University education for sustainable national development:

Implications for University Leadership, Management and Society.

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the social and philosophical underpinnings of the role of education in economic development in Uganda. It is partly based on a study on bureaucracy and the management of the challenges facing Makerere University carried out by the writer in 2006 using a sample size of 381 respondents representing a population of 50,000. The results show that the issue of a university being used as an instrument for mobilizing support for government policies is contentious but that cooperation with Industry and the Private Sector to design academic programmes and curriculum for training a labour force which is employable and geared towards national development is favoured. The findings confirmed the divergence in perception about the role of higher education per se to National development. The capacity of universities to produce desired results with regard to the promotion of National Development is discussed. The paper concludes with the observation that in pursuing the objectives and goals of the Higher Education Institution, the university top leadership, as well as management have to play a decisive role in making higher education fulfill the expectations of society, but points out that not every thing society demands is in fact worthy. It is recommended that university education strives to inculcate a positive attitude towards the kind of change that society demands through curriculum innovativeness.

INTRODUCTION

The Third Millennium ushered in a worldwide revolution in Universities that is sometimes likened to a mass movement which those living in its stride ignore at their own peril. The many shifts that are being experienced within Universities have an impact on the role of University Education in sustainable National Development. As Universities are transformed from central or local government controlled Bureaucracies into quasi – Corporate bodies and increase in number, the National Development component of academic roles has likewise expanded. Changes are taking place with regard to the Higher Education Manager's responsibilities and duties as University Leaders and Managers at all levels become more significant players in facilitating Effective Teaching and Learning that contributes to sustainable National Development. University education should be re-oriented towards National Development.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The controversy over the linkage between development and education is as old as formal education itself. While some scholars argue that historically development always preceded educational advancement, others maintain that this is not so. Philosophers, from Socrates, his pupil Plato to Dewey, defined education in accordance with their philosophy of life, with the result that conflicting concepts and perceptions have emerged. In this paper, an attempt has been made to tread the slippery path others have trodden in an effort to extend the frontiers of knowledge. The thesis that the way society perceives and interprets education determines the

social responses to it and consequently the characteristics of the Education System, is explored in light of its implications to National Development and the University Manager.

According to Ball (1977) the Education System has important effects on the process of socialization, and if I may add, sustainable development; the more so if it is extended to cover University education. The values imparted by Universities may not be the result of direct indoctrination as might be the case at Uganda's ruling party's infamous National School for Leadership and Political Education at Kyankwanzi, but are nonetheless pivotal. A deliberate decentralized educational system may for example prevent direct government interference and may encourage or support the development of anti-cultures. The liberalization and subsequent decentralization of higher education may also lead to a situation in which Universities promote regional or local loyalties and the reinforcement of ethnic or tribal attitudes.

Hence, Gulu University, with a manager who is from the North, will most likely promote political ideas seen from a Northern Perspective. Busitema University, whose founders stopped short of baptizing it the Eastern University, with a manager from the Eastern region, may promote Pro-East Political Ideas. It will not be surprising if Muteesa I Royal University, founded by the Kingdom of Buganda, with a Muganda Manager, promotes tradition, culture and monarchical ideas, and Mountains of the Moon University promotes the interests of the Tooro and Bunyoro Royalty, as well as of the political elites from the Western Region, and so on. Uganda Martyrs University is a faith-based private university that cherishes Christian values and is therefore responsible to the needs of the Catholic Church and the people of Uganda. At UMU all functions start with the Eucharistic Prayer thereby fulfilling the mission set for it by its founders; the Episcopal Conference of Catholic Bishops of Uganda. According to Mugagga (2006) the fundamental purpose of Catholic University Education is to articulate the Christian message and its inherent values, to cherish, keep and transmit the culture of "the sacred in the secular world" (Kasibante, 2001).

Thivierge (2003) quotes the *Magisterium* of the Church, the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae (1990*) and John Paul II in December 2002, as cited by Mugagga (2006); a Catholic University is called to humanize education. In countries where the Leaders brutalize the very people they are supposed to protect it is imperative that university education is humanized as a first step to humanizing the Leaders themselves.

