

BLACK MONDAY

Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!

Editorial

In this edition, we share heart-touching stories on the impact of a corrupt system on the quality of education especially for children from disadvantaged communities.

Thirty years ago, it was possible for any child in Uganda, irrespective of background, to make it to university for any professional course. But now, one has to either be from a rich family or, at the very least, have gone through one of the famous 'first class' schools to have an opportunity of obtaining a degree.

As PLE and UCE results have always indicated, these urban-based 'first class' schools continue to outperform rural public schools. Close to 70% of the top schools in recent PLE and UCE exams were urban-based schools.

As soon as the results are released, newspapers are awash with lists of best performing schools and students. Parents buy the propaganda and start hunting for placements for their children in those winning schools. But many cannot afford their dream schools because the cost is too high. They are therefore forced to trade their dreams for a lower-caliber school.

But it gets worse. For the extremely poor, the only choice is Universal Primary or Secondary Education, arguably the poorest quality of schooling since this country attained independence. For many of these children, their destination is inevitable.

Those who have money and their children have good grades are spoilt for choice. Those with money and poor grades can also access any school they want because they are connected or can afford to lubricate the system.

The fees parents pay in these top-class schools are ridiculous. Some pay as much as 2.5 million shillings (almost \$1000) a term! Other indirect costs like shuttle services, entertainment, sports, and tours will cost parents an extra buck.

With the forces of demand and supply at work in a purely liberalised and non-regulated education market, we have all bought in, without questioning. We unconsciously join the capitalistic class of the corrupt, who, with their easily earned loot, have contributed to the escalating cost of unnecessary luxurious and extractive education system to perpetuate inequality. We do not recognize that by simply buying in, we are actually systematically reinforcing the structurally designed injustice and breeding a monster of intergenerational poverty.

A number of studies have shown a close association between corruption and lower quality of education that widens inequality. Institutional constraints including corruption have been cited as the major factors responsible for poor quality of education in public schools in Uganda. In 2012, some Shs 375 billion that was misappropriated under the ministry of education could have been used to construct 2500 class-blocks at Shs 150 million each.

In other words, we must ensure that public education offers quality to reduce the growing inequality. One way to achieve this is to stamp out corruption and demand for regulation of the education sector that is structured to favour the rich over the poor. Just imagine the pressure the elites would have put on government if we did not have the option.

Enjoy reading.

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Over 50,000 pupils failing PLE as theft with impunity surges



Pupils of Kakindo primary school study under a makeshift UPE school in Kibaale district. It is such a national disaster when we still have children learning under such conditions

Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results were released last month, recording a noticeable improvement punctuated with high failure rates from the Eastern and Northern parts of the country. The government funding to the education sector has increased but the quality of education and teachers' pay continues on a downward spiral.

Mary Goretti Nakabugo, the Executive Director Twaweza/Uwezo, has been actively engaged in monitoring the quality of learning. According to her, we need to fight corruption in the sector.

The PLE results indicated there was an improvement in the grades. In the same pages, we read that it was not good news across the country, particularly districts in the East and North. What was your first reaction on analysing the results?

"Parents and schools with pupils that passed the exams have reason to celebrate but as a nation we should be mourning. Over 50,000 pupils failing exams is a national disaster. Every child underperforming should worry us because it is not about one child. It is about the country. The entire society's future is at stake. The majority of those failing are from UPE schools and that trend has created a stereotype against UPE schools

which is bad. The issue is not with UPE per se, it is with the implementation of the programme. Government funding to the program is not enough, it is misused, and often comes late. The outcome of those glaring gaps is in the results."

What do you make of the consistent high failure rates in the eastern and northern parts of the country?

"It has been a trend for the last three assessments I have looked at. The World Bank service delivery indicators report, our own Twaweza/Uwezo report and now PLE results all indicate that those two regions are trailing and that raises a fundamental question. There is UPE across the country, why are the East and North performing the way they do? The results also show the socioeconomic status of these areas. Across East Africa, children from low status households underperform."

The government of Uganda spends an average of shs 6,000 per primary school child annually. How does this low funding tie with the outcome, and what does it portend for the future of the country?

"By all standards it is not sufficient, it is very little especially if you look at it per pupil allocation, but if you look at in the picture of say 1700 pupils, that money can

actually do something. That is why we are saying that as much as we must advocate for more funding, let us also stop the leakages on the little we have. If utilized in a transparent manner it can do wonders, but it is sent late, misused, and at times schools spend money on things like vans that do not facilitate the learning process. The outcome of that is the nature of results we see, the quality of P7 graduates: 20%

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Over 50,000 pupils failing exams as theft with impunity surges

