

Borgman, D. (1990). Ugandan demographics. S. Hamilton, MA: Center for Youth Studies.

OVERVIEW

BASIC STATISTICS

In order to understand the youth of a region, it is vital to know about the region in which they live. The following includes facts and figures on Uganda.

Official Party	National Resistance Movement (NRM)
Area	236,860 Square kilometers
Population (World Bank)	15,160,000 (1986)
Density population per square kilometer	62
Capital	Kampala
Main languages	English, Kiswahili, Luganda, Lusoga, Lunyoro, Ateso, and Luo
Population growth rate	2.8 to 3.0 (1973-1986)
Gross National Product (World Bank)	Estimates under \$425,000,000 (1986)

URBANIZATION

Except for Kampala, and the small population of Entebe as an administrative center,

urbanization in Uganda has shown a tendency of reverse growth. Economic and political factors have caused a return to rural life; most cities experienced a population decline through the 1980s.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

- Uganda has a proud and illustrious history of ancient kingdoms.
- Independence from Britain came in 1962. Preparation for independence began in 1955.
- Its history since independence has been characterized by adversarial relationships between the ruling government and opposition groups. British colonial policy, along with ancient tribal rivalries have caused costly divisions. Traditional monarchies of Buganda, Ankole, Bunyoro-Kitara, and Toro have striven for dominance and been opposed by other tribes and the Ugandan government. The British favored the Buganda in recruitment for their civil service while using the Acholi and Langi in the military. This policy terribly affected the possibility of unity after independence.
- The Idi Amin years (1971-1979) saw the suspension of Parliament and all political activities, the decimation of Acholi and Langi, the expulsion of Asians, and the collapse of the economy. An estimated 400,000 Christians alone were killed from 1971-1978. More than 42 religious sects, 28 of them Christian, were banned by Amin from 1974-1978. Eighteen foreign missionaries were expelled.
- From the election of 1980 until the consolidation of power under Museveni's NRA in the late 1980s, Uganda experienced difficult political and economic unrest and instability. Despite huge odds against him, deep animosities and a decimated treasury, Museveni took a strong stand against factionalism and corruption and has engendered real hope for stability and development.

RELIGIOUS POPULATIONS

	1900	1980	2000 (estimate)
Christian	180,000	10,353,000	20,417,900
Roman Catholic	100,000	6,558,000	12,804,800
Anglican	80,000	3,463,000	6,761,800
Protestants	0	251,000	652,300

African Indigenous	0	66,000	169,000
Orthodox	0	15,000	30,000
Tribal	2,416,700	1,661,000	1,208,000
Muslim	53,000	872,700	1,787,800
Baha'i	0	330,600	724,800
Hindu, Sikh, Jainist	300	0 (approx. 72,000 were expelled in 1972; some returned in late 1980s)	N/A
Non-religious	0	4,000	20,000
Jewish	0	700	1,500

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUTH

- In two decades, besides those killed, hundreds of thousands Ugandans have been dislocated, fleeing the country or from one region to another. Many of these are children and youth.
- A striking feature of youth in Uganda is their presence in the military. Children and youth predominate in the army. The military has, on the one hand, protected and nurtured orphans and homeless. On the other hand, these children are in the army for life.
- In the 1960s, Uganda could boast of some of the finest health and education facilities in Africa. UNICEF estimates that 73% of children under 15 years of age were immunized in 1973. By 1980, that figure had dropped to less than 10%. During that period, hospital admissions of children with measles jumped from 1% to 25% of the total admissions. In the Amin era, 40% of the 978 doctors, 96% of the 116 pharmacists, and more than half of the only 42 dentists left the country. Education for Uganda's children has obviously been disrupted. Many students have been forced to

learn without books. Still, teachers and schools have carried on valiantly.

- About UNICEF's 1988 report, "Children on the Front Line," Jeminah Mwakelemu writes ([1989, April 12]. *Daily Nation* [Kenya].):

They have seen it all. Mass murders, rape, relatives butchered, burnt to death or buried alive. They have gone through the horror of seeing people they know drowned with their legs tied. And they have been forced to undergo military training after which they have been sent out to kill. They are the children of the war-torn areas of Africa...

Spotlighting this feature story is a picture of nine- or ten-year-old Ugandan in military uniform holding an automatic weapon—his eyes emotionless and empty.

- The principle needs of Ugandan children and youth are related to peace and stability. Education and health facilities are of primary importance. As many African young people, they are concerned about future employment and supporting a family.
- Religiously, Ugandan youth want more than they often find in their churches. They look for a faith that is relevant to their needs and societal problems. They want a dynamic faith that engages their emotions and whole being, healing and giving promise of dramatic fulfillment of their needs and aspirations. If they do not find these in the established churches, they may leave church altogether or find community and excitement in cults and new churches.
- Those concerned for youth in Uganda worry about resources for schools, the quality and character of teachers, and the generation gap between educated children and their parents and pastors. Many churches have no youth programs. Training for youth workers is needed.

IMPLICATIONS

1. This information, though dated and limited in its available statistics, is important for two reasons. It still provides valuable background material, and it serves as a helpful model of what organizations need to know about the countries they serve.
2. Ugandans hope that world brothers and sisters will remember to encourage and support their national task of rebuilding.

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