

Thematic Curriculum, Role of Parents, and Quality of Primary Education: A Governance Challenge for the Anglican Church of Uganda

Musana I. Samson
St. Paul's University

Abstract

This scholarly article examines the quality of rural based primary education among the Anglican Church founded primary schools in Uganda, tracing the trends of church-government-parents involvement from the time formal education was introduced in Uganda by European Christian missionaries. The paper displays the governance challenges experienced by the Anglican Church in the implementation process of thematic curriculum that are contributing to the poor quality of primary education. To examine the trends of formal education in Uganda, historical-critical hermeneutical methodological approach that focuses on understanding humanistic literary works was relied on. Results show that: a) Anglican Christian leadership is incapacitated to manipulate local resources to sustain education programmes established on religious lands; b) lack of teacher training in local language classroom management is a pivotal challenge demotivating teachers; c) local language curriculum is written in English which makes it hard for teachers to translate and interpret certain concepts; d) guiding books and phonetic charts that accompany the local language curriculum are in short supply; e) children transiting from local languages to English languages is a serious struggle. Teachers who handle lower primary classes are trained differently from those who handle transition and upper classes; f) class rooms are crowded and this has resulted into high teacher pupil ratio. Big numbers of learners have made it hard for teachers to focus on the unique learning needs of each pupil; and g) non-committal behaviour of parents to the education needs of their children is a serious setback. It is recommended that the Anglican Church of Uganda that is well structured with leadership councils takes the lead in promoting quality education among rural based government aided primary schools established on their religious lands. In addition, the Directorate of Education rolls out a Provincial Newsletter annually detailing academic performances of primary schools in their custody.

Key Words: Missionary, Curriculum, Church, Education, Government

Introduction

Education is the key to unlocking the vocational potential of mankind in any pluralistic society. When young people are equipped with academic skills and in turn utilize their competences to profitably to add value to society, then communities attain states of socio-economic sufficiency. Accordingly, this paper examines the governance challenges experienced by the Anglican Church in the implementation process of the thematic curriculum. The challenges associated with deteriorated quality of primary education are highlighted. The solutions that the Anglican church of Uganda can rely on to overcome the setbacks have been theorised. This study utilizes

the historical-critical hermeneutical methodological approach that focuses on understanding humanistic literary works (Palmer, 1969, pp.7-10) to examine the trends of formal education in Uganda.

1. Historical Trends of Formal Education in Uganda

Before the introduction of formal education in Uganda, the science of observation that involves use of human sensory systems was the orality mode of knowledge: initiation, implementation, innovation, and transfer. Informal education was the cultural medium utilised by kingdom and chiefdom leaderships to pass on innovative skills to the next generation. Young people learned from their superiors. Initiation ceremonies were among the life transition knowledge transfer points. Specialized knowledge such as medical therapy, hunting, business transactions, and marital management skills were passed on informally by gifted community experts (Hanson, 2010, pp.157-158).

The coming of European Christian missionaries in 1886 spearheaded introduction of formal education (Web Solutions, 2023). The methodology that European missionaries used to translate indigenous languages that they encountered for the first time into English language is a mystery that is scanty to trace in African literary sources. It is recorded that the first encounter of Henry Morton Stanley with the leadership of Buganda Kingdom resulted into a document that was published in the Daily Telegraph in England inviting missionaries to come to Uganda (Ward, 2024). The extent the letter was written in English language by the Kabaka is a question to ponder on. However, given the fact that the Buganda kingdom leadership had early encounters with European explorers and Arab merchants, it is likely that the Swahili and Arabic literacy skills they had acquired helped them to craft the letter (Brierley & Spear, 1988, p.602). On the other hand, some people are naturally gifted with multilingual skills, it is possible that the Kabaka administration interconnected with foreigners using symbolic language expressions that then were translated into English language (Sohn, 2012). Without doubt, in the business of multilingual mingling, missionaries related well with indigenous people who supported them as hosts, guides, and interpreters. It is then that such people became the first recipients of European formal education (New Vision, 2012).

The period running from 1886 to 1918 witnessed amoebic sprouting of education institutions manned by the Anglican and the Roman Catholic religious organisations. Adults and young people attended schools built at missionary stations that were well equipped and supported by external funding. Formal education benefited children of tribal chiefs, clergy, and the aristocracy. Everywhere Christianity spread, so did formal education (Web Solutions, 2023).

The secondary phase of formal education development produced indigenous tributary learning centres. Every place where Christianity occupied space, native village schools overseen by local church councils were instituted. Native Church council leadership devised strategies whereby community chiefs hosted teachers who had been trained at missionary stations. In 1896, Anglican Church of Uganda had 725 native teachers who in turn equipped 60,000 people all over the country with reading, writing, and basic numeracy skills; and biblical knowledge. By 1937, 5,673 village schools had been established through local initiatives and were feeding 227,996 learners (Hanson, 2010, pp.156-160).

Indigenous people embraced European formal education. They donated land on which temporary school structures were established. They offered free labour in the construction of community schools. Parents met scholastic needs of their children, they supported teachers with food hand-outs, and they paid school fees to cater for the stipends of teachers. Church council leadership mobilised finances locally to supplement on teacher's wages. Native church council leadership support towards teachers was twice the grant given to teachers who were on government pay role. The administrative management of village schools were entirely in the hands of local church councils until 1909 when the Protectorate government reverted taxes paid by teachers to mission stations. The mission stations used government funds to improve on the infrastructural set up of school learning environments (Hanson, 2010, pp.156-160).

