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THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION POLICY FORMATION IN AFRICA

The Case of Uganda



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1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Over the past nine years, Uganda has been simultaneously democratizing society, instituting economic reforms, and framing a new constitution. During these years, government has been reviewing its national education policy alongside similar efforts in other sectors. The procedures used to review education policy have departed significantly from the approaches used for decades.

1.2 The most significant innovation has been extensive consultation, dialogue, and debate between government officials, professional educators, and a wide variety of stakeholders at all levels of civil society. Using various mechanisms to encourage mass participation, the process has generated widespread understanding of the proposed policies and willingness to cooperate in their implementation. It has also helped produce compromises and build consensus around controversial issues in education. One consequence of the protracted process has been the need to move ahead with the implementation of selected policies before the process was complete, raising questions of prioritization and issues of power relationships between donors and government.

1.3 The central purposes of this report are to highlight the innovations and to share the lessons learned from Uganda's experience. As they formulate their own education policies, other African countries may find these lessons help them increase their effective ownership of both the process and the resulting policies.

2 - THE CONTEXT FOR THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

2.1 In 1981, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) commenced a guerilla struggle against the government in power. This movement followed numerous crises in Uganda's history since Independence in 1962. After nearly a decade of national progress, a military coup in 1971 had ushered in a fascist dictatorship and genocide. The fifteen years that followed were characterized by continuous breakdown in the economic, political, cultural and social systems. The struggle to end this situation and effect positive change was manifested in different forms on different fronts. On the political and military fronts the struggle became increasingly violent. On the social and cultural fronts it provoked intellectual, professional, and mass public criticism of the situation and loud outcries for change.

The socio-economic situation

2.2 When the NRM took power in 1986, the colonial economic system and structures still existed but in a modified form that suited the neo-colonial economy. Agricultural exports were the mainstay of the export-oriented economy. Export volume of coffee, the main crop, had declined precipitously. There was little industrialization and almost no basis for modernization of the economy. Worse still, by January 1986 Uganda's economy had almost totally collapsed. Revenue collection stood at 4 percent of GDP, the growth rate was very low, inflation was above 200 percent, and nearly three-quarters of the national budget was financed externally. Scarcity of commodities and social services was widespread, causing hardship to almost everyone.

2.3 The policies of the NRM government in 1986 favored self-reliance and avoidance of the Bretton Woods institutions. But in 1987-88 this policy began to shift, mainly as a result of the politics of realism and reasoned dialogue between government leaders, especially the President, and top officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and other Western donor agencies. Yet government maintained the essence of its economic vision and accepted donor conditionalities only when convinced they were necessary and their negative impact on society would be limited.

2.4 Nevertheless, the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which began in 1988 and was aimed at improving the productive sectors, caused public concern about its negative effects on education, health, water and sanitation, and child care and protection programs. For instance, people protested that, under the SAP, government regarded education as a non-priority sector, a view reinforced by unfortunate public statements from high-ranking NRM leaders.

2.5 Thanks to its own principles and vision, as well as to public outcry, government shifted policy again in 1992-93, placing more budgetary emphasis on the social sectors, which it deemed a priority for manpower development, national unity, peace, and development. The 1993-94 national budget included for the first time what was known as a Core Development Budget Program, which gave 60 percent of the recurrent budget to selected social sectors; education received 20 percent of that. As a result of government persuading donors to revise their own policies and its agreement to conditionalities in the social sectors, external revenues continued to pour into the national treasury. Government's establishment and vigorous utilization of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) began to increase local revenue collection. Thus, local revenues rose from 4 percent of GDP in 1986-88 to 10 percent in 1993. In that same year, economic growth rose 7 percent and inflation fell below 30 percent.

The education sector

2.6 Some colonial and post-colonial education policies became increasingly unpopular and adverse to national development. Secondary school education and academic education was supported at the expense of primary and practical, skill-oriented education. The politically motivated, unplanned expansion of teacher training colleges and other educational institutions, especially during the early 1980s, adversely affected the quality of education. Inadequate attention was given to goals, content, and operational aspects of education. Resources were allocated disproportionately to tertiary education and non-pedagogical needs. The teaching service had poor terms and conditions. The country also suffered from a decline in the quantity and quality of manpower, a serious decline in moral and intellectual levels, and a lack of adequate discipline, patriotism, and productive skills. Unemployment and under-employment also increased, and education opportunities and benefits became less equitable.

2.7 Through various policy conferences and documents, targets had been set for the year 2000:

- (a) Release of citizens from disease, poverty and ignorance;
- (b) Free, compulsory Universal Primary Education (UPE);
- (c) Universal adult literacy;
- (d) Expanded secondary and tertiary education and primary and secondary school teacher training;
- (e) Special attention to education for people in remote areas and communities;
- (f) Improved quality and relevance of education, especially at primary level;
- (g) Emphasis on science, math, and practical subjects in curricula, especially at the secondary level;
- (h) Education for self-reliance and production of sufficient manpower for Uganda's economy;
- (i) Fairness in access to formal education, especially through emphasis on day schools.

2.8 But expectations for education generated by the Independence movement and commitments of successive governments and international agencies were not being met. People cried out for a new approach to education, and new ideas and expectations were espoused by Ugandan elites returning from exile abroad. Inequitable political and economic conditions also pressured the education sector to change.

2.9 Foreign donors also had an interest in Uganda's education system and wanted to influence changes. Indeed, their influence intensified toward the end of the 1980s as conditions in the country improved, the Cold War approached an end, and a new era of international relations dawned. They demanded observance of human rights (as they are generally understood in the Western world) and democratization, including the adoption of a Western multi-party political system. They also urged government to exercise proper planning of policies and development action programs, to produce transparent budgets and become accountable for how resources were used, and to keep pace with implementation time lines and agendas set by donors.

2.10 In the 1990s, donors' demands increasingly characterized their negotiations with government, including negotiations in the education sector. Moreover, since education was recognized by both donors and Ugandan leaders as a priority for change, change in education appeared to be a pre-condition for change in the other sectors.

The political context

2.11 When the NRM came to power in 1986, the institutions of political organization and governance developed during colonial times were still largely intact, at least on paper. For instance, religious and tribal-based political organizations still existed, reinforcing polarization of the society. The educated and the propertied elite dominated leadership roles in the parties and the governing structures. The principle of “winner take all” guided the formation of national governments. Important social groups like women, youth (particularly the uneducated), orphans, and the poor were kept out of the mainstream of socio-economic development. This situation perpetuated the conditions that had created the crises plaguing Uganda.

NRM leadership and the new political structures

2.12 Among the most important socio-political innovations introduced by the NRM are the Resistance Councils/Committees (RC) system. RC members are popularly elected, and the RCs have brought unity and participation by large numbers of people in governance and development activities. This political structure is supported by a vigorous process of raising awareness of citizens.

2.13 The RC structure is an elaborate hierarchy based on a village people’s assembly to which everyone over eighteen belongs unless one chooses not to. Village-level committees in a parish constitute a parish assembly, whose members elect from among themselves a committee to lead the parish. This process is repeated upwards to set up Resistance Councils and Committees at the sub-county, county, and district levels. Urban centers, institutions of education, medicine, and security, and large work places are also organized within the same structure. The system ascends to the National Resistance Assembly (NRA), whose members are elected at the county level. The NRM Secretariat is headed by a National Political Commissar, above whom are the Chairman and Vice Chairman, responsible for all RC affairs in the country. District RC chairmen are the political heads of their respective districts. Starting at the district level, all NRM leaders are elected through universal suffrage and can be recalled or removed from office by their electorate. People vote for candidates by lining up in public behind the candidates of their choice. Anyone can stand for office and vote. The bottom-up principle is an important aspect of the system.

