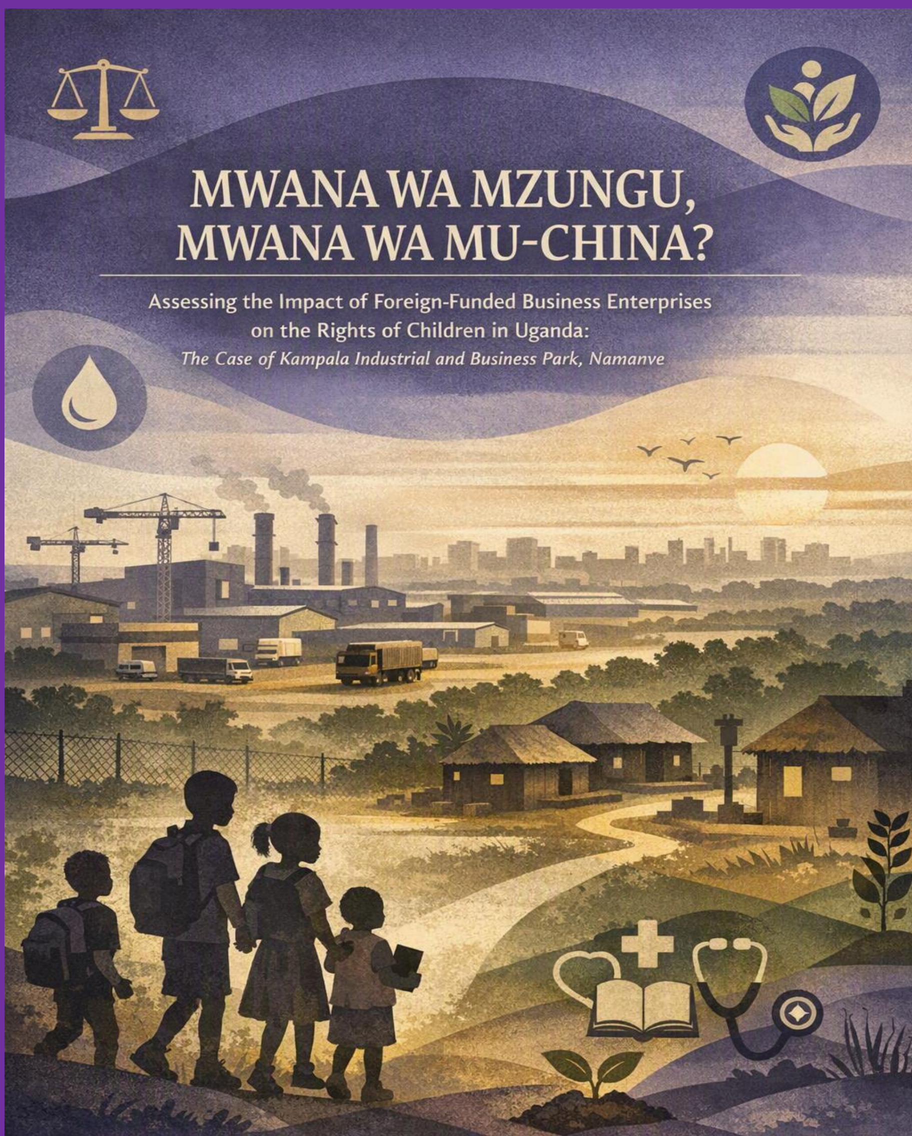


Global Campus Alumni

*Together for Human Rights*

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**Official Disclaimer:** *This baseline assessment was developed as part of the Global Campus Alumni Cross-Regional Projects.*

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## Executive Summary

This baseline assessment, titled “Mwana wa Mzungu, Mwana wa Mu-China?”, examines the impact of foreign-funded business enterprises on the rights and welfare of children in Uganda, using the Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve as its case study.

The title “Mwana wa Mzungu, Mwana wa Mu-China?” is drawn from Luganda, the language of the Baganda people and one of the most widely spoken languages around Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve. The Baganda, who form the historic community of the Kingdom of Buganda in central Uganda, are widely associated with warmth, courtesy and hospitality; qualities that have long shaped Buganda’s place as a meeting ground for people from different parts of Uganda, Africa and the wider world. In many ways, that spirit mirrors Uganda’s broader national character: a country known for welcoming visitors, investors and communities from elsewhere.

Loosely translated, the title asks: “Whose children matter — the European child, the Chinese child, or the Ugandan child living closest to the effects of industrialisation?” It uses this question not to reject foreign presence, but to test the moral balance of Uganda’s hospitality: whether foreign-funded industrialisation protects and benefits the children of the communities that host it, or whether its gains flow outward while local children bear the social, environmental and developmental costs. From a child-rights perspective, the assessment therefore asks whether industrialisation in KIBP is truly sustainable: whether it improves the lives of children growing up near its factories, roads and pollution, or leaves them carrying the burden of prosperity created for others.

It situates KIBP within Uganda’s wider industrialisation and foreign investment agenda, while asking whether the economic promise of industrial parks is being matched by adequate protection of children who live, study, work, play and grow up in communities directly affected by industrial activity.

The study responds to a significant evidence gap. Foreign investment and industrialisation in Uganda are commonly assessed through indicators such as infrastructure growth, employment creation, export promotion, technology transfer and investment facilitation. However, the child-specific impacts of these processes remain under-documented. Where children are considered, the discussion is often confined to child labour, leaving insufficient attention to broader concerns such as health, education, environmental wellbeing, family livelihoods, access to services, participation, community safety, sexual exploitation risks, and the best interests of the child in investment governance.

The report traces Namanve’s transformation from a historically charged landscape associated with State violence and underdevelopment into Uganda’s flagship industrial and business park. It notes the rapid expansion of KIBP, from a limited number of operational factories to a major industrial hub hosting more than 300 companies, including firms with perceived or documented foreign links to India, China, Japan, South Africa, Switzerland, the United States, the Netherlands, Kenya, Ireland and Mauritius. This growth demonstrates the scale of foreign and foreign-affiliated business activity in the area, but also heightens the need to assess whether such investment is compatible with children’s rights and community wellbeing.

Methodologically, the study is designed as a baseline assessment combining legal and policy review, thematic analysis, secondary data, field observation and limited stakeholder, community and child insights. Its findings are grounded in international and domestic children’s rights standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Uganda's Constitution, the Children's Act, and emerging business and human rights standards. The report treats children not only as potential workers, but also as rights-holders within families, schools, communities and environments affected by business operations.

The legal and doctrinal analysis shows that Uganda has a strong normative framework for the protection of children, but that the business-and-children's-rights nexus remains weakly developed in practice. Uganda's constitutional and statutory framework recognises children's rights to care, education, health, protection from exploitation, and a clean and healthy environment, and creates obligations that bind both State and non-State actors. However, the study finds that policy and regulatory attention to children in business contexts remains heavily weighted toward child labour, with limited integration of children's broader rights into investment licensing, environmental and social impact assessment, industrial park planning, monitoring, procurement and enforcement.

The study's findings are organised around five core child-rights themes: the best interests of the child, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to education, the right of children to participate, and the right to a clean and healthy environment. On the best interests principle, the study found limited evidence that children's interests are systematically considered before businesses are licensed, projects are approved, or factories commence operations in KIBP. While the KIBP infrastructure Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) contained some child-relevant concerns, including education, child labour, traffic safety, public health, water access, livelihood disruption and school exposure to dust and noise, there was little evidence that these considerations were cascaded to individual enterprises or embedded as enforceable child-sensitive obligations.

On health, the study applies the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality framework and finds serious gaps. Although the wider Bweyogerere area has several health facilities, government facilities are few, distant from many affected communities, and difficult for poor households and children to access. Residents rely heavily on private facilities that may be unaffordable. The study further identifies concerns relating to inadequate health infrastructure, limited skilled personnel, weak referral systems, mental health stigma, reproductive health barriers, poor access to child-sensitive support services, and the absence of visible business support for community health. Environmental exposure to dust, fumes, noise, poor waste management, stagnant water and industrial pollution was linked by respondents to respiratory complaints, skin diseases, typhoid risks, sleep disruption, headaches and other health concerns affecting children.

On education, the study finds that business activity around KIBP may be weakening children's connection to schooling. Respondents reported school dropout, absenteeism, long distances to government-aided schools, overcrowding, high costs of private schooling, and children being drawn into informal work around factories. The study also found limited verifiable evidence of sustained business investment in education, notwithstanding isolated examples of school support. It concludes that the right to education must be assessed not only through school availability, but also through the ways in which poverty, casual labour markets, industrial expansion, unsafe routes, pollution, household pressure and weak adaptation measures affect children's attendance, retention and learning conditions.

On participation, the study finds a substantial participation deficit. Community members and local leaders reported limited or no consultation before factories were established, and there was no evidence of child-specific consultation. The researchers' limited engagement with children nevertheless revealed that some children feel unheard in schools, health facilities and local complaint processes, and that they experience fear or uncertainty when reporting harms linked to family stress, workplace pressures, traffic, pollution and other risks. This suggests that children around KIBP lack safe, trusted and responsive channels through which to raise concerns about business-related harm.

On environmental rights, the study finds that conditions within and around KIBP pose serious risks to children's right to a clean and healthy environment. Respondents and children raised concerns about industrial noise, heavy truck traffic, vehicle fumes, roadside and industrial dust, odour, waste dumping, poor drainage and pollution. Children specifically reported persistent noise from the aluminium factory and fear of heavy traffic along industrial roads. Although further technical assessment is required to establish the full scale and causation of these harms, the evidence gathered strongly suggests that children's environmental wellbeing, safety and health are being materially undermined by industrial and foreign-funded business activity in the area.

The study is subject to important limitations. Time constraints limited the number and depth of primary interviews. Community engagement was affected by reluctance to discuss business operations, especially environmental concerns, because of perceptions that investors enjoy strong government protection. Direct engagement with children was constrained by school schedules, ethical considerations, prevailing attitudes toward child participation, and security concerns. The report should therefore be understood as an initial evidence base requiring validation through further fieldwork, key informant interviews, caregiver focus group discussions, technical environmental and health assessments, and ethically designed consultations with children.

Overall, the study concludes that Uganda's foreign investment and industrialisation agenda must be assessed not only by economic output, factory numbers, jobs or infrastructure, but also by its consequences for children as independent rights-holders. The Namanve case shows that industrial growth can generate opportunity, but also creates risks when child-sensitive safeguards are absent or weakly enforced. The study therefore recommends a more child-sensitive model of investment governance, including mandatory child-rights impact assessment, stronger environmental and social safeguards, meaningful community and child participation, improved health and education support, child-sensitive grievance and remedy mechanisms, clearer obligations for investors and businesses, and stronger monitoring by government agencies. By establishing baseline indicators, the study seeks to support a development model in which foreign investment contributes to inclusive growth while safeguarding the rights, dignity and future of children who live closest to its consequences.

