



Economic & Social Rights Advocacy (ESRA) Brief

Dec 2015 - Issue 5



2016 General Elections:

**Vote 4 Education,
Vote 4 Health**



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Acknowledgements

The Economic and Social Rights Advocacy (ESRA) Brief is a biannual publication of the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) whose goal is to create awareness, encourage and stimulate national debate around social economic rights as well as act as a knowledge exchange platform for stakeholders and the broader Ugandan populace.

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Contents

4-7

Introduction

2016 General Elections:
Vote 4 Education, Vote 4Health

18-20

Dr. Kizza Besigye

(Forum for Democratic Change –
FDC)



8-13

Citizens' Voices



14-15

Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba,

(Independent Candidate)

22-25

Hon. Amama Mbabazi

(Independent Candidate)



26-29

H. E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

(National Resistance Movement –
NRM)



30-31

Ugandans deserve better than

“As Long As We Can Sleep”:
Citizen Manifesto 2016-2021

2016 General Elections: **Vote 4 Education, Vote 4 Health**



2016 General Elections: **Vote 4 Education, Vote 4 Health**



70 Year old Zaina Bakanansa, resident of Kyetume-Bukasa village, Nakisunga Sub-County Mukono District believes elections are just a waste of time.

“No Member of Parliament or Local Council Chairperson has made a difference in my life”, she says.

Bakanansa’s need is to have a health facility in her village “I am weak and sickly and unfortunately I cannot access a health facility. The private clinic close to my house is too expensive for me”.

The Mukono Health centre IV or Nazigo health centre III which are public health facilities are quite a distance from her house, several kilometres away. Her only hope would be in voting leaders with a manifesto that addresses her concerns but she has been disappointed many times. “I have participated in national elections but I don’t see the benefits. When I have health needs, I call on a Non- Governmental Organisation to get help and they are always responsive.” The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda gives citizens like Zaina Bakanansa power, to elect the political leaders of the country every after five years. Very soon, Ugandans shall elect political leaders – from the local level to the President.

The leaders we vote into power are crucial because they are responsible for initiating the country’s journey to meet key development milestones, including the 2nd National Development Plan (NDP II) and the National Action Plan on the Implementation of Human Rights. These initiatives promise more sustainable socio-economic development with a strong emphasis on a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) that leaves no citizen behind as the country implements its development agenda. These leaders will also kick start the journey to implement the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal three of the SDGs is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages, while goal four is to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote life-long learning.

As we prepare for the 2016 general elections we need to critically engage the people who seek to lead us for the next five years. Leaders seeking re-election should account for the last five years, indicating the measures adopted to protect and promote basic rights including education and health care. For the new comers, we need clear plans on how they are going to work towards the realization of these rights.

This is important in light of the challenges confronting the country: Uganda still suffers very high maternal mortality rates, with a ratio of 438/100,000 births. Government funding for Primary Health Care Services is grossly insufficient. In the 2014/2015 financial year, only 41.185 billion was allocated as recurrent budget to run service delivery in 137 Local Governments with 56 General Hospitals, 61 Private Not For Profit Hospitals and 4,205 lower health units. This is a major concern because local governments are at the forefront of delivering Primary Health Care in the country. Government has acknowledged in the 2014 Annual Health Sector Performance Report that the high incidence of out of pocket expenditure on health care negatively impacts on household incomes and affects household demand for, and access to, health care. As a mitigating strategy, government plans to introduce the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). While this is commendable, the proposed implementation plan is not without shortcomings one of these being that it is not all-inclusive as it proposes to first provide coverage to people who are formally employed with no clear timeline on when the scheme will enrol unemployed and other vulnerable groups including the elderly and orphaned children.

Uganda has been praised for introducing free Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE). These free schemes were hailed for promoting the right to education in the country and indeed registered some successes over the years – including an increase in the education enrolment rates countrywide, and improving the number of girls and children from poor families acquiring education. However over the years, the education sector has faced many challenges that threaten to erode the gains made and perpetuate exclusion of disadvantaged children if no remedial action is taken. The system had its emphasis on enrolment, with little regard to quality of education provided, as well as equality, non-discrimination, and pupil retention.