FROM PG 1

of those who complete P7 cannot read and comprehend a sentence. That is worrying.” The teachers, under their umbrella body, Uganda National Teachers’ Union continue to demand for decent pay and motivation. How does this poorly facilitated teaching force affect the results we see? “Teachers’ pay is low; there is no debate on that. All over the world teachers need motivation. We must therefore prioritize education but I advocate for cash on delivery. We have gone to schools where head teachers are present thrice a term, in

others teachers come to school once a week but they are paid the same salary as those who put in their full effort and time. When we demand for higher pay, let us task the teachers to also fulfil their obligation.” **Are you shocked that as government chest thumps about allocating the education sector over shs one trillion, the situation in schools is heart breaking and education quality is as deplorable as it is? What is the problem?** “It is shocking but we are dealing with huge numbers here. Even if we allocated shs 15 trillion the slices have to go to many stakeholders in the sector, but I am not shocked because at every stage

someone is pinching something so by the time it gets to the last person, the funds have been swindled and are not enough to do what they are budgeted to do. Let us ask for more transparency. There is anecdotal evidence that shows some school management committees demand for money from head teachers. We have to ensure even the little we have is utilized well and that responsibility lies on us as citizens, not government alone because the greatest investment we can make as a country is giving our children a quality education.”



Mary Goretti Nakabugo: Executive Director Twaweza, Uganda

Yega Agenda: Citizen action can transform education

Last year Western Ankole Civil Society (WACSOF) launched a campaign dubbed “the Yega Agenda” aimed at improving learning in schools in Bushenyi district. This was precipitated by the declining levels of performance in the Primary Leaving examinations and increasing blame game on who is responsible for the deteriorating quality of learning in a district that has for long been celebrated as a hub for quality learning in Uganda. On a countrywide comparison, Bushenyi district moved from 4th position in 2012 to 25th position in 2013.

What was the problem?

WACSOF carried out a sample survey to find out what is responsible for the deteriorating levels of performance in the district. We sampled and visited 16 primary schools in Bushenyi district. The findings from the survey indicated that indeed there were reasons to be worried about the future of children in the district, given the declining pupil enrolment with some classes having

“This school last had Grade One in 1980. It’s now in 2014 as a result of the intervention of civil society that we have received massive support from parents and now our school got 3 pupils in Grade one. It’s my appeal that WACSOF motivates all the schools in our district and continues changing the minds of parents to realise their duty in education of their children. May God bless WACSOF” Says Headteacher Kabuba P/s

“WACSOF helped all of us realise that there was greater danger and we all collectively

responded. This is just the beginning; our target must be the 1st position in the country and we are ready to deal with anyone who becomes an obstacle towards achieving our target. We must get politics out of this and change the mind set of our people”. Wills Bashaasha Chairman LCV Bushenyi

“In order to maintain pupils around, I decided to get some S4 Vaccists to teach while waiting for qualified teachers” H/teacher Nyamizi P/s

less than 10 pupils; no school inspection and supervision; many pupils going without lunch; gross apathy amongst parents; teacher absenteeism; Parent Teacher Association and Senior Management Council conflicts; very limited funds to operate the schools; use of unqualified teachers – employing S4 leavers and carpenters to teach among others. These key findings indicated a need for multi stakeholder intervention to ensure learning in schools.

Our intervention!

WACSOF cherishes education not only as a catalyst to social transformation but also as a firm foundation for economic development. Our findings from the sample survey became an engagement base that has since ignited action in the district. We had a meeting with key district stakeholders; the Chief Administration officer, the Chairman LCV and the RDC to compel them to refocus and give special attention to education and rectify the situation for the good of the young people in the district. We took lead in convening the district education stakeholders meeting bringing together the head teachers, chairpersons PTA and school management, the entire district

political leadership, the RDC, the foundation bodies and identified senior citizens in the district. The meeting redefined the roadmap for education in 2014 and set targets. The CAO and the entire team worked around the clock to ensure that all the schools that had no teachers at their stations got some and allocated a vehicle to the education department to ease monitoring.

This campaign was taken to schools and we have met over 5000 parents to sensitise them on their roles and ensuring quality learning for their children. Many of the schools we visited have since given encouraging testimonies on how parents are responding and contributing towards education of their children and development of the schools.

What has changed!!!!

Our intervention has been widely celebrated by the entire district. The district that was the 25th in PLE 2013 was the 5th in the 2014 PLE with Bushenyi Ishaka Municipality being the 2nd in the country. From 14.1% in 2013 to 19.3% in 2014 grade one percentage pass is such an improvement that every stakeholder is celebrating. From 501 and 571 first and second grade respectively to 773 and 2164 first and second grade respectively in 2014 indicates the multi stakeholder intervention ignited by WACSOF and how helpful it has been to the district.

Parents’ responsiveness towards supporting learning has greatly improved. In the schools where we meet parents and sensitized them, there is great improvement in PLE performance highly attributed to the parents’ support. Many parents are now willing to make a monetary contribution and have set aside the policy issue of free education.

Our intervention has influenced district council to allocate money to purchase a new vehicle for the education department. Our major engagement was to address failure of the district local government to do effective monitoring and supervision which they attributed to lack of a vehicle in the education department. The procurement process has already commenced.

The gaps of teachers were filled and teacher transfers are now done timely to avoid disorganized teaching. The chairman LCV, the RDC and the CAO in Bushenyi district talk the same language on key strategies.