When Uganda became a British protectorate in 1894, English language became legalised as the official commercial language. Missionary activities, formal education, and governance programmes were conducted in English language to the disadvantage of indigenous people who needed interpreters to understand foreign language concepts (Here in Uganda, 2022).

European formal education replaced African knowledge mining. African knowledge quest that perceives the universe as energized with spirits that interconnect to produce life energy was regarded as primitive and replaced with Eurocentric worldview that perceives the universe as a world of atoms and quarks. The first African knowledge recipients of Europeanized education shook off their indigenous identities. They jumped on the European civilization ferryboat to send to abyss African language thought patterns. The years preceding 1930 witnessed mass intellectual exodus of Africans who left the primitive land of intellectual slavery and crossed over to Eurocentric intellectual Paradise (Hanson, 2010, pp.162-163)

2. Thematic Curriculum in Uganda

As formal education engagement programmes progressed, increasing numbers of indigenous people became trained as teachers and in turn they became influential at transliterating European language concepts into indigenous languages. European concepts that had no space in African languages retained Europeanized sounds that were coloured with African accents. Subsequently, English became a language of pride for the African elites. To speak English fluently meant an African was intellectually bright and was at the cutting edge to interact with business elites locally and overseas. Many people looked forward to have their children attain Europeanised education. Europeanised education meant abandoning indigenous knowledge transfer methods and dressing up in foreign academic intellectual attires (Hanson, 2010, pp.162-163; Web Solutions, 2023).

However, to the education specialists of that time, formal education needed to flow from people's innate traditions, so was the need to develop 'thematic curriculum' – curriculum that is indigenous knowledge transfer contextualised. Research that had been carried out from 160 language groups indicated that when people attain intellectual knowledge wrapped in the framework of their indigenous language concepts, they are able to manipulate their native resources to move towards socio-economic sufficiency (Tumwebaze, 2013, p.7).

Accordingly, to examine the challenges associated with conducting education in foreign languages in Uganda, Phelps-Stokes Commission was flagged off in 1924. In their report, the commission highlighted that: a) it is crucial to promote native African languages as this would provide a lay way to preserve people's social traditions and promote patriotism; b) Languages are inherent and therefore it is important to aid people to express their personalities in their milk

suckled languages; and c) Education must underpin the cultural language expressions of people to enable them evolve to higher intellectual levels and overcome social injustices (Tumwebaze, 2016, p.3).

The Phelps-Stokes Commission report resulted into the implementation of the thematic curriculum and the Luganda language took the centre stage. This was so, because the Baganda were the hosts and the first recipients of European civilization. Luganda became the language of evangelism; the Bible and European hymns were transliterated into Luganda; and Luganda became the language of curriculum instruction among the Bantu speaking groups. To other Ugandan tribes, English language was fronted as the medium of curriculum instruction in schools. As the Bantu speaking communities progressed intellectually, other tribes developed at a snail speed (Nankindu, 2020).

To enforce usage of local languages in schools, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in September 1953 published a report detailing the significance of local language instruction in education curriculum. The key issues documented in the report were: a) it is through indigenous languages that human beings think, innovate, and express themselves; b) human beings are born in cultural environments that influence their language expression outputs; and c) use of foreign languages in education institutions makes it difficult for learners to master alien vocabularies and as such, it becomes difficult for individuals to express their own ideas (UNESCO, 1953, p.47).

In agreement with UNESCO, in their administrative order papers, the British government in Uganda recommended use of indigenous languages in primary schools during the first three years of schooling and then English language to be introduced as a subject during the fourth year of primary education. Local languages were to be continuous mediums of instructions in education institutions (Nankindu, 2020). However, Uganda being a multilingual society; with over 50 ingenious languages grouped into four: Kuliak, Nilotic, Bantu and Central Sudanic (Here in Uganda, 2022); enforcement of local languages became difficult and as such were relegated among optional subjects to be taught in schools. Subsequently, English language remained a medium of instruction in all teaching areas besides being a compulsory subject (Here in Uganda, 2022).

3. Quality of Primary Education in Uganda

Compulsory enforcement of English language gave space to the British government to exercise commercial control over schools, thus, expatriates built classrooms, European tailored instructional materials were supplied, and bursaries were offered to bright students to increase mercantile consumer force. The colonial governance impact was highly felt during 1950s and 1960s. All education programmes and appointment of teachers were in the hands of religious institutions. The colonial government aided in funding education programmes but did not play a direct role in management and administration of schools (Mujaju, 1976, pp.68-69). The school administrators were under the supervision of church leadership. Schools accessed extra funding from parents and donor communities (Kjær & Muwanga, 2016, p.9).

After independence, education flourished for a little while but the emergence of political parties founded by students from the three religious backgrounds – Anglican, Catholic, and Islam influenced the tides of education services in Uganda. Interreligious hatred caused discrimination in the employment sector. To overcome the ugliness of religious imbalances, the government abolished religious supervisors and took over the management of schools. However, private bodies were allowed to conduct education programmes within the confinement of the law. The intention of Government was to promote education as a vital tool for influencing patriotic consciousness among young people as compared to religious indoctrination approaches. But then, religious institutions retained their rights as founders of schools and constructive religious expression freedom was granted to every Ugandan (Muhumuza, 2018, pp.4-10, 27-28).