IUIU which was founded by the Organization of Islamic Conference and established by Statute of Parliament promotes Islamic values and ideals.Kaire (2003) opines that Islamic education has to permeate university education with a strict Islamic moral code; the fundamental quest of Islamic philosophy of education being to understand the nature of Allah, Man's relation to Allah, and how the nature of all beings relate to the Being called Allah. At IUIU too all functions start with an Islamic prayer and a few minutes to 1300hrs everyday the Campus reverberates with the voice of the Muezzin calling the university community to the mandatory daily prayers.

 Aggarwal (1985)states that the concept of education is like a diamond, which appears to be a different colour when seen from a different angle, the inference being that different individuals, groups and societies perceive the role of University Education in National Development differently. Not only is the perception varied, education itself is dynamic, not static. The perception of its role in national development changes whenever there are shifts in its characteristics and vice versa. University Education is therefore intrinsically developmental; it is dialectical. Dialectical logic sees contradictions as fruitful collisions of ideas from which a higher truth may be reached by way of intellectual synthesis (Bullock and Stallybrass, 1977). The implications to the University education manager is that when societal needs change the education system must logically follow suit. Responding to increasing corruption in the country,

the high incidence of violent conflict and general moral decadence, Uganda Martyrs University has deliberately skewed its curriculum towards training in ethics, good governance and conflict resolution.

National Council for Higher Education Executive Director Kasozi (2004) defines Higher Education as "advanced level of education beyond a full dose of secondary education at advanced level". This definition is congruent to the one offered by the Uganda Education Policy Review Report (1989). The terms "tertiary" and "higher education" are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing. This paper adopts the same approach. More importantly though, it tows the line adopted by the Education Policy Review Report (1989) that gives the aims of tertiary education as the production of skilled human resources, dissemination of knowledge, all of which are pivotal to National Development.

President Museveni views education as a means of removing the dependence syndrome of Ugandan Society; creating and producing intellectuals. While addressing a youth Seminaind 4(ving thei-0.0

This calls for these University leaders to increase their range of conceptualization and theoretical insights into University leadership for sustainable National Development. Professor Olweny (2008), who is the Vice Chancellor of Uganda Martyrs University, has, in the same vein, made it clear to his staff that UMU should not exist in isolation but must merge with the community. He outlines "quality assurance, service to the Church in order to produce men and women who are going to be leaders of tomorrow, HIV/Aids, peace and justice issues, poverty alleviation and local management of food resources," among others, as the focus areas in his leadership. He deplores the mercerization of higher education even though society may demand it. On the commoditization of higher education in Uganda, Ssesanga (2004) seems to agree with him when he argues that market-driven reforms will not result in National Development but in the relegation and de-emphasis of educational ideals.

DISCUSSION
In a recent study on Bureaucracy and the Management of the challenges facing Makerere University carried out in 2006, a semi-structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 381 respondents representing a population of 50,000 people consisting of approximately 35,000 students, about 1500 members of the academic staff, approximately 800 administrative and support staff at Makerere University. The following results were obtained:

Table 1: Opinions on whether Makerere University should assist government in drawing up National Development Plans

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, because of Professional and technical knowledge.	318	83.5
Cooperation improves relations between Makerere University and government.	32	8.4
Others	13	3.4
Total	**363**	**95.3**

Table 1 above shows that out of the 363 respondents, a significant 318 (83.5 %) respondents were of opinion that Makerere should assist government in drawing up National Development Plans, 32 respondents (8.4%) were of opinion that closer cooperation would improve relations between the government and the University.

Table 2: Steps Makerere University can take to bring about smooth relationships between the government and the University in order to facilitate National Development.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Improved Cooperation with government	108	28.3
Avoid partisan Politics	113	29.7
Others	114	29.9
Total	335	89.9

It is significant to note that out of the 335 respondents, 108 respondents (28.3%) envisaged improved Cooperation as the main step that could be taken to improve relations between Makerere University and its main benefactor, the Government. Whereas 113 respondents (29.7%) advised against Partisan Politics, an almost equal number, of respondents totaling 114 made several other suggestions that included allowing adequate time and opportunity for mutual consultations, which some said should be done on a monthly basis.

Promoting serious dialogue between the government and the University and what some respondents called a "cessation of hostilities and abandonment of the desire by either of them to dominate the other" were suggested. The top University Management, some suggested, should be open minded when dealing with government officials. They said the University ought not to adopt an anti-government stance which seems to be the core of the prevailing icy relations between Makerere and the Party in power, the symptoms of which are revealed through strikes and subsequent closure of Makerere University for three months in 2007 and the ongoing negative media reports about it. Perennially starved of financial resources to pay Staff and run its programmes, Makerere has lived on the brink of collapse for so many years that it seems to have developed a thick skin against adversity.

