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External forces, funding of universities

I have Ofwono Opondos's article, *Makerere, let's return to the basics,* in the *New Vision* of November 20, and Mukwanason Hyuha's *A reaction to Prof. Mamdani's Makerere* (*New Vision*, November 24, 2016). Both disagree with Mamdani's assertion that external financial forces, particularly led by the World Bank, adversely impacted on Makerere's funding and share part of the blame for the predicament of what Makerere is in today.

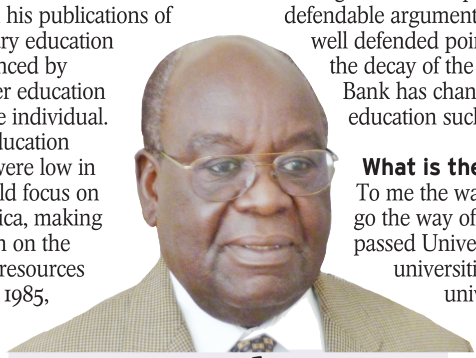
It is true that while the financial collapse of the African state in the 1970s can be blamed for the intervention of the IMF and World Bank into Africa's financial affairs from the 1980s to the late 2000s, the policies of these external financial institutions had a devastating impact on higher education funding in Africa, Uganda included. However, since the publication of their reports: *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril or Promise (2000), Constructing Knowledge societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education (2003) and Accelerating Catch-Up: Tertiary Education for Growth in sub-Saharan Africa* (2008), the World Bank has become more friendly to funding higher education in Africa. But its past lending behavior to African education has had a lasting behavioral trend on African education administrators. Ministry of Education bureaucrats who implemented the banks' neoliberal policies behave as if they still have the view that the primacy of primary education funding means financing primary education at the expense of higher education.

The coincidence of the near collapse of the Uganda state from the 1970s to the 1980s and the rise of neoliberal ideas that stress the market instead of the state as the determinant of human actions explain the underfunding of higher education in Uganda. Supporters of market models assert that the market rather than the state should finance social services, including education. Market models regard education as commodities for sale and educational institutions as merchants selling educational products. According to Campbell and Pederson, (2001) this neo-liberal view is based on the assumption that since education benefits the individual, it is a private good which must, therefore, be paid for by the consumer. World Bank's consultant economists such as George Psacharopoulos articulated in his publications of 1980 pointed out that public returns on primary education were higher than on higher education. Influenced by Thatcherites and Reaganite economists, higher education was viewed as a commodity that benefited the individual. These economists argued that since higher education benefited private individuals and its returns were low in comparison to basic education, the state should focus on the primary sector. Privatisation, and for Africa, making students and parents pay for higher education on the other hand was believed to lead to increased resources for higher education. According to Hinchliffe, 1985, Banya and Elu, 2001, at a meeting in Harare, African vice chancellors were asked if it would not be proper to close African universities and African students go abroad for higher studies, which, fortunately, they refused to do. The World Bank reduced spending on higher education. In the period 1985 – 1989, the Bank spent only 17% of its worldwide education expenditure on higher education. In the period 1995-1999, this was reduced to 7%. Higher education was considered a luxury and enormous financial cuts in a number of African countries weakened the African university. According to the 2008 World Bank report, Accelerating Catch-Up: Tertiary Education for Growth in sub-Saharan Africa, page xxvii, public expenditure per student fell from $6,800 in 1980 to $1,200 in 2002 and averaged $981 in thirty-three African countries. Later on, these multilateral institutions took the view that African universities should focus on training graduates needed by the market. Local experts were drafted into the school of thought of the exclusive primacy of primary education. In a 1989 MUASA seminar, A. Tibarimbasa reproduced World Bank arguments that the private returns on primary education are always higher than those of higher education, more so in Africa than in other parts of the world (Tibarimbasa, 1989). The 1989 Education Policy Review Commission (the Kajubi Report on pages 19,78,161,163-4, 169) recommended more emphasis on primary education. The 1989 Economic Policy Review was also of the same opinion. The Commission (Kajubi Report), therefore, called for more allocation of resources to basic education with over 70% to the primary level. The 1992 Government White Paper also proposed the same allocations of resources and gave a timetable. Thus in the period 1998/9 to 2007/8, the share of the primary section averaged 2.40%, Secondary 0.58%, BTVET 0.21% and tertiary 0.37% as a percentage of GDP. Ministry of Education officials, backed by international donors, have been unwilling to alter these distribution levels to enhance university capacities.

If the Structural adjustment conditionalities were relaxed on university funding, and higher education regarded as a necessary public good, Makerere might have been allocated more funds and the institution might not have implemented components of neoliberal policies from 1992/3 as Hyuha mentions in his article.

