protection strategy for children's safety online for Uganda. This strategy should recognize all actors and stakeholders, assess the existing responses and pathways, analyse the state of safety of children online in the whole country, make a case for the cost-benefit analysis for the protection of children online, and provide a national framework for implementation of the identified recommendations in line with the broader government strategic plans.

c) Take action to ensure that Internet safety for children is included in the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools. Safety of children online should not only be a subject of ICT.

d) Train all teachers (not only ICT teachers) on Internet safety for children because they are all now involved in online studies one way or another.

e) Ensure that the law enforcement agencies are trained to investigate cases of abuse of children online, the prosecutors are trained to successfully prosecute the cases, and judicial officers are sensitized on the delivery of justice in such cases without causing more harm.
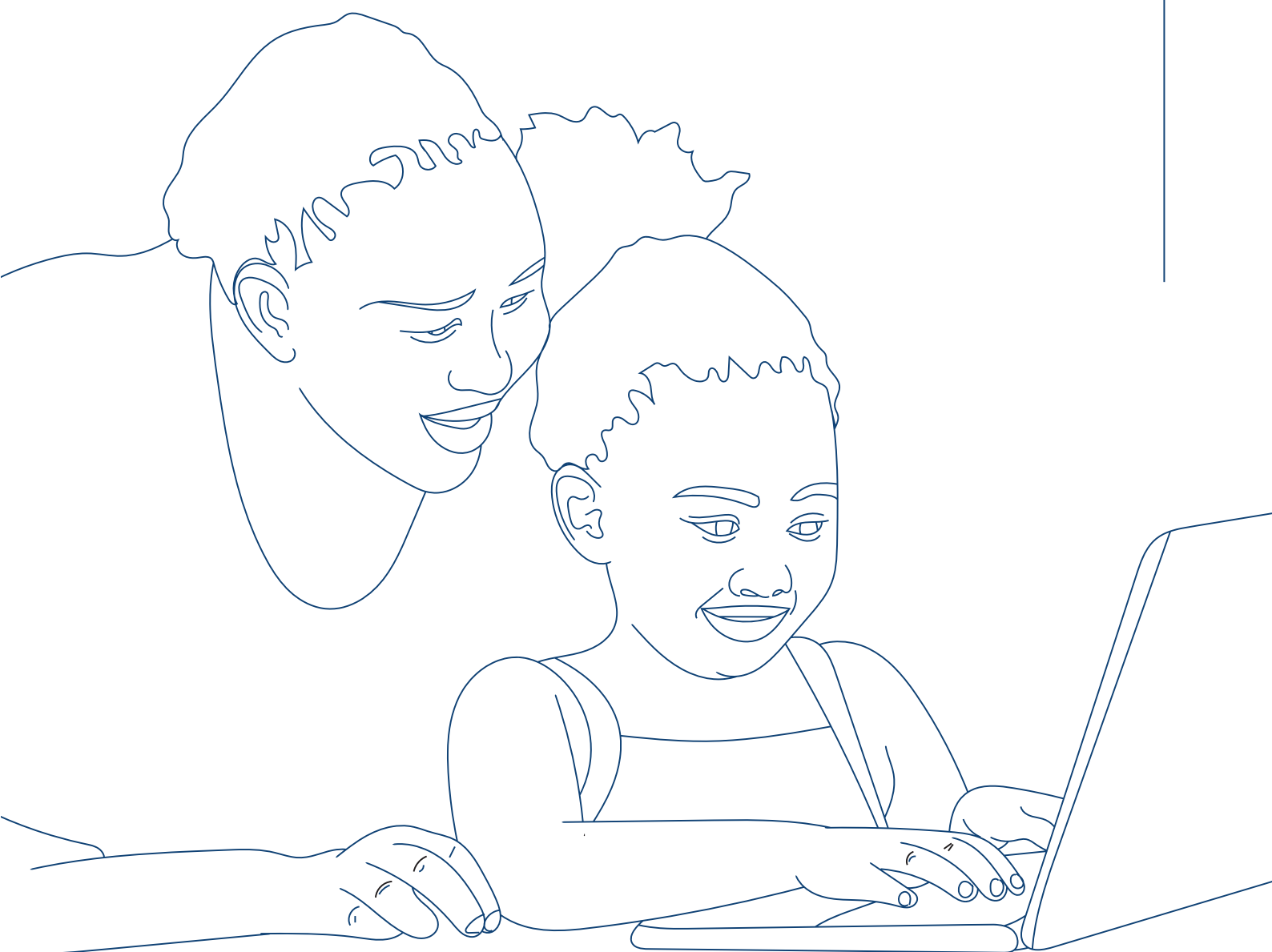
Appendix I:

Findings from the One-on-One Interviews

Introduction

The findings under this study consist of one-on-one interviews with 162 children (46 pupils and 116 students) from the 8 districts of Gulu, Soroti, Jinja, Arua, Tororo, Lira, Mbale, and Moroto. The children were sourced from 20 schools in the said districts

Fig 1: Number of Children interviewed per district

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Gulu	24	14.81%
Soroti	24	14.81%
Jinja	24	14.81%
Arua	24	14.81%
Tororo	18	11.11%
Lira	16	9.88%
Mbale	16	9.88%
Moroto	16	9.88%

Fig 2: School category:

