

# BLACK MONDAY

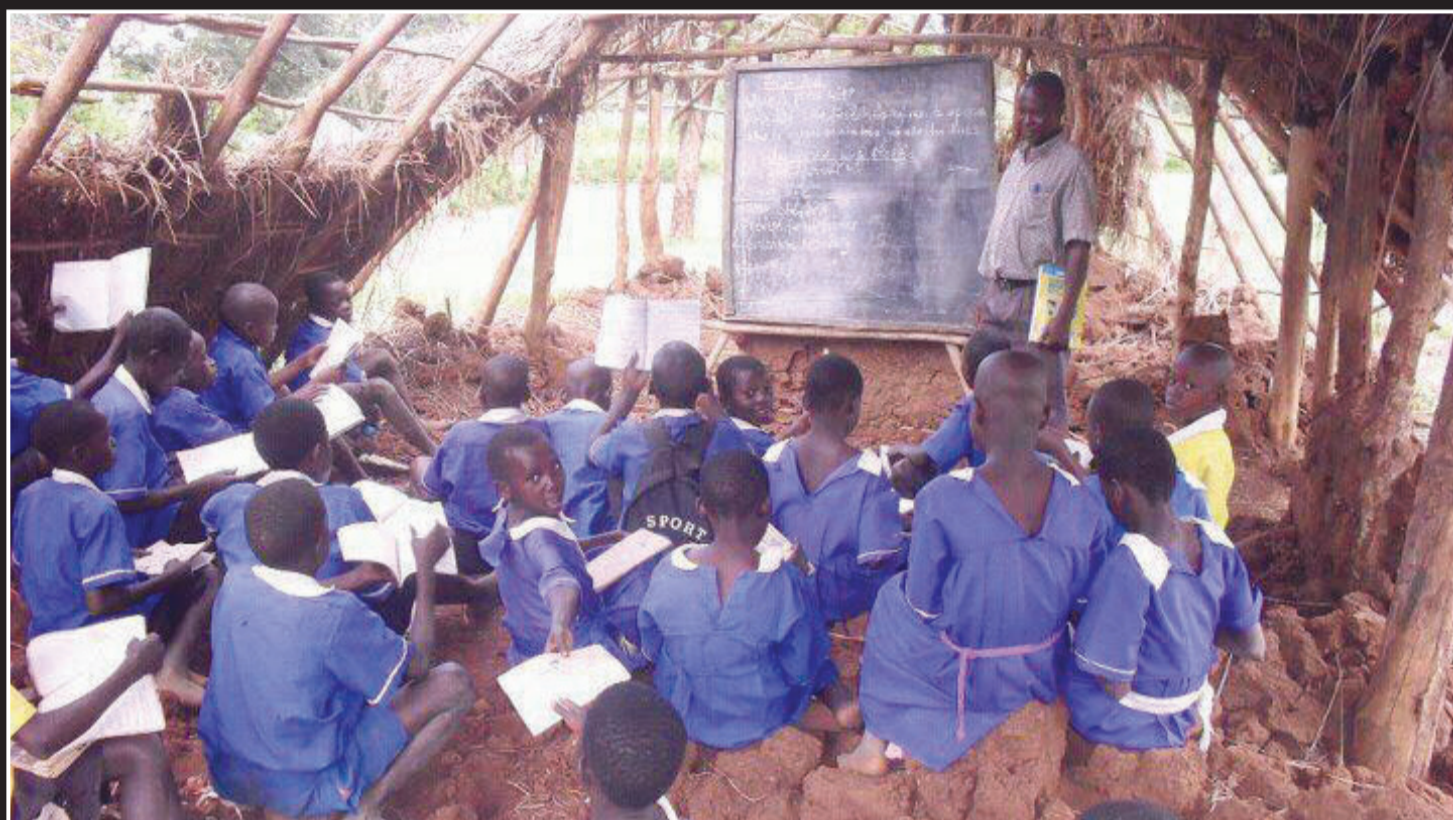
News Letter

*Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!*

## RAISE THE ALARM: Theft of public resources is robbing from us and our country the future

**THE THEFT OF OUR MONEY**  
 the taxes we pay (both direct and indirect) and the revenues from public investments – is now a tired story. It no longer makes headline in the news. In fact, we are surprised when a public official, politician or civil servant, does not steal from the public coffers. And those who steal, we protect: the government protects those it considers to be ‘important cadres’; religious leaders and fellow tribes’ mates protect their kin under the guise of ‘selective justice’ – “are they the only ones stealing?” they ask; the rest are silent even when they know who and what they have stolen, because the thieves are generous, or are their relatives, or friends or members of their party. Those who fight ‘thieving’ are given names, and are monitored closely by the Uganda Police lest they ‘incite violence’. Those arrested are kept in police cells briefly, released on police bond – to report weekly (preferably on Mondays), as the rest of Uganda continue in ‘business as usual’. This has become normal for Uganda!

What is not tired is the disastrous impact this theft and the thieves are having on the quality of the life of Ugandans. It is getting worse by the day. There is growing despair everywhere. Teachers, healthcare workers, traders, farmers – the more they work to make ends meet, the further away the ends diverge. And as for the children and youth of the land, who constitute the majority of our population (about 80%) – they are just there! The majority of these children



*Alut Kot Primary School, Oyam District. Teachers can happily teach if they have a conducive environment. Their welfare and the learners’ needs to improve!*

and youth are in our schools, colleges and universities. For many of them, education has ceased to be the door to promise and opportunity; it has become another of the many graveyards of Uganda’s hopes and dreams.

The Universal Primary Education (UPE), whose introduction in 1997 gave hope for many who had been locked out of Uganda’s education system, has become a nightmare. Children are in school, but they are not learning. They are hungry; they do not have enough teachers; and the schools do not have adequate facilities. Teachers are not teaching: they are de-motivated because of poor pay, so spend more time in their gardens than they do in school. The results show. Only 25% of the children who started Primary One sat Primary Leaving Exams (PLE), the rest having