The respondents suggested that while cooperation in drawing up National Development Plans would be good, the Government should resist the temptation of politicizing its relations with the University by appointing pro-government politicians to the top leadership positions. It is unrealistic to expect the University to avoid Partisan Politics on Campus because universities generate political ideas and can influence political choice since they are a microcosm of the entire Electorate. They cannot be prevented from engaging in Partisan Politics because that would be an encroachment on both their intellectual and democratic rights. But, the government should focus more on using the Universities for drawing up development plans and giving professional advice on the management of the National Budget instead of converting the University community to its political religion. Ruling Parties in Africa often condescendingly purport to be the custodians of the people's political heritage but there are instances and places such as universities, when and where such patronizing peremptory gobbledygook will not work.

The respondents suggested that the University ought to include more government officials on all its committees for purposes of improving relations between the University and the Government. This, they argued, would build confidence and minimize mutual suspicion. It was suggested that in order to promote mutual respect the Government should consult the University when making certain policies that affect it and before any major decisions are implemented by the University Council. The Government and the University should be prepared for compromise in order to promote mutual respect. In addition some respondents suggested that the University should mobilize public support for its policies and programmes. This, they argued, would encourage the government to change its stance if the public is in support of University policies. Besides, the best brains at the University could be called upon by the Government to assist in formulating and evaluating National Development Plans because it has the personnel and expertise to do so. The Investment Department, created not so long ago, and the Faculty of Economics and Management at Makerere University, have the capacity to do this.

Table 3: Opinions on the use of Makerere University as an instrument for mobilizing support for government policies

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	189	49.6
No	182	47.8
Total	**371**	**97.4**

The results show that those who agreed to the proposition were 189 (49.6%) and those who disagreed were 182(47.8 percent). This means that the issue is contentious and ought to be handled with circumspection. A healthy diversity of political opinion was observed as significant at Makerere. The political opposition, with the NRM breakaway faction called FDC and the oldest party in the country DP, has made significant in- roads into the Student population and the Academic Staff; a phenomenon that has increased the level of mutual suspicion and therefore made NRM government sponsored mobilization untenable. The situation prevailing at Makerere can be generalized to other Universities in the Country. Despite the overt support given to the Ruling Party sponsored Guild Presidency elections which took place at the government-owned Makerere and Kyambogo Universities, the Opposition candidates won with comfortable percentages.

Persuading the leadership of Universities, their Academic Staff and students to tow the political line advocated by the Ruling Party *en masse* is wishful thinking. National Development Plans which are drawn in accordance with its manifesto are bound to be opposed or undermined by a significant section of the University Community. Yet, for University Education to contribute to sustainable National Development, relations between the institution of Government and the Universities ought to be cordial and complementary, rather than icy and confrontational. If relations between Uganda's oldest University with the government leave a lot to be desired, what is the situation like with regard to industry and the private sector?

The need for Uganda to industrialize in order to facilitate modernization and sustainable National Development is not only appreciated by most Ugandans , but it is deemed essential, provided that the pattern of industrial development fits into an overall strategy of development to achieve the economic and social objectives of the people and their Government. The case for industrialization needs no further argument. Industrialization generates employment through its backward and forwards linkages with other sectors which are considered front-runners in any development drive; one of these is the education sector which infuses expertise and greater efficiency into the entire economy. The relationship between Universities, on the one hand, and industry and the private sector, on the other hand, is therefore of vital importance.

Table 4: Practical steps the University can take to bring about smooth relationships with Industry and the Private Sector.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Train labour Force	78	20.5
Cooperation	118	31.0
Others	121	31.8
Total	**317**	**83.2**

Table 4 shows that out of the 317 respondents a significant 118 (31.0%) respondents suggested closer Cooperation with Industry and the Private Sector, 78 (20.5%) respondents suggested that

the University should link up with the Private Sector to design academic programmes and curriculum for training a labour force which is not only skilled but also employable, and to facilitate National Development Oriented Research. This is important because in other countries multi-national companies sponsor research in Science and Technology that contributes to their national development. Universities in Uganda must emulate their counterparts in the academic heartland of the Western World, where the results of research work are utilized in manufacturing new products, systems, corporate transformation and restructuring.

