Need for a Total Revamp of the Ugandan Educational System towards Enabling Local Graduates to Compete on the Global Scale

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Abstract
The Ugandan education system has developed through different stages since the colonial times. However, the philosophy and methodology upon which it was built have become obsolete and irrelevant to the needs of the contemporary society. Therefore, the philosophy, school system, method of instruction, curriculum, measurement and assessment have to be revisited. In this paper, a critical comparison is made with some of the selected best school systems and programs in the world from which the Ugandan educational system could draw warm inspirations and improve for the better. An eclectic philosophical approach, vocational studies, problem-solving instructional method, improving on teacher-training and preparation etcetera are discussed and recommended. Policy makers and implementors can borrow some of the ideas highlighted to improve on the educational standards of the country.
Keywords: Education, Philosophy, Curriculum, Renewal, Policy, Eclectic

Introduction
The background of the Ugandan education system is traced back in the colonial times (Mino, 2011). Not only in Uganda, but elsewhere in East Africa and Africa in general, the colonial masters wanted to train and create collaborators for purposes of correspondence. Therefore, the education system comprised of basics such as arithmetic, reading and writing. The education system was since then designed to help achieve colonial interests (Kithinji, 2012). Even when later the system became more developed, the skills and courses taught at tertiary levels were to cultivate colonial values and interests. The colonial education system in Africa in general was to create more of job seekers than creators (Vidal, et al., 2022). The graduates had to remain dependant on the colonial values and interests hence there was limited creativity because of the desire for acquisition of white-collar jobs. The misconception that good quality education is all about masterly of foreign language in this case has been English. When colonial masters left, there were still residues of colonial ideologies within the political and social-economic structures of the former colonies. Coupled with this, the colonial masters left local clones to give an extension to their colonial values and interests which later came to be known as 'neo-colonialism'. Since the independence of Uganda, there has been deliberate efforts to revamp the educational policy in the country (Tromp & Datzberger, 2021).

Promoting foreign languages at the expense of indigenous ones (Mwakira & Mwangi, 2021). In many urban schools, learners are discouraged and sometimes punished for communicating in their respective mother tongues and rewarded for using English. (Hurwitz & Kambel, 2020) argued that language-based exclusion is a colonial approach towards education introduced with a deliberate aim of creating countries that have racial classes and build the masters' superiority. There's still a misconception that fluency in communicating using English language is the peak of education (Oduor, 2015). Proposed a multilingualism approach towards instruction and education in general, the idea is that sciences such as mathematics, chemistry, biology etcetera could be taught in English and social studies and arts be taught in local languages.

According to one of Uganda's local tabloids (Monitor, 2021), 87% of the Ugandan graduates are jobless. One of the highlighted issues at hand is the failed educational system. (Mwesigwa, 2014) argued that the Ugandan educational system still addresses the colonial problems whereas the needs of the country have since changed in terms of socio-economic, moral and political aspects, Uganda needs innovators, metal fabricators, mechanics and scientists. The need for a total revamp of the entire system becomes relevant, timely and hence comes to address the crisis. Total revamp in this case refers to the philosophy of national education system as a whole, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and evaluation.

In this review study, relevant literature has been analysed in this article. It is not a quantitative approach. It is an analysis that has been made on the challenges of the education system in Uganda whereas suggesting the way forward. A comparison has been made on the education systems of Finland, Thailand and Singapore. This is because the education system of Finland is considered among the best in the world whereas that of Thailand is to demonstrate and benchmark on how little available resources can be used to facilitate learning. Just like Uganda, Singapore is a post-colonial country but the obvious question is how did Singapore make it with a few natural resources to build a very strong education system? The juxtaposition of the local education system with some of the foreign ideologies, methods, policies and values on education is not in any way suggesting reaffirming or emphasising the position of western neo-colonial influence on the same system that needs redemption. But to reposition the status of the Uganda on the globe by addressing her problems through improvement in the education system according to internationally accepted reform-systems, trends and standards.

Five decades ago, the educational system in Finland was worse than this, however, through intensive teacher-training programmes, rethinking the educational policy, decentralisation of assessment and evaluation, Program for International Student Assessments (PISA) ranks Finish education system as the best in the world (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

According to PISA, Finland is arguably the only European country that has consistently maintained her educational status not only in assessment performance but also after school, the products have lived according to the skills and knowledge gained from school (Marten, 2010).

The Mechai Bamboo school in Buriram province of Northeast Thailand is another lifelong learning centre that was introduced to produce upright citizens who will promote national unity, possess quality skills and become social entrepreneurs and community leaders (Hegwood, 2013).