2.14 The RCs are responsible for development activities in their districts or areas. This responsibility has been recently reinforced by the law and process of decentralization to the districts of government administration, resource management, service delivery, and management of all development processes. Large percentages of taxes collected are retained at sub-county, county, and district levels. The central government also provides grants to district governments. The sub-county is a corporate body and can initiate development programs and obtain credit to support those programs. Because of the centrality and importance of the RCs in the process of socio-economic-political development, almost all RC officials have undergone awareness education.

2.15 The RC system is important in all levels of the education system, which gets special attention and one of the biggest budgetary allocations at all levels. At each level, an Education Committee is chaired by the RC Secretary for Education and Mobilization. District Education Officers serve as secretary to these committees.

Media and civil society

2.16 Uganda has never enjoyed such a vibrant media environment as that of the last nine years. Government controls only one of at least four television stations; two of the three radio stations are private, and no less than twenty national and regional newspapers, journals and other print media publications, several drama, theater and music groups, and other information media compete for attention and use. The liberal atmosphere has also enabled organizations of women, youth, religious groups, marginalized and minority

The process of education policy formation in Africa

groups, workers, manufacturers, farmers, and others, to rise up and operate freely. Not all media organs and social groups support government. This atmosphere has provided ample opportunities for wide national debate on educational issues, which are of concern to most people.

A new system of governance and the NRM political vision

2.17 The principles of reconciliation, cooperation, and national unity form the basis of the NRM system. This system deliberately avoids the multi-party arrangements that in earlier years plunged the country into sectarianism, intrigue, deceit, elitist minority domination, corruption, and genocide. Emphasis has been placed on the establishment of consensus and national unity at all levels rather than divisions and conflicts. Yet the system has worked alongside political parties, which continue to function, although large-scale open party campaigns and other similar public activities have been suspended. Generally, the gentlemanly sort of agreements made between the NRM and the four major political parties to cooperate in a broad-based government during the transitional period until a new constitution could be put in place and general elections held have continued to work well. Consequently, with the exception of areas in the north and northeast, where some political rebellion still occurs, national harmony and tranquility have predominated, providing an atmosphere conducive to participatory constitution-framing and fundamental reforms.

2.18 NRM leadership has been dominated by young men and women, most of whom received a post-colonial education and have been exposed to progressive philosophies. This is a different breed from the political, bureaucratic, and professional elite that led Uganda to Independence and ran the government until the 1970s. This leadership champions the principle of fundamental change and espouses new principles:

- (a) The process of change in Uganda must be systematic, taking into consideration the prevailing conditions and reacting to them accordingly, without losing sight of the strategic goals of liberation and national development.
- (b) Every situation to be changed must be critically and scientifically analyzed in order to determine the inherent potentials and possibilities for positive change with minimal losses.
- (c) All possible options for tackling problems must be considered before the best and most relevant one is selected.
- (d) Action plans must be prioritized according to the importance and urgency of the situation being tackled and the availability of resources needed for implementation.
- (e) Popular participation in the process of change remains fundamental.
- (f) Flexibility in implementing remedial and developmental actions must be maintained in accordance with prevailing circumstances and the demands posed by the specific situation.

These principles were key in the education sector analysis, policy review, and formulation of the new policy.

The culture of popular participation

2.19 The guerilla struggle that NRM waged relied on mass acceptance and support. Throughout the guerrilla activities and subsequent pacification campaigns in northern and northeastern Uganda, NRM victories over opponents have resulted from this approach. Programs of awareness raising (popularly known as *Chaka Muchaka* or political education) are geared toward helping people analyze their own situation, understand how the country is influenced by its geography, history, economy, culture, society and ideologies, and appreciate the possibilities for change. These programs are intended to increase citizen participation in

community and national programs for change, though their development throughout the country has been uneven. In the northern and northeastern areas, for example, the violent rebellions have retarded the development of the new political structures for some years. In peaceful southern Uganda, the RCs and education programs have been gaining more and more popularity.

2.20 Though this culture of enlightened participation in policy analysis and development activities had been widely established by 1990, when the constitution-framing process began, it had not been so at the beginning of the educational policy review process in 1987.

The culture of policy analysis

2.21 After the NRM came to power, it embarked on an ambitious analysis of the extent of corruption and inefficiency, sectoral and institutional problems and needs, and capacity and resources for rehabilitation and improvement. Commissions of inquiry and situation analysis teams were set up to probe various sectors and public institutions. Although most of their reports were never made public, which raised concerns among the media and public, officials argued that government made use of them in its programs for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

2.22 The constitution-framing exercise involved an unprecedented form of policy analysis, involving wide consultation and mass participation. The Constitutional Commission worked from 1990 through 1993, mainly carrying out sensitization and consultation activities on the process, the issues, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals and communities in the exercise. The commission's report was abridged, translated into major local languages, circulated, and discussed widely, leading to a year-long constituent assembly debate with simultaneous public consultations by delegates.

2.23 In contrast to the wide public discussions which marked the constitutional discussions, most sectoral analyses were characterized by more traditional political practices: they were dominated by elites, lacked reliable data and information, and were burdened by bureaucratic obstruction, and the desire for personal gain by professional and technical members and officials. Research and policy options were heavily influenced by donors, and donors determined implementation time lines and allocation of resources.

2.24 The education policy formation process, like others, was characterized both by the benefits of critical and thorough analysis and the constraints of the problems noted above.

3 - THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION POLICY-MAKING

Policy formation approaches of the past

3.1 Various methods have been used in Uganda to conduct education sector reviews and to formulate policy. The most common method has been to constitute a commission about every ten years for these purposes. The commission's findings and recommendations then become the basis of major sectoral policies. Commissions reports have also provided the principles, guidelines, and rationale for subsequent analyses of specific areas within the sector and the formulation or re-evaluation of related policies and action programs. Multi-sectoral analyses are conducted at regular intervals of five years, resulting in five-year development plans.

3.2 Education sector policy-making has been characterized by an absence of a framework for continuous sector analysis, policy review, and monitoring. This results in ad hoc policy-making and sector management-by-crisis. Roles, studies and interventions are duplicated. The work of various agencies and institutions is not coordinated. Scarce resources are wasted, and recommended policies and programs are not always coherent. In addition, policy-making suffers from the problems encountered by all sectors.

The traditional education commission approach

3.3 The first education commission in Uganda was the Phelps–Stokes Commission of 1925, which carried out reviews of the educational systems in many British colonies in east and southern Africa. The colonial government policy was subsequently influenced by the 1928 Hilton-Young Commission, which reviewed the relationship between the educational activities of government and missionaries. The de la War Commission of 1938 recommended the establishment of Makerere College as a regional post-secondary institution, and the Thomas Education Committee drew up a development plan for 1941-45. Following the war, the Worthington Development Plan provided for the expansion of education and for teacher training. In 1952 the de Bunsen Commission provided the policy framework for the decade prior to independence, and in 1963 the Castle Commission provided the first post-Independence review and policy recommendations for the national educational system. The social and political turmoil of the Amin regime in 1971 interrupted the tradition of regular education commissions. An attempt was made to revive it in 1977, when the first Kajubi Commission was appointed.