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary School	116	71.6%
Primary School	46	28.4%
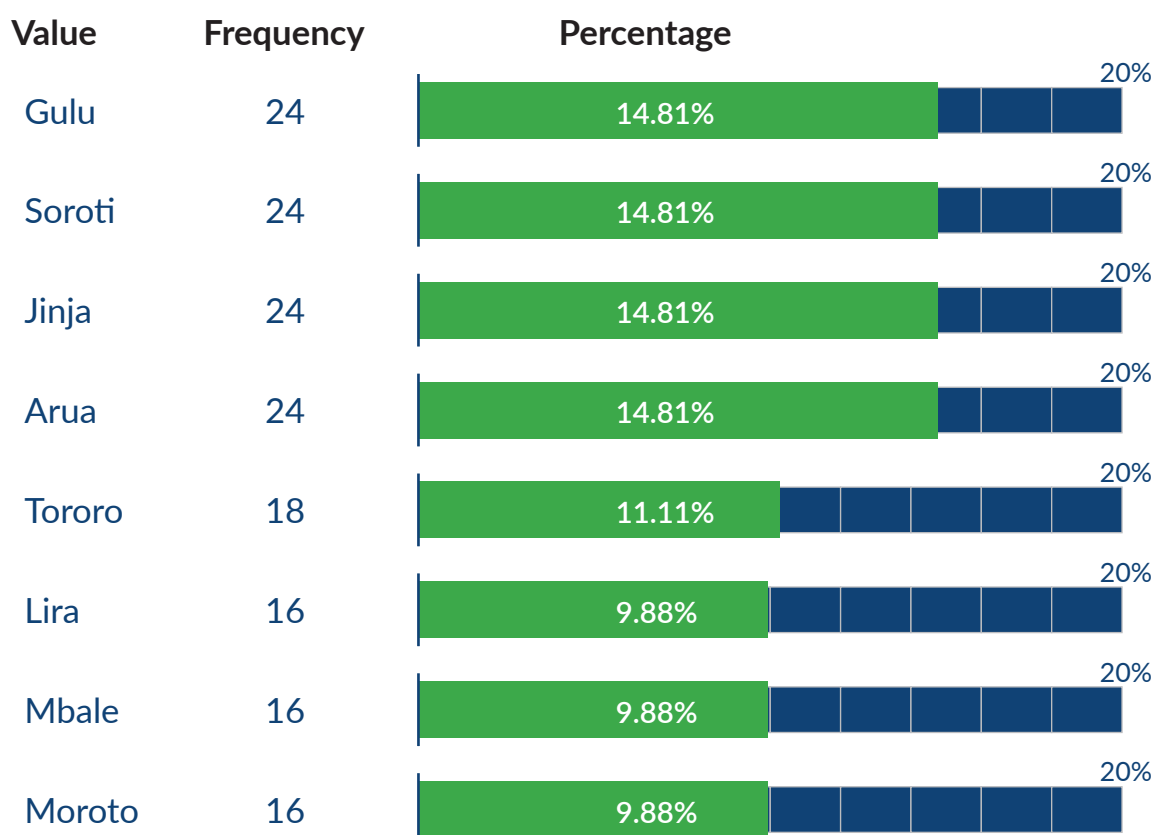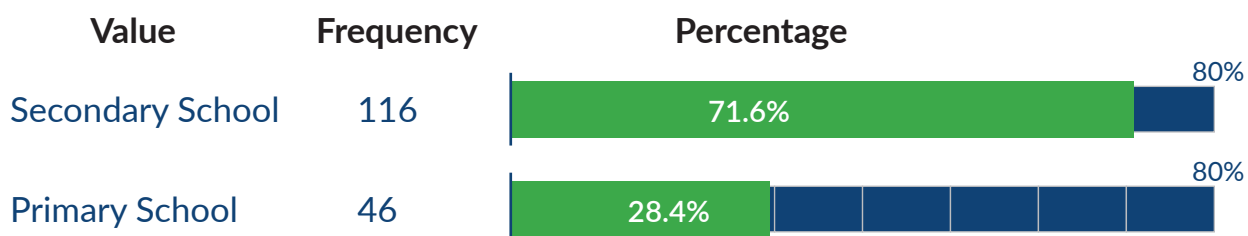
Fig 3: Number of children interviewed per school:

Value	Frequency	Percentage	
Gulu College	10	6.17%	10%
Tororo Girls School	10	6.17%	10%
Madera Girls Primary School	8	4.94%	10%
Main Street Primary School	8	4.94%	10%
St Katherine S. S. S.	8	4.94%	10%
Soroti Senior Secondary School	8	4.94%	10%
St Mary's Girl's S. S Madera	8	4.94%	10%
St Gracious Nur & Pri School	8	4.94%	10%
St John Paul II College, Gulu	8	4.94%	10%
Jinja Senior Secondary School	8	4.94%	10%
Arua Public Secondary School	8	4.94%	10%
Jinja Progressive S. S.	8	4.94%	10%
Mbale Progressive S. S. S.	8	4.94%	10%
Nkokonjeru Primary School	8	4.94%	10%
St. Joseph's College Ombaci	8	4.94%	10%
St. Leo Primary School	8	4.94%	10%

St. Peter's College - Tororo	8	4.94%	10%
Apostle of Jesus Seminary Moroto	8	4.94%	10%
Moroto High School	8	4.94%	10%
SOS Hermann Gmeiner Primary School	6	3.7%	10%

Fig 4: Gender demographics of the respondents:

Male   **Female**

| 52.47% | 47.53% | 100% |
| 85 | 77 | |
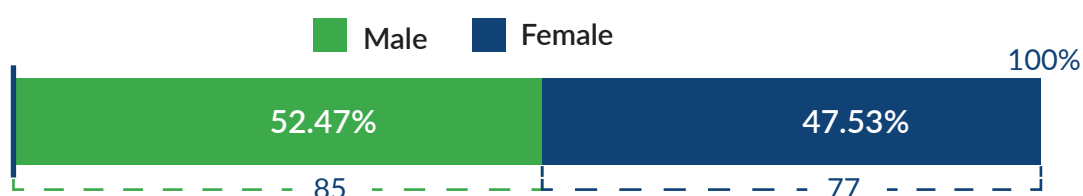
Question 1: Do you know anything about children's online safety?

Yes
No

| 61.73% | 38.27% | 100% |
| 100 | 62 | |
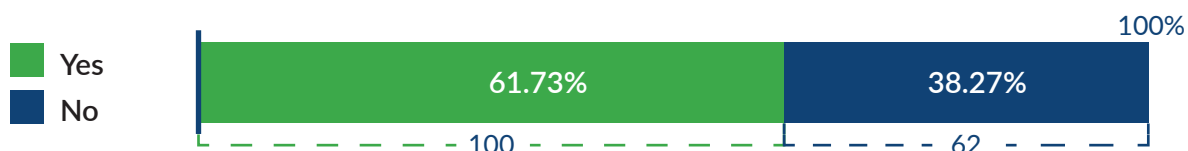
Question 2: Do you think online studies can be a better approach to bridge learning gaps in our society?