Singapore's education system has evolved from being survival-driven to efficiency-driven to ability driven (Tan et al., 2016). The success of Singapore's education system is because of so many factors. However, (OECD, 2010) attributes the success to the advantage of small

numbers given the size of the country in terms of geography and population, good policies with capacity to implement them and an integrated planning system. Uganda is not so far away from adopting some of these methods in order to improve on her own.

This paper is to inform policy makers and implementors on how to improve on the educational standards of the country in reference to global needs and expectations. It is further to be used as a tool for future research by educationists.

Problem Statement

Education systems are not free from political and socio-economic values and interests (Hickey & Hossain, 2019). Once the structures of the country are polluted with colonial interests, the education sector cannot be spared. There can be numerous models or approaches. Either the political and socio-economic goals change so that the atmosphere for education improves or the education system is revamped with a new set of goals, aims, objectives and vision to create a new breed of graduates who will ultimately deliver the nation to the promised land. The challenges in Uganda are more or less the same as those in the neighbouring and developing countries, the education system has to address most of these problems, although the challenges are global, the educational policy seems to be inclined more on the local needs and trends, albeit unsatisfactorily. The upgrades on the education system have not only been on trial-and-error method, but also on bits and pieces of the system with very slow progress. What the system needs is a complete cleansing inside out, rebooted and come up with something new.

Revamping the Educational Philosophy

The policy makers have to consider the current needs of the Ugandan community. This can be achieved by probing the current goals on whether they can help produce graduates who can uplift their society. Both the intellectual and skill-based fields have to be revisited, the gaps should be identified. Identification of gaps will help generate more realistic targets to be addressed by the education system.

There are various philosophies that guide and inform the direction with in which a particular education system operates. The framers of the educational policies sometimes deliberately design policies rooted from specific philosophical orientations but at times the polices may be structured according to the needs of the time and place, and still unknowingly or spontaneously will belong to at least one or two educational philosophies. I would argue that the philosophy of education in Uganda be eclectic.

Uganda is a multifaceted nation, with more than 45 tribes, numerous values, religions and belief systems. It would therefore be difficult to effectively tackle the challenges of the whole nation while the education system is buttressed from principals of one or two philosophies. For instance, idealism advocates for morality, spiritual education, values of humanity, critical thinking, creativity, intellectualism some of which may be relevant to the education system of the country (Sooraj, 2011). Reconstructionism on the other hand lays much emphasis on unity in diversity, justice, multi-cultural tolerance and more futuristic tendencies (Mwanzia & Mwangi, 2016). A country such as Uganda with the vast cultures and beliefs needs some ideas borrowed from such a philosophy to inform the education system of the country. Existentialism has an important component at the core of its educational philosophy and that is education being a vessel to help individuals in the realisation of self (Koirala, 2011). Realism puts emphasis on vocational, social, religious and scientific studies, this is because the child has to grow mentally, physically socially and morally hence the teacher has to adjust

according to the needs of the time for example in this generation, the use of multimedia audio-visual aids in the teaching-learning process (Nuroh, et al., 2020). Perennialism on the other hand has aspects that perceive a human being and the universe from the metaphysical and spiritual side, hence education should train an individual a way of improving morality and nourishment of the soul and spirit (Zirhlioğlu & Yayla, 2016). Therefore, an eclectic approach would enable Uganda to probe all philosophies and pick what benefits her context in education as well as enhancing flexibility during the reform journey.

The policy makers, implementors and stakeholders have to revisit the mission, vision, aims, goals and objectives of the educational policies to fit in the current century and global demands. This can be achieved through benchmarking the internationally vibrant and effective education systems. The Finish education policy for example allows learners to set their own objectives, the purpose of teachers is to help and guide learners on how to achieve such objectives (Haukka & Starck, 2020). Allowing learners to set their own aims and objectives, paves way for slow learners to set their own pace as the quick learners also find their speed. Pre-determined objectives for all students may not fully cater for individual differences as the slow learners may be left behind or the quick ones under-taught. The major philosophy of education in Finland is lifelong learning geared towards betterment of human society (Zodakreza, 2015). Uganda is an African nation, therefore there is need for renewal of African heritage by engraving values such as Ubuntu with in the education system (Takyi-Amoako & Assié-Lumumba, 2018).