dropped out. The girl-child is the most vulnerable, for as soon as they hit puberty, the lack of sanitation facilities forces them out. It is no wonder that Uganda has the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Africa! As for those who sit PLE and pass, only about 60% of them are absorbed at the secondary level (including technical schools). A similar percentage is lost at the tertiary level. And those who complete college have at most

a 20% chance of some formal employment.

The government’s explanation is that there is not enough money; that the resource envelope is limited. On face value, it is possible to believe until you probe deeper. Recent official reports have shown that the country has been losing more money to theft than it receives in international aid. Think about it for a moment: if we plugged the holes of theft, we would not need international aid for social services! But every year, for a number of years now, the Ministry of Education has been reporting ‘ghost’ schools, ‘ghost’ teachers and ‘ghost’ pupils. One wonders what it really takes to snuff out these ghosts! Due to the enormity of the thieving phenomenon, there is now new vocabulary to differentiate levels of theft: there is petty corruption and then grand corruption! Let no one lie to us: there is enough to go round. It is the theft in Government that is robbing us all – children, youth, parents, professionals – and our country the future we have worked for and indeed deserve.

This must stop. It cannot continue. We have already lost a generation. Imagine these millions of drop-outs, unemployed and un-employable youth in 10 years time. Where will they be? What will they be doing? But 10 years is too long. They will not wait. We must all rise to save our future; the future of Uganda’s children and youth.

Let us put our President on notice: “Live up to your pledge. Show the country that you mean what you say: Zero tolerance to

**“Let us demand for resolute political action on the thieving ministers; interdiction for any Permanent Secretary named in any scandal; full capacity for the institutions mandated to pursue the thieving civil servants; and the Police to halt any more intimidations of those fighting the vice”.**

corruption’ otherwise we shall conclude that you too are a beneficiary”. Let all do something; everyone, anywhere, everywhere. There is

no one neutral on this. You are either with the thieves or you are with the future of Uganda. Let everyone of us do what we can do: shun our thieving family members, fellow believers and fellow workers. They are not only a shame to us; they are killing the future – theirs and ours.