Yes
No

| 70.99% | 29.01% | 100% |
| 115 | 47 | |

Question 3: *Did your teachers or parents provide any safety and security measures for you on using the internet during online studies?*

Yes — 54.32% (88)
No — 45.68% (74)
100%
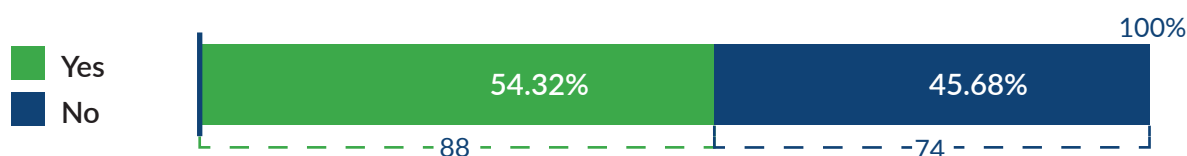
Follow up question 1: *If yes, what guidance did they offer you?*

1. My parents told me not to open a Facebook account.
2. No Facebooking during class and no unnecessary friends search on Facebook.
3. After learning, phones and laptops must be turned off or returned to parents.
4. We only used the computer in the presence of teachers.
5. I was advised to strictly do the learning online and not to use other platforms because people can steal using the internet.
6. Monitoring, put a timing application for you to concentrate on learning.
7. I was told to avoid posting or sharing my password.
8. I was told to stick to the studies website and not go anywhere else.
9. I was told not to avoid using Facebook and YouTube.
10. By always timing me while using the internet and putting passwords to the no go areas for me.
11. They limited me on other websites by putting passwords.
12. Block sites that contain things we don't have to see, kids' mode was switched on which restricted sites to use.
13. Physically monitoring what we are doing. The ICT teacher moves around to see what we are doing.
14. My parents would log-in into the classes herself and would only give me the device when I am already logged into the online class.
15. I was advised not to reply to messages from strangers and not to click on them since they may be bullies who may lock my laptop. They also told me I would report to the police to help me in case I am threatened or abused online.

Follow up question 2: *If no, why were they unable to support you?*

1. There are no online studies and no internet in computer studies and my mother has no idea about smartphones, so she doesn't really care.
2. I study computers and teachers don't offer any safety measures.
3. Some of the teachers and parents have no idea while others also have limited knowledge about safety and security for children online.
4. They were reluctant.
5. They wanted us to get exposed and get used to both negative and positive usage of the digital gadgets.
6. Sometimes parents go to work leaving us to do anything we want which is not safe.

7.   Most parents are illiterate about internet and online systems.
8.   I don't know. Maybe they were not interested.
9.   The parents are too busy.
10. My parents are not bothered to follow and know how we are using online applications.
11. I live with my grandmother and she knows nothing about the internet.
12. My parents assumed the internet was strictly for learning.
13. I know more about the internet than my parents.
14. I was using my own devices, so no control.

Question 4: *Have you ever participated / heard any awareness on children's safety online?*

100%

Yes
No

24.07%	75.93%
-39-	-123-

Question 5: *Do you think your safety online is guaranteed as you use different social media learning?*

100%

Yes
No

45.68%	54.32%
-74-	-88-
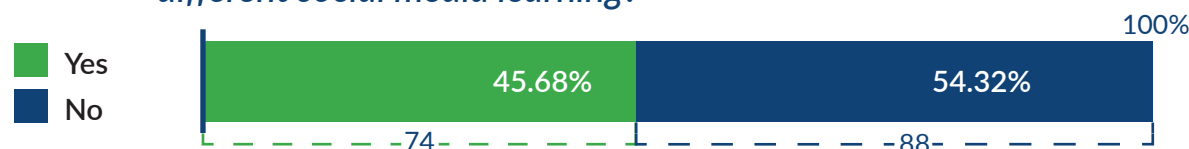
Follow up question 1: *If yes, what safety measures were put in place by your school?*

1.   Use of passwords.
2.   No access to the internet without the consent of the teacher. And usage was under the supervision of the teacher.
3.   Teachers provided guidance on how to engage online.
4.   I was advised not to watch pornographic videos.
5.   No downloading videos without the consent of the ICT teacher.
6.   A camera was installed in the computer lab and the Facebook application was blocked.
7.   My parents were advised not to let me use the digital gadgets alone without adult supervision.
8.   There are safety measures such as blocking you from accessing certain sites.
9.   When I am using a phone, my parents are always near me to check what I am doing so I feel I can't go wrong.
10. The school has put timers

Follow up question 2: *If no, why do you think you are not safe online?*

1. Afraid of abuses and hackers.
2. I am naturally curious about some strange adverts that pop up in picture or video form. It is so tempting for me to click and follow.
3. It is not safe on social media because there are not enough regulations.
4. No, it is not safe because online platforms are open for everyone which makes it risky.
5. Maybe on WhatsApp but on Facebook, I don't feel safe because anyone can view your profile or comment and anyone can send you messages which is risky.
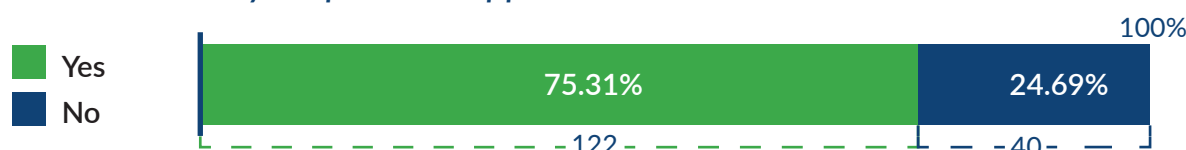6. We were not taught on how to use the internet.
7. When I post my pictures, I get bad comments from others who are not my friends and I feel embarrassed.
8. There is a lot of pornography and posting of nudes on the internet which is not good for us as children.
9. Because teachers don't teach us how to manage online threats and abuses.
10. I am not safe because of the very many activities on social media that may disrupt my information and attention.
11. Because there are those who know how to access your information even when you have passwords.
12. While at home, I am not safe but at school, teachers guide us and monitor what we are doing.
13. The media is for everyone so they don't sieve content based on age. They just put every thing out there.
14. There are groups you join thinking its for learning but later you find that it's a group that shares bad things not good for children.
15. Other things you download thinking it's learning material yet it's not. It can be bad content.
16. Some unknown people send me bad things that I don't want to see like nude pictures.
17. Some sites are not good even if it's for learning. They attach a lot of bad content on them which children are not supposed to see.
18. Some children know computers more than the teachers and so, even if passwords are put on some applications and programs, they can still access them.
19. There are many temptations as videos keep popping up.
20. I don't feel safe when someone writes to me. I feel afraid and unsafe.
21. On social media, men are always asking for sex.
22. I always see naked girls on the internet.
23. I just know I am not safe, no particular reason.