# 1. INDUSTRIALISATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: AN OVERVIEW.

## 1.1. Background and Rationale

Historically, industrialisation has served as a key driver of development in both advanced and emerging economies by promoting the production and consumption of higher-value goods and services. As a developing country, Uganda is focused on using industrialisation as a major vehicle to achieve robust economic development. The focus is visible through the theme of the National Development Plan III (NDP III) which is "Sustainable Industrialisation for Inclusive Growth."[1] Uganda's industrial sector is comprised of the following sub-sectors: manufacturing, construction, mining, and quarrying, electricity and water.[2]

Uganda attaches great importance to attracting foreign investment as part of its strategic focus on achieving the socio-economic transformation of the country. Under Uganda's Industrial Policy, one of the key actions of the Government is to facilitate attraction of foreign investors, establish and negotiate technology transfer agreements and access to foreign markets. Government is specifically mandated under the Policy to attract and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment in the priority value chains for industrial development.[3] The Industrial sector contributes about 27% to Uganda's GDP making it the third biggest contributor alongside the services industry and agriculture.[4]

The Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) was mandated to develop industrial and business parks across Uganda to attract investment, create jobs, support technology transfer, and boost exports and revenue. By 2017, the number of planned industrial parks had increased to 27, with the parks expected to promote value addition and support growth in agriculture and minerals. There are three Government-owned industrial parks within the Kampala-Mukono region. These include the Kampala Industrial and Business Park (KIBP)-Namanve, the Luzira Industrial Park and the Bweyogerere Industrial Park.

Uganda is home to more than 22 million children (persons below the age of 18).[5] Over 25,000 children stay within the Kampala Industrial Business Park,[6] Namanve and are in direct contact with the day-to-day activities of Industrialisation within the area. Such children live in communities where industrialisation and related business activities take place, making them directly and indirectly affected by business operations. Children are important stakeholders for foreign businesses as consumers, family members of employees, young workers, and future employees and business leaders, while also being members of the communities and environments in which businesses operate.[7]

Children within the context of business and industrialisation are protected under international and domestic human rights law, including both binding and non-binding instruments. States, including central and local governments, businesses and individuals are required to respect, protect and, where

[1] The National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, August 2021, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Gender snd accessed on 31 May 2026.
[2] The Government of Uganda, National Industrial Policy,33, 2020, NIP Report last accessed on 15 May 2026.
[3] Same as above, 22.
[4] Industrial and Business Parks - Uganda Investment Authority last accessed on 08 July 2026.
[5] The National Population and Housing Census 2024 – Final Report – Volume I (Main), Published, The National Population and Housing Census 2024 – Final Report - Volume I (Main), Published - Uganda Bureau of Statistics
[6] BWEYOGERERE WARD - NPHC 2024 Data last accessed on 01 July 2026.
[7] Children's Rights and Business Principles, 2012, Children's Rights and Business Principles | UNICEF last accessed on 01 July 2026.

violations occur, remedy children's rights, guided by the overriding principle of the welfare and best interests of the child. As expectations for responsible business conduct and human rights compliance continue to grow, it has become increasingly necessary to examine how business operations affect children's rights.

This study examines how foreign business interests within the Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve, affect the rights and welfare of children. As a baseline study, it seeks to establish an evidence-based starting point for identifying child-rights risks and violations, tracking changes over time, and generating recommendations for state and non-state actors to strengthen child-rights protections in the context of industrialization.

## 1.2. Problem Statement

While some studies have been done and interventions made regarding the impact of foreign business interests in Uganda on the economy and even on human rights generally, there remains a dearth of information on child-specific data on how these interests have impacted children.

Foreign business interests in Uganda are often assessed through economic, financial and infrastructure outputs, while their specific impacts on children remain under-documented. Further to this, usually, when the interactions of children with business entities are discussed, they are almost always biased towards the issues of child labour and nothing beyond it. The study aims to broaden the discussion beyond that narrow scope and to set the pace for any further inquiry into the study.

Additionally, information available on the Kampala Industrial Business Park, Namanve, is largely biased towards the economic benefits or otherwise of the Park but little or nothing exists about the impact of the enterprises in this area on human rights generally, and the rights of children specifically.

Accordingly, this baseline study responds to the absence of a consolidated child-rights evidence base on the impact of foreign business interests in Uganda, using the Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve, as a case study. It establishes an initial reference point for identifying existing and emerging risks, measuring changes over time, and informing child-sensitive policy, regulatory and business responses to ensure that industrialization and foreign investment advance, rather than undermine, the rights and welfare of children.

## 1.3. Main Research Question

How do foreign business interests within the Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve, affect children's rights and welfare, and what baseline indicators can support future monitoring and child-sensitive investment governance?

## 1.4. Specific Research Questions

1.4.1. What foreign-funded or foreign-affiliated business activities operate in and around KIBP, and how do they affect children and surrounding communities?

1.4.2. Which children's rights are most affected by industrial and foreign business activity in KIBP?

1.4.3. What baseline indicators can assess whether KIBP protects, benefits or harms children?

1.4.4. What reforms are needed to make foreign investment and industrial park governance child-sensitive, accountable and sustainable?

## 1.5. Objectives of the Study

1.5.1. To analyze the relationship between foreign business interests and children's rights in Uganda.
1.5.2. To establish a child-rights baseline across education, health, protection, participation, livelihoods and environmental rights.
1.5.3. To propose indicators and recommendations for child-sensitive investment governance.

## 1.6. Methodology

This study combines legal and policy review, thematic analysis, field observation and limited primary data collection to establish an initial evidence base on the child-rights implications of foreign business activity in and around Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve.

### 1.6.1. Study Design

The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive design, using Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve, as a case study. It does not aim to produce statistically representative findings. Instead, it establishes a baseline for understanding how foreign-funded and foreign-affiliated business activity may affect children's rights and welfare, while identifying recurring risks, community perceptions and indicators for future monitoring, policy engagement and more detailed empirical research.

### 1.6.2. Document Review Strategy

The document review was purposive and theme-driven. It considered legal, policy, institutional, academic and publicly available materials relevant to industrialisation, foreign investment, business and human rights, and children's rights in Uganda. These included international and regional children's rights instruments, Uganda's constitutional and statutory framework, business and human rights standards, government policy documents, investment licensing materials, environmental and social impact assessment materials relating to KIBP, population and health facility data, academic studies, civil society reports, media commentary and publicly available corporate information on selected entities operating in or associated with the Park.

The review specifically looked for evidence relating to the five thematic areas of children's rights that guide this assessment, namely the best interests of the child, the right to health, the right to education, the right of children to participate, and the right to a clean and healthy environment.

### 1.6.3. Interview Sampling and Numbers

The study relied on purposive and snowball sampling to identify respondents who had direct knowledge of KIBP and the surrounding communities. Local leaders were particularly useful in identifying persons who could speak to the realities of children living around the Park. The respondents included parents and guardians, community members, business representatives and, where ethical and practical considerations allowed, a small number of children.

The selection of respondents was guided by the need to understand how industrial activity affects children's everyday lives, including their access to schools and health facilities, exposure to pollution and traffic, child labour risks, household livelihood pressures, consultation processes and available grievance channels.

In total, the study relied on 12 formal interviews and 8 informal research conversations with adult respondents. The formal interviews, which followed a structured or semi-structured approach, constituted the primary basis for verifying and grounding the study's findings. The informal research conversations were treated only as complementary qualitative inputs, used to clarify emerging issues, capture contextual community perceptions and assist in triangulation. They were not independently relied upon to establish the veracity of any finding. These engagements were supplemented by limited child-sensitive interaction.

The interviews and conversations were not intended to produce statistically representative conclusions, but to identify recurring concerns and support the development of baseline indicators for future monitoring.

#### 1.6.4. Ethical Considerations

The study was guided by voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, non-maleficence and respect for the dignity and evolving capacities of children. Adult respondents were informed of the study's purpose and were not required to disclose information they considered unsafe or sensitive. Where anonymity was requested, identities were withheld, particularly for business representatives, casual workers, parents and community members discussing potentially sensitive enterprise practices.

Engagement with children was deliberately limited and cautious, considering consent, assent, school schedules, retaliation risks and the need to avoid exposing children or caregivers to harm. The study therefore avoided any form of questioning that could require children to disclose traumatic experiences without appropriate support systems.

Children in schools were interviewed only where appropriate infomed consent and assent were obtained, including from the child, parent or guardian, and relevant school authority, and without disrupting school schedules. Where photographs were taken, children's identities were protected by concealing facial features or using anonymised illustrative representations where anonymity was requested.

#### 1.6.5. Analytical Framework

The analysis was grounded in both a child-rights framework and a business and human rights framework. On that basis, foreign business activity in and around KIBP was assessed by examining how it affects children as independent rights-holders, as well as the responsibilities of State and business actors to respect, protect and remedy children's rights. The analysis focused on five thematic areas: the best interests of the child; the right to the highest attainable standard of health; the right to education; the child's right to participate; and the right to a clean and healthy environment. These themes guided the review of documents, interviews and observations, and informed the development of baseline indicators for assessing whether investment governance in KIBP protects, benefits or harms children.

#### 1.6.6. Methodological Limitations

The study was limited by time, access constraints and security-related sensitivities within communities surrounding KIBP. Its purposive sample does not claim statistical representativeness, and some respondents were reluctant to discuss business operations, especially environmental concerns, because of perceptions that investors enjoy strong political or government protection.

The study also had limited access to company-specific environmental and social impact assessments and could not independently verify ownership structures for all enterprises described as foreign-owned or foreign-affiliated.

Child participation was further constrained by ethical safeguards, school schedules, community attitudes toward children's participation and the need to avoid exposing children or caregivers to retaliation. These limitations do not undermine the value of the findings; rather, they point to the need for further fieldwork, technical environmental and health assessments, wider community consultations, caregiver focus group discussions and carefully designed child-participation processes.

## 1.7. Scope of the Study

The study is geographically focused on Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve, located within the wider Bweyogerere area of Kira Municipality in the Kampala-Wakiso Metropolitan Area. It considers children and surrounding communities whose daily lives, services and environments are directly or indirectly affected by the Park's industrial and investment activities.

Substantively, the assessment applies a child-rights lens to examine how foreign business interests within KIBP affect children's rights, welfare and access to essential services, and draws lessons for child-sensitive investment governance across Uganda.

## 1.8. Data Sources

1.8.1. Review of existing legal, academic, government and civil society materials.
1.8.2. Secondary analysis of investment-related impacts identified in prior research.
1.8.3. Case-based and thematic analysis of child-rights implications drawn from foreign-funded industrial projects and broader human rights and development evidence within and beyond Uganda.
1.8.4. Interviews with members of the Community of Kampala Industrial Business Park including local leaders, care-givers (parents and guardians), local business persons, children and other stakeholders.

## 1.9. Limitations

The main limitation of the study was time, which constrained the extent of primary interviews with stakeholders, community members and children around KIBP. Community participation was also limited by reluctance to discuss business operations, particularly environmental concerns, due to perceptions that the enterprises were protected by strong government interests.

Interviews with children were further limited by school schedules, prevailing attitudes that discourage child participation, and the risk that direct engagement could attract suspicion from local security actors or leaders perceived to be linked to business interests. As a result, the report draws primarily on secondary data, formal adult interviews and limited community insights, with children's views captured only where ethically and practically appropriate. The findings should therefore be treated as an initial evidence base requiring further validation through child-sensitive fieldwork, additional key informant interviews, caregiver focus groups and carefully designed consultations with children.

## 2. NAMANVE'S RISE FROM THE RUINS TO COURTING FOREIGN BUSINESS INTERESTS.

The area known as Namanve, where the Kampala Industrial and Business Park now sits, has a complex and unsettling history marked by State power and grave human rights abuses. For years, it formed part of the Namanve Forest, remembered by many as an infamous site where victims of the repressive regimes of the 1970s and 1980s were allegedly tortured, murdered and abandoned. In this local memory, the forest is recalled not merely as a physical landscape, but as a somber symbol of unresolved violence and State brutality. Among the most haunting episodes linked to this history is the story of Dora Bloch, an elderly passenger on Air France Flight 139 who, during the 1976 Entebbe hijacking, was separated from the other hostages after being taken to hospital in Kampala.[8] She disappeared soon after the Israeli rescue operation and was later reported to have been killed under Idi Amin's regime, making her story one of the enduring reminders of the violence associated with that period and the forest.