When schools became nationalised, the roles of religious leaders in decision making were undermined. The government politicised education, they claimed that they had the capacity to finance, administer, monitor and ensure provision of quality education for all (Kjær & Muwanga, 2016, p.9). When civil wars erupted, European expatriates and local teachers fled from the country and the burden of education of children was left in the hands of untrained teachers. The education sector experienced a manpower vacuum (Snel, 2024, pp.1-3).

The postcolonial period witnessed a decline in the academic performance of young people. Missionaries who had been the architect of financial sustainability of educational institutions had left. The Government, which had taken over education programmes was unable to steer equitable

education for all Ugandans. Academic performance among rural based schools was below acceptable standards. Similarly, the indigenous Christian leadership had a weak administrative mandate to manipulate local resources to sustain educational programmes that had been established on religious lands. Reluctantly, the local church leadership took a back seat. As a result, the costs associated with education became high (Ball, 2011).

By the closure of 1980, school age going children had increased and yet the available infrastructure was insufficient. Many children were taught under tree shades and in risky temporary structures. From 1986 onwards, reforms in the education sector came into force. Such reforms led to the introduction of Universal Primary Education (Snel, 2024, pp.1-3).

Children from poor households massively enrolled to benefit from universal primary education. On the contrary, the middle and upper class earners sent their children to private schools. Due to mass enrolments, the education sector faced many challenges that affected the quality of primary education thus:

a) Use of Foreign Language: Scholars examined primary education performance trends and found out that use of English language as a medium of education curriculum instruction affected school enrolment and academic career success of children; illiterate parents were incapacitated to participate in their children's learning; and dropout rates of girls were high due to frequent repeating of classes (Ball, 2011).

Due to poor academic performance that was being experienced in primary schools and in line with international treaties that postulated that poor school academic performance is linked to failure to promote usage of local languages in schools as medium of instruction, Uganda legislated the local language policy and resurrected the 'Thematic Curriculum' in 2007. The promoters of the policy hypothesized that the high Ugandan illiteracy rates and academic failure rates at national exams were correlated with pupils' inability to attain literacy and numeracy skills in their mother tongue. The policy was enacted to instruct young learners in their local languages for better attainment of the basic skills of reading, writing, comprehension, speaking, and arithmetic; thus, skills that children appeared to be failing to attain when instructed under English tailored curriculum (Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors, 2023; Akurut, 2022; Tekeu, 2013).

Thematic curriculum targets pupils in rural areas enrolled in primary one up to primary three. Children studying in urban areas are exempted from thematic curriculum, it is urged that city social life is cosmopolitan. At the lower primary level, English is taught as a subject while the rest of the curriculum subjects are taught in local languages. Primary four is a transition class and by the time a child advances to primary five, all subjects are switched off from being taught in the local languages to English as the major medium of instruction (Ssentanda & Nakayiza, 2015).

To successfully promote local language education, a number of strategies were put in place. The interventions included: Creation of language boards, development of linguistic curriculum, motivation of local language writers and translators, pedagogy training of teachers, development of instructional materials, and language policy formulations to influence promotion of indigenous literacy skills (Tumwebaze, 2017, pp.1-9).

The assumptions promoted by the policy makers is that young human beings think and innovate within the context of their local languages. When people manipulate nature through their local language concepts, they move towards self-realization and progressive socio-economic transformation (Tumwebaze, 2017, pp.1-9). Such an assumption holds weight when people have commercial dreams beyond their boarders but for communities whose local languages have limited mercantile influence, it is hard for people to invest their intellectual energy to attain indigenous literacy skills.

Hanging on limp reasons, thematic curriculum is tilted to rural based primary schools. Children who attend private schools and those who go to schools located in urbanized communities are exempted. To the framers of the policy, private and urban schools are cosmopolitan and that makes it difficult to implement thematic curriculum (Asad, 2021, p.81). Such a shaky anomaly erases all the arguments the framers of thematic curriculum tagged to poor school performance. The double sided policy enforcement has created two classes of learners in the country, that is, a group that is infused with English from early school entry and the group that struggles to transit to English tailored subjects from primary four onwards.

To this end, the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) rated learners in 2018 from urban-rural and public-private schools and found out that the numeracy proficiency among

urban based learners was at 68.4 percent as compared to rural based learners at 51.2 percent. Next, privately owned schools were compared with government aided schools and it was found that literacy in English was at 83.3 percent while among learners in government schools it was at 44.2 percent. In addition, there were wider disparities in numeracy at 85.1 percent in private schools and 50.1 percent in government aided schools (Uganda National Examinations Board, 2018, pp.11-12).

Just like urban based primary schools, privately owned primary schools are exempted from implementing thematic curriculum. The assumption is that private schools accommodate children from different tribes and that makes it hard to single out a cross-cutting indigenous language. However, such a stance fails to respond to the concerns of the framers of thematic curriculum. Thematic curriculum then, might have been a business construct of some people to attract foreign funding.

In agreement with NAPE, UWEZO Uganda (2021, pp.12-29) report indicates that in the assessment time span between 2018 and 2021, the number of children who could not read alphabets in their native languages shot from 40.5 percent to 54.5 percent; reading skills in local languages were much lower as compared to English, subsequently, none reader children aged eight years increased from 32.8 percent to 50.7 percent; and the non-numerate increased from 22.4 to 31.3 percent.