The education system should promote national identity. Learners should be taught in languages they understand best or multilingualism should be invoked. The practice of demonising local languages should be discouraged. Education should foster national cohesion and unity in diversity. The Finish education system promotes educational equity, advocating for a knowledge-based society and enhancing local authorisation (Ustun & Eryılmaz, 2018). Some Ugandan schools have either gone full-blast international curriculum whereas others have partly local and western curriculum.

Education for all should be actualised. One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4) indicates that by 2030, all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2022). Millennium Development Goal (MDG2) had one target to Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (UN, 2022). Uganda has both universal primary and secondary education. However, although there was an influx in enrolment, universal education has not had a significant improvement on the socio-economic development and status of the country (Kan & Klasen, 2020). Universal education has to be re-thought, replanned so that a significant impact can be realised both economically and on the social well-being of the citizens.

Revamping the School System
The practice of learners going to school from early morning hours till late evening or at night should be improved. School timetables should be restructured to allow learning be more enjoyable arousing the learners' curiosity, enthusiasm and interest to learn. There should be government intervention on excessive drills such as homework, holiday packages, classwork exercises and test extermination. In Finland school starts between 9:00Am to 9:45 and ends between 2:00pm to 2:45pm with minimal or no HomeWorks and this does not in any way

affect their performance (Colagrossi, 2018). The school system should allow learners to enjoy other extra-curricular activities such as sports and games. The schools can also focus on projects that can help boost creativity and equip learners with problem solving abilities.

Curriculum review is necessary, has to be a continuous process and always updated (Kiguli-Malwadde, et al., 2006). The curriculum has to be more learner-centred. The lower secondary curriculum has recently been reviewed to address this issue. Implementation of some few changes is still a problem. Some teachers have not shifted from the old traditional methods of teacher-centeredness upholding the concept of tabula-rasa where the teacher remains the master feeding empty vessels.

The curriculum should also incorporate vocational studies at all levels of lower education. Singapore's education system lays focus on the labour market needs, character education, technical studies, modernisation, science, mathematics and technology (Kandemir, 2017). The policy makers in Uganda have to consider the current and futuristic global markets, jobs, and employment trends and needs, the kinds of experts needed in the world in order to come up with education programs and courses. Meriläinen et al (2018) indicated that in Finlad vocational studies at secondery level have a wide range of options, not compulsory, widely supported by the communities because they keep more teenagers in school and lead to more employed citizens. In 2020, the ministry of education in Uganda introduced a competence based curriculum, however, some gaps have been identified in the curriculum especially implementation where teachers lack sufficient training, limited resources such as books, ICT equipment because of the influx of students population as a result of COVID-19 and limited awareness among other stakeholders like parents (Collins, 2022). All stakeholders must be involved in all phases including the planning, policy making, implemantaion and evaluation, this might help to mitigate some of the challenges hindering the smooth running of the new competence-based curriculum (Oyugi, 2015).

The method of instruction should be more practical and problem solving-based. This allows learners to be more creative and critical thinkers. Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda, all seed schools should have demonstration gardens and farms such that learning is by hands on. Promoting and adoption of information communication technologies (ICT) in learning and instruction. ICT can also be used in research, innovation, content creation and facilitate open distance learning to enable learners from remote areas benefit from modern education through interaction with other learners and teachers on a global scale. The government of Singapore funds and coordinates innovation at all levels of schooling and promotes cultural diversity as well as mindset change (Kent, 2017).

The education system should develop a deliberate plan to identify the skill-sets, abilities and talents of learners. The teachers should be charged with a duty to search and identify the skills and abilities of different learners. The schools should provide facilities that will enable to promote and improve on such skills.

Teacher training to be improved. (Wagner, 2008) argued that most of the teacher training and licencing programs largely focus on the required academic content such as history of education, psychology, curriculum which may have little or nothing to do with the actual requirements of being an effective and good teacher. The teachers need to be equipped with modern skills of teaching enabling them to facilitate learning effectively and efficiently interact with modern learners. Singapore pays very close attention to teacher training

through lifelong teacher professional development programme (Rajandiran, 2020). Finland also pays close attention to teachers through rigorous training and ensuring that a few teachers interact with the same learners for a longer period of time consistently to address individual differences (Colagrossi, 2018). The teacher then helps learners discover their potential and abilities, helping them improve on their thinking and making them smarter (Haukka & Starck, 2020). Tromp & Datzberger (2021) indicated that the teachers in Uganda lacked sufficient training and equipment due to poor and insufficient teacher-training programs. Akello & Timmerman (2017) argued the Ugandan teachers to invoke participatory action research so as to reflect on their practices and students' learning. According to SDG4, by 2030, substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States (UNESCO, 2017).