Namanve is located in Bweyogerere Ward, in southeastern Kira Municipality, in Wakiso District, Central Uganda. It is approximately 15 kilometres, by road, east of downtown Kampala, Uganda's capital and most cosmopolitan city. Namanve is bordered by Seeta to the east, Namilyango to the southeast, Lake Victoria to the south, Kirinnya to the southwest and Bweyogerere to the west and northwest.

As part of the wider Bweyogerere Ward, Namanve sits within a densely populated and economically active area of more than 68,000 people and over 22,000 households.[9] In 1997, the area was formally designated as an industrial and business park under the stewardship of the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), as part of Uganda's broader national strategy to stimulate industrial growth and attract investment.

For the longest time, Namanve's claim to fame for anything related to business was the Century Bottling Company Plant, the manufacturers of the famous Coca-Cola, one of Uganda's most adored soft drinks. For passengers travelling along the Namanve stretch of the Kampala–Jinja Highway, about 15 kilometres east of Kampala's central business district, the most striking feature was the unmistakable presence of Coca-Cola on the left side of the road. The Century Bottling Company premises stood out against the otherwise underdeveloped surroundings, with their see-through perimeter fence revealing neatly trimmed lawns, carefully maintained gardens and freshly painted office buildings. To motorists and passers-by, this polished corporate frontage was the dominant landmark in an area that had not yet fully taken on the appearance of a planned industrial park.

Beyond the Coca-Cola premises, however, the landscape changed sharply. A wide stretch of swampy, largely undeveloped land extended behind the factory grounds, much of it serving as open grazing space for cows, goats and sheep. Sections that had been designated for industries, warehouses and other

[8] Joshua Potere Mushwa, "From Namanve's Painful Past to Factory Whistles", The Kampala Post, 22 April 2026 From Namanve's Painful Past to Factory Whistles - Kampala Post.
[9] BWEYOGERERE WARD - NPHC 2024 Data

facilities within the much-publicised industrial park remained visibly idle or were being put to informal uses such as bricklaying and small-scale agriculture.

Across the Kampala–Jinja Highway, the southern side offered only a modest improvement, marked mainly by a few murram roads cutting through the area. By contrast, the northern wing was even less developed; according to local residents, until around 2012 it had little more than narrow footpaths threading through the swampy terrain and open land.

Alongside Century Bottling Company, a limited number of firms, including Roofings Group and Hima Cement, maintained an early industrial presence in the area.[10] However, the Park remained significantly constrained by inadequate infrastructure, including poor road access, unreliable water and electricity supply, and limited digital connectivity. These deficiencies undermined its capacity to attract and sustain large-scale industrial investment.

In the early 2010s, the Government of Uganda seemed to have re-awakened its interests in KIBP and entered several Memoranda with different players to bring the vision of the Park to life. It is reported as follows: -

> "the Government of Uganda, through Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) with financing partners including United Kingdom Export Finance (UKEF), entered into a major infrastructure development contract with Lagan Dott Namanve Limited. This strategic project is now upgrading essential infrastructure including a network of roads and bridges, water and sewerage systems, power distribution, street lighting, fibre-optic connectivity and more, laying a firm foundation for growth. The impact of these improvements has been transformative. Before 2016, the park had only about 22 operational factories. Today, that number has grown exponentially, with over 300 companies setting up operations and expectations that up to 500 factories could be functional in the next two years. This growth is not just about numbers. It represents a leap forward for local value addition, import substitution and export potential in sectors like agro-processing, mineral processing, logistics, ICT and general manufacturing. Once fully operational, KIBP is expected to create over 200,000 direct jobs, providing livelihoods for thousands of young Ugandans and supporting broader national development goals."[11]

That glowing tribute was from an online commentary in April 2026.

As a testament to the incredible work of the Government of Uganda in Namanve, KIBP's growth has also elevated UIA's international profile, earning it recognition such as the Greenfield FDI Award 2025, the WAIPA Special LDC Award 2025, runner-up status for Best Investment Promotion Agency in Africa at the AIM Global Awards 2025, and the Investment Catalyst Award at the 2023 Go Global Awards.

[10] Joshua Potere (n 8).
[11] As above

The study observed the presence of several foreign-owned industries operating within the area. The KIBP is currently home to more than 300 operational factories, rising from 12 in 2016.[12] Several interviews conducted with the locals indicated that most of the foreign-owned industries in the area are owned by Indian and Chinese nationals.[13] Some of the industries identified in areas such as Kiwanga-Mawuto and Kiwanga-Lwanda were owned by Indians[14] and Arabs.[15] Several Chinese and Japanese companies were observed in Kireku such as CFAO Motors the distributor of Toyota automobiles in Uganda. Foreign businesses operating in Namanve included companies in Oil and Gas,[16] Agro-processing,[17] Coffee production.[18] The Leading Foreign-owned Coffee production entity is Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited which is owned by the Volcafe Group which was acquired by Hartree Partners in 2025.[19] Reacting to that acquisition, some commentators noted as follows: -

> "Financial consolidation is not inherently negative. Capital investment can bring efficiency, stability and scale. It can fund sustainability programmes, modernise infrastructure, and provide counter-cyclical support during periods of market volatility. But it changes incentives. And incentives shape decisions. When a coffee trading operation is owned by a commodity-focused financial firm — rather than by people whose primary expertise and identity is rooted in coffee — the decision-making framework shifts in ways that have structural consequences for the entire value chain."[20]

Comments such as the one above are telling because they go to the heart of the inquiry of the impact that businesses have in communities and whether that impact is geared towards profitability even if that profitability comes at the expense of the rights of the community's most vulnerable populations.

Other foreign entities operating in Namanve include companies involved in machinery manufacturing, construction,[21] Transport and Logistics,[22] Furniture production, Steel and Aluminum production, and many more.

It was clear from public perception that there is significant foreign investment in Kampala Industrial Business Park. Some of the Companies that we have identified above, and others captured in the table below, were noted to have heavy foreign influence.

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[12] Geofrey Serugo, "Namanve on course to become regional hub for trade and manufacturing" 30 May 2025 Namanve on course to become regional hub for trade and manufacturing - The Observer Media Ltd

[131313] Interviews with Interviewee 1, 2, 4 and 5.

[14] Interviewee 2 indicated that there are about 20 Factories owned by Indians in Kiwanga-Mawuto.

[15] Interviewees 1 and 2.

[16] Namanve Thermal Power Station. While Locals thought this was a Foreign Company, its ownership reverted to the Government of Uganda from the Norwegian owned Jacobsen Elktro. Namanve Thermal Power Station | UEGCL – Powering Uganda's Growth through Strategic Partnerships.

[17] AVADO Industries Limited which is owned by a one Hasan Kailani, a Jordanian-trained leading avocado oil consultant

[18] Kyagalanyi Coffee Ltd (Uganda) - Volcafe

[19] Hartree Partners Announces Closing of Acquisition of ED&F Man Commodities - Volcafe.

[20] Who Controls Coffee? The Structural Risks Behind the New Wave of Consolidation | Matteo Borea.

[21] Super Plaza Enterprises Limited which according to Locals is operated by the Indians. Interviewee 2 and 6.

[22] Africa Global Logistics, (formerly Bolloré Transport & Logistics Uganda) is **a major multimodal logistics provider and part of the global MSC Group**. The company was rebranded as Africa Global Logistics (AGL) in Uganda in November 2023 following its acquisition by the MSC Group. The MSC Group is owned by the Italian Aponte Family and the Bollore Transport Group had strong French Corporate roots. It is widely recognized for its integrated logistics network that connects Uganda to global trade corridors. AGL is specifically known for its role as a Tier-1 logistics contractor for the **East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)** and the **Tilenga project**, as well as for its significant investments in national infrastructure like the Namanve container depot.

Most of the interviewees, indicated that they were aware that there are several foreign entities in the Industrial Park. During the interviews, we were able to see significant Indian and Chinese presence within the Industrial Park.

The researchers were not able to directly access some of the Foreign Nationals sighted in some of the businesses, and reliance was placed upon interviews with locals, local leadership and members of the Ugandan business community to pick up on some of the perceptions.

The table below analyses selected companies with operations in Kampala Industrial Business Park-Namanve, focusing exclusively on those with perceived foreign ownership or significant foreign affiliation. The classification is based on publicly available information, corporate history, brand association, and market perception.

It is not a legal verification of ownership or shareholding structure. Companies whose ownership could not be confidently determined are not included in this list.

| Rank | Company | Industry | Perceived Country of Ownership/Origin | Presence in KIBP Namanve / Confidence |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Export Trading Company | Agribusiness & Commodity Trading | India (Rai Group) | Very High |
| 2 | Roofings Limited | Steel Manufacturing | Indian-Ugandan (Lalani family) | Very High |
| 3 | Steel & Tube Industries Ltd | Steel Manufacturing | Indian-Ugandan | Very High |
| 4 | Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited | Coffee Processing & Export | Switzerland (Volcafe) | Very High |
| 5 | Leaf Tobacco & Commodities (U) Ltd | Tobacco Processing | United States (Universal Leaf) | Very High |
| 6 | Laborex Uganda | Pharmaceutical Distribution | South Africa | Very High |
| 7 | Plascon Uganda Ltd | Paint Manufacturing | South Africa | Very High |
| 8 | Toyota Uganda | Automotive | Japan | Very High |
| 9 | Saraya Manufacturing | Hygiene Products | Japan | Very High |
| 10 | Spedag Interfreight | Logistics | Switzerland | Very High |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Alfasan Uganda Limited | Veterinary Pharmaceuticals | Netherlands | High |
| 12 | POA Tanks Uganda Limited | Plastic Water Tanks | Kenya | High |
| 13 | Raxio Uganda | Data Centre Infrastructure | Mauritius (Regional Investment Platform) | High |
| 14 | Lagan Dott Namanve Limited | Construction Materials | Ireland/Uganda Joint Venture | High |
| 15 | Cipla Quality Chemical Industries | Pharmaceuticals | Historically India/Uganda; ownership subsequently changed | Medium–High |
| 16 | Plasnet Olyset Mosquito Nets | Medical Textiles | Japanese technology partnership | Medium–High |
| 17 | Ganesh Investments Ltd | Manufacturing | Indian-Ugandan | Medium |
| 18 | Shreeji Pharmaceuticals Ltd | Pharmaceuticals | Indian-Ugandan | Medium |
| 19 | China Huangpai Food Machines (U) Ltd | Food processing machinery manufacturing | China | Manufacturing facility in Namanve; High |
| 20 | Xing Dong Manufacturing (U) Ltd | Steel structures, trailers, cranes, weighbridges and industrial equipment | China | Factory on Roofing Road, Namanve Industrial Park; High |
| 21 | Tian Tang Group | Manufacturing | China | Subsidiaries operating in Namanve; High |
| 22 | Yaya Children's Products Manufacturing Co. Ltd | Baby products and hygiene products | China | Namanve factory; High |

**<u>Key to understanding the Table Above.</u>**

- The **Indian/Indian-Ugandan business community** represents the largest concentration of perceived foreign investors within the selected companies, particularly in steel manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, commodity trading, and industrial production.

- **Chinese-owned or Chinese-affiliated companies** rank second within the selected list, with four identified entities operating in manufacturing, food-processing machinery, industrial equipment, and children's or hygiene-related products. This makes Chinese ownership one of the most visible foreign ownership categories in the sampled KIBP-Namanve companies, after the Indian/Indian-Ugandan grouping.

