



# **Enhancing the Quality of Primary Education in Uganda**

**Report of PROCEEDINGS of the Primary Education Policy  
Symposium**

**Prepared by**

**DRUSSA WP5 Country Coordination Unit**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Development Research Up-take in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRUSSA) programme is supporting the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MESTS) to adopt evidence-based policy-making approaches. The symposium was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports in Kampala. The symposium was organised by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) in collaboration with DRUSSA partner Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and in partnership with the Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MESTS). The symposium focused on enhancing the use of research evidence in primary education policy in Uganda. The participants including MESTS officials, university and higher education stakeholders and DRUSSA programme representatives attended the symposium. A list of participants appears as Annex 1.

## **2.0 OPENING REMARKS**

Dr. Daniel Nkaada, the Commissioner for Pre-primary and Primary Education in MESTS, opened the symposium. He indicated that MESTS has identified enhancement of the quality of primary education as priority area of focus for DRUSSA programme. In this regard, MESTS had, in consultation with Dr. Annabella Habinka, the DRUSSA Policy Fellow, identified a report prepared by Prof. J.C. Munene as a useful resource material to inform interventions in the primary education sub-sector. The purpose of the symposium was to discuss and agree the key findings and recommendations of the report with key stakeholders prior to their presentation to a larger stakeholder audience for validation and adoption by MESTS.

## **3.0 PRESENTATION OF THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION REPORT**

Professor JC Munene presented an overview of the quality of primary education report. Below are the highlights.

### **Research issues and methods**

- The study was based on call for research proposals on Improving quality of primary education. The call was premised on the perceived unpreparedness for Universal Primary Education by the stakeholders involved especially the community.
- It was systematic study from first IQ 1, followed by IQ 2, then finally IQ 3 based on the Social Capital Model estimated using qualitative data analysis methods.

### **Empirical findings**

- The study finds the various avenues for community involvement in running the schools were overlooked by the UPE programme. PTA- Parents Teachers Association and SMC's were disempowered. It was also noted that the good school has functioning PTA's.
- Committed schools had committed Head Masters/mistresses who were always present and had residential homes within the schools for closer supervision. The UPE schools had unserious, uncommitted Head Masters/mistresses that were absent from the school which

resulted in having many acting deputy head masters, with uncommitted teachers. With the uncommitted H/Ms there was no professionalism and more student drop outs.

- The study found that learners' readiness, teachers' conditions and behaviour are key predictors for the success of a school. Class room condition and pupils self-concept were key with the latter affecting the students' performance and esteem. Education was taken just for the sake of being at school without a passion to be knowledgeable.

### **Policy implications**

- Government took for granted that fact that education is valuable to all and mixed people who care with those that don't care to all go to school. Assumption that all people need education could be re-thought to allow those with a passion to take it up while the less interested are considered gradually.
- Motivation of teachers with better salaries was key to improving teaching and learning outcomes.
- Building school facilities, including houses for the teachers creates a conducive learning the teaching environment.
- It is important to focus on having the parents teachers' associations mobilise the parents to play their role and not just assume that the community has a role without setting up structures to support them.
- The government should let parents run the schools and not government run the schools.

## **4.0 PLENARY DISCUSSION**

### **MESTS feedback**

Dr. C.Tony Mukasa-Lusambu noted that parents/community assumption of their roles is still an issue. However it was noted that the enrolment increased from 2.5 million to 7.5million after the introduction of UPE. This was an upsurge of pupil numbers which presented capacity challenges on the education system.

In regard to the Chaos theory presented in the report which postulates that scientific chaos makes fundamental change. Constraints are needed to avoid anarchy. The chaos has got to be organised for it to bring about socially desirable change.

In classifying the population by income status, it would important to make a distinction between economic poor and the non-economically poor.

Quality of education is key and should to be considered as just passing UNEB exams. Learner abilities should be built beyond the requirements for passing examinations to include other aspects of day-to-day life such as Physical Education (PE).

## **UNCST feedback**

Mr Ismail Barugahara noted that there were 5 major findings he captured during the presentation as the key predictors of quality of education that stand out and recommended for a strong methodological backing for this important piece of research by Prof Munene and his team.

He appreciated the fact that there were clear guidelines for policy implications in the books that would be looked into and encouraged Prof Munene to continue and work out what the current status is since the book is now 10 years old.

He requested MESTS to make this book available for participants and was looking forward to having a symposium with a larger section of MESTS stakeholders to disseminate Prof Munene's research findings. He also noted that report would further be presented to a EARIMA conference that is scheduled to take place in August 2015 in Uganda.

## **ACU Feedback**

Dr. Tomas Haber indicated that having received the report, the next steps will include continued discussion with the academia and MESTS on what is feasible to adopt from the policy recommendations. He promised to get application guidelines for donor support to enable Prof. Munene apply for a research grant to update his research report.

## **CONCLUSION**

The symposium received and discussed the research report on the quality of primary education in Uganda. Five key findings and policy implications on the predictors of education quality were noted and recommended for further discussion at a subsequent and relatively larger symposium for MESTS stakeholders. The outcomes of the symposium are to guide DRUSSA support to MESTS policy interventions in enhancing the quality of primary education in Uganda.

**ANNEX1: LIST OF SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS**

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