In the Developed Countries the relationships between Government, Industry and the Universities is symbiotic and University Education is geared towards fostering sustainable National Development. Whereas some respondents suggested that Industry and the Private Sector should establish internship and sandwich programmes for University students, others suggested that universities should be used as recruiting agencies and that joint Trade Exhibitions and short term and medium term training programmes should be considered. The findings of the study confirmed the divergence in perception about the role of Higher Education to National Development. The explanation for different perceptions is to be found in the complex nature of human personality, which has different aspects; social, physical, intellectual, and moral, spiritual and aesthetic. Focus on one or the other aspect, leads to different perceptions of the role of education in national development. According to Aggarwal (1985), a society that embellishes spiritual values will demand for an educational system that stresses the self-realistic aspect of University education, while a moralist community, perceives education as being a process which enables an individual to adjust himself to the moral values and cultural morals of the environment.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

There have been many attempts by theorists of the management of University education as well as economists to discuss and analyze the benefits of University Education in a community, country or to the individual. Although economics literature presents a convincing argument concerning the role of University Education in development it remains relatively silent concerning what it is that the University does to people that makes them more productive than those who have not gone to University. This reminds me of what Makerere University Professor of Educational Planning and Policy Musaazi who once said, "It is possible for a person to go through a University without the University going through the person"! That would be a disaster. It is said that University Education is the total process of development of human ability and behaviour. It is a social process in which one achieves social competence and individual growth carried on in a selected controlled setting which can be institutionalized to enhance all round development.

Efficiency concerns the relationship between inputs and outputs. This also refers to the capacity of universities to produce desired results with a minimum expenditure of time, energy, money and materials. This relationship between university output and input may seem obvious but at times when the government cuts funding for public universities, it is all too easy for it to make the erroneous assumption that funding can be cut without having far reaching effects on output. It is equally likely that cuts in University outputs may lead to proportionately greater negative spiral effects on National Development. The result of cuts may be that the economy may become less efficient in the long run thereby affecting the rate of growth and development.

The complexity of human environments is one of the factors that lead to different interpretations of the role of University Education in National Development. The colonial environment, for example, fostered a different type of education from that of the Post Colonial era. Nkumba University Vice Chancellor Professor Ssenteza-Kajubi (2004), who has chaired Several Education Commissions and twice Makerere University's Vice Chancellor, quotes British Governor Sir Phillip Mitchell as stating that the purpose of transforming Makerere to an institution of Higher Learning in 1938 was "to produce an aristocracy of culture which by nature must be very small." Makerere has been an elite institution ever since.

The environment has various social, physical, cultural and economic development aspects. Different societies have different philosophies of life when it comes to National Development, which in turn determine the way the different societies perceive the role of education in National Development. According to Ssenteza-Kajubi (2004) the main need of the colonial environment was for Clerks and Para-Professionals like Medical Assistants and Nurses, and Artisans, while the Missionaries wanted only trained teachers for their schools. The colonial administration and the Christian Missionaries had different perceptions of the role of education in National Development, as well as the use to which University products are put. Kiwanuka (1972) makes an understatement when he alludes to Ugandan society as having been perceived from colonial times as having no Western forms and values which was seen as being congruent to the absence not only of development, but also of education itself! In other words, Ugandan Society equates education with Western values and forms, which give rise to West European models of development.

It is erroneous to equate development with Westernized University education because since ancient times, society has evolved its own religious beliefs, social and cultural values and it was upon those values that the education system has partly been based. Technical education was not unknown in pre-colonial Africa because crafts and craftsmen, artistes, road builders, iron-smiths and mechanics existed in Uganda long before the arrival of European and Arab influence. In fact, according to Kiwanuka (1972) the spread of these technologies was education. As Forojalla (1993) has argued, in certain contexts the traditional and the modern can co-exist in the process of National Development.

Syncretism, which is the fusion of seemingly incompatible elements, was observed in the traditional societies of South-East Asia by Riggs (1964) who argued that development in such societies progressed in a similar manner in which light travels through a prism. He called them Prismatic Societies and was of the opinion that administration and the management of the development process in Africa operates in much the same way that a Prism does. Just take a look around you if you are in Uganda and digest what you see. If University education is perceived by a particular society as a stimulator of creativeness of mind that can explore new horizons and bringing the vision of the future into a living reality, a constructive agency for improving society and an instrument for emancipating the community from the oddities and infirmities of society and man respectively, then the University Manager must see his duty as a continuous reorganization and integration of those activities and experiences. Whichever perception society has of the role of University education, the community expects the education manager to live an exemplary life.