Question 6: *Would you recommend for continuous teaching online?*

- 🟩 **I recommend**
- 🟦 **I don't recommend**
- ⬛ **Strongly recommend**
- ⬜ **Not sure**

45.06%	32.1%	16.05%	6.79%	100%
–73–	–52–	–26–	–11–	
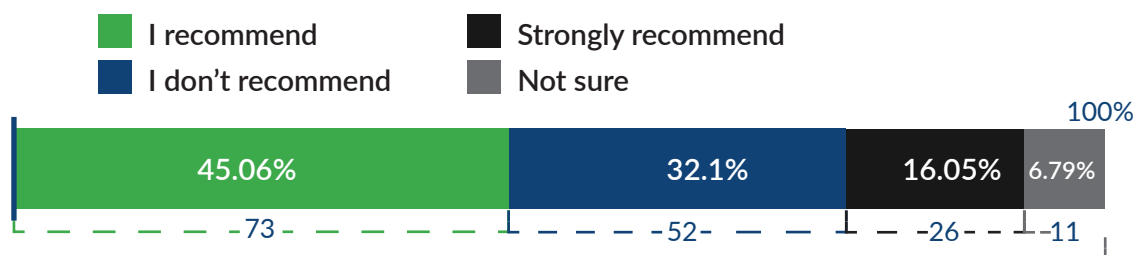
Question 7: *Were your parents supportive towards online studies*

- 🟩 **Yes**
- 🟦 **No**

| 75.31%	24.69%	100%
–122–	–40–	

Follow up question 1: *If yes, how did they support you?*

1. They bought data for me.
2. They bought a phone for meh.
3. My parents would give me their laptop and sometimes a phone to do my online classes.
4. My dad gave me his MiFi.
5. Sometimes, my parents attended with me the lessons to elaborate more.
6. They paid for the online studies, bought books and provided the internet.
7. Guided me on using the device and loaded data to attend Zoom classes.
8. Downloading learning materials and printing them for me.
9. My parents facilitated my going to the internet café every week as I did my research on questions I didn't understand.
10. Some assignments were sent on email so my dad would give me his phone and we do the work together.
11. My mother gave me her laptop to use, she helped me to access learning groups on WhatsApp and created an email account for me.

Follow up question 2: *If no, why were they unable to support you?*

1. I don't know.
2. My parents were not interested.
3. My parents were not able to afford it.
4. There were no studies online.
5. My parents could not afford to buy a smartphone and also, our home is deep in the village where even internet could not be accessed. Even a radio to grab a network is a challenge.
6. They did not have ways to support me since they were not working during lockdown so there was no money.
7. I think they were busy. They just never had time.
8. My parents said it was too expensive in terms of buying data.

Question 8: *Were there any capacity building provided to you by either your teachers or parents?*

Yes
No

| 51.23%	48.77%	100%
83	79	
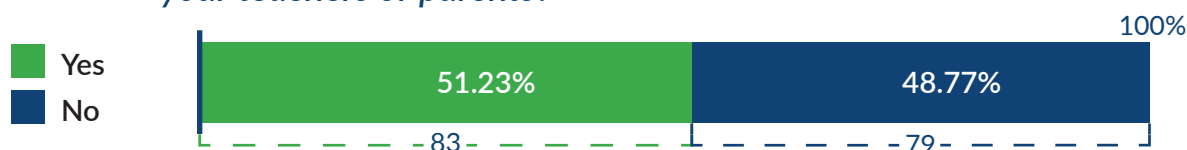
Follow up question 1: *If yes, what training did they offer you?*

1. My elder brother taught me to avoid suspicious adverts.
2. The teacher trained us on how to use Zoom on the first day.
3. The teacher taught us how to use links for online studies.
4. Teachers cautioned us on sharing passwords and bot saving all your data on one source. They advised everyone to get their own personal flash disk.
5. They taught us how to use a computer, how to search and download reading materials.
6. My parents taught me how to use email because notes were sent on email.
7. They taught me how to avoid messages that keep popping up.
8. How to log-in and attend online classes, how to ask questions during online classes and how to send answers online.
.

Follow up question 2: *If no, why were they unable to train you?*

1. I don't know. I am not sure.
2. Lack of knowledge.
3. My parents are illiterate.
4. My parents were busy. They did not have time for my online studies.
5. The lessons are only limited to the curriculum and no extra cyber skills training is done.
6. I think they don't know anything about online safety.
7. They assumed I knew what to do online.
8. I know how to operate a phone, so there was no need for training.
9. I learnt on my own. I watched what others did and I applied. I am a fast learner.

Question 9: *Were there any forms of online threats or abuse you encountered during your engagement on the internet?*

Yes
No

30.25%	69.75%	100%
49	113	
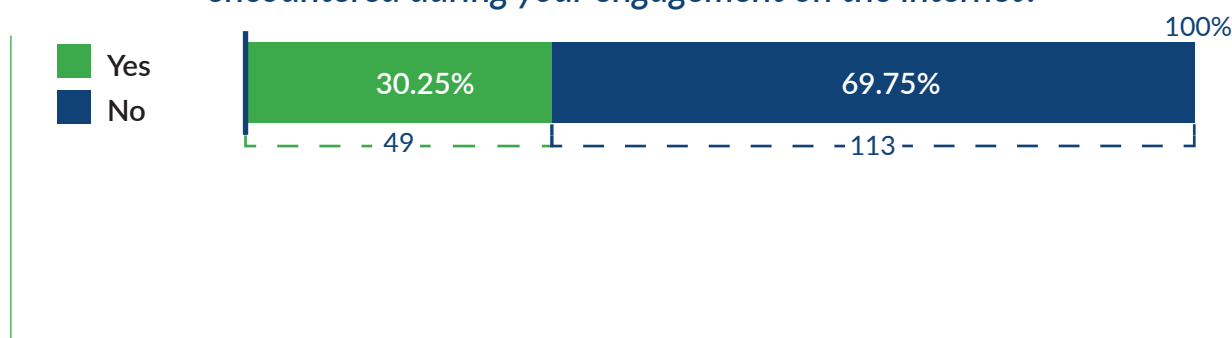
Follow up question 1: *If yes, what threats/abuse did you face?*

1. I had a female friend whose boyfriend harassed me because I was her friend on Facebook and used to like and comment on her posts. He went to my profile, picked my number and called to harass me.
2. Abuse.
3. Send me a nude picture.
4. Someone sent me pornographic and obscene messages twice.
5. Strangers lie that they are ladies and after befriending them, you realize that they are men and they start sending you intimidating messages.
6. I posted things about myself and in response, I was abused and bullied online.
7. My Facebook account was hacked and used to send pornographic things and threatening messages to my friend which brought me. a lot of humiliation.
8. Being added to WhatsApp groups without my permission more so when the things discussed are harmful content.
9. I received anonymous messages on Facebook scolding me about a picture I posted with a girl.
10. I received messages and nudes on my Facebook account. It started when a stranger sent me a friend request and when I accepted, they added me to a group where I started watching disgusting things.
11. A stranger sent me abusive words on my photo comments.
12. One time, I received a message that my account would be shut down if I don't pay. I talked to my parents and they told me to switch my account and close that.
13. A stranger asked for my photo. I refused and he/she abused me.

Question 10: *Have you ever uploaded your picture or that of your family or friend without your parents' consent?*

100%

Yes	No
41.36%	58.64%
67	95

Question 11: *Have you ever posted any personal information or anyone else without their consent?*

100%

Yes	No
27.16%	72.84%
44	118

Question 12: Have you ever shared a password with another person other than your parent?