In this edition of the ESRA Brief, citizens from various parts of the country pose pertinent accountability questions to their leaders, and share their frustrations and expectations. We have reviewed the manifestos of the different presidential candidates to see what they say about the basic rights to education and health and how they plan to realize these rights. We do hope that citizens will use this information to hold their leaders and government accountable for progress made to date or the lack thereof. The brief concludes with highlights of the Citizen Manifesto.



They have no furniture but these children are still determined to have an education.



Pupils of Huuda Islamic School in Namutumba District deal with poor learning environment.

Citizens' Voices



Basic education, basic health care and clean water are some of the aspirations of Ugandans as the country prepares for the general elections from February-March 2016. Although many of the citizens who appear in this article expressed an appreciation for the peace and stability Uganda has now enjoyed for some years, they also yearn for a more prosperous nation. They voluntarily shared their daily struggles, dreams and aspirations; recounting countless unfulfilled promises by political leaders. Although, some doubted whether their lives will be improved by new political leadership, they at least hope against hope that one day their social and economic lives will be transformed.

The most shocking outcome of this interview was to discover that some interviewees did not know the importance of voting. One interviewee said, "I vote because it is time to vote", which shows that many Ugandans need more civic education.

Below are views of citizens drawn from the districts of Kayunga, Mbale, Mukono, Iganga, Rukungiri, Kyenjojo and Kampala.



Samwanga John

There is so much noise around this election but no one is talking about how they will improve our lives. None of the parties is talking about improving agriculture. I am a farmer. My job matters a lot to me. I want a government that takes agriculture very seriously. No lip service, just real talk. We need good seeds that will yield better. Sadly, farmers have been ignored especially some of us who do it on a small scale.

Also, transporting our food stuff to the market is also very important so we need a tarmac road. Well, the manifestoes are not out yet but I am not sure they will capture my needs. Any political party that promises to improve agriculture by giving us good seeds I will vote for that party. Other than that, I will never vote.



Nakaliisa Epephania

I have a long list of needs; hospitals, pipe water and good schools. However, wealth creation is my priority. I want the people of Busana Sub-County to generate their own wealth. Government should support people here so that they can make their own money. That will be my only motivation to vote. So far no political party has spoken about how they will support people here to create their own wealth. I am patiently waiting to hear from them.

Matiya Iswaya

Busana sub- county needs many things; a hospital, roads and water. Personally, I will vote for a candidate that focuses heavily on education. Many children complete Secondary School yet they don't find any work. So the education we have now is more or less useless. Many graduates are not skilled to do anything. I will vote for anyone who will focus on building technical schools in my sub-county so that the youth will have something very useful to do.

The party I will vote for has promised to do that. Although they did not fulfill all the promises they made previously, I will give them another chance because they implemented Universal Primary Education. I believe they will fulfill all their promises this time around. I want the youth to stay here and work and not always run to Kampala and become Boda Boda (commercial motorbike) riders.

I don't care about whether one man has been President for a very long time, the only thing I care about is service delivery.



Segero Paul

I am a farmer. I want the next government to build hospitals. My sister died a very painful death. We were rushing her to the hospital when she died. I also know many people who have died because they could not reach the nearest health centre. The only thing that concerns me is a good hospital. We need a good hospital that will also give us medicine. If we had a nearby hospital, I believe my sister would be alive today. We also need very good roads too. We need political parties to give us a road map of how they are going to achieve the promises they make. We have heard too many stories.

Kelementi Ochwo

The youth here have nothing to do except farming. Our farming is not supported by the government. We need government support. However, education is my first priority in this sub-county. Many students drop out after secondary school and others after primary school. We need a government to keep children in school so that they become valuable in the community. Education is the key. Our political parties should tell us the plan they have for us so we can ask questions.



Tongu Julius

The only thing I care about is my cattle. I will only vote because it is time to vote. Do we vote for political parties because we want them to do something for us? Please tell me because I don't know.

Answer: Yes you vote to elect leaders so that you get a better life. If that is the reason then, I need water but who do I tell? This is very confusing. I have always voted because it is time to vote.

Ejongani John

Just look at the bad roads we have here. When it rains, vehicles don't come here at all because of the terrible nature of the road. I will only vote in the upcoming election if candidates promise to tarmac the road in front of my house. I care about national development but I care about where I live more. We have been promised too many times but now we are fed up. I may not queue to vote if my road remains in its current bad state. I also need a nearby clinic in my community and clean water.