Viewed from the above assessments, the visualised goals of thematic curriculum are holding a section of Ugandans in intellectual prison. At the apex of primary level transition to high school, children who study in rural-urban-private based primary schools are measured using the same yardstick. High school entry exams that capture taught concepts in all learning areas in primary three are examined in English language.

Even when English language and local languages have similar vowels and alphabets, word constructions are not the same. Construction of words in English are complex. Surprisingly, writing, reading, and speaking skills are independent aspects that have to be learned. I can speak a language fluently but to write and read it even when I'm an intellectual in English grammar, takes a lot of strength. Imagine, a rural-based child competing on the same footing with a child

studying from urban-private school settings where English language is more less a mother tongue!

Of course people dream, innovate, tongue twist, and think in their mother tongue (Khan, 2014). People derive prestige when they are identified by their tribes and clans and it is through one's cultural heritage that foundation stones are laid for an admirable future career success (Kioko, 2015). Without the innovativeness of cultural diversity, then this world would be a boring home for humanity. Reading and writing in a foreign language does not mean that my reasoning is Eurocentric per se. When I express myself in a foreign language, it is not an indication that I'm detached from my African identity.

When linguistic worldviews clash, the resultant outcome is incarnation of foreign language into the thought patterns of the host community. People are mistaken, I suppose, to think that my cultural formal language expression in a foreign language means that my thinking is colonised. To a certain extent they may be right but that is not true. I may not express myself in written form in my mother tongue but that does not mean that my everyday linguistic expressions documented in a foreign language are not African. I abide in the domain of my African ancestry. It is within my African mental domain that I tap into to attain new ideas and project my innovative thinking.

The arguments promoted by the framers of thematic curriculum that poor school performance of English language tailored exams is due to children's inability to acquire literacy and numeracy skills in their indigenous languages is a wishful intellectual reasoning. Subjecting young people to torturous attainment of literacy and numeracy skills in their mother tongue that are not commercialised is not cost effective in the current digital mercantile economy.

To make matters worse, thematic curriculum does not feature in pre-primary education. Urban based children who compete with their counter parts in rural areas are taught in English. Generally, to ensure equality, local languages would be enforced on uniform scale at all lower levels of learning. The common spoken language of a given urban community would override. A child acquiring skills in another local language is an added advantage for one to become multilingual. Children generally learn new languages very fast. The rational of exempting urban and private schools from implementing thematic curriculum is weightless and if not checked,

then two classes: the elite few and semi-literate majority are most likely to spout at the cost of destabilising national security.

On the other hand, even when there are learning materials that have been developed to enable learners master grammatical skills in their mother tongue, local languages are relegated to optional subjects to be taught. As such, the thematic curriculum appears not to be coloured with commercial gains to arouse the curiosity of learners. Even when mother tongue education has diverse outcomes in the academic lives of children, the story on the ground is the opposite. Ugandans do not support use of indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in primary schools (Tumwebaze, 2017, pp.1-9).

Since local languages are not examinable at primary level exit, people do not see the value of their children wasting their education years in the competitive environment where people who are well versed in English language trade well in the job market. To make matters worse, Uganda is an oral society, the opportunity for the linguistic writers to have their books published and consumed on a wide scale is limited (Tumwebaze, 2017, pp.10-11).

b) Infrastructure and human Resource motivation: Uganda government has invested a lot in ensuring that every school age child attains quality education. Grants to meet teachers' salaries, administrative costs, and infrastructural development are realised every year. In spite of the efforts of the government to fight illiteracy, children dropout before completion of their primary education in Uganda stands at 45 percent annually. Of the 1.7 million children enrolled every year, only 30 percent complete their primary education. Of those who complete primary level, half score failure grades that cannot enable them to be absorbed in post-primary academic institutions. School dropout rates are higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas (Nalunkuma, 2023; Busingye, 2021).

Several factors have been documented by scholars to be contributing to poor academic performance among school going children in Uganda, thus the household economic poverty that has made parents to engage their children in causal labour, teenage pregnancies with associated early marriages, and poor school environments that affect the motivational initiatives of teachers (Nalunkuma, 2023; Asad, 2021, p.79).

In addition: a) lack of teacher training in local language classroom management is a pivotal challenge demotivating teachers; b) local language curriculum is written in English which makes it hard for teachers to translate and interpret certain concepts; c) guiding books and phonetic charts that accompany the local language curriculum are in short supply; d) children transiting from local languages to English language is a serious struggle. Teachers who handle lower primary classes are trained differently from those who handle transition and upper classes; e) classrooms are crowded and this has resulted into high teacher-pupil ratio. Big numbers have made it hard for teachers to focus on the unique learning needs of each pupil; and f) non-committal behaviour of parents to the education needs of their children is a serious setback (Akello & Timmerman, 2018, pp.320-327).

In policy, education in Uganda is free after the launching of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1996. Demanding school fees from children attending government aided schools, is illegal and it attracts punitive measures (Kan & Klasen, 2020). However, parents have to contribute towards: school uniform, meals, food, transport, remedial lessons, weekly tests and supplementary fees to cater for infrastructural renovations. Such extra costs are easy go for people who derive their living in urban settings as compared to rural based peasants, who have been robbed of their dignity by politicians and taken on a lethargic mentality, to think that it is the duty of the government to meet all the educational needs of their children. Not all rural based parents are economically incapacitated. Many have God-given competences that if traded well, their skills can be traded to meet the educational needs of their children.