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Comparative performance 2013 and 2014							
Year	Div 1	Div 2	Div 3	Div 4	U	x	Total
2013	568	2193	794	238	117	128	4038
2014	773	2164	670	248	144	115	4114



Pupils of KAbuba P/S pose for a photo with Elly Muhwezi of WACSOF after a meeting with the parents. Since 1980, the school has only been able to get 3 first grades in 2014.

Corruption fuels education inequality and inter-generational poverty

Primary Leaving Education (PLE) results released last month registered a noticeable improvement. However, there is often a stark variance between statistics and the reality on the ground.

In 1997, the National Resistance Movement administration started the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program. A close analysis of this year's PLE results indicates pupils that continue to stare at a bleak future. We live in a country where individuals swindle millions of dollars as pupils share classrooms with sheep.

Let us go to Kyehoro Primary School - one of the public schools in Hoima District. The school, which is in Nkondo parish in the Albertine Graben, is in the same village where oil explorers have discovered the Ngassa-1 oil well, the Daily Monitor reported recently adding: "The teachers reveal that the sorry structure was built by parents. The floor in the classes is bare and dusty. But inside the classes, are also goats and sheep."

Good education is confined for rich families who can afford private schools for their children.

An analysis of a list of best schools in 45 districts across the country reveals that the highest

number of first grades came from schools that charge an average of shs 750,000 per term. Rich man schools like Kabojja Junior and Kampala Parents PS, which got more than 98.6 per cent first grades, charge over shs 1,200,000 per term.

Fred Mwesigye, the executive director of the Forum of Education NGO's in Uganda (FENU), is quoted in a local newspaper:

"The more you pay to get an elite education, the more [marks] you get. If you opt for a cheaper school, you may not get into a good secondary school in the long run..." There is a link between going to 'a bad school' and the future. Over 50,022 primary schools registered no candidate in first grade in the just released PLE results in districts like Kween, Bukwo, Buyende, Manafwa, Kapchorwa, and Luuka.

Bishop Zac Niringiye has repeatedly spoken for the voiceless pupils starving at school without lunch but the government's ear remains deaf. We have technically written off this segment of our population! What is their crime?

Special needs education for instance continues to suffer under the weight of a government disinterested in cracking the plight of these pupils. Limited funding and

inadequate facilities to aid learning continue to deny these young Ugandans a decent life and equal opportunities. Almost all candidates in special needs schools passed in the second and third grades - out of the 604,971 candidates who registered from the 11,904 centres countrywide. Blind students have only two schools across the 112 districts, although there are some 21 units to cater for them in 33 integrated schools.

Dr Rose Nassali, the permanent secretary in the Education Ministry admits in Daily Monitor the

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government's limited efforts toward special needs education:

"Parliament enacted the Persons with Disability (PWD) Act 2006,

in which the government is supposed to commit not less than 10 per cent of all educational expenditure to the educational needs of PWD's. But to this date, there is no known breakdown or percentage," he told the newspaper.

All this while the thieves' party.

The government has been paying some primary school teachers, including 'ghosts', at least shs 7 million per month, according to Sunday Monitor. Some of the ghosts have been paid salary advances up to April 2018.

Officially, a primary school teacher who holds a Grade III certificate is paid shs 277,240 per month, a diploma holder is paid shs 568,000 while a graduate teacher earns shs 723,000 monthly. But the newspaper's investigations show that under dubious circumstances, some of the teachers received abnormal monthly salaries as high as shs 3m - shs 7m. To date there is no update on this scandal even though the police claimed it was closing in on uncovering it. Meanwhile our teachers continue to plead for decent pay and working conditions while the thieves go untouched.

This and more scandals explain why, with education taking the priority in the national budget, we

still grapple with funding challenges. It is because the government has sacrificed the future of the country at the altar of greed of a few individuals.

Then we have the wasteful expenditure in unproductive sectors such as the president's office. An independent analysis of the ministerial policy statement (MPS) 2014/15 shows that all the six departments directly under the president namely; Office of the President, Internal Security Organization (ISO), State House, Uganda Aids Commission, directorate of Ethics and Integrity and External Security Organization (ESO) were allocated more than shs 960.9bn. Never mind the unwritten rule of State House supplementary budgets annually hitting over shs 200b.

For all the bad choices, we make now, for the indifference to the innocent souls of this country, for the disinterest in uplifting the standard of education, for the anarchy and apathy in our UPE schools: let us remember that there are consequences and history shall judge us harshly.

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It is so ironic how so much funds have been spent in the education sector yet we continue to have such deplorable schools

SUMMARY OF CORRUPTION SCANDALS TO LOOK BACK AT



What must we do to get our money back?

Wear only black clothes every Monday to show you are tired of theft.

Demand political action from the President

Isolate every thief implicated in a theft scandal. Don't invite them to your burials, weddings.

Do not buy goods or services from businesses owned by thieves. Support Ugandans working honestly to make a living.

Until all the thieves have returned our money.

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