3.4 The commissions of colonial times were made up of non-Ugandans of British origin. These men acquired their values and attitudes through “observation and imitation of the behavior of elders in that remarkably coherent set of socializing agencies”: the upper-middle-class family, public school, university, and specialized institutions. This group shared a broad view of the nature of the colonial situation and of proper behavior within it of administrators, traders, planters, educationists. These people

developed a specialized set of assumptions relating to their particular role within this general framework of overriding ideas and values...and their coherence as a group and their commitment to the colonial ethic...secured by a careful process of selection and socialization.¹

3.5 The methods of reviewing the education system and the recommendations made by the commissions were strongly influenced by the social and professional culture and orientations of commission members. More recent commissions included Ugandans, but whose ideas, values, ideals, and functional skills were generally similar to those of the British officials and professionals who came to work in Uganda. Lugard, one

of the leading architects of British colonial philosophy, said that most educated people in colonies like Uganda went through socializing educational systems that

removed (them) from the subversive influences of (their) normal environment. (The school) influence (formed) the character and ideals of the (students), and introduced the English school code of honor ..., training the youth according to Western standards... to imbibe the traditions ... discipline and training which have fitted them for the work of the Empire.²

3.6 Another British scholar concluded that the university-educated Ugandan elites were overwhelmingly white-collar, comprised predominantly of teachers, professionals in government, businessmen, managers, and self-employed entrepreneurs.

This pattern (was) the result of decisions, made over the years, about the nature of education in East Africa, which has to be related to the structure of the demand for the services of highly educated Africans under British rule.³

3.7 In addition to the imposition of this point of view, which does not represent that of most Ugandans, reliance on commissions appointed at ten-year intervals has prevented development of a process of continuously reviewing existing policies and formulating new ones.

3.8 In 1979–80, top policy-makers in the Ministry of Education seriously considered the possibility of adopting the Kajubi report of 1977 and implementing its recommendations. But there was general agreement that the Amin dictatorship had not permitted an atmosphere conducive to consultation and open discussion of education issues. The disruptive political changes that had taken place following the end of Amin's rule did not foster constructive action.

3.9 The second Obote government of 1980–85 did not improve the situation. The subsequent Okello military junta was too short in power and, more seriously, incapable of tackling the important issue of education policy formation.

4 - THE EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW COMMISSION OF 1987

NRM's approach to the work of the commission

4.1 This changed when NRM came to power in 1986. NRM leadership was convinced that the public was “rightfully calling for...a redesign of the education system...” so that it could be “properly tuned to and more adequately fulfill the needs and aspirations of Ugandans and...function as a powerful instrument for society’s progress.”⁴

4.2 In contrast to the intermittent policy-making activities of most of the twentieth century, the NRM’s policy review and formulation process endured a long time. Between 1981 and 1986, NRM had conducted a general appraisal of the national situation and articulated its liberation and development principles, goals, and strategies. The decision to carry out protracted sectoral analyses, chart new sectoral policy paths, and engage broad-based participation in the process arose from the experiences of the NRM struggle during those six years.

4.3 Although NRM’s Ten-Point Political Program does not specifically address the education sector, it nevertheless clearly states the philosophical and political tenets within which the education and other sectors were to be assessed and developed. On January 26, 1986, when he was sworn in as President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni stated that NRM was not ushering in a mere changing of the guard but rather a fundamental change. Thus, the political program of NRM indicated that prevailing education policy was “outdated and irrelevant to the needs of the country.” It appointed an Education Review Commission to review the entire spectrum of education in light of the objective that education in Uganda produce job makers rather than job seekers.”⁵ The political program included other visions that had implications for education policy:

- (a) Establishment of popular democracy built on the pillars of a sensitized, literate citizenry enjoying a decent level of living standards;
- (b) Consolidation of national unity in order to establish a broad-based front to confront the common enemy of underdevelopment and backwardness;
- (c) Defense of national independence; citizens who can build an independent, self-sustaining national economy;
- (d) Establishment of regional and African cooperation as well as observance of human rights.⁶

Decentralization and accountability to citizens by all leaders are also important principles in NRM leadership and development program.

4.4 The education sector review had to be geared toward the establishment of an education system that could provide the basis for achieving this vision, which represented a sort of encapsulation of earlier aspirations for education that had not yet been attained. The approaches that were adopted in the processes of sector analysis, policy review, and new policy formation were themselves influenced partly by inherited traditions and partly by innovations stemming from NRM’s philosophy of fundamental change.

The Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC)

4.5 Government's 1987 terms of reference to the Education Policy Review Commission were wide-ranging. The commission was mandated to

... review the present education policy, appraise the current system at all levels, review the general aims and objectives, give advice on effective ways of integrating the teaching of commercial/business and technical subjects and ... re-assess the current system of funding education at all levels including the possibility of students contributing toward their upkeep without impairing academic standards. Furthermore to assess the role of qualifying examinations and the adequacy of the current methods of assessment; ... review the role of the private sector in the provision of education at all levels, and to examine the structure of primary and secondary levels of education bearing in mind the tender age at which children leave primary school. Above all to formulate new policy for education, and to suggest ways and means of bringing about improvement in the quality of education and in the efficiency of management of the education system, ensuring greater welfare of the staff and students.⁷

The Minister deliberately did not specify in the terms of reference the timing for the commission's work. It was, however, given a mandate to propose changes for both short- and long-term implementation.

4.6 The commission began its work with preparatory sessions in Kampala before plunging into the consultative process. It held a series of meetings to identify issues and relate them to the commission's terms of reference and to national goals of development.

4.7 The professional expertise of the members of the commission was particularly useful in steering subsequent work and influencing the consultation process and its outcomes. A secretariat was set up, comprising senior professionals in the Ministry of Education and supported by local and foreign consultants. The commission's work, including the secretariat's, was supported by funds from the World Bank. The secretariat gathered historical documents on sectoral studies, policy documents and papers, both within Uganda and from other African countries.

4.8 After this preliminary stage, the commission embarked on two major field activities, including foreign study tours and extensive consultation with stakeholders in Kampala and people in other parts of the country. The commissioners that went abroad visited eight Anglophone African countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia) as well as India and the United Kingdom. Those who stayed in Uganda traveled in small groups to different regions of Uganda to solicit views on the education system and recommendations for change.

4.9 They explained the purpose of the policy review exercise and their methods, invited participants to raise issues and exchange views, and asked them to make written submissions of their own ideas and to encourage members of their communities to do the same. They also organized more focussed group discussions around specific issues raised during these sessions. Such discussions were more analytical and directed toward specific local situations. Education and other government officials, teachers and members of the elite communities, mainly in and around the urban centers, took part in these discussions. The Ministry of Education in Kampala had advertised the commission widely through the media and asked politicians and education officials in the districts to mobilize people for participation in these consultations.

4.10 The third phase was pooling information and processing it into usable material for focussed analysis. This was done in Kampala. The commission split into subcommittees that looked at specific areas, levels, and issues of education, using the data that had been gathered.