4. Role of Parents in the Education Development of their Children

Parents play significant roles in the education development of children. It is within the home setting that the foundations for lifelong learning are established. Many biblical scriptures inspire parents to influence child formal education. The most prominent biblical scripture is recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Israelite parents were implored to equip their children with intellectual skills. Within the text, there are instructions that parents are to adhere to if they are to shape the intellectual destinies of their children, thus:

a) Teach Children Intellectual Life Skills (Deuteronomy 6:7): Household heads were to use life transition intellectual formation curriculum, making use of all available learning materials in

their surroundings – visual, audio, role models, comedies; and techniques – exposures, music, tours, etc., to inculcate intellectual life skills in their children. Children were the future leaders, hence failing to deposit in them the rightful character formation skills meant harvesting a disastrous tomorrow.

Parents are supposed to play the roles of teachers using all possible techniques to ensure that intellectual formation transition learning takes place in the lives of their children. They are to ensure that they have a well-stocked family library, instructional materials are in plenty, and children are intelligibly exposed to hands on learning encounters. Digital educational tools like cartoons, creative child-friendly music and comedies can be invested in by parents to meet the educational development needs of children in a home setting.

b) Teach Children using Symbolic Artistic Displays (Deuteronomy 6:8): Education development strands were to be reflected in visual symbolic expressions that were meant to keep on cracking the intellectual mindsets of children to focus on their purpose in society. Scholarly works highlight that symbols are reminders of deep realities of life. As young people interact with them, they are inspired to pursue their life goals with unwavering determination (Humphreys, 2021).

If Christian parents are to influence the education destinies of their children, then home environments need to be strategically iconized with brightly decorated symbols that display successful local community role models, African heroes, and wisdom African tales. Iconized displays would stir the inquisitive minds of young people to figure out their space in the intellectual global economy.

c) Teach Children using Incidental Visual Displays (Deuteronomy 6:9): The Israelites were encouraged to scribble incidental words and have them displayed in viewable sites of their home environments. These were meant to quicken the learning process of children and to also act as visual reminders to the Israelites about the realities of their moral obligations to society.

Studies show that multisensory visual displays modulate attention in infants and quicken learning in adults when they are strategically established in a learning environment (Broadbent, et al., 2018). Therefore, if parents are to shape the spiritual mindsets of young people, incidental learning spots ought to be littered on home compounds, on the gates, in the sitting rooms, and on

the walls of family buildings so as to stimulate the intellectual learning acumens of young people.

Viewed from the biblical perspectives, child intellectual nurture is a cardinal mandate of committed parents. Wrapped within children are innate competences that if well nurtured, then, the futuristic wellbeing of society blossoms. Nevertheless, child intellectual nurturing can be possible when parents are equipped with essential teaching skills and they have substantial resources to support the educational progression of their children.

Digital intellectual nourishment tools like cartoons, creative child-friendly music, and comedies, educational tours, and setting up bright nurturing environments need substantial chunks of money. At family level, it might be parents with reasonable sources of income, who can, with less strain, meet the educational development needs of their children. Nevertheless, the nurturing process can be quicker, if rich parents, during their infancy years, were nurtured with similar programmes.

On the other hand, financially incapacitated parents are most likely to be of low education and that may affect them to engage with scholarly works that can help them to attain knowledge on the best ways of shaping the educational outlook of their children. Needless to say, there are committed parents who cannot be bogged down by low levels of education and financial scarcity, such parents interact with well-to-do parents, charity organisations, and community self-help groups. The social capital encounters they cocktail themselves with enable them to acquire skills to manipulate resources within their surroundings to raise income to meet the educational needs of their children.

To the painful extreme, it is lazy, hostile and unfocused parents who are disastrous to the educational needs of their children. They get involved in risky lifestyles. They neglect, abandon, and brutalize their children. Children who are products of hostile parents drop out of school and if they persist with their studies, they perform poorly in class. Scholarly works infer that a negligible number of maltreated children from hostile households attain academic vocational success (Romano, et al., 2015, pp. 418-419).

5. Anglican Church Governance of Primary Schools in Uganda

The Anglican Diocese of Uganda, curved from the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa, became operational in 1897. From 1924 onwards, several dioceses were created. Currently, there are 36 dioceses that make up the Anglican Church of Uganda, 600 Archdeaconries, 4,000 Parishes, and 25,000 sub-parish churches (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, pp.3-6).

In addition ... Church of Uganda has founded and established 1200 pre-primary schools, 5118 Primary Schools, 460 Secondary schools, 14 Theological Colleges, 6 Universities, and 50 other tertiary institutions of learning (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, pp.3-6).

The Church of the Province of Uganda is a member church of the Anglican Communion headed by an Archbishop. The composition of the Anglican Communion is sub-divided into: House of Bishops, House of clergy, and House of laity. House of clergy and laity transact businesses at diocesan hierarchical levels. Each of the 36 dioceses are headed by a Bishop. Each Diocese is divided into Archdeaconries, headed by a Senior Priest. The Archdeaconries are further subdivided into Parishes headed by a Parish Priest. Parishes are subdivided into sub-parishes headed by a Lay Reader. At each church pastoral administrative level, there are management committees (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, p.6).