  It should be noted that the number of Chinese Companies are more than we could establish independently through this study. As of 2021, it was reported that there were about 21 Chinese Companies operating within the Kampala Industrial Business Park.[23] It is most likely that this number has significantly gone up since then.

- **Japanese companies** have established a notable presence in automotive, hygiene products, and medical textile manufacturing.

- **South African firms** are concentrated in pharmaceuticals and industrial coatings.

- **Swiss investment** is primarily found in high-value coffee exports and logistics services.

- Other foreign investors from the **United States, the Netherlands, Kenya, Ireland, and Mauritius** are represented through specialized manufacturing, agribusiness, and infrastructure investments.

[23] Daily Monitor "China's footprint in Uganda's industrial sector" 01 February 2021 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/china-s-footprint-in-uganda-s-industrial-sector-1776604

# 3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF HEAVY INDUSTRIALISATION IN KAMPALA INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS PARK.

## 3.1. Legal and Doctrinal Framework.

Uganda is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), having ratified it in 1990.[24]

Uganda

State Party Signatory No Action

| Human Rights Instrument : (Date into force) | Ratification Status | Declaration |
|---|---|---|
| **Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment :1753** | | |
| Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment :1753 | Signature: NA, Ratification/Accession: NA | |
| **Convention on the Rights of the Child :1753** | Signature: 1990, Ratification/Accession: 1990 | |

As a signatory to the Convention, Uganda has several obligations owed to children and all their stakeholders. The CRC is anchored in four foundational principles: non-discrimination,[25] the best interests of the child,[26] the right to life,[27] survival and development,[28] and the right of the child to be participate in decisions affecting them and in the cultural and artistic life of their communities.[29] Within this framework, the Convention also protects children from economic exploitation and from work that is hazardous, disrupts their education, or is likely to harm their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.[30] States are therefore required to adopt legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to give practical effect to these protections, including setting a minimum age for employment, regulating working hours and conditions, and establishing effective penalties or sanctions for non-compliance.[31] Beyond labour-related protections, the CRC also safeguards children's rights to health,[32] rest, leisure, play, recreation,[33] protection, and an adequate standard of living,[34] while prohibiting torture and all forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.[35]

Uganda is also a signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), which provides broad protections for children in the context of business operations. Like the CRC, the ACRWC, is premised on four cardinal pillars to wit:- non-discrimination,[36] the best interests of the

[24] - OHCHR Dashboard
[25] Article 2, CRC.
[26] Article 3, CRC.
[27] Article 6(1), CRC.
[28] Article 6(2), CRC.
[29] Article 9(2) and Article 31, CRC.
[30] Article 32(1), CRC.
[31] Article 32(2), CRC.
[32] Article 24, CRC.
[33] Article 31, CRC.
[34] Article 27, CRC.
[35] Article 37, CRC.
[36] Article 3, ACRWC.

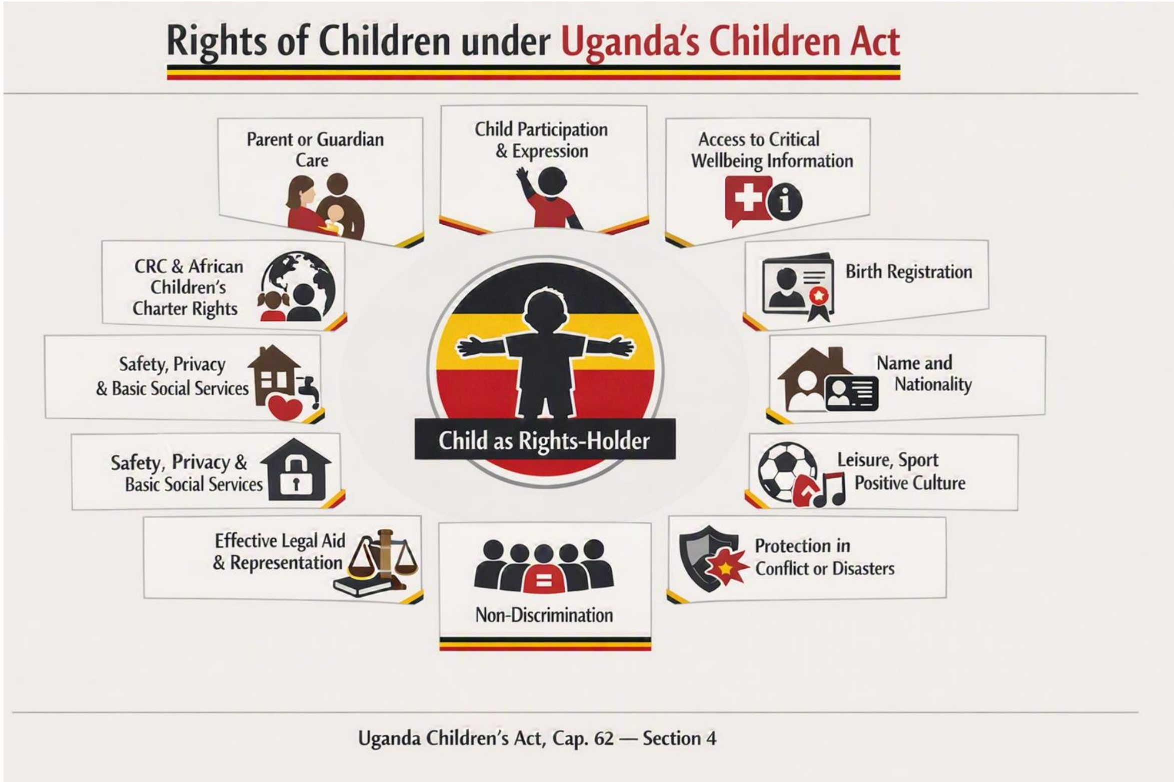
child,[37] the right to life and the obligation of States parties to ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child,[38] and the right of the child to freely express opinions and participate.[39] These principles present in international law are crucial to the substantive discussion on the rights of children in the context of business operations.

In the ACRWC, like in the CRC,[40] Article 15 in no uncertain terms, provides a guarantee of protection of children from all forms of economic exploitation and performance of any work likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Both strands of international law create obligations that require States parties to take legislative action to ensure the fulfillment and protection of the rights guaranteed under the respective treaties. In that regard, Uganda expressly provides protection for children's rights under the Constitution.[41] Implicit in Article 17, is the right of the children to be protected by any citizen from any form of abuse, harassment or ill-treatment. The right to be cared for by their parents and to be raised in the context of a family, is implicit in Articles 31 (2) and(5). Article 34 broadly provides for the rights accruing to children in Uganda and underscores the rights to parental care, education, health, and other social-economic rights without discrimination. Children are entitled to protection from social or economic exploitation and shall not be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.[42]

It should be noted that Article 34 which is the substantive provision on Children's rights in the Constitution operates within the framework of the Bill of Rights in Chapter Four which creates horizontal and vertical obligations on both State and Non-state actors in fulfilling, promoting and protecting human rights in Uganda.[43] In keeping with the obligation to enact legislation intent on promoting and protecting children's rights, Uganda enacted the Children's Act, Cap. 62. The key provisions under this Act are Section 3 which provides that the welfare of the Child shall be of paramount consideration whenever the State, its institutions or any person is determining any question. or matter in respect to the child. Section 4 provides for the rights of the child as seen in the infographic below.

[37] Article 4, ACRWC.
[38] Article 5, ACRWC.
[39] Article 7, ACRWC.
[40] See Article 32 of the CRC.
[41] Articles 17(2), 31(5), and 34 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.
[42] Article 34(4), Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.
[43] Article 20 of the Constitution of Uganda; Center for Health Human Rights and Development and Others v Attorney General, Constitutional Appeal No. 1 of 2013, Judgment of Bart Katureebe.




It is clear from the legal framework, that Uganda is sensitive to children's rights and it has the intent to ensure that these rights are protected against any affront that may be internal or external. What remains unclear is the framework on the nexus between business and children's rights in Uganda.

The study noted with concern that the National Policy Framework on business and Human Rights makes mention of children about 24 times and in most of the references to children it focuses on concerns with Child labour. Only once does it mention the sexual exploitation and abuse that children are exposed to in the context of doing business.[44] This reflection was made with respect to the report by Joy for Children titled "The Impact of the World Bank Funded Kamwenge-Kabarole Road construction Project on Children." This project was notorious for having been marred by widespread accusations of sexual violence against many young children by workers on the project. The World Bank.[45]

### 3.2. Comparative Perspective: Uganda's Constitution and International Children's Rights Instruments

Uganda's Constitution provides a strong domestic foundation for the protection of children, particularly through Article 34, read together with the wider Bill of Rights and the Children's Act. However, the international framework, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, is broader in scope and more explicit in articulating children

[44] The National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, 20 Gender snd.
[45] World Bank Statement on Cancellation of the Uganda Transport Sector Development Project (TSDP), 21 December 2015 World Bank Statement on Cancellation of the Uganda Transport Sector Development Project (TSDP)

as independent rights-holders whose civil, political, economic, social, cultural and developmental rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled. The table below compares the major areas of convergence and distinction.

| **Business and Children's Rights Theme** | **Uganda's Constitutional Position** | **International Instruments** | **Key Distinction / Nuance for Business Activity** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child labour and hazardous work in industrial value chains | Article 34 protects children from social or economic exploitation and from work likely to be hazardous, interfere with education, or harm health or development. | The CRC and ACRWC similarly require protection from economic exploitation, hazardous work and work harmful to education or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. | This is the most direct point of convergence, but the business analysis should extend beyond direct employment to suppliers, informal subcontractors, waste picking, transport yards, vending and household economic pressure linked to industrial activity. |
| Health, pollution and exposure to industrial risks | Article 34 prohibits deprivation of medical treatment and protects children's health and development; Article 39 guarantees the right to a clean and healthy environment. | The CRC and ACRWC protect the child's right to health, survival and development, including access to health services, nutrition, clean water, sanitation and protection from environmental conditions that undermine wellbeing. | Uganda's Constitution gives an express environmental right, while international law helps frame pollution, emissions, noise, unsafe waste disposal and contaminated water as child-specific rights issues requiring prevention and remediation. |
| Education disruption and school environment | Article 34 entitles every child to basic education and prohibits work that interferes with education; Article 30 separately protects the right to education. | The CRC and ACRWC require accessible education directed to the full development of the child and protection from conditions that undermine learning, attendance, dignity and development. | For business activity, the relevant inquiry includes school absenteeism caused by household economic pressures, traffic risks, pollution near schools, displacement, unsafe routes, and children being drawn into |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | informal work around industrial zones. |
| Family livelihoods, parental employment and adequate living conditions | The Constitution protects family life, parental care, dignity and social-economic rights relevant to children’s welfare. | The CRC and ACRWC recognise the child’s right to an adequate standard of living and require States to support parents and caregivers in securing conditions necessary for the child’s development. | Industrial investment may improve household welfare through employment, but poor wages, casualisation, unsafe work, land loss, displacement or inflation around industrial zones can indirectly undermine children’s living conditions. |
| Community safety, transport and physical security | The Constitution protects life, dignity, security of the person and children’s protection from abuse, neglect and ill-treatment. | The CRC and ACRWC require protection from violence, injury, neglect, exploitation and conditions that threaten survival and development. | In industrial parks, children’s rights may be affected by heavy truck traffic, unsafe roads, construction sites, machinery, open drains, poor lighting, security operations and limited safe public spaces. |
| Participation in business-related decisions and impact assessments | The Constitution does not expressly provide a standalone child participation right, although expression, dignity, equality and fair treatment may support meaningful engagement. | The CRC and ACRWC expressly require that children capable of forming views be heard in matters affecting them, with due weight given according to age and maturity. | International law is stronger for child-sensitive consultation, including environmental and social impact assessments, community engagement, resettlement processes and grievance design around business projects. |
| Best interests in investment approvals and | Article 34 is framed around laws made in the best interests of children, and the Children’s Act makes the welfare of the | The CRC and ACRWC require the best interests of the child to be a primary | The principle should inform licensing, land allocation, environmental approvals, monitoring, |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| industrial governance | child paramount in matters concerning children. | consideration in all actions concerning children. | corporate due diligence and enforcement decisions where industrial activity affects children. |
| Corporate accountability, horizontal obligations and remedy | Article 20 binds all organs, agencies and persons to respect, uphold and promote rights, and Article 50 allows any person to seek redress for rights violations. | The CRC and ACRWC impose State duties to protect children from third-party harm and to adopt legal, administrative and other measures to give effect to children's rights. | Uganda's horizontal rights framework is especially important for business and human rights because it supports claims and regulatory action not only against State actors, but also against companies and other private actors whose operations affect children. |
| Children in vulnerable situations around industrial zones | Article 34 requires special legal protection for orphans and other vulnerable children. | International instruments require particular protection for children affected by disability, poverty, separation, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, displacement and other heightened vulnerabilities. | Risk mapping should pay special attention to children in informal settlements, children with disabilities, children out of school, children of casual workers, children living near factories and those exposed to informal work or unsafe environments. |