4.11 The fourth phase was preparing a report, which offered significant insights into the background of Uganda's education and the problems that had seriously eroded its quantity and quality. The commission also redefined the aims and objectives of the education system they proposed. Following an unprecedented

extensive analysis of the different levels and types of education and of the most pervasive and contentious issues, the commission made 220 recommendations; its report was submitted to the Minister of Education in January 1989.⁸

Limitations of the commission's work

Problems involved in the consultation process

4.12 The commission's review was the widest consultation on education ever in Uganda and produced a much larger volume of memoranda than did the Castle Commission 1963. To a significant extent, the political environment enabled this achievement. Yet the commission did not exploit the supportive conditions to consult with citizens and key education stakeholders at all levels of society and in all regions of the country. It held consultation sessions only in urban centers, so rural communities, particularly those in remote regions, were not directly consulted. Even within urban areas, marginalized groups with special needs did not take part in the dialogue. Members of important security agencies like the army, police, prison department, and intelligence were not asked for their views. The impressive list of the 496 memoranda and resource papers does not show any involvement of these kinds of people. A disappointed group of teachers at an in-service course at Makerere University reflected the complaints of many:

The majority of people, including the key stakeholders like communities which support and benefit from education, community leaders, parents, students and others, especially in the rural areas were not consulted by the commission. Probably the commission was allowed limited time.... maybe it was deemed useless and therefore unnecessary to consult such people; or it was the fashioned approach. On the other hand, the commission could have assumed that after all, they—the members of the commission—knew everything because they are experts or veterans in the education sector, and the chairman had, in any case, chaired an earlier commission in 1977. Many people expressed and still express, ignorance of the starting of the consultation exercise, the position it finally reached and, they ask: "What has happened to the work of the commission that we heard about?" ...It was the elite in urban centers who were consulted, and who also probably know the Commissioners' Report.⁹

4.13 One members of the commission has confirmed those observations:

There was no time to stay in the districts longer than we did, so as to go beyond urban centers to meet rural communities, say at the counties and sub-counties in order to make more informal as well as formal contacts. Shortage of time and resources dictated our total reliance on the methods of open meetings in towns and at district headquarters, and collection of memoranda. Most of the people who were consulted, certainly at least half, were professionals. The commission tried to consult beyond the professionals. However, consultation with the communities outside urban centers was inadequate, or in some cases not there at all. For instance, where I went for consultation ... it was mainly the urban elite group that we met. Even then, some of these people asked us to use their local language during dialogue, so that they could express themselves freely and adequately. Therefore, our dialogue was conducted in Luganda—yet, this was an elite group. More important even, the metaphor of the dialogue was that of an elite group.... People want to break the language barrier....Future commissions should break the language barrier, as your question suggests, in order for real dialogue with those key stakeholders to take place....The elite group I am talking about was a sort of self-selected audience, knowing what they wanted to say and to get. The ordinary people were certainly not reached to state and discuss the real problems and needs of education in their own areas and those that related to themselves directly. Some of the contributions that were made by the elite audiences did not represent the real needs and problems of the local stakeholders. For example, for the ordinary people almost everywhere in the country, it would have been the cost of education (or school fees) which is too high for them to bear, that they would have highlighted most emphatically, instead of making demands for controlling school funds, as the elite audiences tended to do....On the other hand, the commission itself was seen by many people as being part of the old system of education and the usual managers of education coming from Kampala.

4.14 The commission's failure to involve some of the most important stakeholders may not have been avoidable. It did not work continuously but rather only intermittently and for a short term. It had limited time, resources, and manpower, and it worked within a limited range of objectives, determined in a selective manner. One member noted that donors, who provided financial support, demanded that its work be

concluded speedily so that a new education policy could be put in place and enable implementation of the reform programs they were supporting.¹⁰ Some donors apparently believed that since the 1977 commission, also chaired by Professor Kajubi, had analyzed and reviewed the sector, it was now a question of quick work to up-date the previous findings.

4.15 In addition, the education officials who drafted the commission's terms of reference and the top officials who sanctioned and issued them did not encourage the commission to maximize stakeholder participation. Thus, the commission's methods were consonant with the signals it received from the ministry. And, with the exception of the appointee from the NRM secretariat, the members' own orientation did not clash with their instructions. They were individuals who had been to institutions established during colonial times and socialized to serve without raising questions about the status quo.

4.16 If the commission had been constituted by a more broad-based membership, stakeholders of different categories, including those at the lower levels of the social strata, might have found it easier to identify with members. They might have discussed issues openly. The commission could have worked in even smaller groups throughout the regions. The constitutional commission, which did its work two years later when NRM's power was more firmly stabilized, was given much better guidance from different quarters including the President himself. It carried out important and decisive consultations and solicited memoranda through the RC system. Had they been better established when the Education Commission was at work, the RCs may well have been effective channels for consultation, especially among the ordinary people. A scrutiny of the list of memoranda and resource papers gathered by the Commission reflects a glaring omission of the RC channel of consultation.

4.17 Students are the most important stakeholders in the education system, followed by teachers, parents, and communities, especially at primary school level. The commission did not consult adequately with these groups. Primary school teachers in particular were ignored, and even teachers at higher levels were not frequently consulted. Some of the memoranda purported to have been written by groups of teachers were actually written by either a few individuals or some members of the leadership executives of such groups, without proper or any consultation with the general membership. This was the case with a good number of the memoranda attributed to PTAs. Where teacher centers still existed, they were not utilized, even though their potential was tremendous. The effectiveness of consultation through school staff memoranda was not widespread. Where teachers participated in the public consultation meetings, they generally did so out of fear of the dominant officials, bosses, the wealthy elite, and some politicians who are still undemocratic in their behavior. In addition, unlike the constitutional consultative process, the Education Commission did not sensitize stakeholders to their rights and obligations in the education sector.

Problems of data availability

4.18 The EPRC report reveals that the commission's work was handicapped by "lack of reliable and up-to-date data on a number of important educational indicators." This had been "a handicap in [the] planning and administration of education...for about a decade... the machinery of data collection, data analysis and reporting of educational statistics [had] virtually been in a state of disarray. Most of the planning and budgeting was based on ad hoc estimates, some of which were suspected to be grossly inaccurate."¹¹

4.19 The Education Planning Unit (EPU) of the ministry had done limited analyses until its capacity was seriously eroded during the 1970s and early 1980s. By 1985 it had almost totally collapsed, and no statistical abstracts were being produced. Even when it was revived with African Development Bank and UNESCO financial and technical support in 1987, it carried out a school census without analyzing the survey questionnaires and producing statistical abstracts. The unit concentrated on producing statistics for determining how to allocate government grants and construction materials.

The culture of data collection and utilization

4.20 The culture of record keeping and of data collection, processing, and utilization are at a seriously low level, not only in the education sector but also, throughout the Ugandan society. Consequently, reliance on data support for the assessment of social problems, decision-making and planning, implementation and evaluation of development action programs is limited among the majority of policy-makers and implementers.

4.21 Within the education sector, record keeping—especially in the primary grades and rural schools—is extremely limited and, where they exist, the data are generally unreliable. Even keeping a class register is difficult for many teachers. There is no effective method of verification of data transmitted upwards. Corruption at all levels has rendered most data unreliable. For instance, inflating figures of student enrollments and teaching staff or deflating those of available instructional materials in order to facilitate graft has been widespread for many years, in spite of recent government efforts to curb such practices.

4.22 Most data flow from bottom levels to the top, with little going the other direction. Districts, for example, do not receive analyzed data in a form they can use to guide improvements in the development, implementation, and evaluation of action programs in the local areas.

4.23 The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) has made significant achievements in producing up-to-date and reliable statistics. The record and filing system of the ministry headquarters deteriorated starting in the mid-1970s. Since then, communication between headquarters and the districts has been unsatisfactory. Important departments like the Inspectorate, autonomous bodies like the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC), UNEB, universities, and the National Teachers', Commercial and Technical Colleges or institutes—all which engage in important data collection—are not coordinated to facilitate useful and integrated processing, distribution, and utilization of data and information. In spite of assistance from external sources and government, the Education Planning Unit, which should be the best situated to do this work, is still handicapped by inadequacies of its terms of reference, skilled manpower, equipment, and financial support.

4.24 Foreign donor agencies and NGOs tend to more complete and reliable data than the ministry does. They have the resources, the will, and the know-how to collect and use data. Most of the important research on education is donor-supported and, therefore, donor-driven. In the absence of a determined, focused local effort to collect, process, and use data, external influence undermines the authority needed to control policy-making and implementation processes. This problem is likely to worsen with the process of decentralization, if it is not addressed.