The Anglican Church of Uganda has maintained the administrative structure handed down by the missionaries and this has made it easy to maintain discipline among Christians and to uphold orderly accountability in the preservation of church resources. Household census conducted in 2014, revealed that people subscribing to Anglican Christian faith were 10,941,268 out of the Ugandan population of 34,124,155 (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, pp.8-10).

The amoebic multiplication of the church worship space and social infrastructures kick-started by missionaries is still ongoing. Anglicanism, coloured with ancient traditions, has found a residence at every local village of Uganda. Anglican church founded primary schools located in urban centres are performing excellently but rural-based primary schools are listed annually among the worst national performers in the primary leaving examinations by the Uganda National Examinations Board. In addition, the school dropout rate is too high and above the national average in rural areas where the Anglican Church owns a lion's share of government-

aided primary schools in Uganda. There are acute shortages of classroom facilities, poor water supply, and lack of conducive sanitation coverage (Nyana, et al, 2019, p.9).

The poor academic performance among rural-based primary schools though theorised by scholars to be influenced by factors that are government-teacher-parent related, the greatest challenge of the age is the minimal manipulation of resources within reach by the church leadership who have thinly played their priestly community engagement roles. The church is God's agent of social transformation on earth but the leadership has abducted their stewardship responsibilities and relegated financial energizing of schools to government. Though politicians antagonize church initiatives, the gentle divine voice of the church that influences Christians to engage in church worship environment constructions and alms-giving to support the welfare needs of clergy, cannot be stopped.

Nonetheless, progressive clergy community engagement voices flow from leadership guts that are visionary, focused, intellectually enlightened, and have well cultivated competence skills in strategic planning, partnerships, resource mobilisation, project implementation, programme monitoring and evaluation, financial management, and above all a servant leadership attitude to offer the best to society at the cost of avoiding to bask in the temporary abode of priestly prestige.

To engage the Christian community in supporting the education needs of children, the Anglican Church of Uganda has a tributary Directorate of Education that supervises church funded educational institutions to promote holistic education services. It is holistic in the sense that children are meant to be empowered with: spiritual skills to relate with their creator, vocational skills to become economically self-sufficient, health skills to be physically healthy, and social capital building skills to relate with others peacefully (Kakooza, 2015).

The Directorate of Education seems to be concentrated on urban-based primary schools as compared to the rural-based schools. The innovative activities that would feed parents, teachers, struggling children, and church leaderships are not felt on the ground. Years roll by without a Provincial Newsletter trickling from the top to sub-parish churches detailing the strengths that yielded positive results among urban based primary schools, weaknesses that need to be worked

on, threats that need to be avoided, and unfolding opportunities to be manipulated to better the education standards of rural based primary schools.

If the Provincial Directorate of Education has well documented goodwill to promote academic excellence among rural-based church founded primary schools, then such vital information is being consumed at high church management levels and probably shelved from the lower church leaderships. After all, it is the duty of government to influence quality education for all.

The Anglican Church of Uganda is well structured. The local church leadership councils pay canonical allegiance to high priestly offices. It is such leadership structures that if well engaged can influence quality education among rural-based primary schools. The grassroots church groupings fall into three major categories that conference in big numbers every year, thus:

a) Youth and Children Ministry: These are teenage school-going children, high school students, college students, and young graduates. In their specialized groups, they meet during school holidays to: engage in theologically-sound debates to influence behavioural change; to participate in games, sports, skits, poems, music, and drama to encourage talent development; and to listen to the successful stories of community role models.

Infrastructure in terms of classroom space and teacher's residences is among the setbacks pointed out by scholars affecting quality primary education. Vast lands occupied by the Anglican Church of Uganda, unlike mountainous places, are endowed with clay soils. The resources needed in the process of brick baking are readily available. The digging and preparation of the soils when done by experts much earlier, young people can be resourceful at moulding, drying, and assembling bricks ready to be baked. It is uncertain whether the youthful resourceful force is being utilized to raise construction materials for schools. If it were so, then, incidences of class room congestion and inadequate housing for teachers would not be a story to be echoed by scholars.

b) Father's Union: Father's Union is a composition of Anglican Christian men who play the roles of father figures. They hold seminars once year to: reflect on their marital relationships; acquire parenting skills; and be educated about the rule of law, issues of health, investment strategies, and nutrition. A ritualistic voice of a diocesan Bishop requesting each man to

contribute one bag of cement, one iron bar, one iron sheet, a desk, and a kilogram of nails each year, towards infrastructural development of primary schools cannot be rejected. Besides contributions of construction materials, there are men who are brick layers, metal fabricators, painters, and carpenters who can volunteer their time to engage in manual construction works. Similarly, there are well positioned men in society with substantial incomes who can contribute reasonably. The extent at which priestly ecclesiastical mandates are being utilized to improve infrastructural development of rural based Anglican church founded primary schools in Uganda is a pastoral headache to mediate.

c) Mothers' Union: Mother's Union is a body that incorporates all mother figures. Just like fathers, they meet once a year to look into the affairs of their marital relationships and parenting roles; attain family nutrition, sanitation, and hygiene management skills; and acquire enterprise management skills. Mothers are empathetic nurturers. Their abilities to influence community mothers to adopt to new changes cannot be underestimated. Wrapped within their feminine software is a trait of social capital building and empathetic identification with struggling people (Komisar, 2017). It is such traits that can be manipulated by religious leaders to inspire mothers to partner with teachers and get involved in the education needs of their children. Teachers in rural based primary schools are inadequately remunerated and facilitated as compared to those in urban-private based primary schools. The everyday prickly challenges have affected their abilities to offer quality services to children.