The comparison shows that Uganda's Constitution substantially domesticates the core protection concerns found in international law, especially parental care, education, non-discrimination in access to medical treatment and social benefits, protection from exploitative labour, separation of child offenders from adults, and special protection for vulnerable children. However, international instruments are more expansive in at least four respects. First, they treat every person below eighteen as a child for general rights protection, whereas Article 34(5) refers to persons below sixteen for purposes of labour-related protection. Secondly, they expressly articulate participation, play, leisure, recreation, cultural life, health systems, adoption, alternative care and protection from a wider range of harms. Thirdly, they frame children as independent rights-holders whose views must be heard, rather than merely beneficiaries of adult protection. Fourthly, they impose more detailed duties on States to adopt legislative, administrative, social, educational and budgetary measures to realise children's rights.

For this study, the key point is that business impacts on children in Namanve should not be assessed only through child labour or hazardous work. A child-rights analysis must also consider how industrial activity affects children's health, education, family livelihoods, housing, safety, play spaces, participation, access to water and sanitation, exposure to pollution, access to remedy, and the situation of vulnerable children.

While constitutional and statutory protections for children often give particular prominence to work-related rights, especially protection from economic exploitation and hazardous labour, the business and children's rights discourse must not be confined to labour conditions alone. Children affected by industrialisation and business activity also experience impacts on their rights to health, education, family life, play and recreation, participation, environmental wellbeing, adequate living conditions, safety, and access to essential services. A narrow focus on child labour risks obscuring these wider dimensions of children's lived experiences and may leave serious rights concerns outside the scope of policy, regulation, monitoring and remedy. This study therefore calls for a broader child-rights lens that treats children not only as potential workers, but also as rights-holders within families, schools, communities and environments affected by business operations.

### 3.3. Findings and Baseline Indicators.

This section presents the study's findings through a child-rights lens, grouping the evidence according to the main ways in which business interests in KIBP have affected children and surrounding communities. The analysis focuses on five interrelated themes: the best interests of the child principle, the right to health, the right to education, the right to a clean and healthy environment, and the right of children to participate in decisions that affect them. These themes provide the basis for identifying baseline indicators against which future child-rights impacts of industrial activity in KIBP can be monitored.

For purposes of this baseline study, the indicators should not only measure direct violations such as child labour, but should also capture the broader ways in which industrial activity affects children's daily lives. The proposed indicators therefore combine legal, social, environmental, health, education and participation measures, and provide a starting point for future monitoring of whether business activity in KIBP advances or undermines children's rights.

While undertaking the study, the baseline indicators were divided along the five major themes of children rights.

| Child-rights theme | Baseline indicator | What should be monitored | Possible data sources |
|---|---|---|---|
| Best interests of the child | Extent to which children's interests are considered before investment approval, licensing and factory operations commence. | Presence of child-rights impact assessments; child-sensitive ESIA requirements; mitigation measures for children; and | UIA licensing documents, ESIA reports, NEMA approvals, local government records and community interviews. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | monitoring obligations imposed on investors. | |
| Right to health | Children's access to available, accessible, acceptable and quality health services in communities affected by KIBP. | Distance to health facilities; affordability of care; child-sensitive services; pollution-related illnesses; occupational stress affecting caregivers; and business support to community health. | Health facility records, community health workers, local leaders, household interviews, environmental complaints and business CSR records. |
| Right to education | Extent to which industrial activity supports or disrupts children's access, attendance, retention and learning conditions. | School dropout, absenteeism, distance to schools, costs of schooling, child labour around factories, pollution near schools and business contributions to education. | School records, teacher interviews, parent and child consultations, local council records and company community investment records. |
| Child participation | Existence of safe, meaningful and age-appropriate opportunities for children to be heard in decisions affecting them. | Child consultation in impact assessments; child-accessible grievance mechanisms; responsiveness of schools, health facilities and local authorities; and protection from retaliation. | Child-sensitive interviews, school and local council records, grievance logs, community consultations and ESIA participation records. |
| Clean and healthy environment | Children's exposure to environmental harms associated with industrial activity in and around KIBP. | Air pollution, dust, noise, odour, waste disposal, drainage, water contamination, traffic risks, proximity of schools and homes to factories, and environmental enforcement. | Environmental monitoring reports, NEMA records, community complaints, school observations, health records and technical environmental assessments. |

### 3.3.1. The Best interests of the Child.

The study sought evidence that child-rights considerations are included in investment decisions including investment-related approvals, licensing, environmental and social impact assessments, industrial park planning and monitoring and community engagement processes.

There was no single respondent who observed the prior consideration of children's best interests as a pre-requisite to setting up a business in the KIBP. While some Respondents observed interventions by law enforcement agencies,[46] it was clear to us that these interventions were reactionary and rather belated. They did not happen before the various projects were rolled out. A cursory look at the checklist for investors while applying for the Investment License revealed that there is no single mention of anything specifically related to the best interests of children in the community.[47]


We noted that while there was a recognition that business activities in the KIBP would ultimately impact social-economic receptors such as individuals, families, households and communities, there was a generic recognition with little mention of children in the ESIA Report embedded within the Kampala Industrial Business Park Infrastructure Scheme.[48] Children were mentioned or affected indirectly through education, child labour, community health and safety, traffic risks, access to water, household livelihoods, GBV/family stability, and school exposure to dust/noise. There was no specific section dedicated to children in the ESIA.

The study commends the Uganda Investment Authority for having laid a foundation of the factors that could impact children at the commencement of the KIBP Project.

The table below shows the extent to which that ESIA went into appreciating child-specific concerns.

| **Child-impact issue** | **Where mentioned in the ESIA** | **Child-relevant effect** | **Key mitigation measures** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education and schooling | Section 12.3.9; Community Investment Plan discussion | In-migration may increase pressure on already limited school places; household poverty may limit children's access to education. | Community Investment Plan support for schools, including infrastructure, equipment and furniture. |
| Child labour risk | Sections 12.3.4 and 12.4.2.5; HR Policy; Labour Management Plan | Children could be exposed to labour risks in service, industrial or supply-chain activities if controls are weak. | Prohibition of child labour and forced labour; minimum-age controls; contractor and supplier compliance with labour standards. |

[46] Interviewees 2 and 5.
[47] UIA Investment license Checklist
[48] Volume-II-ESIA-KIBP-final.pdf, 183.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Traffic and road safety | Sections 12.3.7 and 12.4.2.7; Chapter 13 | Children walking to school or using community roads may face increased accident risks from construction and operational traffic. | Traffic Management Plan; warning signs; speed restrictions; driver training; safe pedestrian access routes; scheduling controls. |
| Health and public health services | Section 12.3.8; Sections 12.4.2.6 and 12.4.2.7 | Children may face reduced access to healthcare, increased communicable disease risks and indirect impacts from pressure on public health facilities. | Community Health and Safety Plan; disease-control sub-plan; liaison with health authorities; onsite worker medical facilities; HIV/AIDS awareness; possible health-centre support. |
| GBV, domestic violence and family stability | Section 12.3.11; Sections 12.4.2.6 and 12.4.5.17 | Children may be indirectly affected by domestic violence, family breakdown, labour influx, alcohol abuse and reduced household stability. | Influx Management Plan; worker Code of Conduct; counselling support; GBV, alcohol and drug awareness; grievance mechanisms. |
| Loss of access to water | Section 12.4.2.2; ESMP and E&S policy commitments | Reduced access to spring wells may affect child health, hygiene, school attendance and household care burdens. | Maintain public access to existing spring wells or provide accessible alternative water sources before restricting access. |
| Economic displacement and household poverty | Section 12.4.2.1; Livelihood Restoration Plan | Loss of informal livelihoods may reduce household income, food security, ability to pay school costs and access to healthcare, increasing child vulnerability. | Livelihood Restoration Plan; compensation; livelihood restoration support; vulnerability allowances; grievance management; monitoring and evaluation. |
| School exposure to dust and noise | Section 5.2.2.3; Section 11.4.2.4 | Nearby schoolchildren may experience dust exposure, construction noise disturbance and reduced learning conditions. | Dust suppression; construction noise controls; site hoarding; restrictions on noisy works; construction traffic management; review of sensitive receptors during detailed programming. |

While we take cognizance of the fact that the ESIA on KIBP was forward-looking, there was little to suggest within the discussions with some of the interviewees we had, that the social aspects of the impact assessment had been cascaded down to each entity operating within the KIBP.

Although the KIBP Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) recognised several child-relevant concerns, there is little to show that those concerns were carried through into the licensing of individual enterprises within the Park. It is important to note that the aspect of "Social-Impact" seems not to exist as part of the requirements to obtain an investment license. The inevitable result of that is that the best interests of the child in an investment project would most probably not be catered for or taken into consideration.

The study found that business operations, particularly foreign-funded enterprises, often prioritise financial and commercial objectives over child-sensitive planning. The study found limited evidence of prior community consultation for many of these projects. Interviewees, including local leaders indicated that they were not consulted before any of the factories or industries were established in the KIBP.[49] It was reported by some of the Respondents that owners of factories and Industries do not even know the roles of local leaders.[50] Consequently, they do not even consider that consulting with local leaders is important. If the Investors have approval from the Uganda Investment Authority which is in effect the Central Government's representative in these issues, then the local leadership would just tow the line.

If adult community interests were not meaningfully considered before certain projects were established, it is even less likely that children's views and best interests were adequately considered. This would not be surprising. Very often prior impact assessments are made against only environmental concerns and not the social impacts of a business venture on the community and especially on the children in and of that community. On projects such as the Bujagali Hydro-Power project, it was reported that "while the project was evaluated against international environmental treaties to determine its compliance, there was no assessment of the project against social impacts contained under Uganda's international obligations, including human rights."[51] This same concern was raised by previous studies on infrastructural projects such as the Karuma and Isimba Hydro-Power Projects.[52]

Since Environmental and Social Impact Assessments are an important tool for showing whether children's best interests have been considered, the limited evidence of their use in KIBP raises concern. This concern is heightened by the broader absence of social-impact assessments in other investment projects, which casts doubt on whether individual business ventures in KIBP conducted project-specific ESIAs before commencing operations.