4.25 The EPRC consultation process might have overcome some of these problems to improve the quantity and quality of the data it received. It might, for example, have used the RC system where it had been established to cross-check and verify and to obtain data on selected education indicators on a sampling basis. Or, it might have mobilized teachers' centers where they still existed, PTAs, teachers' associations, students' organizations, NGOs, community organizations, and tertiary institutions make a contribution, however inadequate or problematic.

5 - THE WHITE PAPER PROCESS

Major steps

5.1 During the period in which the EPRC was at work, NRC had not yet fully implemented its participatory approach to policy formation. Thus, when it came time to draft the White Paper, government made an effort to broaden the participation of citizens in policy-making to include more than just the urban elites. Figure 1 presents a chronology of the White Paper's development; these events are described in the paragraphs below.

5.2 Introducing the White Paper, the Minister of Education and Sports wrote that:

Government has examined the various proposals made by the Commission, and has taken serious note of the observations, discussion, comments and suggestions made by different sections of the Ugandan people on the Report...(and) has even started implementing some of the most important and obviously urgent recommendations. However, most of the recommendations require careful consideration and detailed examination...(striking) a balance between what is desirable from the point of view of pedagogy, and education development, and what is feasible in view of the financial and other resource constraints.... It was also necessary to work out strategies and to draw out an action plan for implementation.

Government, therefore, adopted an innovative and democratic approach, and appointed a White Paper Committee consisting of eleven members...to examine the report of the EPRC and to identify the recommendations which are acceptable and feasible to implement, and to make amendments where necessary, after a proper appraisal of the present and future needs of Uganda, the objectives and development programs of Government, as well as the current and the anticipated future resource constraints.

The Committee co-opted forty more people from different parts of Uganda, and it carried out consultations as extensively as possible and discussed thoroughly all aspects of the EPRC report before writing this White Paper and presenting it to me for presentation to Cabinet. This White Paper deliberately departs from the established traditional approach whereby a White Paper is prepared to be read side by side with the Commission's report at every stage. The White Paper makes revolutionary innovations and, therefore, simplifies the reading process it is easily readable and adequately intelligible on its own.¹²

5.3 In November 1989, the Minister appointed twelve professionals and four consultants from within and outside the Ministry of Education as members of the White Paper Committee. The committee started work immediately under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary for Planning and Development. After a few meetings, the chair was transferred to an educator from the university. One month later, the committee grew by forty people so that it could include non-bureaucratic professionals in the more technical work of policy formation. The new members were retired civil servants, teachers, politicians, and representatives from workers' unions, student and youth organizations, parent organizations, the major religious denominations, RCs, employers, small scale industrialists, rural communities, NRM secretariat representatives, parliament, political parties, district education officials, the media, and representatives of other groups. The White Paper preparation process was no longer the exclusive business of the traditional monopoly of bureaucrats and professional elites. The committee was more broad-based and socially diverse than the EPRC had been. A strong element of progressive ideological orientation was also injected in the ranks of the committee.

5.4 This large and diverse committee, however, was allowed only three weeks to complete its work. Some donors were demanding that a White Paper stating government's stand on the EPRC report be produced quickly to sanction the reforms they planned to support. Government had agreed to enter into a Structural Adjustment Program, and donors were eager to exploit the changed circumstances. The

Figure 1: Time Line of Major Steps in the White Paper Process

Month Year	Jan. 1986	July 1987	Jan. 1989	Nov. 1989	Dec. 1989	March 1990	April 1990	April 1991
Event	NRM assumes power	EPRC is constituted	EPRC report is submitted	White Paper (WP) committee appointed to work for 3 weeks	Expansion of WP committee and extension of work to 3 months	First draft of WP	One month approval meeting by Ministry and WP committee	Second draft of WP
End 1991	April 1992	Mid 1992	Mid 1993	Mid 1993	Early 1994	Mid 1994	Oct. 1994	1995
Cabinet approval of WP	Revised WP (3rd draft), incorporating Cabinet's decisions	Beginning of World Bank's TDMS project	National consultative conference for district political leaders	Beginning of USAID's SUPER project	National consultative conference for religious leaders	National consultative conference for women's representatives	Parliamentary debate on WP	Preparation of two new education acts

International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) were in the lead. Several delegations representing these and other donors visited the Ministries of Education and Finance.

5.5 Donors were constantly monitoring the progress of work on the White Paper. They interviewed officials of the EPU, the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), commissioners, the chairman of the White Paper Committee and ministers. Through their collaborators in the PIU, World Bank officials obtained copies of successive drafts of the White Paper. The prevailing sentiment among donors was that political leaders in the Ministry of Education were purposely delaying government's approval of the EPRC report and even trying to change what the report had recommended—a tactic with which the donors disagreed.

5.6 The need to grasp the issues raised by the EPRC's report—some of which were highly controversial—and to formulate new policy based on consensus that necessitated extended and innovative processes of dialogue. Realizing the challenges posed by the task, the expanded White Paper Committee asked for and received an additional three months. Seven subcommittees were set up. Their tasks included: deepening and sharpening the sector analysis that had been done in the EPRC report; determining the relevance, reliability, and feasibility of the report's recommendations in the context of national development goals; assessing public attitudes toward the report; re-costing recommendations, taking into account the unstable economic situation and the fluctuating government budgetary position; and prioritizing the implementation plan in order to establish its sustainability. The committee was to look closely at a report of a consultancy team that had calculated the costs of implementing the EPRC report.¹³

5.7 An open and lively public dialogue continued for about two-and-a-half years as the committee did its work. For several months, panel discussions over Uganda Television and Radio Uganda involved government officials, White Paper Committee members, professionals in the field, politicians, and members of the public holding different and, in some cases, opposing opinions on issues. These discussions were usually initiated by leaders of the White Paper Committee who were, at times, rebuked by top bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education for departing from civil service traditions and publicly discussing a government document that was not supposed to be discussed in public.¹⁴

5.8 The Education Policy Commission Report was sent to all major post-primary schools, and district headquarters and education offices, with a call for organization of public debates and discussions. President Museveni himself led public discussions on the education reform, particularly on important issues such as UPE, vocationalization and democratization of education, and cost-sharing. The Minister of Education, the White Paper Committee chairman, and ministry officials helped to raise awareness of the proposed education reform by discussing the White Paper in gatherings throughout the country and at the National School of Political Education. Participants in these discussions included district leaders, undergraduate students of tertiary institutions, youth leaders, RC leaders, civil servants, employees in private and public sector enterprises, donors, religious leaders, teachers, and media representatives. The autonomous government newspaper, *New Vision*, serialized some of the major recommendations and featured analyses of the EPRC report and related letters to the paper. All the major dailies and weeklies in Kampala received copies of the report and asked to participate in the dialogue (though not all did).

5.9 The ensuing debate was open and in some cases highly charged politically. When issues like cost-sharing were the main concern, the debate took on emotional and sometimes violent twists, particularly on the part of Makerere University students. Nevertheless, government kept the arena open, and the Minister of Education and his colleagues at the ministry went all out to meet students, university dons, and others to discuss these contentious issues.

5.10 The RCs and awareness-raising programs were used at this stage of the dialogue process. Consultations were more scientific in the analysis of issues, they had a clearer political and philosophical

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context, and they treated education issues within the context of the broader issues of national development. This dialogue involved social strata and groups that had not been involved by the EPRC. By this time, peace was coming to northeastern and some parts of northern Uganda, and communities in these regions had an opportunity to air their views.

5.11 The preference for a quick dialogue at the beginning of the White Paper process gave way to a recognition of the importance of extended awareness-raising and discussion. Donors who were using this period to push their own arguments began to realize the importance of the extended dialogue, though sometimes their strong positions contributed to delays.