Florence Nywacho

I don't know why I vote. I only vote because I am asked to vote. I even voted in the last election. My pressing need is potable water. The borehole in the community is just one so many of us are forced to form long queues and wait for a long time before getting water. Currently, it is raining so we have enough water but after the rainy season we have to queue for a long time to get water.



Wafula Bernard

I really want Uganda to develop. I want to see good roads and hospitals because we lack many of these things here. I want my children to have very good education so that they become responsible in the future. However, lack of these things will not inform my decision to vote for a particular candidate, I would rather vote for someone who will maintain peace in Uganda. Historically, Uganda has gone through a lot. I don't ever want us to revisit those days of war. I want to live peacefully. Roads, schools, hospitals are important; I need them I won't lie to you. But I will never trade peace for anything. I want peace. So I will vote for peace.

Question: Are any of the candidates preaching war?

No one is preaching war but it is clear that when I vote for the party that I have in mind there will be peace. So I will vote for that party. Don't be mistaken I still need piped water!

Anyone who brings me soap and salt for the election I will gladly accept their gift, thank them and vote for the candidate of my choice. Politicians have taken us for granted for a long time. My village was promised electricity but it was partially fulfilled. Not all of us have electricity. Government should give all of us electricity and also construct our road. As you drive out, you will see many people queuing to fetch water. We have just one borehole for more than 2,000 people so we need more water.

Egumann Ivan

It's my constitutional duty to participate in the electoral process. Besides, I am a duly registered voter. Since I am both directly & indirectly affected by the decisions of leaders of the day, it's prudent that I participate in choosing the leaders. I expect them to implement their manifestos. A good elected leader is one who implements his manifesto. I also expect an elected leader to give priority to improving key sectors, health, education, and infrastructure & promote social justice. Well, our MP tried to fight social injustice but it was not enough. Practically he has done nothing. So, I would vote him out. But the decision will also be informed by who the other candidates contesting for that seat are. So, whether I would vote him out is on a balance of probabilities. I need to assess him against the other candidates.



Hanisa

Our borehole in Butiti (Kyenjonjo) broke down and we convinced our local leaders to fix it. They promised to fix it many months ago, but later they came to us ordering us to contribute money and fix it ourselves. We contributed but the money was too little so we could not repair the borehole. Now we don't have any choice but to fetch water from a very dirty pond. That is the reason why it would be difficult for me to spend time to queue and vote. I will only vote if the borehole is repaired. Also, our road is in a terrible state and until it is repaired I won't vote.



Tugume Aggrey

Most politicians have good manifestos but they do not implement them at all. This time around I do not expect any positive change from these leaders. I want to vote for change in leadership but the alternative candidates have not ably addressed concerns I have in agriculture, health, education, eradication of poverty and corruption. I will vote for the candidate who exhibits the capacity to address these issues.

Victoria Kaalo

Your child will die if you don't buy medicine, Twakalaba". That is what a nurse told me at the Mbale Regional Referral Hospital. "I just broke down into tears because at that moment my child's life depended on a few shillings. I was very lucky a Doctor came to my rescue and ordered nurses to give my child some medicine. Later, I had to buy medicine to save my son's life. This experience will influence how I cast my ballot next year. My child would have died because of little money. I was fortunate but I am not sure I would always be fortunate so I will vote for a party that will cares about healthcare".