Yes
No

| 15.43% | 84.57% | 100% |

25   137

Question 13: Are there laws/rules put in place by your school on children's safety online?

Yes
No

| 54.32% | 46.3% | 100% |

88   75

Appendix II:
Findings from the Key Informant Interviews

Introduction

The following findings are interviews with 40 respondents (teachers and school administrators) from the 20 schools in the 8 districts of Northern and Eastern Uganda. The interviews were conducted from March 22 to 27, 2021.

Question 1: Have you ever heard about children's safety online?

■ Yes
■ No

87.5%   12.5%   100%

-35-   -5-
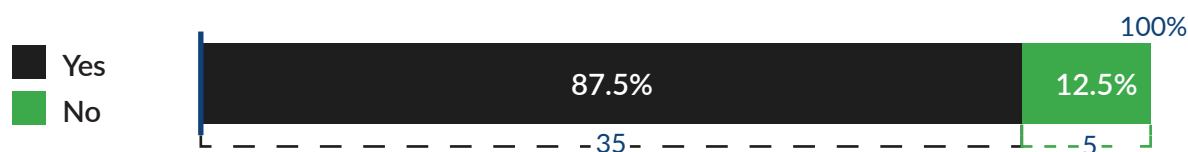
Question 2: What major challenges have you encountered while conducting online studies?

1. Power fluctuations which affected charging of gadgets and internet connectivity.
2. No internet at the school.
3. Poor internet network connectivity.
4. Internet shutdown made it impossible to conduct online studies.
5. Shortage of computers in schools for use in the online studies.
6. Some parents and guardians did not have gadgets like smartphones and laptops which the children would use for online learning. This meant that many learners had no access to computers, laptops, radios, or television sets.
7. High costs of conducting online studies in terms of data costs.
8. It was impossible to reach all children for online studies at a given time like it would be if it was physical class.
9. Some parents were not in support of online studies. They argued that they couldn't afford it since it was abrupt.
10. Teachers had no organized notes and online learning materials to send to the learners. Time was lost in trying to haphazardly prepare them.
11. Limited computer skills necessary to enable teachers to effectively deliver the online classes and for learners to effectively utilize the online learning platforms.
12. Children / learners used the internet to access 'bad content' which corrupted their minds.
13. Some children / learners lost interest in studies. Instead, they used the internet for their entertainment.
14. Some parents and guardians were ignoring the study materials sent to them for their children and therefore either the children would miss out altogether or get it late.

Question 3: *As a school, were there some precautionary measures put in place to protect children from online threats and abuse while conducting online studies?*

Yes	No
55%	**45%**
–22–	–18–

100%

Highlights of the comments from the respondents:

1. No precautions because there is no internet use unless they are using it in their personal or parents' phones.
2. No, we assumed their parents protected them since they were at home.
3. There were no measures put while conducting online studies.
4. As a school, we interface with the children when they are at school. So, since we conducted online studies when they were at home, we couldn't control them.
5. Yes, frequently updating passwords, conducting orientation with parents and guiding them on what to access and what not to.
6. We guided them on internet use by creating apps that do not allow them to exceed the required information. We also created passwords that don't really allow them to access the internet without the guidance of the teacher.
7. Yes, teachers guide on the use of these gadgets. Rules have been developed to ensure better use of the computer laboratory.
8. Through the ICT department, some sites were blocked to restrict access to harmful content and limitations in access to the internet for students on campus but outside school, it's hard to dictate.
9. Yes, we put in place guidelines o children while using the internet, never allowed posting of any other business, encouraged parents to control children while online.

Question 4: *Do you think children's safety online is guaranteed as the school uses different social media to disseminate different learning materials to learners?*

Yes	No
22.5%	**77.5%**
–9–	–31–

100%

Highlights of the comments from the respondents:

1. No, because there are no measures put in place to guarantee it. The children can visit any sites without restrictions since it is on their personal devices.
2. No, it is not guaranteed because there is free access to the mobile applications.
3. Children will always want to know new things and they lack information about threats and online abuses.
4. Children are so curious and they explore other sites in search of what they want to know.
5. The school doesn't have control over their learning gadgets used at home but the ones used at school, there are rules attached to usage.
6. The school has a safeguarding structure in place and a fully-fledged ICT department which ensures children's online safety.
7. We have little control over the internet. So, children are exposed to many things.
8. Parents use different social media sites and so, it is hard to restrict children.
9. When children are online, they get an opportunity to access and watch immoral content e.g., on Opera News application, there is some content which is not good for children. Some children are exploring dating sites which distracts them from learning.
10. Most children don't have their own gadgets and so, I believe most parents have restrictions on their phones.
11. No, teachers are not trained to guarantee children's safety online while disseminating learning materials to the learners.

Question 5: *In your opinion, do you think the government has put in efforts to protect children's safety during online studies?*

■ Yes	
■ No	

10% (4)   90% (36)   100%

Highlights of the comments from the respondents:

1. There is no measure or effort that I can think of.
2. The government has put in place laws that govern cyber crimes such as the Computer Misuse Act.
3. Not really because as much as classes were done on radios and TVs, there weren't a lot of safeguarding mechanisms put in place by the UCC (Uganda Communications Commission). Children could wander off and watch other content without anyone knowing.
4. People are providing children's safety online privately but the government is not. It doesn't even support addressing challenges faced by Uganda on using mobile applications.
5. The government put in place guidelines but didn't enforce it.

6. The government has tried. Fast time you would log in for online studies, the system would ask for the name, age, location, and more other details.
7. The government talked about it but didn't enforce it in schools.

Question 6: *Are there plans in your school to integrate cyber security module in the curriculum?*

100%

Yes	No

62.5% | **37.5%**

– 25 – | – 15 –
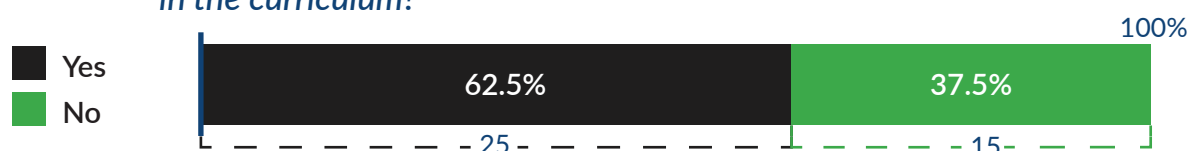
Highlights of the comments from the respondents:

1. We have plans but don't have the means. We need to have enough computers and the internet.
2. We have guidance on computer studies and restricted some sites.
3. We have plans to do so (integrate a cyber security module in the curriculum) though we need to begin with the teachers.
4. Not really but we would appreciate it if cyber security module is added to the curriculum.
5. It is not among the school prospects since the school isn't looking at using online studies as a priority.
6. The academic policy at school is so good that computer studies are mandatory in Senior 1 and 2 classes which equips each student with at least an idea of personal safety while using computers or the internet. The school also conducts specialized computer competence training for students who apply for it.