This calls for action for all. The time to act is now. We must save our education system, now!

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# WHY ARE OUR CHILDREN NOT LEARNING?

**A GRADE III TEACHER** in one of Bunyoro's primary schools runs a school of 385 pupils singlehandedly. He is the head teacher, class teacher, senior teacher and sports teacher. The School Management Committee Chairperson steps in to 'herd' the pupils around as the teacher hops from class to class. The pupils are housed in a 4-classroom block, built by a religious organization, whose roof had been blown off and prospects of replacement are remote.

In the above scenario, the children in fact go to school but are they learning? It is easy to blame the teacher who is hopping around the school, the child who cannot read, the school or the parent. But what has gone wrong with our education system? Uganda was once hailed as a "success story" in East Africa. Many of our leaders did not have to travel to study in the city for a good education.

Since the introduction of Universal Primary Education, the Government has sunk billions in the education sector. Over the same period, billions have been lost in different scandals – that includes ghost schools, ghost teachers, ghost pupils and swindled school grants. It is hard to put a definite figure to all these losses.

The theft of public funds in the education sector touches every citizen. Children do not learn



*How much can a hungry child achieve?*

**"At least 1.5 million children start Primary One but only 500,000 make it to Primary Seven. This is a crisis. Where are the 1million children?"**

because schools are acutely understaffed and the available human resource is overstretched, rendering them incompetent.

But even for those who remain in school, how do you effectively monitor attendance and progress yet there is one teacher in the entire school? If learning is missed at an early stage, it is impossible to redeem it later in life.

It is time to rethink Uganda's

resource allocation and management to the education sector if we are to become the first world that is described in Vision 2040.

Many children spend the day at school on empty stomachs. Providing lunch for all school children will boost learning.

While reading and writing are important, these core skills are not sufficient. Quality education calls for critical thinking, problem solving abilities, team work and civic values.

These require a government

that is ready to invest in public education, ensure that school land is not grabbed, schools are safe, teachers are paid on time and that those who steal public resources are punished.

The privatization of education is another phenomenon that has created inequality in access and disincentive for government to investment in public schools.

It is every citizen's responsibility to know how much goes into education and ensure that they get value for their money.

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The **Black Monday Movement (BMM)** supports and encourages all to get involved with the activities of **the Quality Public Education Week: 22-26 April, 2013.**

Activities are coordinated by the **Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda (FENU)** together with the **Citizens Action for Quality Public Education.**



# CORRUPTION: Gradually 'eating' away teachers' intended salary increment!



A kitchen of one of the teaching staff at Ntinda Police Barracks Primary School

"AUNT DUUKA, mummy antumye airtime wabasomesa owa MTN (Mum has sent me for teachers' MTN airtime)", shouted a little boy of about four years to the shop attendant!

I thought it strange. To my surprise, the teller simply handed over a Shs500 MTN airtime voucher to the little boy who scampered away!

As I paid for my groceries, the scenario repeatedly played in my mind. The cheapest airtime had been nicknamed the '*Teachers' airtime*' and no one seemed bothered about it. I imagined for this little boy and his colleagues will grow up knowing that it's a curse ending up a teacher because you will be the poorest in society.

That is how low the teaching profession has sunk; that is how far down the professional ladder, teachers have been pushed. Is it any wonder that the majority of our teachers are in teaching as a second, third, or last

resort? In fact, the reality is that teachers are waiting for the next opportunity to jump out of the profession.

In all this, the most disappointing aspect has been the response and or lack of it by government to the teachers' cry for a 100% salary increment. The issue of salary increment has been subjected to negotiation and theorized beyond measure. Some say, increasing salaries for teachers would have a negative impact on the economy. Others claim that increasing salaries for only teachers will cause uproar among other civil servants who in turn will also claim for an increment. Government has even gone further to claim that there is no money to increase teachers' pay.