In pursuing the objectives and goals of the Higher Educational Institution or University, the manager has to realize that in order to fulfill the expectations of society he or she ought to perform many roles. The manager must have a clear perception of the role society expects him to

perform within the education system in order to deliver services that focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and are in tandem with sustainable National Development objectives. While being conscious of his/her manifest role, the manager must identify and play his or her talent roles. However, because of the many ways in which society perceives the role of education in sustainable National Development, University Education is bound to be pervasive.

This pervasiveness creates role conflicts which Passi (1996) categorizes into three main types, namely; individual conflicts, organizational conflicts and inter-organizational conflicts. The inter-institutional conflicts observed at Makerere and other universities are counter-productive. However, these conflicts can be reduced by the Education Manager through defining clear goals for the institution in accordance with the expectations of society, using division of labour in carrying out responsibilities, specifying clear limitations of functions and sharing responsibility with all the stakeholders on sustainable National Development. In order for the University Manager to be able to direct the activities of the Institution, the manager must be clear about the institution's aims and objectives on the one hand, and the perceptions and developmental goals of society on the other.

University Education has an important role to play in nation – building even though; sadly, Ugandan politicians, like their colleagues elsewhere in Africa, seem to be pre-occupied with manipulating the emotions, ignorance and perceptions of society to build political capital, instead of building the nation. Education, according to Passi (1996) is vital in the answering of fundamental questions related to the development of the nation such as what the basic needs of the people are, how health services, appropriate agricultural technology and basic education can be more effectively brought to the people in the rural areas. How can values pertaining to a democratic society, the primacy of the Country's constitution, and an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of the citizens be best taught? The implications of these questions and possible answers to them are that the role of the University Education Manager is pivotal to sustainable National Development.

The University Education system must change its curriculum when society changes. Once the society demands change the content of the programmes for the various courses must change too. The study findings indicate that Uganda Martyrs University's Steadfastness in this regard is quite impressive. To fit in the global village, the Uganda Government must forge partnerships with universities to modify the National Development Plans in accordance with global trends. This ought to be done in such a way that the disadvantages of globalization such as the contagion of the example of global moral decadence are minimized while the advantages of the ICT revolution are maximized. Today, Africans have lost their pride and self esteem. They have left no stone unturned in their attempt to emulate everything West European. The self-respecting Africans whom Mungo Park, Speke, and Grant met in the 18th Century have become endangered species. University Education for Development ought to reverse this phenomenon. During the 16th Celebrations of the founding of UMU at Nkozi the Guests were treated to an unforgettable integrated cultural performance by the students that made a strong statement not only about the importance of African Culture but also the need for unity in diversity. That is the way things should be. It is claimed that University Education has a big role to play in liberating the citizens from the vicious cycle of ignorance, poverty, dependence, diseases, indignity and in building a self–reliant and self–sustaining economy. If that is the case, then the University Education curricula must be made relevant to National Development. It must be of high quality and be universally acclaimed even though custom–tailored to the National Development needs of the country. University Education must inculcate a positive attitude towards the kind of change that

the society demands. Since leadership and good governance are significant and pertinent factors for overcoming what Paul Collier (2007) called the Four Development Traps, namely, the conflict trap, the natural resource trap, the trap of bad governance and the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbours, university curricula should focus on these areas.

CONCLUSION
The kind of University education given by a particular society is determined by the social, cultural, theological and National Development needs of that society. But, those needs change according to the contingencies of the situation. This implies that society is never static but is dynamic. University Education too must be dynamic, relevant and in tandem with sustainable National Development Goals as well as the needs of society. Not all that society demands though is worthy and the work of the University Education Manager is to moderate those oblique societal demands.

Whereas Plato saw education as developing the body and the soul of all perfection, which the two are capable of, Socrates his teacher and mentor, perceived education as performing the function of dispelling error and discovering the truth. Truth and honesty are essential tools in evaluating and fostering sustainable National Development. Truth, however, is conspicuous by its general absence in partisan politics and in the traits of the politicians who manage National Development Plans. As observed by Olweny (2008), University Education must strive to inculcate a culture of intellectual and political honesty in the Country's future Leaders by sensitizing students to good governance, peace and justice issues.

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