Encouraging more project-based learning. In Singapore, teachers assign projects that require learners to use higher order thinking skills, such tasks enable learners to do hands on activities and promote exploration, sense of discovery and team work (Crawford, 2002). In the new Ugandan lower secondary curriculum, there are aspects of project-based learning but the operationalisation needs to be revisited especially in terms of relevance, efficiency and frequency. Also, to train teachers about teaching students using project based-learning. (Mukembo & Edwards, 2016) demonstrated the possibility of using project-based learning in teaching and promoting agriculture and entrepreneurship in Uganda, this could be achieved by merging entrepreneurial skills, community service and agricultural skills to achieve higher aims in all aspects of life. The entrepreneurship and agriculture teachers would have to work together in collaboration with community leaders, students and parents to achieve such aims. The Mechai bamboo school in Thailand has its own agricultural farm where students practice and learn farming and sale the produce to the neighbouring communities (Karki, 2017).

Measurement and Evaluation
Assessment, measurement and evaluation are pertinent in any given education system. Examinations should be decentralised to district or even to school level. Passing examination has become the major force and motivation behind the Ugandan education system, this has led to increased examination malpractice. Evaristo & Wilson (2019) attributed examination malpractice in Uganda on poverty, lack of professionalism and poor education system. The whole aim of education has been simply reduced to grades (Owoeye, 2021). The assessment methods by far and large measure memory and to a lesser extent intelligence, competence and skills (Kaul, 2018).
Other important aspects such as competence, creativity, morality, discipline, values can be assessed using progressive means at school level and they should be given preference before the student moves to the next level. The assessment system will also improve on the modes of instruction, the teacher-centred approaches are in many cases influenced by the need to pump facts in the heads of leaners for better grades. Finland has only an optional National Matriculation Exam with no other standardised examinations, therefore the students do not have to worry about the stress for grades and performance giving them enough time to focus on projects and tasks, learning and personal growth (Colagrossi, 2018).

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."- Albert Einstein

Learners at various levels should be assessed basing on their skills, abilities and talents. Students can also participate in the process of progressive assessment, teaching and learning can also be integrated in the process (Cowan & Cherry, 2012). It is necessary to conduct assessment of students' performance on readiness to be future leaders, how to live a meaningful life and how to contribute towards the success of their respective communities (Maynor, 2017).

Evaluation should also be conducted on teaching, that is pedagogy as well as the resources used in the teaching-learning environment. In the Mechai Pattana bamboo school, students participate in the selection, assessment and evaluation of their teachers (Kerr & Schwei, 2012). Students can be provided with templets to help them conduct self-assessment and peer review (Cowan & Cherry, 2012).

Monitoring and Evaluation of the entire educational system. It is very crucial to assess and analyse whether the educational policies, programs and designed curriculum are effectively achieving the intended outcome and helping in solving problems of the community. The assessment, monitoring and evaluation has to be continuous, recorded and should inform policy makers and implementers on reforms. In Uganda, there's donor-aided monitoring and evaluation, however, because it is on a limited scale, there is still need from internally local forces as this may provide genuine loop holes that need patching (Holvoet & Inberg, 2015). The government through the ministry of education can sponsor research and innovation on the education system, accept positive criticism and feedback and engage academics and experts in the entire process of planning up to evaluation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Instruction be made in languages that learners understand best. However, for specific objectives such as demand in employment sector for example tourism and secretarial studies and other courses that may require proficiency of particular languages, then multilingualism can be invoked (Wagaba, 2010). Equip learners with lifelong skills that will enable them become entrepreneurs and community leaders. The education system should be designed to prepare learners become critical thinkers, innovators and problem solvers. Teachers should be equipped with skills of the 21st century. Teachers should continuously be trained to keep them up to date with the new emerging trends in pedagogy and education in general. Needs of the international labour market and global community problems should be assessed while designing the curricular and policy. Continuous improvement, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the education system. Empowering learners and teachers to conduct self-assessment. Project-based learning should be promoted and well facilitated at all levels of education in Uganda. Encourage more individualised, computerised, learner-centred curriculum and instruction (Crawford, 2002). Integration of information communication technologies in the teaching-learning environment will not only improve on instruction, but also enhance the learners' curiosity and enthusiasm to learn and discover new ideas, information and build a strong knowledge base (Gyagenda, 2021). Involving all stake holders including teachers, the community, learners and experts in planning for education systems and policies. Consideration of international policies such as Human Rights, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among others while designing the educational programs. Integration of African values such as Ubuntu in the curriculum.

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