5.12 These country-wide consultations did not, however, occur within the same clear legal framework that the EPRC work did. Editing took time, as it was left to one foreign expert, who did not complete the editorial work until the second edition of the White Paper was on its way to Cabinet toward the end of 1991. Nor were they backed with financial and material resources to facilitate a nationwide coverage and effective contacts. In addition, the EPRC report had not been widely circulated, and many of those consulted were ignorant of its contents.

Data analysis and intra-ministerial coordination

5.13 Although the data collected for the school census of 1988 were not immediately processed and published, the White Paper Committee was able to use them to update statistics in the EPRC report. Nevertheless, many critical gaps remained, including data to clear up conflicting figures on teachers' salaries.

5.14 Poor coordination between different ministerial departments made it difficult for the committee to obtain better and more reliable statistics. Coordination between the education Inspectorate, which still gathered some scanty reports from schools and districts, UNEB, which had reliable statistics on examinations, and tertiary institutions and other departments of the Ministry of Education was inadequate. And none of these departments were coordinated with the EPU, which should have coordinated data collection, processing, and use. The committee was also trying to develop new professional and administrative promotional structures for the teaching profession. Their work was frustrated by suspicion and mistrust among officials in different ministries, a lack of commitment by many officials to their duties, broken-down channels of communication, outdated methods of work, and low morale among officials.

5.15 For example, in spite of serious efforts, the committee could not establish the correct number of primary teachers' colleges in the country after some had been closed in a reform of teacher training. The matter was political; some officials hesitated to provide figures for fear of being caught on the wrong side or antagonizing politicians who had direct interest of influencing the restructuring of college distribution. Similarly, the lack of coordination complicated consultations by the Committee to ascertain, for instance, the number and remuneration levels of teachers in schools and on the payroll.

Continuing consultation

5.16 The White Paper Committee submitted its first draft to the ministry in March 1990, which began a long approval process. As further drafts were being produced and sent through the approval process, consultation and dialogue was extended to reach more groups.

5.17 In 1993, after Cabinet's approval of the White Paper in late 1992, the Minister of Education convened a one-day conference of government officials and key representatives of all 39 districts in

Uganda. They included the political heads of districts, who are also the chairmen of the District Councils, chairmen of the District Education Committees, central government representatives to the districts, District Education Officers and District Inspectors of schools, heads of autonomous bodies and the headquarter departments of the Ministry of Education, and selected government officials and community leaders. Participants were about two hundred in total. Conference participants, who had consulted with stakeholders in their respective districts, discussed the key issues in the White Paper.

5.18 Universal Primary Education (UPE) was the issue that attracted the greatest interest of the participants, especially those from the districts. Both government and citizens regarded UPE as the most important education policy issue. The President of Uganda had on many occasions discussed UPE. The White Paper raised the issue of whether free primary education should be granted only to citizens who do not possess means to pay for their children's education, while others continue to pay. Related to this issue was the new policy that primary school attendance would be compulsory for all children of school-going age; failure to send one's child to school would be punishable under the law. The debate also touched on the possibility of local district authorities providing bursaries and grants to some of the needy and deserving children, as well as allowing parents and guardians to pay in-kind for their children's education. These measures were to help achieve UPE as soon as possible, in any case not later than 2002.¹⁵

5.19 The minister's conference unanimously agreed and recommended that UPE was absolutely necessary, that government and communities should do everything possible to achieve it within the target time, and that most citizens could pay for their children's primary education. Political leaders would therefore mobilize people in the districts to realize this capacity. This decision received widespread support. The conference decisions were included in the minister's statement to Parliament along with presentation of the White Paper.

5.20 Another one-day conference was organized in 1994 and attended by top religious leaders. It provided an opportunity for this group to air views on the White Paper and to suggest improvements. Among the issues discussed was the controversial one of democratization of all the governing bodies of educational institutions. While these leaders had been among the most vocal advocates for democracy, in this case they sought to retain the dominant presence of their denominations on governing bodies of educational institutions. As a result of this consultation, a compromise was struck without compromising the main objective of establishing democratic governance of educational institutions—a long-standing demand of many stakeholders.

5.21 In 1994, after Parliament had debated the White Paper, a conference was organized of representatives of women's groups and officials of the Ministry of Education to discuss gender concerns in the White Paper. This occasion represented yet another form of extension of the dialogue and consultation process to stakeholders that had not been reached by the EPRC and yet are central to the success of the new education policy and to economic development.

5.22 Even as two new Education Acts were being drafted, consultations were continuing between Ministry of Education and other government officials and university students on the issue of cost-sharing and enhancing the implementation of the education policy. Because the consultation process continued alongside early implementation of some policy decisions made outside the process, the issues began to include those of implementation as well as formation of policy.

Approval of the new education policy

5.23 The top management team of the Ministry of Education was continually briefed and consulted by the White Paper committee during weekly meetings and, when needed, on controversial issues. The

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process of policy-making was thus checked and kept on course through (at least) initial approval of the ministry on specific individual issues.

5.24 After production of the first White Paper draft in April 1990, a one-month meeting between all key ministry political and bureaucratic officials and the White Paper committee was organized away from headquarters. It scrutinized the document almost word by word, made final amendments and gave a mandate to the minister to submit the amended draft document to Cabinet. This type of rigorous and lengthy political and professional approval of a policy proposal by a Ministry was unprecedented in the history of policy formation in Uganda. A similar approach by another Ministry had been far less rigorous. Top leaders in the ministry participated actively in the meeting, though the dominating style of some tended to instill fear among junior officials, who either remained silent or spoke with caution, fearing to appear to disagree with the views expressed by top officials and saying only what would be expected to be agreeable to those leaders.¹⁶

5.25 The second draft of the White Paper, dated April 1991, was discussed and approved in principle by Cabinet with minor amendments later on that year. The high degree of Cabinet's agreement with the document confirmed that areas of concern and controversy had been adequately addressed. The amendments made by Cabinet related to the issues of language policy for primary schools and the implementation of UPE. The third White Paper edition of April 1992 incorporated Cabinet's amendments and became the official government policy document.

5.26 It took two-and-a-half years after Cabinet's approval before the White Paper could be discussed by Parliament. There are two explanations for this long delay. The first was government's decision to de-emphasize education, health, sanitation and child protection during its early years and place priority on economic stabilization and reform and revitalization of the production sector. At the same time government—and the nation—were framing the constitution. These important reforms attracted most of the attention and resources of government and major donors. Second, though some of the non-controversial policies in the White Paper were already being implemented, because of the level of controversy surrounding policies such as the cost-sharing and the funding of boarding school education, especially among the vocal university students and the Kampala elites, government was slowing the speed of full implementation. This affected the overall speed of processing the White Paper through political institutions, especially at a time when donor-supported economic measures were causing hardships, and elections for the Constituent Assembly were underway.

5.27 Accelerating the pace of discussions on issues in the White Paper might have forced government to resolve the contradictions in simultaneously implementing UPE, which appealed to voters, and improving the quality of the existing education system, which many realized had to be done. Government was not at this time under pressure, either from its agenda for national reforms, from donors, or even from the public (including the media) to approve and implement the new education policy. Government, therefore, relaxed and moved slowly in initiating parliamentary debate on the White Paper and gave priority to bills the constitutional process, economic reforms, security, economic investment, and restoration of traditional leaders.