Further inquiry is therefore necessary to determine whether children's best interests are assessed before foreign entities are licensed to operate in Uganda.

### 3.3.2. The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has in its CESCR General Comment 14 on the Right to Health observed that "health is a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights. Every human being is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health conducive to living a life in dignity." The right to health of children and adolescents must be understood broadly, not merely as access to hospitals or treatment, but as an obligation to create

[49] Interviewees 2, 7 and 8.
[50] Same as above.
[51] Study on Children's Rights and Business in Africa, 84, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 2023, Study_Children's Rights and Businness_English.pdf.
[52] Kansiime M. Taremwa "Evolving without involving: Reflections On Chinese Investments In Uganda And The Right To Development." 2024, 40, On file with the Author.

conditions that support children's survival, development and wellbeing.[53] International human rights law requires States to reduce infant and child mortality, ensure access to essential health services, support maternal pre- and post-natal care, provide child-friendly health information, eliminate discrimination in access to nutrition and health services, and protect children from harmful practices and unsafe environments. In assessing a State's compliance to the right to health, there must be an examination made of whether there is the existence of the core elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality.[54]

The availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality framework provides a useful standard for assessing the right to health in this study. Availability requires that functioning health-care facilities, goods, services and programmes exist in sufficient quantity, including hospitals, clinics, trained health personnel, essential medicines, safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

Accessibility requires that these facilities and services are reachable by everyone without discrimination, physically accessible, affordable, and supported by access to health-related information while protecting confidentiality.

Acceptability requires that health services respect medical ethics, cultural values, gender sensitivity, life-cycle needs and privacy.

Quality requires that health services are scientifically and medically appropriate, supported by skilled personnel, safe equipment, approved medicines, clean water and adequate sanitation.

For the purposes of this baseline study, children's right to health in KIBP-Namanve cannot therefore be assessed merely by asking whether health facilities exist; rather, the analysis must consider whether children living near industrial activity can realistically access safe, affordable, culturally appropriate and child-sensitive health services, and whether underlying determinants such as clean air, safe water, sanitation, safe housing and school environments, protection from industrial pollution, and access to information and remedies are protected. The AAAQ framework therefore translates the right to health into practical indicators for assessing whether foreign-funded business activity supports or undermines children's survival, development and wellbeing, including exposure to pollution, disease, unsafe water, poor sanitation, traffic risks and other hazards; reported respiratory, skin, waterborne and injury-related concerns; distance to health facilities; availability of child-friendly services; community perceptions of pollution and health effects; and child-sensitive preventive, protective and remedial measures by government agencies and businesses.

In terms of availability, the study found that there are 25 health facilities in the wider Bweyogerere Division Area where KIBP is hosted. Of the 25 facilities, only 2 are Government owned with the 23 being privately-owned. Both Government-owned health facilities are Health Center III facilities.[55] We were able to ascertain from the local leaders that in most of the villages, there are no single government health facilities and that the only ones which exist are difficult to access. For instance the leaders in Kiwanga-Luanda and Kiwanga-Mawooto decried the fact that there is no government health facility in their communities and even indicated that the transportation fare it takes to move from Mawuto to Nantabulirwa, where the first Health Center III is found, is equivalent to the price of purchasing one dose of Coartem.[56] The other Health Center is in Goma, which is in another District (Mukono).

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[53] CESCR General Comment 14, Paragraphs 22-24.
[54] CESCR General Comment 14. Paragraph 12 (a-d).
[55] National Health Facility Registry | Ministry of Health.
[56] Interview 1 and 2.

In terms of accessibility, the study noted a difficulty in accessing the government health facilities because they are a considerable distance from the heart of the Industrial activity. This has left residents reliant on the privately-owned hospitals which are unregulated in terms of pricing and are expensive for most of the local population. They are also mostly HC II facilities with their own limitations. It was of concern that the businesses operating in this area were reported to have a nonchalant attitude towards health-related issues. One would wonder, if it proved difficult for adults to access the health centers, how much more the children with their varied inter-sectional ties. Notably, no accessible data was available on how children with disabilities access health facilities in the KIBP area. There was zero reports of support by foreign businesses to health facilities, subsidizing health costs for locals,[57] or even providing health or medical insurance to casual workers, who are most of the local population who work in the factories in KIBP.[58] In terms of accessibility, there is still a significant gap.

In assessing the acceptability element of the right to health, the study identified several community-level barriers around KIBP, including stigma surrounding mental health and reproductive health. Reproductive health stigma manifested in menstrual health challenges, fear and misinformation around family planning, and attitudes that deprioritise girls' education. The strong economic pull of business activity around KIBP reportedly leads some parents to discourage girls from remaining in school, thereby increasing their vulnerability to unintended teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

Mental health stigma was also evident, particularly among casual labourers who reported anxiety, trauma, self-harm and frequent emotional breakdowns, concerns that were most frequently associated with some Chinese-run businesses. These findings are consistent with earlier research on Chinese-led infrastructure projects in Uganda, including the Karuma Hydroelectric Dam, where chronic verbal abuse by Chinese managers was reported as a defining feature of labour relations and was linked to loss of self-esteem, anxiety, depression and, in extreme cases, suicidal thoughts.

Of particular concern was that many respondents did not recognise mental health concerns as legitimate health issues, instead attributing them to poor stress management, perceived entitlement among younger workers, or other victim-blaming explanations.

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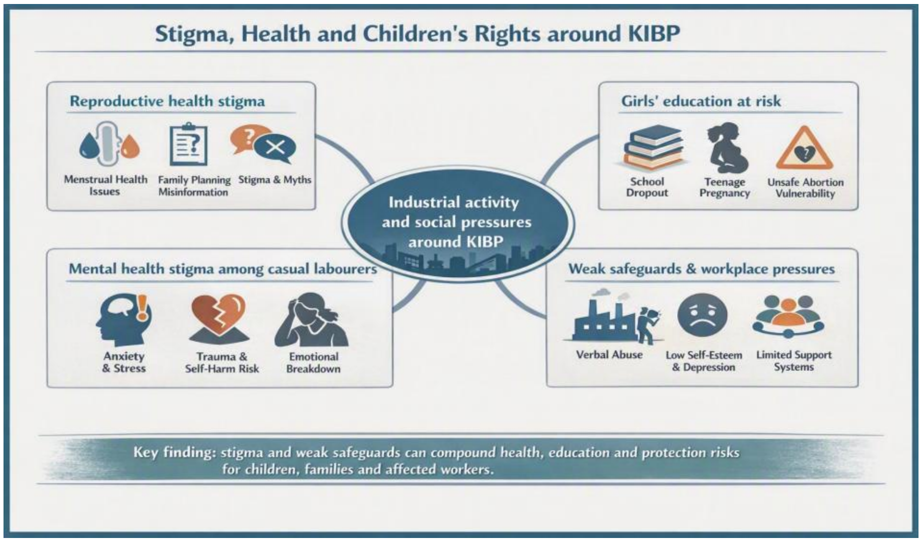
[57] Interview 1.

[58] Atuhairwe Justus, Kato Emmanuel, et al "Unmet Health System Needs in an Industrial–Peri-Urban Setting: A Qualitative Study from Namanve Industrial Park and Surrounding Communities, Uganda" 2026 [Unmet Health System Needs in an Industrial–Peri-Urban Setting: A Qualitative Study from Namanve Industrial Park and Surrounding Communities, Uganda].




The study therefore found that businesses operating in KIBP contribute both directly and indirectly to mental health challenges through long working hours, low wages, abusive workplace practices and the absence of workplace mental health policies. It was also concerning that no CSR programmes addressing health-related issues, including mental health interventions, were identified. Such programmes would provide an important opportunity for businesses to support the welfare of surrounding communities, particularly because harm to the mental health of workers, many of whom are parents and caregivers, can have significant ripple effects on children.

Viewed through the acceptability dimension of the right to health, the study found that existing health and support systems around KIBP are insufficiently equipped to respond to children's health-specific needs in an ethical, confidential, child-sensitive and gender-responsive manner. The availability and accessibility gaps in health facilities are compounded by the absence of adequate psychosocial support services,[59] weak safeguards for privacy, and a perception among children that their concerns may not be taken seriously.[60] This is particularly troubling where children fear that reporting sexual exploitation, mental health concerns or other health-related harms could expose their parents or caregivers to retaliation, including loss of employment and household income.[61] In this context, the acceptability of health services is undermined because children cannot safely seek care, disclose harm, or access support in conditions that respect their dignity, privacy, evolving capacities and best interests.

Regarding quality, the study identified several shortcomings. Under the AAAQ framework, quality requires health services to be scientifically and medically appropriate and supported by skilled personnel, safe equipment, approved medicines, clean water and adequate sanitation. It was observed that not only is it difficult to access the health facilities, but there is also a shortage of trained personnel, inadequate medicines and equipment, safe infrastructure and effective referral systems all in the context of an evidence-based care system.

In the context of business operations, communities around KIBP face difficulty in enjoying a quality standard of health because some factories contribute to noise, air and water pollution. Some respondents, representing 80% of the respondents, reported significant noise and air pollution from several factories, making it difficult for children to sleep at night or concentrate in school.[62] It was also

[59] Same as above.
[60] Interview 2.
[61] Interviews 2 and 4.
[62] Interviews 1, 2,3, 6, 7 and 10.

reported and observed that roads around the factories are very dusty, with dust frequently suspended in the air, worsening respiratory illnesses such as flu and cough.[63] This was confirmed by both the respondents and previous studies conducted in the area.[64] The environmental conditions around these business communities were also linked to skin diseases, water-borne diseases such as typhoid, and mosquito breeding around many factory premises. Specific complaints were raised by local residents regarding the aluminum factory in Kiwanga, particularly its reported tendency to cause migraines and disrupt children's sleep patterns within the community.[65]

Other issues that were raised as concerns were issues of dumping industrial waste in wetlands and in drainages.[66]

Further to this, instances of child labour, as reported by about 50% of the respondents, have heightened the risk of girls being exposed to sexual exploitation, as has been proven in other business and investment projects. Although this risk was strongly disputed by respondents in local leadership, it should not be dismissed. The researchers observed children around some factories waiting to perform menial tasks, such as fetching water or taking up any available informal work. The concerns are also significant because they were raised by respondents whose accounts warrant serious consideration, including business representatives from some establishments who spoke on condition of anonymity, as well as parents and guardians. The forceful denial by Local Council leaders should be treated with caution because they also acknowledged that foreign business owners neither take local leaders seriously nor appear to understand their role within the community. Their limited interaction with foreign business owners therefore weakens the suggestion that they are sufficiently placed to speak authoritatively on the existence or extent of child labour. It is also possible that local leaders may be reluctant to acknowledge such concerns for fear of damaging their reputation as superintending over communities where child labour is prevalent.

All these risks are further compounded by the limited access to health-related information in KIBP, which, as reported in other studies, allows such harm to remain hidden and unaddressed.[67]

Cumulatively, these concerns significantly undermine children's enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health in KIBP-Namanve. Further inquiry is required to determine the extent of the disease burden, its connection to industrial and business activities within the Park, and the extent to which child labour and related vulnerabilities expose girls and other children to sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, based on the present study and subject to its stated limitations, the limited availability of health facilities, barriers to access, shortage of skilled health personnel, environmental conditions exposing children to health hazards, and the heightened protection risks associated with sexual exploitation collectively place children in KIBP at serious risk and amount to a grave infringement of their right to health.