Lukalango Paul

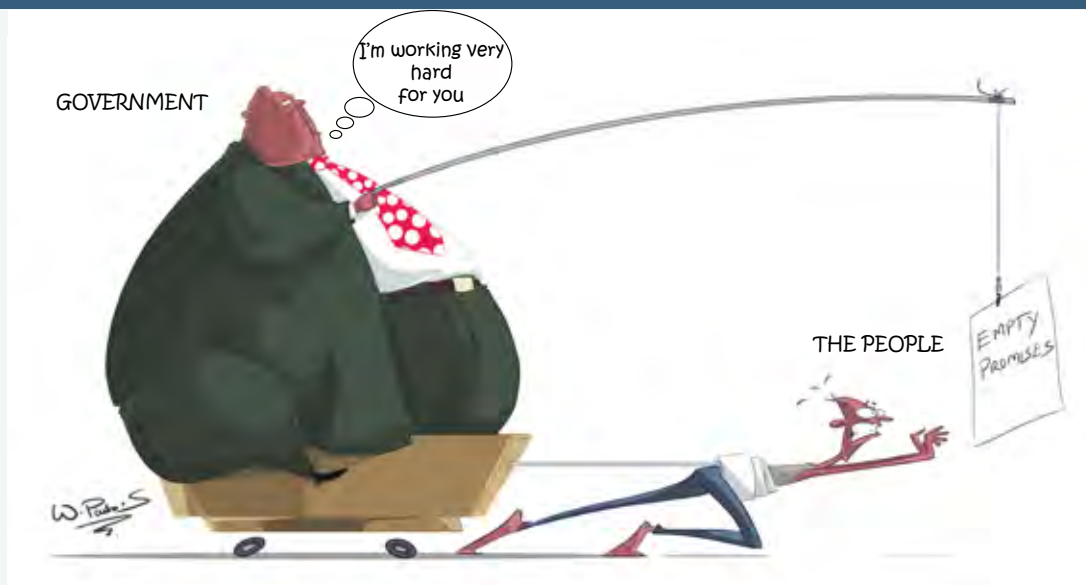
Iwant leaders to address health and creation of jobs for the youth of this country. I will vote out those who have been in power for more than 10 years because they have served their time and if they have failed to deliver, it's fair that others get a chance to serve. I think that after 10 years being in power, ideas run out and one is unable to deliver. I want "fresh blood" to be given a chance. That is why I will vote, to participate in the process of change. My worry is that the Electoral Commission is not competent enough to ensure a free and fair electoral process.

Patrick Lule

My main focus is the Local Council 1 leadership because they are directly responsible for problems in my community. Some of our Local Council leaders should not contest for the seat again because they have failed woefully. Even construction of toilet stances for a school in the Kyampisi Sub County was shoddy. Some Mukono leaders are self-seekers not servants to the electorate.



Vote 4 Service Delivery



Many Ugandans don't have access to potable water. As seen in this picture, a lady collects water from a dirty pond in Butiti Sub County, Kyenjojo District.



Maternal Health Care is a major problem in Uganda. This man called Benon lost his wife because he could not get her to a hospital which is 30 kms away.

Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba,

(Independent Candidate)



➤ According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Ministerial Policy Statement for FY2014/15, the national classroom deficit stood at 39,788.

Education:

Prof Baryamureeba makes a strong promise of prioritizing education by devoting 20 percent of the national budget to this cause. Professor Baryamureeba has also promised better remuneration of teachers as a motivation to provide quality education. He will review teachers' salaries to encourage more people to join the profession. The manifesto also states that provision of lunch will be made compulsory in all schools and parents will be encouraged to share the cost of providing lunch in primary schools. He has also promised to completely overhaul the educational system by reducing primary school education to 6 years. In his vision, within 6 years of primary education children should know how to read, write and master arithmetic before progressing to secondary school.

Under Prof Baryamureeba's government, Information Communication Technology (ICT) will be compulsory in all education institutions. According to Prof. Baryamureeba's manifesto, all students who finish primary education will be allowed to join ordinary level secondary education conducted over four (4) years; after which, it will be compulsory for all students to sit for the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE). After successful completion of UCE, students would have the option of joining either vocational/ technical institutions or advanced level secondary schools for a further duration of three years and students who successfully concluded this level would acquire a diploma. The pre-university education system envisaged by Prof Baryamureeba would be restructured to a 6-4-3 system.

ISER Analysis

Basic education, in particular Universal Primary Education (UPE), is one the areas that has suffered as a result of very low funding. The government has allocating an average 7,000shs (about two dollars) capitation grant per child per annum since the UPE's inception; this money is earmarked for the general running of primary schools. The school facilitation grant allocated for construction of classrooms, teachers' houses, and latrines among other things is also insufficient. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Ministerial Policy Statement for FY2014/15, the national classroom deficit stood at 39,788. There are many classes that take place in non-classroom environments, and many pupils study and write exams on the school compound under trees. There is also acute shortage of furniture with many pupils sitting on the floor. For example, When ISER visited Alwala Primary school in Apac District in July 2014, we witnessed a population of 735 pupils sharing only 35 desks; Awir Primary school with a population of 1584 pupils has only 70 desks.