Question 7: *Aware of the need for continuous education, as a school, did you train teachers on how to ensure there is safety of children online?*

100%

Yes	No

22.5% | **77.5%**

–9– | –31–
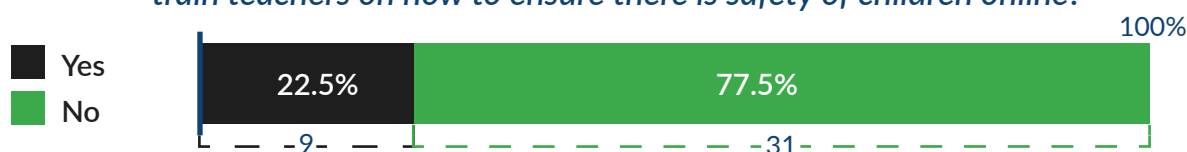
Highlights of the comments from the respondents:

1. Only computer teachers are called for training organized by the government at the National Curriculum Development Center annually.
2. During the lockdown, teachers were the first to be trained on how to use Zoom.
3. Online learning came abruptly due to the pandemic and it (online learning / studies) was just taken up in an attempt to continue with learning.
4. It is being done as all teachers are being trained in computers since the school is incorporating computer studies with other subjects because learning is becoming computerized so the teachers are being trained to embrace this as well as ensure safety of children online.
5. Not all teachers are aware apart from mainly the IT teachers.
6. The teachers were not trained because of lack of professionals.

Question 8: *Were there any awareness campaigns on children's safety online?*

100%

Yes
No

| 40% | 60% |

-16- -24-

Whereas some awareness sessions were conducted according to the feedback from the respondents, all the sessions were general in nature and did not address the specific to-do action points to ensure children's safety online. For example, most of the sessions focused on password use, how to use computers, and cybercrimes. These sessions, although helpful in the broader context, do not empower parents / guardians and teachers with the ability to monitor, regulate and take specific actions to ensure children who are active online are safe.

Question 9: *Did any of the children / students report any abuse while using the internet?*

100%

Yes
No

| 17.5% | 82.5% |

-7- -33-

Some of the approaches used to respond to the abuse online:

1. The disciplinary committee summoned the student and was cautioned on abuse of use of the internet.

2. Children shy away from reporting abuse when they encounter it but teachers look through their histories and when found, they are traced, guided and counselled. Sometimes, the students do the abuse themselves and when got, they are banned from the lab and referred for counselling.

3. A child on Facebook reported that a group was using nicknames that were offensive so being a school group, the group was removed.

Question 10: *Do you have any referral pathways for cyber crimes?*

■ Yes	
■ No	

32.5%	67.5%	100%
13	27	

The majority of the respondents (27 teachers) noted that they do not know any referral pathway for cybercrimes and therefore, if a student suffered an attack, they wouldn't; know what to do. Other respondents named pathways such as police, disciplinary committees of the school, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and school ICT departments. From the above list, it is clear that most teachers would not know how to respond.

Appendix III:

Summary of findings of FGDs in Jinja and Tororo Districts

FINDINGS ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE PROJECT-FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT FOR JINJA AND TORORO DISTRICTS

Background/Introduction:

The Focused Group Discussion (FGDs) were held with the objective of finding out the current situation of children when it comes to their safety online as they use different social media gadgets and internet to carry on with their studies online. 2 FGDs were held in Jinja and Tororo Districts. In Jinja, the FGD was held on March 25, 2021 in Ghol-are Village, MainStreet Parish, Jinja Municipality while in Tororo it was held on March 30, 2021 in Central Village, Central Parish in Tororo Municipality.

Criteria for selecting the Participants

Each Focused Group Discussion (FGD) consited of 5 parents from the selected schools where group discussion was conducted making a total of 10 parents for the 2 FGDs held. In Tororo, there were 3 male and 2 female while Jinja there were 3 female and 2 male. A total of 5 male and 5 females were interviewed. The parents were recruited into the survey through the help of the Local Councilors who did head hunting of these parents in the selected areas given the fact that they know where the parents whose children belonged to the selected schools lived in their area. The findings of the FGDs were obtained through discussing various questions while note taking and also taking some recordings from the respondent. Below are the questions and a summary of their responses.

1.	Have you ever heard about children's safety online? If yes, (Politely probe to ascertain)	Yes, these are measures in place to protect children while using internet, it also means children getting exposed to materials outside social media like pornography. Caretakers have to ensure these children below 18 years are well protected from these online threats. Out of the 10 parents, 5 didn't have any idea on children safety but their children have access to social media.
2.	Do you think and say, access to online chatting, internet, and texting are rights or a responsibility for a child? Yes/No (others may give brief comments, ask	• Yes, because access to the internet gives a lot of information that is useful, the world is moving from analog to Digital, it's a shortcut of information, therefore children should be allowed to use social media to get enough information and also to know what's happening around the world. • It is not a right of a child unless he or she has reached 18 years of age and also if the child is using it for study purposes only. • However, 3 parents said no, saying that this can expose the children at their early stage to materials that are not good for their consumption and this can make them end up with wrong behaviours in the communities. For example, a child can start stealing people on social media.
3.	Were the children safe as a result of engaging them through online studies, Yes/No, (if yes, did you as a parent provide guidance regarding their safety online? If No, what threats / abuse did you observe from the child, or did a child report any?)	• Yes, they monitored the children and guided them to stick on study website • Yes, parents would log into their accounts and download the materials for their children. • Most parents said their children were not safe online because; They had little or no measures were put in place to ensure their safety, the government did not implement these measures yet it started the whole program of online studies, some of the parents bought children gadgets but also didn't know how to use them, most children learn from friends on how to use these medias, so they would want to explore everything. • No report on any threats or abuses reported

4.	We know that, going online and using the internet can provide hours of entertainment and wealth of information, as well as lots of potential problems with hackers, scammers,	• Deactivating programs that can expose these children while accessing the internet. • Offering parental guidance to the children on how to use the internet and its associated dangers. • Monitoring and supervising the contents or the different websites that the children do have access to. • Engaging the children in groups and providing adequate knowledge on internet usage. • Providing passwords in all applications known by the care-taker • Ensure online web restrictions
5.	As parents, what kind of online problems and threats do you take seriously? (let them List) for their honest opinion)	• Downloading/exposure to pornographic videos • Access to an account without permission • Luring of children out of home • Addiction to internet • Internet misuse • Communicating with strangers on social media • Child being conned
6.	As community members/par- ents, how can you support our children to be safe while on the internet?	• Restricting a child to certain programs that are harmful • Close supervision while on internet • Attaching them to recognized institution • Not exposing them to pornographic movies • Putting passwords to avoid misuse • Stick to educative sites • Advising them not to share passwords • Couselling and Parental guidance on internet usage • Talk to them openly about the good and bad of internet