It would be a mistake to put all the blame for the rot of the African university on external forces. But it will be equally wrong to deny its part in accelerating the rote like the Holocaust deniers would of the murder of more than six million innocent people. The failure of the post-colonial African state to stabilise lies at the root of the decay of our institutions. From the 1970s to the 2000s, the African state weakened to a point of collapse. Years of mismanagement by military and authoritarian regimes adversely impacted on universities. The African university lost any of its autonomy it had under colonialism. Government nationalisation of higher education made the African university a government institution governed as one of the state's departments.

But it is wrong to forget History lest we repeat its mistakes. History does not repeat itself except to those unwilling to learn from the past. This debate on the university Uganda needs as an engine of development should be based on facts, data and defendable arguments. I think Mamdani made very clear and well defended points of a historical nature that have influenced the decay of the university we need. Fortunately, the World Bank has changed and is funding key areas of higher education such as centres of excellence.



Tanzania and Kenya passed university Acts that detached university management from the state

What is the way forward?

To me the way forward is very clear. Uganda should go the way of Tanzania and Kenya which, respectively, passed University Acts in 2005 and 2012, detaching universities from state management, separating universities from other tertiary institutions, chartering all public universities and creating public university grants committees (within the higher education regulatory agency in case of Tanzania) to receive from multiple sources funds and distribute them to public universities. Through its charter, each public university negotiated a relationship with the state and the state was saved from constant irritations of being seen as owner and administrator of universities. As long as the state is seen, and perceived to be owner and manager of the university, university communities will target the government through strikes and activisms. This is what some Makerere social groups are doing. Neither the state, nor the parents, nor foreign donors can individually fund universities. But a combination of them all can. They can never get all the money they need when they are run as "state institutions" responding to bureaucratic red tape.

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Rukia Nakamatte

Let us embrace net distribution campaign

As we drive our country towards a desired malaria-free Uganda by 2020, we need to remind ourselves that countries that have managed to eradicate the disease started by putting the general public at the forefront of the struggle.

South Africa, Namibia and Swaziland attest to the participation of the general population as having led the struggle. We, as the health ministry, have borrowed a leaf from such countries as we fight to reduce death and illness due to malaria. According to the recent Uganda Malaria Indicator Survey, malaria accounts for 30%-50% of outpatient visits and 15%-20% of hospital admissions in the country.

It is upon this background that we have channelled our energies to empowering the population with not only information, but also with the necessary ammunition to be able to lead the battle towards a malaria free-country. The provision of drugs at health facilities remains a core mandate of the Government. Additionally, drugs will be available now with the new government strategy of rolling out the Integrated Case Management for Malaria in more districts. With this, Village Health Teams (VHTs) will distribute anti-malaria drugs. The Indoor Residue Spraying exercise in selected districts continues to take place.

And now, the light at the end of the elimination tunnel seems to beam brighter. The Government has additionally intensified efforts to increase access to and use of Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLIN) through mass distribution campaigns. Three years ago in 2013/2014, we undertook the first Universal Coverage Campaign where 21.5 million nets were distributed throughout the country, protecting over 35 million Ugandans. This hence increased net coverage and protection of Ugandans against malaria. It is no wonder that the incidence has tremendously gone down.

According to the recent Uganda malaria Indicator Survey, Malaria accounts for 30%-50% of all outpatient visits

To sustain the gains achieved in the previous campaigns and improve areas of net utilisation and retention, we are now undertaking yet another National Universal Coverage Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLINs) distribution campaign starting next month. The campaign, dubbed *"Lyemo Malaria – Sleep under a mosquito net"* is coined because of the one-year epidemic in northern Uganda. The campaign aims to ensure that 85% of targeted populations have access to a LLIN and 85% of all nets distributed are fully utilised.

Under this campaign, one mosquito net will be given per two people in the household as per the World Health Organisation Universal coverage definition. The distribution process will be guided by the Government structures, majorly at the local governments. The campaign will be phased in eight waves across the country beginning in December. We shall start from the region hit hardest with the malaria burden and end in Kampala and Wakiso, both of which have the lowest burden.

With the mosquito nets now available in the community, it is now the responsibility of the general public to ensure that the nets are used correctly and effectively. It is our humble appeal to ensure the following in order to get the Government free net;

- Register for the net when a VHT comes to your household. No person will receive a net if not registered.
- Sleeping under a mosquito net every night protects you – so sleep under a mosquito net every night.
- These mosquito nets should be used throughout the year, even when there are fewer mosquitoes, for example, during the dry season
- Remember to take good care of your mosquito net by keeping it clean and sewing any holes.

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