When well mobilized, mothers can each contribute an agreed amount of food hand-outs once every school term to support teachers' welfare needs. In the same line, the church leadership can ensure that commercial plants that yield incomes in the short-medium-long term of a given geographical locality are ritualized; say two plants of cassava, are grown at every mother's homestead. Such crops when harvested, assembled by the Mother's Union leadership, and sold in bulk; proceeds can be wired to supplement the teacher's welfare needs.

The population of learners grows every year and so does the need for learning space and to have more volunteer and government paid teachers on board. The Government is stretched beyond measure and cannot solve all the needs of the society. Even if the church leadership was to rely on external funding to run school programmes, such an approach can create dependency and

lethargic mentality. Free hand-outs make people to fold their hands and they become motionless to manipulate their local resources. Donors cannot keep on babysitting communities for decades. Certainly, some urban schools are donor-funded and people who take their children to private schools have walked out of free hand-outs dependency mentalities.

In a nutshell, primary schools that are registering excellent performance have taken great strides at motivating parents to engage in the education process of their children. It is such strides that the Anglican Church leadership ought to navigate and make use of the resources within reach.

Conclusion

Formal education was introduced in Uganda to enable indigenous people translate their orality knowledge transfer methods into modes that could be preserved and transmitted to benefit many, where in most cases at a mercantile cost. The initial stages during the British colonial period, with associated setbacks, registered success. The church played the cardinal role as the custodian of formal education. When the post-colonial conquest set in, education among rural based schools declined. Insufficient school infrastructure, poor academic performance, increasing school dropouts, and inadequate remuneration of teachers are the outcries. The situation gets worse with every year that unfolds even when several intervention measures are being mitigated by education players to contain the situation. Under such prevailing situations, the question to ponder on is: to what extent can the Mother of formal education in Uganda – the Anglican Church leadership manipulate resources within reach to influence quality education among rural based primary schools?

References

Akello, L. D. & Timmerman, M. C. G. (2018). *Local language, a medium of instruction: Challenges and Way Forward*. Educational Action Research, 26:2, 314-332. Retrieved from
https://ir.umu.ac.ug/bitstream/handle/20.500.12280/1443/Akello_Article_Educ_2017_Local.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y

Akurut, T. (2022). *Is the Thematic Curriculum still relevant?* Retrieved from
<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/is-the-thematic-curriculum-still-relevant--3764466>

Asad, K. W. (2021). *Primary and Secondary Education in Uganda: Challenges and Prospects*. Interdisciplinary Journal of Education, Vol. 4, No. 1, May 2021. Retrieved from <https://journals.iuiu.ac.ug/index.php/ije/article/download/56/59/187>

Ball, J. (2011). *Children Learn Better in Their Mother Tongue*. Retrieved from <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/children-learn-better-their-mother-tongue>

Brierley, J. & Spear, T. (1988). *Mutesa, the Missionaries, and Christian Conversion in Buganda*. The International Journal of African Historical Studies, 1988, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1988), pp. 601-618. Boston University African Studies Center. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/219743>

Broadbent, J. H., White, H., Mareschal, D. & Kirkham, Z. N. (2018). *Incidental learning in a multisensory environment across childhood*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5873275/>

Busingye, C. (2021). *Government to Change Primary National Assessment*. Retrieved from <https://www.educationvision.co.ug/govt-to-change-primary-national-assessment/>

Hanson, H. E. (2010). *Indigenous Adaptation: Uganda's Village Schools, ca. 1880–1937*. Comparative Education Review, Vol. 54, No. 2 (May 2010), pp. 155-174. The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Comparative and International Education Society. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1086/651932.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa3f362344da7544f5438d9a5b06f3109&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1

Here in Uganda. (2022). *What language do they speak in Uganda?* Retrieved from <https://hereinuganda.com/languages-spoken-in-uganda>

Humphreys, C. (2021). *The Significance of Signs and Symbols*. Retrieved from <https://www.hprweb.com/2021/01/the-significance-of-signs-and-symbols/#:~:text=Without%20Christian%20signs%2C%20our%20religion,or%20mystery%20of%20our%20faith>

Kakooza, P. (2015). *Directorate of Education*. Church of Uganda. Retrieved from <https://churchofuganda.org/about/departments/education/>

Kan, S. & Klasen, S. (2020). *Evaluating universal primary education in Uganda: School fee abolition and educational outcomes*. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/rode.12725>

Khan, M. T. (2014). *Education in Mother Tongue – A Children's Right*. Retrieved from <http://www.isaet.org/images/extraimages/P1214011.pdf>

Kioko, A. (2015). *Why schools should teach young learners in home language*. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/why-schools-should-teach-young-learners-home-language>