Government's inability to take action is inexcusable and trying to explain away this situation is being irresponsible. The monthly remuneration of the teacher for the lowest paid teacher is Shs273,000. In case of a 100% increment,

Shs804 billion annually would be needed for 129,341 Primary teachers and Shs192 billion for 22,569

Secondary school teachers. This would amount to about Shs996 billion annually hence about 9% of the total national budget for 2012/2013 which currently stands at Shs11.15 trillion.

What is Shs996 billion annually compared to the Shs2.6 trillion that has been lost in big corruption scandals since 2006? Taking into consideration the losses to corruption scandals of 2012 alone, our teachers could at least be awarded a 50% increment. In July 2012, more than Shs142.6bn was lost to City business man Hassan Bassajabalaba, close to Shs50bn in the OPM scandal, Shs200bn in

the botched national ID scandal, Shs63bn to ghost pensioners, and Shs5bn in the bicycle scandal. These scandals came to light in the course of 2012 and many more remain buried!

In the wake of all these scandals, Government has had to refund some of the money lost in the OPM scandal to the donor community. This, of course, has meant budget cuts! It is therefore no surprise that even the meager 15% (Shs40,000/=) salary increment for teachers budgeted for FY 2012/13 has not been forthcoming!

Increment aside, of recent, many teachers are complaining of unexplainable salary deductions, half pay and others no pay at all! In this era where Ministry of Public Service no longer issues pay slips, one wonders where the teachers' money is disappearing to! The only explanation given by the Ministry of Public Service is 'technical error' and thereafter it's business as usual while the teachers have to ponder where their next meal will come from.

It is sad that there is no shame left in government, those involved in the stealing, eating and diversion of public funds continue to live in splendor while teachers continue to plunge further into poverty.

**"It is improper to be asking our teachers or anybody else to sacrifice without tackling the continuing theft and squandering of tax payer's money which we all hoped would help to better the situation of our teachers".**

The effects are beginning to bite. Universities especially Makerere University are now insisting on full payment of tuition at the end of the first months. We are

yet to see the children of teachers, Policemen and other civil servants missing university exams and course works if not dropping out all together.

The teachers have a duty to struggle for their dues and nobody else will make offers for them without a protracted demand. Parents and children should join hands with the teachers in this struggle because in the long run they are the beneficiaries. Our teachers deserve better and so do our nation's children.

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*Pupils studying under a tree.*



*Ntinda Police Barracks Ps teaching staff quarters. Inset; the bathrooms.*

**Our country  
state of ed  
Where is g  
ment's inv  
in education**



*Its where they call classroom...*



*Pupils struggling to find a way to school in Bwaise after it rained heavily.*



*Evan Nakamatte is already a mother at 16. the only UPE school in her locality*



# ry's poor ducation: govern- estment on



A classroom block at one of the upcountry primary schools. Inset are the latrines with no doors.



Children dont have classrooms. When it rains, the only option is to leave.



She dropped out last year after KCCA closed



Their daily study depends on the day's weather.



# What if stolen money was invested in our primary schools?



*Inset: water stagnated in the corridors.*

*A UPE school in Bwaise which was closed last year over floods. It only needs a drainage system. Some pupils have since become young mothers.*

**AT 16, EVAN NAKAMATTE** is already a mother. But she still dreams on hoping her former school, St James Primary School in Bwaise, a Kampala slum will be reopened after it was closed last year by Kampala Capital City Authority over floods.

Having been the only school implementing government's Universal Primary Education programme and serving close to 180, 000 population from five parishes, many children have had no option but to drop out because they couldn't afford school fees in private schools. Majority of the girls like Nakamatte have been forced to be mothers at an early age while the others are either spotted in bars or loitering around the slum with no work to do.

"I want to go back to school given an opportunity. They said they would reopen our school. This is the second year since it was closed. Many of my friends have since given birth," she said.

For Flavia Nantaba, her dream to become a doctor is still fresh. The Primary Four dropout too hopes government invests in the school and reopens it for her to continue her studies.