7	Have you ever participated in any awareness creation on children's safety online? If yes, Let them narrate as you take notes.	No, None of the parents has participated on children safety Online and they also said they would appreciate it if such a program is given to them.
8.	Do you know any referral pathways for cyber-crime?- for their honest opinion)	Yes, most of the parents said the only referral path way is reporting to police, 1 parent said to contact the service providers like the managers of these companies ,another said just block the account. 3 didn't know any referral pathways.
9.	Have you ever heard about children's safety online? If yes, (Politely probe to ascertain) for their honest opinion)	• Yes, they monitored the children and guided them to stick on study website • Yes, parents would log into their accounts and download the materials for their children. • Most parents said their children were not safe online because; They had little or no measures were put in place to ensure their safety, the government did not implement these measures yet it started the whole program of online studies, some of the parents bought children gadgets but also didn't know how to use them, most children learn from friends on how to use these medias, so they would want to explore everything. • No report on any threats or abuses reported

Appendix IV:

Summary of findings of FGDs in Moroto and Gulu Districts

FINDINGS ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE PROJECT-FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT FOR MOROTO AND GULU DISTRICTS

Background/Introduction:

The Focused Group Discussion (FGDs) were held with the objective of finding out the current situation of children when it comes to their safety online as they use different social media gadgets and internet to carry on with their studies online. 2 FGDs were held in Moroto and Gulu Districts. A total of 10 parents in the two districts were engaged during this field activity.

1.	Have you ever heard about children's safety online? If yes, (Politely probe to ascertain)	7 out of 10 had never heard about children's safety online the other 3 had a rough idea about children's online safety but not enough information to make conversation.
2.	Do you think and say, access to online chatting, internet, and texting are rights or a responsibility for a child? Yes/No (others may give brief comments, ask for their honest opinion) for their honest opinion)	Whereas all 10 parents agreed that access to online chatting, internet and texting are rights and responsibilities for a child, half of them said they would not allow the children to engage in these spaces because it is disruptive and that children need to be supervised and regulated when using these platforms. The other half said that online engagement has information that the children need, gives them a chance to be updated about world news and build connections through social media.
3.	Were the children safe as a result of engaging them through online studies, Yes/No, (If yes, did you as parent provide guidance regarding their safety online?, If No, what threats/Abuse did you observe from the child, or did a child report any?)	All the respondents stated that Children were not safe because those who were learning on TVs some channels would show harmful content such as naked girls and boys among others, they stated that whereas sometimes elders would be there to guide them on some days other days the elders had to go to work and leave the children alone, another respondent said learning on the internet exposes children to suspicious people who can expose them to harmful content.

4.	We know that, going online and using the internet can provide hours of entertainment and wealth of information, as well as lots of potential problems with	• Parents need to guide and counsel children on online engagements and also restrict and monitor the amount of time children spend online by being more involved in the children's online presence. • Restrict some sites that are not age appropriate to protect children from harmful content and suspicious ads.
5.	As parents, What kind of online problems and threats do you take seriously? (let them List) for their honest opinion)	• Pornographic literature because children will want to try out what they have seen. • Sexual Harassment online • Conmen and Con-women luring children to go to suspicious towns. • Cyberbullying where someone is calling a child a baboon, "not fit to be a human being". This is common with facebook.
6.	As community members/parents, how can you support our children to be safe while on the internet?	• Restrict Children from accessing harmful content. • Get more involved in children's online presence. • Younger Children should be given more guidance • Advocate for better referral pathways for reporting cyber crime Though a very big concern was raised that it will be difficult for parents to support children to be safe online because nowadays children know more about the internet than parents and some parents have never even held a smart phone and the internet is a new and strange concept to them.
7.	Have you ever participated in any awareness creation on children's safety online? If yes, Let them narrate as you take notes.	All 10 respondents have never participated in any such awareness campaign and they are hearing it for the very first time.

8.	Do you know any referral pathways for cyber-crime?	Although the respondents have never encountered any issues of cyber-crime, they think the government should restrict the access of children to some materials. However they say if faced with any issues of cyber bullying majority of them wouldn't know where to report but one respondent in Gulu said he'd report to Police (Child and Family Protection Unit) and to the LC1.

District Officials
Note: The researcher further held a discussion with 2 district officials from Moroto (Municipal Inspector of Schools) and Gulu (Assistant Inspector of Schools for Gulu Municipality). Below is a summary of the notes from the discussion.

9.	Why did the government introduce online studies?	This was done during the Covid-19 pandemic when schools were closed down so that learning could continue and to ensure children are not redundant and also to help teachers finish the syllabus. The government focused on Radio and Television as modes of teaching but also didn't restrict other schools from using other means available.
10.	What challenges did the government face while introducing online studies to different schools?	• It was difficult to evaluate the quality of learning because radios and Tvs are hard to track, and with the TVs for learning to be successful the parents have to be there because children can easily change the channels yet some media air harmful content. • Inadequate resources • Ignorance due to the large number of people who still can't use the Internet • Poor network connectivity in some areas.
11.	Do you think the government has plans to integrate cyber security modules in the curriculum?	The respondents had no clue on the government plans to integrate cyber security and they stated that most of these discussions are held at a higher lever and the decisions come from above so they don't know about any plans.

Appendix V:

Summary of findings of FGDs in Lira and Arua Districts

FINDINGS ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE PROJECT-FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT FOR LIRA AND ARUA DISTRICTS

Background/Introduction:

The Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with the objective of ascertaining the current situation of children when it comes to their safety online as they use different digital gadgets and internet to carry on with their studies online. 2 FGDs were carried out in Lira and Arua Districts (cities). In Lira, the Focused Group discussion was held on March 22, 2021 in Ocukuru Village, Boroboro West Parish, Adekokwok Subcounty from 4:02pm – 4:38pm while in Arua, the Focused Group Discussion was held on March 26, 2021 in Zambia Village, Mvara Parish, Dadamu Subcounty from 6:00pm – 6:42pm

Participant profile and Demographics:

Each Focused Group Discussion consisted of 5 parents from the selected schools where one-on-one interviews were conducted making a total of 10 parents for the 2 Focused Group Discussions held. Each Focused Group Discussion consisted of 3 females and 2 males. taking some recordings from the respondent. Below are the questions and a summary of their responses.