Kjær, A. M. & Muwanga, N. K. (2016). *Inclusion as political mobilisation: The political economy of quality education initiatives in Uganda*. ESID Working Paper No. 65. Retrieved from https://www.effective-states.org/wp-content/uploads/working_papers/final-pdfs/esid_wp_65_kjaer_muwanga.pdf

Komisar, E. (2017). *Are Mothers and Fathers Interchangeable? It's complicated*. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@EricaKomisarCSW/are-mothers-and-fathers-interchangeable-its-complicated-bdf8b0fe2935>

Muhumuza, N. (2018). *The Constitutionality of Religious Education in Uganda*. Retrieved from <https://repository.gchumanrights.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a0fd4548-e509-40c5-8391-92e54537fd/a/content>

Mujaju, A. B. (1976). *The Political Crisis of Church Institutions in Uganda*. African Affairs, Jan., 1976, Vol. 75, No. 298 (Jan., 1976), pp. 67-85. Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/721867>

Nalunkuuma, J. (2023). *Empowering Uganda's Youth through Education*. Retrieved from <https://nilepost.co.ug/news/166790/empowering-ugandas-youth-through-education#:~:text=School%20dropout%20rates%20in%20Uganda,out%20before%20completing%20their%20education>

Nankindu, P. (2020). *The History of Educational Language Policies in Uganda: Lessons from the Past*. American Journal of Educational Research. 2020, 8(9), 643-652. Retrieved from <https://pubs.sciepub.com/education/8/9/5/index.html>

New Vision. (2012). *Kabaka Mutesa I, the Father of Uganda's Formal Education*. Retrieved from https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1303394/kabaka-mutesa-father-uganda-formal-education

Ntagali, S. & Magezi, A. (2016). *The Church of Uganda Provincial Master Strategic Plan 2016 – 2025*. Retrieval from <https://churchofuganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Vision-2025-Web.pdf>

Nyana, F., Ssemmanda, E. & Okaka, W. (2019). *Primary School Management Practices for Effective Performance of Pupils in Uganda*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335653502_Primary_School_Management_Practices_forEffective_Performance_of_Pupils_in_Uganda

Palmer, E. R. (1969). *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. North Western University Press. Evanston

Romano, E., Babchishin, L., Marquis, R. & Fréchette, S. (2015). *Childhood Maltreatment and Educational Outcomes*. Trauma, Violence & Abuse, Vol. 16, No. 4 (October 2015), pp. 418-437. Sage Publications, Inc. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26638371>

Snel, S. B.V. (2024). *Education in Uganda*. Retrieved from
<https://www.studocu.com/row/document/kibabii-university/research/education-in-uganda/41058958>

Sohn, E. (2012). *Are Some Brains Better at Learning Languages?* Retrieved from
<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna46784028>

Ssentanda, M. & Nakayiza, J. (2015). *Uganda's private schools must stop snubbing language learning policy*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/ugandas-private-schools-must-stop-snubbing-language-learning-policy-46819>

Tekeu, R. F. (2013). *Uganda: Local Language Instruction Spurs Primary Level Literacy and Numeracy*. Retrieved from <http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/news/uganda-local-language-instruction-spurs-primary-level-literacy-and-numeracy/>

Tumwebaze, S. A. (2016). *Implementation strategy for advocacy of local languages in Uganda*. Retrieved from
<http://labeuganda.org/publications/Implementation%20Strategy%20for%20Advocacy%20of%20Local%20Languages%20in%20Uganda.pdf>

Tumwebaze, S. K. (2013). *Mother Language Symposium Presentations: Change to Implement Quality and Inclusive MTE in Uganda*. Retrieved from
[http://labeuganda.org/reports/Mother%20Language%20Symposium%20Presentations%20SEPS%20May%2031\(2\)-1.pdf](http://labeuganda.org/reports/Mother%20Language%20Symposium%20Presentations%20SEPS%20May%2031(2)-1.pdf)

Tumwebaze, S. K. (2017). *Implementation Strategy for Advocacy of Local Languages in Uganda*. Retrieved from <https://labeuganda.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Implementation-Strategy-for-Advocacy-of-Local-Languages-in-Uganda.pdf>

Uganda National Examinations Board. (2018). *The Achievement of Primary School Learners and Teachers in Uganda in Numeracy and Literacy in English*. National Assessment of Progress in Education Report 2018. Retrieved from
<https://www.education.go.ug/utsep/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/5.-NAPE-2018-Report.pdf>

UNESCO. (1953). *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education: Monographs on Fundamental Education*. Retrieved from
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000028/002897EB.pdf>

UWEZO Uganda. (2021). *Are our Children Learning? Illuminating the Covid-19 Learning Losses and Gains in Uganda*. UWEZO National Learning Assessment Report, 2021. Retrieved from https://uwezouganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Uwezo-2021-National-Assessment-Report_FINAL.pdf

Ward, K. (2024). *A history of Christianity in Uganda*. Dictionary of African Christian Biography. Retrieved from <https://dacb.org/histories/uganda-history-christianity/>

Web Solutions. (2023). Uganda: *History & Background*. Retrieved from
https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1583/Uganda-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html#google_vignette

Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors. (2023). *Quality of National Curriculum and Student Learning: The case of thematic curriculum in Uganda*. Retrieved from
<https://www.africaeducationhub.org/handle/hesa/68#:~:text=In%202007%2C%20Uganda%20introduced%20thematic,ands%20relevance%20of%20learning%20outcomes.>