### 3.3.3. The Right to Education

This section cannot make sense if it does not begin with the reflections of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which has succinctly articulated thus: -

[63] Interview 4.
[64] Atuhairwe et al. (n 58) 10.
[65] Interview 2.
[66] Interview 1.
[67] Atuhairwe et al (n 58).

> "Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and controlling population growth. Increasingly, education is recognized as one of the best financial investments States can make. But the importance of education is not just practical: a well-educated, enlightened and active mind, able to wander freely and widely, is one of the joys and rewards of human existence."

The enduring importance of education cannot be overstated. Although initiatives such as KIBP are often presented as pathways through which nations can overcome poverty, the CESCR's reflections, consistent with broader human rights discourse, make clear that development which deprives communities of access to education ultimately defeats its own purpose. Such development is not only of limited value to the affected communities but is also unlikely to be sustainable in the long term. Education is a substantive and enabling right.

As a substantive right, the right to education is assessed through four interrelated dimensions: availability, which requires sufficient educational institutions, trained teachers, infrastructure, and learning materials; accessibility, which ensures education is available to all without discrimination, is physically reachable, and economically affordable; acceptability, which requires educational content, curricula, and teaching methods to be relevant, culturally appropriate, and of good quality; and adaptability, which requires education systems to be flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of learners and the changing demands of society, thereby ensuring inclusive and effective education for all.

Read together with Article 7(2) of ILO Convention No. 182, which requires States to take effective and time-bound measures to ensure access to free basic education and, where possible, vocational training for children removed from the worst forms of child labour,[68] the study's findings show that child labour around KIBP must be assessed not only as a labour concern but also as a direct threat to the right to education. The obligation to ensure that families and communities are not dependent on child labour is closely connected to the four dimensions of education.

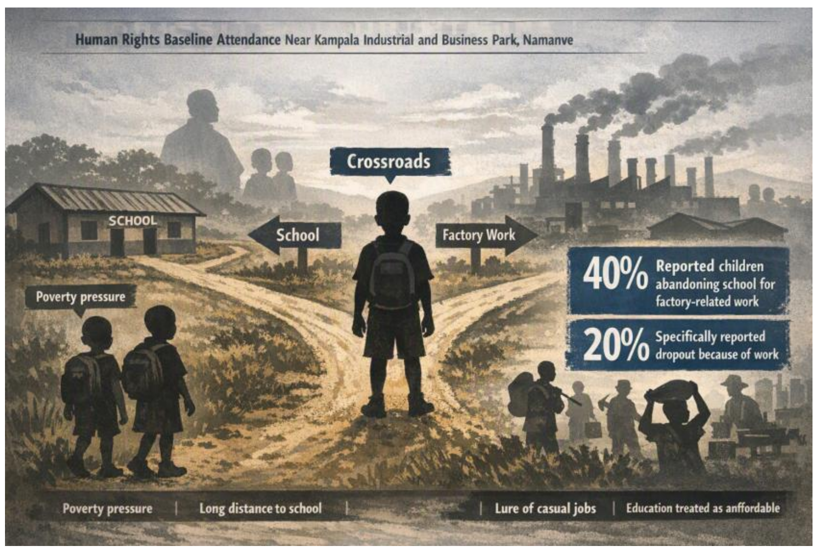
Child labour undermines availability where schooling is displaced by informal work around factories; accessibility where poverty, household economic pressure, or business-related opportunities draw children away from school; acceptability where the learning environment is weakened by stigma, unsafe conditions or gender stereotypes that deprioritize girls' education; and adaptability where the education system fails to respond to children removed from work through flexible learning, retention measures or vocational pathways.

In this context, the presence of school-age children around factories during ordinary school hours, including children apparently waiting for informal tasks or vending food to casual workers, suggests a weakened connection to schooling and a heightened risk that business activity around KIBP is interfering with children's right to education.

[68] Paragraph 55 of CESCR General Comment 13 on the Right to Education.

The study was very explicit in probing whether the existence of foreign-business interests has affected the children's school attendance. 40% of the respondents indicated that children had abandoned school for work in some of these factories. 20% of the Respondents indicated specifically that children had dropped out because of work.[69] Many of these respondents were business representatives who spoke to us on the condition of anonymity. The other part of these were parents and/guardians. Their explanations were even more telling. Some cited long-distances from school as reasons that have affected attendance.[70] Other cited the lure of the foreign businesses and the casual jobs they offer.[71] This coupled with the glaring poverty in the community that forces children and parents alike to depend upon work from these factories makes education a luxury and distraction that they cannot afford.[72] This was observed in real time when one of the girls came to report her father to the Local Council Chairperson that he had forbidden her from going to school so as to "do the work that needs to be done." We were not granted an opportunity to interview this child, but it was obvious that the local council leadership was uncomfortable with these stories being told without nuance.

In view of the availability and accessibility dimensions, the concerns on the long distances from schools cast a shadow over whether there are accessible and affordable schools. It was reported that there are only a few Government-aided schools being shared by several Local Councils.[73] These schools deal with issues such as over-crowding and inevitably bring into question issues of pupil-to-teacher ratios and how these affect the quality of education.[74] There are several private schools but the cost of attending these schools is very high for the marginalized children of or around the KIBP and the wider Kampala-Wakiso Metropolitan area.[75]




Overall, the study found limited evidence that businesses have meaningfully supported education-related initiatives in the community. 60% of all respondents denied or indicated that they were unaware of any business support for education activities.[76] Although some respondents claimed that certain businesses had built schools, the study was unable to verify these accounts. When local leaders were asked to clarify these claims, the most concrete examples they identified were the donation of about

[69] Interviews 3 and 4.
[70] Interview 1, 4 and 5.
[71] Interview 3.
[72] Interview 2.
[73] Interview 1 and 2.
[74] Gov't School Seeks UGX 700 Million for New Two-Storey Building To Ease Overcrowding - Insight Post Uganda
[75] Yudaya Nangonzi, "High fees: why parents are stuck with costly schools" 29 January 2025, The Observer High fees: Why parents are stuck with costly schools - The Observer Media Ltd.
[76] Interviews 3,6,8, 9 ,10 and 12.

100 chairs, currently kept at the Local Council offices, and the renovation of Kiwanga Church of Uganda Primary School by Sadolin Paints in 2022.[77]

Special mention should be made of companies like Volcafe, the parent Company of Kyagalanyi Coffee which also operates in the KIBP. This Company has been instrumental in taking initiatives to end child labour through joining the ILO Coalition against Child Labour. It was also recognised as the Best Company in the Elimination of Child Labour in the national Employer of the Year Awards (EYA).[78]

Perhaps the clearest failure in relation to adaptability is the apparent absence of deliberate State planning for the changes that KIBP would bring to the educational landscape in Namanve. Since factories began operating in the Park, there is no available evidence that Government has commissioned any study to assess whether surrounding communities are benefiting educationally or whether industrial activity has created new barriers to schooling.

It is equally concerning that no company appears to have been required to make a tangible and measurable contribution to education in the area. Even Picfare, despite its direct connection to education through the production of scholastic materials, does not appear to have made a clearly documented contribution to strengthening local schools or supporting children's access to education. These gaps remain open to further inquiry and targeted intervention.

### 3.3.4. The Child's Right to Participate.

Under the principle of evolving capacities, States are obliged to ensure that business-related laws, policies, regulations, administrative decisions, and oversight mechanisms fully respect and protect children's rights by integrating children's views into decision-making processes that affect them. Government agencies and regulatory bodies should facilitate meaningful, inclusive, and age-appropriate participation of children in consultations, impact assessments, and monitoring activities, while ensuring that their evolving capacities and best interests are consistently upheld. States must also guarantee that business-related decision-making is transparent, informed, and continuously assesses potential impacts on children's rights. In addition, they must neither support nor condone business practices that infringe on children's rights and should use their regulatory, commercial, and procurement functions to promote compliance, including by awarding public contracts only to enterprises that demonstrate a commitment to respecting and safeguarding children's rights.[79]

The study itself reflected the limited recognition of children's right to participate in matters affecting their welfare. The researchers had restricted access to children within KIBP and the surrounding communities. Some respondents suggested that children were unlikely to provide meaningful information because they were not aware of the detailed processes through which the Industrial Park was established. This view, however, illustrates the very problem under consideration: children are often excluded from decisions and processes that shape their communities, and their perspectives are discounted on the assumption that they lack relevant knowledge.

Nevertheless, the researchers were able to engage with a few children, some of whom stated that their voices are not heard in schools or health facilities. Others expressed concern that their parents and caregivers return from factory work visibly stressed, angry or frustrated, suggesting that difficult

[77] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIvvwQs7pO8
[78] Volcafe in Uganda recognised for work to combat child labour - Volcafe.
[79] The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment 16, Paras 15-21.

working conditions may be contributing to household tension and, potentially, gender-based violence within the community. The children also indicated that when such concerns are reported to local authorities, they are often not taken seriously. This points to a participation gap that goes beyond consultation: children lack safe, trusted and responsive channels through which they can raise concerns about harm affecting their lives.

As noted earlier, there was no evidence that the entities operating in KIBP undertook meaningful community consultations before establishing their businesses, and there was certainly no indication that child-specific consultations were conducted.[80] This absence of consultation raises serious questions about the sustainability agenda of these businesses. If children and surrounding communities are excluded from decisions that shape their environment and future, it becomes difficult to see how such business activity can claim to serve long-term development. Notably, no respondent indicated that they had been consulted before any company was established in the Business Park, a finding that captures the broader participation deficit in KIBP and for much of the development paradigm in Uganda.

### 3.3.5. Children and the Right to a Clean and Healthy Environment.

Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental harm because of their physical, social and economic circumstances. They are less able than adults to withstand shocks arising from floods, droughts, extreme weather events and heatwaves, and they face heightened physiological risks from exposure to toxic substances, and pollutants, even at low levels.[81]Children are also more likely to suffer severe consequences, including death, from diseases aggravated by pollution and climate change, such as pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea. Environmental degradation during childhood can therefore have lasting effects, depriving children of health, development and opportunities throughout their lives.[82]

States have the primary duty to ensure that children are protected from environmental harm, not only by preventing immediate violations of their rights, but also by addressing foreseeable future violations arising from present acts or omissions.[83] This duty includes the duty to protect children from environmental harms that are caused by third parties such as business enterprises by putting in place regulatory safeguards.[84]

The State's obligation to respect and protect includes the active initiative to ensure that children's voices are not erased from environmental decision-making, even in the context of development agendas.[85]

In relation to business obligations, General Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment recognises that businesses have a responsibility to respect children's environmental rights.[86] The Committee notes that business activity is a significant source of environmental harm, including industrial air and water pollution, and that such harm can undermine the ability of children and their

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[80] FN 49.
[81] Ùnited Nations International Children's Emergency Fund "Every child has the right to a healthy environment" Childhood_Right_To_Healthy_Environments_Key_Messages_2022.pdf.
[82] Same as above.
[83] United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child Genarl Comment 26, Paragraph 68.
[84] Same as above.
[85] General Comment 26, Paragraph 70.
[86] General Comment 26, Paragraph 78.

families to enjoy the full range of their rights.[87] Businesses are therefore urged to engage with children and other community stakeholders in the areas where they operate, and to adopt due diligence procedures that integrate child-rights impact assessments into their operations, decision-making and risk-management systems.[88]

The study noted that there were significant allusions to environmental harms within the KIBP. Several respondents informed us that they have noticed air, water and noise pollution because of the industrial activity in the area. 50% of the respondents specifically spoke about noise pollution and how it affects children's sleeping patterns and are sources of some cases of affected hearing. 40% of the respondents specifically cited industrial and roadside dust as concerns which have exacerbated instances of flu and cough complaints.