But how much of this can be realised? As the area LC 2 chairperson, Hajat Nuruh Alinda later tells us: "There are many children affected. Parents don't have money to send their children to private schools. The children are redundant. They can't be employed by anyone because they don't have the skills. KCCA is not helping us. They keep tossing us. The government should help and reopen the school as it was the only UPE school. Our children have started producing at an early age. If they were in school, things would be different."

Our schools are slowly collapsing under the weight of ill funding amidst massive theft of public funds by a section of our technical and political leaders. What if some of the huge stolen sums of

money find their way to arresting a funding crisis in these primary schools?

Unless a fundamental decision is made to free resources from other non-essential budget lines of Government and simultaneously reign on marauding thieves of public money, our primary education is in trouble.

St. James PS, had over the years faced flooding problems. Flooding of schools in slums demands that, children negotiate flooded surrounding paths to reach classroom blocks. On such days, the learners spend hours on mopping out water from the classroom with bare hands to enable learning. But this can be

short lived once it threatens to rain again as they dash out to get home before the downpour.

Even with community efforts, the parents could not save their own school. It needed the will and money from Government.

**"Just imagine if the Prime Minister was to drive a normal vehicle of about 60m instead of the reported Shs600m machine and what the balance could do to guarantee hundreds of children of St. James education? Or compare the Shs200bn stolen from the National ID project with the Shs26bn KCCA has for the entire 2012/2013 education budget".**

If individuals were to share the national cake equally, more lives would be saved through a better education. So, as 'billions of

stolen money' messages beam daily newspapers, think about lost opportunities and how our education is slowly collapsing under the weight of a few thieves.

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# Schools are collapsing because of theft in our government!



Former Kitemba Primary School which currently houses offices for Kaweeri Coffee plantation

**IF THE INCUMBENT** leaders of Uganda had attended the same UPE that they boldly list as an achievement, would any of them have had a chance at becoming half of what they are today?

With the prevailing UPE standards (or their absence), would they have qualified to join what was during their time referred to as Junior Secondary One and go on to be admitted for higher education within the country, the region and beyond?

For all its imperialist interests, the British colonial government alongside the missionaries established schools which, over the decades, became enduring legends of Uganda's academic tradition. How much more should

Ugandans expect from a native government? More so a regime that has ruled uninterrupted for more than half the time that Uganda has been independent!

Is there one rural school across the breadth and length of Uganda that can give elementary education to Uganda's next President or First Lady as did Kyamate Primary School, to which General Yoweri Museveni and his wife Hon. Janet owe their primary education?

Behold the ruins of Shimoni where the current Speaker of Parliament once played, learnt how to read and write and even made friends as a little girl! Where classes once stood, an incomplete "investor's" commercial property now stands as a result of a public-private

partnership that was fraught with discrepancies ahead of the CHOGM hosted by Uganda in 2007.

In November 2009, the President instituted a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the mismanagement of UPE and USE in the Ministry of Education. A staggering 1000 cases of inflated funds, ghost teachers and schools, incomplete and shoddy construction works, were uncovered. The final report that was handed to the President for action totaled up to trillions of shillings stolen but as with most other

commission reports that lie on the shelves of State House gathering dust, no action has ever been taken since!

This colossal sum of money was intended for building schools and the establishment of school management committees.

In one particularly shocking revelation by the Independent, furniture that was procured for schools was abandoned on the roadside by the transporter but the contractors were fully paid and the delivery file indicated that the goods were delivered to and "received" by the schools. Villagers picked the pieces of furniture and took it to their homes for domestic use!

It is deplorable what has become of Uganda's legendary schools.

Nyakasura School, which boasts of alumni like Professor Edward Rugumayo, Bank of Uganda Spokesperson Jan Tibamwenda, MP Tim Lwanga, Major General Benon Biraaro and Andrew Mwenda, has only managed an abysmal 13-

20% of its UCE candidates passing in Division One for the past ten years! In spite of efforts by alumni to restore Nyakasura's glory, the school, like a comatose patient, still lives by fits and spasms of life and progress.