5.28 These two explanations notwithstanding, the two-and-a-half years of lost time between Cabinet and Parliamentary approval could have been avoided, especially if the policy-making exercise had been carried out according to a systematic master plan. In an interview, a leading educator and government official summed up the effects of the delay in approving the White Paper:

This kind of distribution of emphasis affected the processes of education policy formation and approval of the White Paper. Delayed approval of the White Paper also led to the loss of momentum, steam and public interest in the education reform process, that had been well built up. When the White Paper was discussed in (Parliament) in spite of the Minister's eloquence and superb presentation, the debate was already

overshadowed by other national issues. There has, therefore, been a danger of losing visibility of the education policy reform. The kind of guidance the country needed was not forthcoming from the legislature. Maybe it will be necessary to take more determined and bold initiatives in order to provide effective guidance to the process. On the other hand, implementation of selected decisions from the White Paper and others, has been untidy and piece-meal, mainly due to the absence of the necessary guidance. Although some of the reforms being implemented are generally fairly well coordinated, there is nevertheless a serious danger in dealing with problems in a piece-meal manner. It may take another year or two at least, before there is a return to a general debate and a concerted approach to effective dialogue on the new education policy and well coordinated and prioritized implementation of the same.

5.29 The parliamentary debate on the White Paper did not end with clear-cut, formal approval. The debate that took place was generally lively, although on some occasions it was marred by cheap politicking by some members who used it to catalogue commonplace problems of education in their own constituencies in the hope of being heard back at home through media coverage. Minor amendments to the White Paper were suggested. Government felt that Parliament would conclusively legislate.

Major benefits of the consultative process

5.30 The five-and-a-half years of dialogue and consultation resulted in significant deepening of the sectoral and national analysis done by the EPRC. By far, many more opportunities—some of them unprecedented in form and in essence—were provided for stakeholders to participate in the policy formation process. Much was done to take into account the interests, needs, and opinions of key stakeholders. Although full consensus on all issues, and particularly the contentious ones, is not possible, effective consensus has, however, been established on the overall policy and most issues. Even on issues like cost-sharing, where some limited opposition continues to come from small groups of university students and dons and from opposition politicians, there is broad consensus among the majority of citizens on the need for cost-sharing.

6 - DONORS AND DONOR COORDINATION

The donor-government round table

6.1 In July 1991, the World Bank and the Ugandan government cosponsored a round table of donors to education, which initiated at least 17 pre-investment studies, including studies on primary education and teacher development, primary school curriculum reform, secondary school science education reform, and instructional materials for technical education.

6.2 This meeting initiated a process of policy analysis and subsector policy formation that was not only outside the White Paper process but also ran parallel to and sometimes ahead of it. Donors had their own agendas and did not want to operate within the slower education policy formation process linked to the White Paper. They benefitted from the vacuum created by the absence of a government master plan or framework. Consequently, for example, the World Bank's study on primary education and teacher development resulted in a major policy component developed outside the priorities established by both the EPRC report and the White Paper. Another study by USAID entitled *Uganda Education Sector Review: Issues and Options* was done outside the policy formation process. Subsequently, the World Bank's Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS) project and USAID's Support Uganda's Primary Education Reform (SUPER) project became major reforms, moving ahead of the White Paper process.

6.3 Even more significant is that as a result of the dynamism and commitment of its experienced expatriate staff and detailed and well coordinated planning of the project, government's education policy implementation emphasis shifted from the issues of increased *access* to education (benefitting those out of school) to improving the *quality* of education (benefitting those already in school). Although the EPRC report and the White Paper recognized the importance of both access and quality, they gave more emphasis to the former.

6.4 Public statements by government have continued to emphasize access, especially to primary school. This was one of the justifications for cost-sharing at tertiary levels, so as to shift resources to the primary level. Yet the donor-driven re-allocation of emphasis to quality has meant that the focus and emphasis on UPE stated in the EPRC report and the White Paper has been played down during early implementation of policy decisions. Furthermore, donors have shown little, if any, interest in supporting UPE. So, as of now, the emphasis that has been placed on improving quality rather than access is likely to result in continued benefits for those who are lucky to have access to school and prolonged exclusion from the mainstream of formal education and social development of large sections of the people who are marginalized.

6.5 The argument for placing priority on improving the quality of primary schooling rather than on expansion does not carry the conviction and support that it would have had if this had been central in the public discussions on education policy.

Early implementation of selected policy decisions

6.6 The two-pronged approach to continuing dialogue while beginning implementation of selected policy decisions derived from the dynamics of the history of the education sector and from political and professional considerations and judgements of government officials and donors. Two kinds of policy decisions have been implemented before completion of the policy formation process.

- (a) Those on situations that have long generated public outcry and a widespread desire to act on them: increasing access for marginalized groups; democratization and decentralization of the management of educational institutions and the education system; improving teachers' conditions of service; rationalization of educational resource allocation and of the school map.
- (b) Those that required a lot of resources to implement and attract donors' interest and immediate support: primary education curricula reform and supply of instructional materials.

Donors' influence

6.7 Donors have been able to influence policy decisions such as reform of primary school and primary teacher training programs and improvement of education quality because

- (a) Donors are generally well organized, can negotiate effectively, and have strong resource bases.
- (b) In preparation for negotiations and other decisive events, they benefit from a culture of thorough analysis of the most minute aspect of the matter in question;
- (c) They select the best and most loyal professionals and skilled technical people from around the world, and remunerate them well, thus exercising powerful control over them.
- (d) They operate from positions of superiority given credence by historical experiences, particularly in their former colonies.

6.8 In countries like Uganda, the culture of serious research is still limited. Poverty is rampant and adversely affects even the professional elites, some of whom sell their labor to well-paying bidders from abroad, on almost any terms. The culture of thorough analysis, preparation for negotiations, record keeping, and appreciation of data are poorly developed, if at all. In this situation, donors are likely to dominate in policy selection, formation, implementation, and evaluation processes.

7 - IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOMES

7.1 Policy decisions taken outside government's consultative policy formation process do not conform to the implementation program, budgetary projections, and time line envisaged by the White Paper. This must be expected to cause problems in making financial commitment to implementing policies not foreseen in the White Paper.

7.2 The most important problems related to this approach, however, have to do with ownership and control of programs developed outside that process and the benefits of such programs. Several times, for example, implementation measures of USAID's SUPER project slackened because government could not remit its financial contributions on time, due to budgetary problems and uncoordinated planning of policies and actions. In such cases, USAID had to threaten to withhold its own contributions in order to push government to act.

7.3 It is not clear what will happen to donor-driven projects when foreign experts return to their own countries and the loans and grants run out. For example, when UNICEF support for the School Health Education Project (SHEP) ended this year, the project came to a halt in an untimely and untidy way. Also, donor priorities sometimes result in irrational implementation decisions. In 1990, curricula reform started with the secondary school mathematics syllabus because that is where donor interest lay at the time.¹⁷

7.4 Many complaints are heard from district-level people about their lack of involvement in government-donor decisions that they must implement. The negotiations are a monopoly of a few national bureaucrats and politicians. Unless this arrangement changes, problems with donor-supported interventions are likely to become worse with decentralization of administration to the districts.

7.5 These problems do not negate the crucial resources that donor interventions have brought to the education sector and the positive impact they have had. Nor do they imply that without donor interventions the situation would be better. In many cases, donors must be guided by their own agendas and push government bureaucrats to act and to maintain programs. Government operations and systems have weaknesses, in spite of which the NRM government—and the Minister of Education in particular—have maintained commendable overall control of the process of policy formation and critical decision-making.