Methodology:

The parents were recruited into the survey through head hunting with the help of the Local Councilors of the selected areas given the fact that the Local Councilors knew where the parents whose children belonged to the selected schools lived in their area. The input of the Focused Group Discussion was obtained through note taking where questions were asked and responses recorded down.

1.	Have you ever heard about children's safety online? If yes, (Politely probe to ascertain)	Yes, it means protecting children from exposure to bad things online like pornographic contents. Parents have to ensure that the content their children are accessing are safe and is suitable for their consumption. In total those who said yes were 4 and 6 parents had not heard about children's safety online.
2.	Do you think and say, access to online chatting, internet, and texting are rights or a responsibility for a child? Yes/No (others may give brief comments, ask for their honest opinion) for their honest opinion)	Yes, because the information act 2005 and the constitution of Uganda 1995 permits access to internet, texting and online chatting. This would enable them to have freedom of expression and opinion so I suggest that at the age of 6 and above, a child can be given the opportunity to access internet contents or enjoy texting because at such an age a child is building up some understanding. However, 2 parents said no and mentioned that access to the internet can make children vulnerable and exposed to online threats and abuses. They further urged that children grow up looking at the environment they are living in so when exposed to bad contents online, they may end up with wrong behaviors.
3.	Were the children safe as a result of engaging them through online studies, Yes/No, (If yes, did you as parent provide guidance regarding their safety online? If No, what threats/Abuse did you observe from the child, or did a child report any?)	Yes, the children were safe because they had parents or adults near them as they did online classes. They would monitor what the children were doing. Yes, some parents would log in to download reading materials for their children by themselves. Yes, some parents have passwords to lock some applications that didn't suit children. 1 parent agreed that children were not safe online giving the following reasons; Children picked up the use digital gadgets with a lot of excitement because for most children, it is a new thing so they feel curious to explore every applications and learning them too, parents were too busy and thinking of other things, some parents don't know how to operate some gadgets so the children teach/guide them instead. All parents agreed that no child reported any form of threats/abuses.

4.	We know that, going online and using the internet can provide hours of entertainment and wealth of information, as well as lots of potential problems with hackers, scammers, and predators. How can our children enjoy being online while staying safe?	Monitoring the contents that our children access online to discover whether he/she is accessing what is appropriate. Need to use an updated anti-virus to block malwares. A strong password in all applications known by the parent only so that they can't switch to other applications/sites Safe browsing can be recommended where this can be set with the default internet browser. Emphasized parental control where children don't just pick the gadgets on their own and use on their own unless under instructions.
5.	As parents, what kind of online problems and threats do you take seriously? (let them List)for their honest opinion)	• Internet dependency. • Obscenity in the contents online. • Cyber bullying. • Falling victim to online scams. • Playing online harmful games. • Downloading malwares or a virus. • Posting private information. • Communicating to unknown persons.
6.	As community members/parents, how can you support our children to be safe while on the internet?	• Monitoring what they are doing. • Openly talking to them about the positives and negatives of being on line with risks associated. • Knowing his/her online friends and where need be unfriending those who you think might ruin them online. • Teach them the do's and don'ts of the internet. • Activate safe browsing to ensure that he/she is not hacked. • Add parental control measures to ensure that their access is appropriate for them.

7.	Have you ever participated in any awareness creation on children's safety online? If yes, Let them narrate as you take notes.	No, all the 10 parents said that they had never participated in any awareness creation on children's safety online.
8.	Do you know any referral pathways for cyber-crime? for their honest opinion)	Yes, police, courts of law. Only 2 parents agreed to this but the rest of the parents (8) didn't agree saying that it's hard to track online crimes and it takes forever.

District Officials
Note: The researcher further held a discussion with district officials in the two districts and below is a summary of the notes from the discussion.

1.	Why did the government introduce online studies?	The online studies came in as a result of Covid 19 pandemic to help in continuity of learning.
2.	What challenges did the government face while introducing online studies to different schools?	No response recorded.
3.	Do you think the government has plans to integrate cyber security modules in the curriculum?	No response recorded.

Appendix VI:

Summary of findings of FGDs in Mbale and Soroti Districts

FINDINGS ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE PROJECT-FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT FOR MBALE AND SOROTI DISTRICTS

Background/Introduction:
The Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) was held in the two districts of Soroti and Mbale with the aim of finding out the current situation in these two districts when it comes to children's online safety. The FGD carried out in Soroti district took place in Kamuswahili Village with 5 parents and in Mbale district, the discussion was held in Wandawa Village in Namatala Ward, Mbale Municipality with also 5 parents, bringing in total 10 parents for the two district.

Criteria for selecting the Participants
The respondents were recruited into the survey through head hunting with the help of the Local Councilors of the selected areas given the fact that the Local Councilors knew parents whose children were engaged in online learning especially during the Covid-19 school lock down. The interview was done through note taking where questions are asked and responses noted in the questionnaire.

1.	Have you ever heard about children's safety online? If yes, (Politely probe to ascertain)	Yes, these are safety measures that are put in place by either parents or schools to ensure that children are safe while online.
2.	Do you think and say, access to online chatting, internet, and texting are rights or a responsibility for a child? Yes/No (others may give brief comments, ask for their honest opinion) for their honest opinion)	Yes, as it's the easiest way for children to access various information especially those doing research. However, some parents disagreed on grounds that social media exposes children on worldly things hence converting their minds away from educational activities online.
3.	Were the children safe as a result of engaging them through online studies, Yes/No, (If yes, did you as parent provide guidance regarding their safety online? If No, what threats/ Abuse did you observe from the child, or did a child report any?)	Yes, for some parents who said they could guide their children while conducting online studies since some parents said the children could sometimes use their gadgets like smart phones, laptops to access online studies. Some parents said no, that their children were not safe online since some of their children could go to the cafes alone to access the internet without any supervision from any one.

4	We know that, going online and using the internet can provide hours of entertainment and wealth of information, as well as lots of potential problems with	They think children can enjoy being online while staying safe only if the government puts in place mandatory precautionary measures to every school going child using the internet. Use of passwords and there should be a software designed for only educational materials for learners to engage in than other activities.
5.	As parents, what kind of online problems and threats do you take seriously? (let them List) for their honest opinion)	• Hackers • Scammers • Predators
6.	As community members/parents, how can you support our children to be safe while on the internet?	• Close monitoring while they use internet • Use of password to ensure privacy
7.	Have you ever participated in any awareness creation on children's safety online? If yes, Let them narrate as you take notes.	All the parents said they have never participated in any awareness.
8.	Do you know any referral pathways for cyber-crime?	Yes, police, children protection unit, service providers