Health:

Recognising that Uganda's health sector is ailing mainly because of insufficient funding and corruption, Professor Baryamureeba has promised to devote 16 percent of the national budget to the health sector. The large allocation is meant to strengthen healthcare systems in the country. His manifesto targets reduction in child mortality, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

His government will find creative ways to improve the sector including:

- Investing in the national health system by rehabilitating national and regional referral hospitals, community hospitals and health centres as well as constructing new ones.
- Investing in the latest medical equipment, theatres and laboratories.
- Reviewing the remuneration of personnel including doctors, nurses and other health professionals.
- Recruiting more health professionals especially doctors to improve the doctor to patient ratio.
- Provision of holistic treatment, palliative care and support to those living with terminal diseases including cancer and HIV/AIDS among others.

ISER Analysis

Professor Baryamureeba's proposed allocation of 16 percent of the national budget to the health sector is in fulfilment of the Abuja 2001 Declaration that requires African States to commit at least 15 percent of their national budget to the health sector. He speaks of corruption but doesn't provide a plan for fighting the vice in the health sector.



The ultimate goal is to make children happy as they study in good environment.



Dr. Kizza Besigye

(Forum for Democratic Change – FDC)



> FDC moves to
spend heavily on
Education

By the time we went to press, three weeks into the presidential campaigns, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) was yet to formally launch its manifesto. However officials in the party tell us that their document is based on the party's platform, Uganda's leap forward, which was launched in March 2015. In that document, the party undertakes to rebuild the education system to make it responsive to regional and global competitiveness.

The document further states “...the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 was a positive policy that boosted primary school enrolment. [This and other policies] are all commendable initiatives that could boost our regional and global competitiveness if only we had a government and leadership that appreciates the importance of quality education in national development.” The party explains that the challenges learners face under these programmes are due to excessive politicization and inadequate allocation of resources.

On his campaign stops, the party’s presidential candidate, Dr. Kizza Besigye, has pledged to improve the education system by updating the curriculum. “We shall examine the syllabus and include subjects that are relevant to the future of our children, such as Information Communication Technology (ICT) in primary schools,” he said. “Indeed we shall make sure every pupil gets a laptop computer and the necessary books that they need to excel in school.”

Dr. Besigye also wants all pupils to get a school lunch, which is not the case currently with the result that learners are at the mercy of their parents, especially in needy areas. “How can you pretend to be teaching, when the learners are hungry?” he asked, to loud applause from would-be voters in Rukungiri.

In a move similar to that of the current government, the FDC is pledging to spend substantial sums of money to improve schools and turn them into centres of excellence, in order to achieve “...education transformation across the country”. The leader of the largest opposition party in the country has also pledged to invest in building a teacher workforce that has confidence, pride and motivation, since teachers are the frontline actors in the delivery of our education policy. “The starting salary of a primary school teacher will be Shs 1m,” Besigye declared, during a rally in Ntungamo in November 2015.

The FDC is also planning to invest substantially in the education sector to make quality education affordable for all children across the country. “At the core of FDC’s education ideology is the belief that parents and the State have a shared responsibility for delivering a quality and rewarding education for the Nation’s children,” reads the party platform.

ISER Analysis

The information released by FDC so far, makes for interesting reading and listening; however until the final party manifesto is released, there is no way of knowing what the final party position will be. Dr. Besigye speaks to the major challenges confronting the education sector including low pay for teachers, revising the curriculum to make education more meaningful, provision of school meals and investing in technology. The FDC is considering upgrading almost all primary schools across the country but the specifics are scanty.

Expect a responsive health system

The FDC party is undertaking to rebuild the health system to make it responsive to the needs of Ugandans. The party is advocating for what it calls a “smart” national health services delivery system; built around a robust health services physical infrastructure, quality medical and support personnel, availability of drugs and other essential supplies; and an inspectorate system that is capable of detecting and correcting failures within the system. “The health services system under FDC-led government must consider the citizen as the central focus and include a complete package: treatment; diagnosis; prevention; education; research and outreach,” reads the document.

The party goes on to explain its rationale. “During the 1960s and 1980s, Uganda’s health service system was one of the best on the continent. Our nation’s referral system functioned through a network of hospitals built across the country with Mulago National Referral Hospital as the “nerve centre” of the system.” The FDC believes that with the failing of that referral system, more financially well-heeled patients prefer treatment abroad; however, there is scope for a drastic improvement in health care.