40% of the Respondents generally alluded to pollution and a poor culture of waste management within the industrial community which has increased cases of odour and flooding around some factories.


**Figure 1: Flooding in Namanve, showing severe disruption to traffic flow and heightened public health risks arising from increased exposure to waterborne diseases.**

Some of the children interviewed reported persistent noise from the aluminium factory and expressed fear about the heavy traffic along several industrial roads, concerns that were also observed during the field study. Noise from heavy trucks was similarly significant, while vehicle fumes contributed to poor air quality in the area. These concerns were specifically raised by some children and reinforce the finding that industrial activity in KIBP has direct implications for children's environmental wellbeing, safety and health.

We note that we could not access any Environmental and Social Impacts of any of the Companies we highlighted in Section 2.

**Figure 2: Photograph showing stagnant water caused by poor waste management. The picture also shows the fog of fumes that covers the air every now and then.**

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that environmental conditions within and around KIBP pose serious risks to children's rights generally, and to their right to a clean and healthy environment in particular. Reports of respiratory illnesses such as flu and cough, together

[87] General Comment 26, Paragraph 79.
[88] General Comment 26, Paragraph 81.

with observed industrial fumes, dust, noise, traffic-related emissions and poor waste-management practices, point to a pattern of environmental harm associated with industrial and foreign-funded business activity in the area. Although further technical assessment is required to establish the full scale and causation of these impacts, the available evidence strongly suggests that children's environmental rights in KIBP are being materially undermined.

# 4. REFLECTIONS ON TAX INCENTIVES FOR FOREIGN BUSINESSES AND HOW THEY AFFECT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN UGANDA

The Uganda Investment Authority indicates that foreign investors in Uganda can benefit from a range of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, including tax holidays, exemptions on import duties for industrial machinery and equipment, deductions for research and training expenditures, and export-related incentives for qualifying businesses.[89] These incentives are intended to reduce investment costs, improve the ease of doing business, support industrial development, and provide a stable and conducive environment for long-term investment growth.

While investment incentives may be important in attracting and retaining business, the study raises concern that such incentives are not sufficiently balanced against the State's obligation to protect socio-economic rights, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable groups such as children.[90] In an interview with some of the local business people within the area, they decried these incentives noting that they have placed the locals at a disadvantage.[91] This has fueled perceptions of discrimination and a lack of transparency around these incentives. This perception is not a new one.[92]

As discussed throughout this study, the policy posture around KIBP appears to place considerable emphasis on making Uganda attractive to foreign investors, while the health, education, environmental and broader welfare concerns of surrounding communities receive far less attention.[93] This creates a troubling imbalance.

Beyond the apparent discriminatory effect of placing investor interests above the lived realities of surrounding communities, generous tax and investment incentives also raise concerns about their impact on the public purse. Several commentators have argued that incentives of this nature reflect unjust tax systems, particularly where they reduce public revenue while the burden of financing essential services is shifted, directly or indirectly, to poor and vulnerable communities. The situation in KIBP gives practical weight to this concern. Despite the visible growth of business activity in the area, health and education services remain weak, and environmental pressures continue to affect surrounding communities. This suggests that business interests have received far greater policy attention than the social and economic rights of the people who live in the context of this rapid industrialization. The result is that already strained sectors such as health and education risk being weakened further, even though these are the very sectors in which children around KIBP depend on most for their survival, development and dignity.

There is therefore a need to review Uganda's regime of tax and fiscal incentives to ensure that they are designed and implemented in a human-rights sensitive manner. Incentive policies should also carry clear child-sensitive obligations, so that the benefits of investment facilitation do not remain with investors alone but translate into direct and measurable improvements in the lives of children and communities affected by industrial activity.

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[89] TAX-INCENTIVE-GUIDE-2024-25.pdf

[90] Diana Ahumuza, "Tax incentives and the realisation of economic and social rights: The right to basic education in Uganda" University of Pretoria, LLD Thesis, November 2022, On File with the Author

[91] Interview 3.

[92] Ahumuza (n 90) 172.

[93] Ahumuza (n 90) 185.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS ON THE FINDINGS

This study has shown that the growth of business activity within the Kampala Industrial and Business Park, Namanve, cannot be understood only through the language of investment, factories, jobs and infrastructure. It must also be assessed against the lived realities of the children and communities who carry the immediate consequences of that growth. While KIBP represents an important part of Uganda's industrialisation agenda, the study reveals serious gaps in the social and economic rights landscape around the Park. Education institutions remain few and under-supported; health facilities are limited, difficult to access and uneven in quality; children appear to have little or no meaningful space to participate in decisions affecting them; and the environment in which they live, study and grow is increasingly strained by dust, fumes, noise, poor waste management and other industrial pressures.

The overall benefit of this study is therefore that it brings children into a conversation from which they have largely been absent. It establishes a baseline for understanding how foreign-funded business activity affects children's rights, identifies the areas that require urgent policy and regulatory attention, and provides a foundation for future monitoring, accountability and child-sensitive investment governance. Ultimately, the study leaves a simple but important question for Government, businesses and future interventions: what is the value of a bustling business environment if there is no posterity to enjoy it? If children are not treated as the ultimate beneficiaries of development in Namanve, then whose children are we building the country for? This is the dilemma captured in the title of this study: "Mwana wa Mzungu, Mwana wa Mu-China?" It asks whether Uganda's industrialization agenda is being shaped for the benefit of the Ugandan children who live closest to its consequences, or whether it is being organized mainly around the interests of foreign investors and the futures of their own children.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STATE AND BUSINESS ACTORS IN KIBP

The study identified several areas that would require significant improvement to have a foreign-business community that is compliant with child-rights standards. These recommendations include the following: -

### 6.1. Adoption of mandatory child-rights impact assessment in investment governance.

This recommendation flows from the discussion on the impact of business interests on the best interests of the child. As noted in that discussion, the current ESIA and investment licensing processes do not appear to require child-rights specific information from companies seeking to operate within KIBP. The study therefore recommends that UIA amends its investment licence checklist to require a child-rights impact assessment as part of licensing obligations and industrial park approvals. Such an assessment should be undertaken before an investor is allowed to commence operations and should consider, in practical terms, how the proposed business may affect children's health, education, safety, family livelihoods, participation, protection and environmental rights.

This would ensure that the best interests of the child are not treated as an afterthought, but as a formal and substantive consideration in licensing, land allocation, environmental approvals, investor compliance and the overall governance of industrial parks.

### 6.2. Strengthen environmental and social safeguards for businesses operating in KIBP.

This recommendation was inspired by the discussion in the section on the best interests of the child, the discussion on environmental rights within KIBP, and the study's finding on the absence of meaningful child participation and community consultation before businesses were established. In this regard, the State should require every business operating within KIBP to conduct and publicly disclose a project-specific environmental and social impact assessment. Such assessments should go beyond general environmental concerns and deliberately examine child-specific risks, including air pollution, dust, noise, traffic, access to water, sanitation, waste management, hazardous substances, and the proximity of factories to schools and residential areas. They should also require meaningful consultation with affected communities and, where appropriate, age-sensitive engagement with children whose lives, schools, health and environments are likely to be affected by the proposed business activity.

### 6.3. Establish child-sensitive grievance and remedy mechanisms.

This recommendation is closely connected to the discussion on the acceptability element of the right to health, where the study found that children may be unable to safely disclose harm or seek support where services do not guarantee privacy, confidentiality, dignity and child-sensitive treatment. It is also inspired by the reflections that some children are afraid to report abuse, and that even when they do, their concerns are not always taken seriously.

For that reason, the study recommends that Government and businesses establish safe, accessible and child-sensitive complaint and remedy mechanisms through which children, caregivers, schools and community members can report harms linked to business activity. These mechanisms should protect children from retaliation, preserve confidentiality, and ensure timely referral to appropriate health, psychosocial, legal and child protection services.

### 6.4. Integrate access to affordable child-sensitive health services with environmental health surveillance.

This recommendation flows from the study's findings on the environmental conditions around KIBP and the way these conditions appear to be increasing the health burden on children and surrounding communities. The study therefore recommends that Government and business entities strengthen health infrastructure by improving access to public health facilities, essential medicines, referral systems, child-friendly services, reproductive health information and mental health support. Beyond this, environmental health surveillance should be treated as a core part of the health response around KIBP. This would require regular monitoring of pollution-related health patterns among children, including respiratory illnesses, skin conditions, waterborne diseases, sleep disruption, headaches and other conditions that may be linked to dust, fumes, noise, stagnant water, poor waste management and industrial emissions. Such surveillance would help move the response from speculation to evidence, and would enable Government, health facilities and businesses to identify risks early, respond appropriately, and hold responsible actors accountable where industrial activity is shown to be contributing to children's ill-health.

### 6.5. Address environmental health risks affecting children.

Flowing from the study's finding that the right of the child to a clean and healthy environment is being significantly undermined, the study recommends that businesses operating within KIBP take urgent and practical measures to reduce children's exposure to industrial fumes, dust, noise, unsafe drainage and other environmental risks.

As part of licensing and continuing compliance obligations, Government should require businesses to set aside specific budgets for environmental-risk mitigation, including regular air and water quality testing, noise monitoring, dust suppression, safe drainage systems and transparent public reporting on environmental compliance.

Importantly, this reporting should not be directed only to adults, local leaders or regulators. Children should also receive information in spaces that are accessible and familiar to them, including schools, school assemblies and community meetings. This is because children are not passive beneficiaries of adult protection; they are autonomous members of the community and rights-holders whose lives are directly affected by business operations. They must therefore be given information in a manner they can understand, and in ways that enable them to ask questions, raise concerns and hold businesses and duty-bearers accountable for conduct that affects their health, safety and environment.

### 6.6.Require Businesses to actively contribute to health and education indicators.

This recommendation flows from the study's findings on the fairly passive posture taken by many foreign business entities toward health and education concerns within KIBP. The study therefore recommends that Government should require businesses, as part of their licensing and continuing compliance obligations, to show how their operations and profits will translate into measurable support for health and education outcomes in the communities around them. This support should not be left to occasional goodwill or public relations gestures. Whether individually or collectively, businesses operating within KIBP should be required to make meaningful contributions toward affordable health centres, schools and vocational institutions, particularly in ways that respond to child labour, school dropout, limited access to health services and the wider social costs of industrialization. The example of Volcafe's work on child labour in the Rwenzori sub-region shows that such business contribution is possible where there is deliberate commitment and accountability.

### 6.7.Review Uganda's tax and fiscal incentives through a child-rights lens.

This recommendation flows from the study's reflection on tax incentives and the concern that Uganda's investment facilitation framework appears to place greater emphasis on attracting and retaining foreign investors than on the socio-economic rights of the communities that live closest to the consequences of industrialisation. The study therefore recommends that Government reviews Uganda's tax and fiscal incentive regime to ensure that incentives granted to foreign investors are designed and implemented in a human-rights sensitive manner. Such incentives should not simply reduce the cost of doing business for investors; they should also carry clear and enforceable child-sensitive obligations, including measurable contributions to health, education, environmental protection, community consultation and access to remedy.

In practical terms, the benefit of tax holidays, duty exemptions and other investment incentives should not remain with investors alone. Where businesses are given public support through reduced tax obligations, there should be a corresponding obligation to demonstrate how that public sacrifice translates into visible improvements in the lives of children and affected communities. This would help address the imbalance identified in the study, where business activity has grown visibly around KIBP while health and education services remain weak and environmental pressures continue to fall heavily on surrounding communities.

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