In the 2012/13 admissions to public universities on government sponsorship, Nyakasura School sent only one student out of eighty four.

From the hitherto eastern giant Busoga College Mwiri, between 2001 and 2004, less than ten students qualified for government scholarship at university. Last year, only three qualified out of 123!

Ntare (which means "lion") School can no longer roar loud enough to groom two Presidents as it did Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

The libraries, or whatever remains of them, at Makobore High School (which was recently closed for lack of operational funds), Dr. Milton Obote College in Ombaci are mere shadows of the exuberance, intellectual discourse and formative environment that students benefited from decades before the NRM regime which has, by the President's own admission, been infested with thieves.

Kololo Secondary School, with 2992 students and eight streams per class in O'level and four streams in A'level, has a paltry 62 full-time teachers. So much for the so-called Universal Secondary Education! It takes superhuman abilities for a teacher to deliver results when operating under such a teacher-to-student-ratio, let alone a paltry salary of 270,000 shillings, which is the cost of one minister's outing!

Perhaps this explains why Kololo Secondary School did not send any student on government scholarship

in the 2012/13 public universities intake!

Across the country, especially Kampala's public schools, the threat of shadowy investors looms. Without explanation, schools are fenced off against protests by parents and teachers. And more often than not, the "investor" wins! Two years after attempts at fencing off the land, the fate of Kololo Secondary School and Kitante Primary School remains unknown. Where young minds were shaped for the future, those minds today can no longer be inspired into new thought and action: this is the cross-cutting situation of Uganda's public schools!

Patrice Lumumba, who literally committed his blood and sweat towards the liberation struggles, and now has two halls of residence named after him at Teso College Aloet and Makerere University would demand the removal of his name if he took a walk through them: the dysfunctional drainage, filthy bathrooms, derelict furniture and caving ceilings are a grave contradiction from what the revered freedom fighter stood for!

Uganda's education sector has principally been reduced by thieves in government to a relic of the past, only churning out thousands of graduates by the numbers, to an unforgiving world outside the classroom!

As he walked down memory lane, ex-deputy Premier Paul Etyang once remarked, "when I recall the glorious days of Mwiri, I feel like crying." Indeed, a walk through any public institution of learning often leaves many people feeling so distraught to the point that they begin to feel like ruins, wandering among the ruins that the incessant theft of public funds has visited on the education sector.

Africa's pearl, now bruised and discoloured from three decades of monumental theft of public funds in every statutory authority, government department and ministry is in serious need of a new set of leaders who demonstrably care about the education of its children.

We must resolutely and firmly work towards restoring this pearl to the sparkling and polished gem that it once was, but first, the thieves must be punished and be forced to return all the stolen chalk, text books, computers, furniture and classrooms!

Their names and addresses are known; all that remains is for the Chief Executive to crack the whip!

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# GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON PRIMARY EDUCATION

**Capitation Grant: Shs4000** per child a year; this is the price of one kilo of sugar.



This means government spends Shs15 per day on each child for the three terms in a year

## If the Shs33bn stolen in the Prime Minister's Office was invested in Primary Education, it would have:

Fed 2.2million children for a term at a cost of Shs. 15000 per term for 7333 schools at a population of 300 per school

Paid salary for 10,185 Primary School Teachers for one full year at a salary of 270,000 per Primary Teacher per month

Constructed 2200 Primary classrooms at a cost of 15M per classroom

Constructed 1100 Houses for Primary School Teachers

Constructed 4125 Five-Stance Pit latrines each at 8,000,000

Procured 330,000 Three-Seater desks to sit 990,000 Pupils in 1238 Primary Schools assuming average enrolment rate of 800 children per school

Purchased 3,300,000 text books each at an average cost of 10,000 shs.

## What we must do to get our money back?

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

**Until all the thieves have returned our money.**

**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.**

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