FDC plans to support it by first engaging the health workers. “Our health workforce is the least motivated within the East African Community, due to poor pay and appalling working conditions,” the document continues. In his campaign rallies, the party’s presidential candidate, Dr. Kizza Besigye has pledged to drastically improve the welfare of health workers, with the starting pay, set at Shs 1.5m for a nurse and Shs 2.5m for a doctor. “Their poor welfare is the reason that you either survive or die in the hospitals and health centres ... we want every Ugandan to have a chance at survival,” he said, during a campaign stop in Ntungamo in November 2015. The party also plans to spend extensively to rehabilitate severely compromised hospitals to relieve pressure on the Mulago National Referral Hospital.

Dr. Besigye has severally also pledged to ensure that women enjoy improved reproductive health services. “There is no plausible reason why we should continue to lose women who are trying to give life ... this will have to stop completely – our women deserve better,” he said. He has also pledged to find financing to increase the number of nurses and midwives available to patients on the ward.“ As a doctor myself I can tell you that we need more health workers and especially nurses to assist patients ... imagine one nurse dealing with 200 patients,” he said, during a campaign stop in Iganga in November 2015.

The party is also planning to establish a nation-wide emergency ambulance and air rescue service accessible by all citizens, as well as a market-based and socially responsive health insurance scheme to ensure coverage for all citizens who do not have insurance from private health service providers or work-based insurance schemes. According to the party platform, this service will pay particular attention to the special needs of women and the girl child.

“After over two decades of sustained investment by Ugandan taxpayers ... only 44 percent of pregnant mothers are delivered by skilled birth attendants. The emergence of a private hospital system and private health services may be a great relief but cannot be a substitute for a functioning public health service.”

The party platform concludes by assuring all people in Uganda that the health system under an FDC government shall be driven by the goal of ensuring that every individual citizen has the ability to enjoy a high-quality life for as long as possible.



Ailing health care. Two children share one hospital bed.

Hon. Amama Mbabazi

wants an overhaul of the education system .



➤ “We shall build more schools and classrooms in order to reduce our current student-classroom ratio from 120-150:1 to 35-40:1.”

While launching his manifesto on 22nd November 2015, Former Prime Minister, Amama Mbabazi, said that rather than dismantle the Universal Primary Education programme, he intends to improve it. He said further, “we undertake to work with civil society and the international community to find ways for parents and guardians to contribute to the full implementation of UPE by providing food, uniforms and transport for their children,” he said. “Where schools do not exist, children study in poor conditions with no classrooms, no meals and many times without teachers and adequate scholastic materials...There is no way that a pupil will gain insight without a textbook or knowledge without a teacher...this must be addressed urgently.”

Hon. Mbabazi acknowledged that government needs to make the more significant contribution to improving the quality of education. “We will increase capitation grants to realistic levels for both government and private schools that are in public private partnerships,” he said. “We shall build more schools and classrooms in order to reduce our current student-classroom ratio from 120-150:1 to 35-40:1. These new schools will be built to replace all schools that do not meet the required standards.” Mbabazi explained that some of the changes are intended to stem the high dropout rate: he claims that approximately 71 per cent of pupils in primary schools across the country ultimately drop out, while the general completion rate for UPE is at about 54%, with the majority of those dropping out being girls.

For this reason, Hon. Mbabazi proposes a study programme to be implemented in partnership with parents, community leaders, civil society and development partners, aimed at addressing the causes of the alarming drop-out rates of young girls in primary school, and seeking to remedies to reverse this dangerous trend. “Most of the children who join primary school never complete secondary school. This mainly affects the girl child. We must change this.” But the best news is reserved for the teachers who have been advocating for an increment in pay for over five years. “We undertake to recruit and train new teachers coupled with restructuring of their remuneration with the aim of reducing the teacher-student ratio.”

Pre-primary Education

Pre-primary education caters for children aged 3-5 years. It has been largely urban based, with little or no presence in the rural areas; moreover, it has never been regulated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MOESTS). Hon. Mbabazi says he is unhappy that pre primary education is expensive for many Ugandans and characterised by inadequate providers and a shortage of teachers. “We shall gradually introduce nursery sections in all government-aided primary schools...[and] support and strengthen partnerships with the private sector to ensure quality education at pre-primary level,” he said. “Our government will develop a pre-primary education policy with a curriculum that has set standards and includes basic ICT skills. We shall institutionalize and provide adequate support for training of nursery care-givers and teachers in our Teacher Training Colleges.”