7.6 Some concrete results are beginning to emerge from the implementation of policy decisions. For example, under the TDMS and SUPER projects, the grade three teacher training reform program is at an advanced stage. The construction of teachers colleges has begun, and the rehabilitation and expansion of selected primary schools to be used as coordinating schools is underway in a number of districts. A new Grade Three teachers' curriculum, which integrates pre-service and in-service training, is partly completed and in use, together with newly written teaching modules. Schools are receiving more textbooks, and communities are being mobilized to support the reform in primary education. Selected communities are being offered incentives to send girls to school and keep them there. In addition, cost sharing in tertiary institutions has been phased in. Some of the non-salary monies have been reallocated, with the released funds re-channeled to support the pedagogical needs of tertiary institutions and primary schools and to increase staff salaries.

7.7 Measures like these are beginning to have results, such improved scores on the primary school leaving examination, better morale among teachers and a willingness to remain in the teaching force, and higher standards, even in some of the rural schools. But it is too early to present a full assessment of the outcomes.

8 - CAPACITY BUILDING FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 A number of management training programs for ministry staff at senior and middle levels have been carried out with financial support from donors. The capacities of the EPU and the PIU are being improved through staff training, equipment, increased personnel, and use of expatriate advisors. The decentralization of administration, service delivery systems, and resources to the districts is increasing their capacity to implement reforms and respond to local needs. The minimum level of qualification for district education and inspection officials is being raised to university graduate. The Ministry of Education is undergoing restructuring. All these changes are intended to increase capacity to implement the policy reforms set forth in the White Paper, yet significant unresolved problems remain.

8.2 In order to implement the policy reforms of the White Paper, government and the Minister of Education has yet to build teams at headquarters and in the districts. Decentralization to the districts has made building these teams an urgent matter. The rigid administrative structure of headquarters and the predominantly conservative bureaucrats, gripped in a culture of timidity, tend to alienate anyone who tries to change the existing order. The few bureaucrats who do their best—and they have done a commendable job—are bogged down with day-to-day administrative duties and have little time for serious thinking, planning and coordinated management of the demanding policy reforms of the White Paper.

9 - LESSONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The innovative approach to education policy formation in Uganda resulted from a protracted struggle to end economic, social, and institutional breakdown, cultural alienation, moral degeneration, disregard for human rights, dictatorial rule, and undemocratic governance. In spite of the teething period and the inevitable problems noted in this paper, the Ugandan approach to education reform is progressive and developmental. The use of extensive dialogue, consultation, and debate among key stakeholders and all citizens, along with scientific policy analysis, have helped to establish consensus on policies and broaden the base of their ownership, thus increasing the likelihood their effective implementation. Such an approach should be consolidated and institutionalized.

9.2 The commission approach, in its original form, as the main method of policy formation has proved to be inadequate to effect fundamental change, especially when the paramount need is to establish and practice democratic governance and work methods. The traditional commission approach should therefore be modernized, divested of the trappings of conservatism, elitism, inflexibility, and temporariness.

9.3 A permanent institutional framework should be developed to facilitate continuous participatory policy analysis as well as policy formation, implementation, evaluation, and renovation—all designed for consensus building, endogenous policy formation, and ownership of the policies by citizens. This framework should facilitate both bottom-up and top-down initiation of policies, with greater emphasis on the former.

9.4 Existing systems, institutions, and mechanisms should be harnessed and adopted to the required institutional framework.

- (a) The Ministry of Education should develop a culture of data appreciation—of its importance and of thorough critical analysis of phenomena to the smallest detail. They need to help individuals develop the skills required for record-keeping, data collection, processing, dissemination and utilization.
- (b) The traditional methods and mechanisms for data collection should be reformed and updated in order to suit the needs of developing countries and their unique conditions.

9.5 UPE and basic nonformal education are the key catalyzing policies in an innovative and democratic approach to education. Government should do everything possible to implement these policies, beginning with UPE.

9.6 Ministries of education and governments as a whole should have in place master plans or broad frameworks to guide policy formation, donor-government negotiations, and the implementation of projects and programs. Then they should ensure that those plans are implemented. This will minimize the amount of time and resources needed and prevent uncoordinated actions, piecemeal development of policies and action plans, and their untidy implementation.

9.7 Donors' contributions to national development and to the education sector in particular is undoubtedly important and highly commendable, yet donor interventions have had some negative effects. Measures that could be tried to minimize these are:

- (a) Have donors invest in the development of the new approach to policy formation and institutional framework;

- (b) Get special support for capacity building in research at all levels of society, especially in areas where responsibility, power, and resources for planning and implementation of development programs are particularly needed;
- (c) Make donor-government negotiations more open and transparent to avoid contradictions between them and the processes of democratization and decentralization;
- (d) Help donors cease to use their agendas and conditionalities in a domineering and inflexible manner, thereby causing problems of uncoordinated action programs, waste of valuable resources and, above all, prevention of endogenous policy development.

9.8 More efforts should be made by government to encourage greater media participation in the processes of policy formation: dissemination of relevant information and gathering relevant data, information, and opinions. The media should be encouraged to make efforts to overcome narrow, superficial, and sensational journalism, sectarian reporting, distortion of truth and reality, and misinformation.

9.9 Sector review reports and resulting policy documents should be circulated at little or no cost to stakeholders, who should be encouraged to read and discuss them. Translated and abridged versions should be available.

9.10 During processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and action programs, everything possible should be done to eliminate the culture of domination by politicians, political and bureaucratic leaders, professional and wealthy elites, both inside and outside government, over junior public servants and ordinary citizens.

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1. Brett, E.A., 1978, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa*, Heinemann, pp.38-40.
 2. Lugard, Frederick, 1922, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*, W. Blackwood, London, pp.43-44, 613- 617, 608-10.
 3. Goldthorpe, J.E., 1966, *An African Elite: Makerere College Students 1922-1966*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, p.63.
 4. Ministry of Education, 1989, *Education for National Integration and Development: Report of the Education Policy Review Commission*, Kampala, p. ii. Henceforth, this report is referred to as *EPRC report*.
 5. National Resistance Movement (NRM) Secretariat, 1988, *Political Program of NRM: Two Years of Action*, NRM Publication, Kampala, p.35.
 6. *Ibid.*, See the whole of Chapter One: "NRM Political Programme".
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. For an extensive description of this process, see Evans, D. and Kajubi, S.W., "Education Policy Formation in Uganda: Continuity Amid Change", In Evans, D. (Ed), *Education Policy Formation in Africa: A Comparative Study of Five Countries*, USAID Technical Paper No. 12 of June 1994, Washington D.C.
 9. Based on interviews conducted for this study.
 10. According to the group of student-teachers interviewed by the author. They had participated in the discussion and had heard the professor give this explanation.
 11. EPRC report, p. 9.
 12. *White Paper*, pp. xi - xii.
 13. Levine, V. and Sentongo, C., 1989, *Report on Consultancy: Financing and Efficiency of Education in Uganda, 4th IDA Project*, Ministry of Education, Kampala.

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14. The author of the present report experienced such rebukes and reprimands directly. However, public dialogue was continued.
15. *White Paper*, p.43.
16. This culture of an intimidated bureaucracy had been evident at other times, and its pervasiveness in the civil service is well known. This was confirmed by complaints and opinions expressed by most people interviewed for this study. It is part of the wider culture of elitist and authoritarian management of public affairs and the related dictatorial dominance of conservative politicians and other elites which still lingers in Uganda's public life, in spite of NRM's efforts to eliminate it.
17. Based on an interview with the consultant who was unhappy about the Ministry's arrangement. When the consultant asked why the process did not start with the primary school curriculum, she was told that the process had to start somewhere, and there was

The formation of an effective national education policy is central in the approach adopted by many African countries to reform the education sector.

The DAE, in close cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development, has supported six case studies on the process of education policy formation in Africa.

The case studies, written by African researchers, reflect a variety of experiences in the cycle of policy formation, articulation, dissemination, and implementation in the following countries: Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Uganda.

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