Hon. Mbabazi argues that all the anticipated changes will not be possible without other cross cutting changes. These include a robust monitoring, supervision and inspection of schools system, which he intends to enforce. “We shall empower the mandates of the District Education Officers and School Inspectors in each district to include annual performance appraisals of all head teachers...so that they are able to deliver quality education,” he said.

He also wants the government to increase the Education budget from 14% to 20% of the national budget, in line with the Dakar World Forum for Education 2000.

Finally, Hon. Mbabazi feels that children are unlikely to meet their ambitions in the future without an overhaul of the current curriculum for all formal schooling up to tertiary level. “The goal is to implement a new school curriculum which is responsive to ICT knowledge and the information based economy of the 21st century. The more people get educated and develop marketable skills, the faster our economy grows and the better our services become.”

ISER Analysis

Hon. Mbabazi acknowledges the importance of early childhood development as well as prioritizing the retention of pupils, particularly girl children, within the education system. If successful, he proposes to develop pupil-responsive policy and strategy, to develop curricula more aligned with contemporary needs, and to adopt robust monitoring, supervision and inspectorate systems.

Hon. Mbabazi believes that a multi-stakeholder approach in which government takes the lead in concert with parents, civil society and donor partners, is the most effective way to resolve the challenges confronting education by leveraging funds and sharing responsibilities. He proposes increasing capitation grants to expand the number of schools and bring down current school-teacher-pupil ratios.

While Hon. Mbabazi does not have the advantage of a track record, the proposals he puts forward are commendable; moreover, since he proposes an allocation of 20% of the national budget to education in line with the Dakar World Forum for Education 2000, more resources would be available to improve education in Uganda. However, Mbabazi would do well to remember that teachers and education administrators are frontline implementers of any policy and curriculum; therefore, their terms of service and remuneration should be given equal attention.

Uganda is ready for a drastic health improvement

Hon. Mbabazi is proposing a voluntary health insurance that would be made available at all sub-counties in the country. Mbabazi says the scheme will, “increase access to health care, while reducing the burden of catastrophic health spending particularly for low-income earners”. He explains that the scheme will be based on the principles of equity, social solidarity, community ownership and democratic control, within the framework of the advanced Sub-County model. “The key factor considered is that it will be family-based enrolment aimed at encouraging risk sharing (having more people on the scheme and thus profiting from economies of scale) and limiting adverse selection that leaves out those in hard to reach areas.” Through this Mbabazi hopes to cut down on the 5,900 women (an average of 16 a day) lost to maternal deaths every year.

Hon. Mbabazi says he has noted that malnutrition is a big problem in a country that should be capable of feeding itself comprehensively. “The most frequent victims are young children and the elderly. Studies have shown that malnutrition costs Uganda almost \$1 billion every year in lost productivity. This translates to almost 6% of our gross domestic product...addressing malnutrition in adults as well as children will not only save lives but will enable more of our citizens to be fully productive.”

In addition to addressing malnutrition, he has pledged to deploy more funds towards eradicating, through immunization, the six killer diseases among children, and other major health challenges contributing to infant mortality including among others Malaria, HIV/AIDS, cholera, dengue fever and yellow fever.

Hon. Mbabazi has also pledged drastic measures to increase funding for the health sector. For instance, he intends to do away with the over \$150m (Shs 510bn) currently spent annually on VIPs seeking healthcare abroad. He proposes to deploy this money in domestic health centres to improve existing standards. He anticipates that the funds will be used in the following way: “our government will construct and equip an ultra modern hospital with excellent, well motivated staff using funds spent on treatment abroad; health facilities will be renovated and equipped to acceptable standards to more effectively treat all ailments; health worker remunerations, benefits and incentives will be restructured to encourage healthcare professionals to seek and retain employment in Uganda”.

Hon. Mbabazi has pledged to find funding for a minimum healthcare package (MHP) for all Ugandans that will include control of communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure; the management of childhood illnesses; sexual and reproductive health and rights; immunization mental health services, essential clinical care, and a robust real time Health Information Management System.

To deal with staff shortages, Mbabazi intends to recruit 25,000 new primary healthcare workers to bridge the current manpower gap in the sector.

The Mbabazi government is also planning a rural medical deployment programme. "We shall introduce a new programme in which eligible doctors will receive special incentives to work in rural areas. This programme will begin by targeting general practitioners, dentists, paediatricians and gynaecologists."

ISER Analysis

Hon. Mbabazi's proposed healthcare reforms tick all the right boxes: he envisages a public healthcare system committed to reducing maternal and infant mortalities through improved reach of facilities, services and professionals equipped to offer widespread immunization, nutrition assistance and targeted disease control programmes.

Hon. Mbabazi further commits to allocate the millions of shillings spent on VIP healthcare abroad to improving local healthcare infrastructure. He aims to prioritize the employment conditions and remuneration of healthcare professionals to make this a more appealing career path and to discourage healthcare skills flight out of Uganda. He commits to offering a broad-based insurance scheme to increase healthcare coverage and he intends to prioritize rural coverage through a rural medical deployment programme.

There is little criticism that one can level against Hon. Mbabazi's healthcare plan; what remains to be seen, however, is how well Mbabazi would translate this plan into action if he proves successful at the polls.

H. E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

(National Resistance Movement – NRM)



Education:

President Museveni's NRM says for the next five years government will improve quality of education across the board by reviewing the education system to align it with the current and future manpower skills requirements. To achieve this, NRM has prioritized the re-training of unemployed graduates to fit job market needs.



the policy of having a primary school per parish as well as continue with the construction of classrooms to meet the targets of 50:1 pupil classroom and teacher-pupil ratios.

President Museveni's government will continue implementing the policy of having a primary school per parish as well as continue with the construction of classrooms to meet the targets of 50:1 pupil classroom and teacher-pupil ratios. President Museveni's team have also promised to increase the budget allocated to textbooks and scholastic materials with a view to reduce pupil-text book ratio in line with the set standards.

The NRM has also promised to establish a semi-autonomous body to oversee school inspections. The new body will be conferred powers to compel district officials to take action on its reports and to refer for government action those who fail to implement its recommendations. Between 2016 and 2021, the NRM government has pledged to gradually increase teachers' pay to competitive levels to enhance professional commitment and morale. The manifesto states that the pay rise will grow progressively over the years until increments accumulate to 50% of a teacher's initial salary.

The NRM government has pledged to promote e-learning and computer literacy in order to enhance learning outcomes as well as increase focus on vocational and skills' training.

In response to high drop out rates among girls on account of a lack of sanitary towels, the NRM government says it will offer free sanitary pads.

ISER Analysis

President Museveni has been in power for the last 31 years. He is seeking re-election unlike all the other presidential candidates. This means that one has to examine his manifesto against the context of the promises he has made over the last three decades and an assessment of how his track record in terms of successful implementation of electoral promises. President Museveni's promise of having a primary school per parish is not new. This has been stated in his previous manifestos hence the language of "will continue implementing". A major barrier in terms of access to education is the extensive distance that many children have to walk to attend primary school. ISER staff were in Kween in July 2015 for a field visit and discovered that in Giriki Sub County In Kween District, there is not a single school – government or private. Children have to walk to the next district (Amudat) to access schooling. The terrain is so bad that many children drop out of school because they can't handle the distance. Children with disabilities are excluded completely because all the schools we visited did not have special needs teachers or equipment.

It is commendable that the President is committing to increase the budget for textbooks and other scholastic materials because when ISER visited schools in the districts of Namutumba, Luuka and Kween in July 2015, not a single school visited had a library.

The NRM government pledge to enhance teachers' salaries is another priority that has been promised before in vain prompting teachers to strike countrywide. We shall wait to see what the teachers and their umbrella organization, the Uganda National Teachers Union, make of this commitment by NRM.

Promoting e-learning and computer literacy while a noble ambition cannot occur unless and until the entire country's energy needs are adequately addressed by electrification or solar installation. This is a major challenge especially for children in rural areas and from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is usually children in urban settings that benefit from such arrangements further entrenching inequalities.

The provision of sanitary towels to schoolgirls to reduce unnecessary disruptions to their learning is long overdue and most welcome. It is great to see that the NRM party is considering this as one way to discourage girls from dropping out of school.

Health:

The NRM policy on health is that all Ugandans should have access to high quality health care in order for each one of them to contribute to social and economic development.

The manifesto states that Uganda will start a National Ambulance System. Instead of every health centre having an ambulance, which is normally abused by the In-Charge (head) of the health units, the National Ambulance System will have ambulances in strategic areas coordinated by a command centre. Health units in need of ambulance services will call the command centre, which will in turn send the ambulance nearest to that health unit.

In addition, the NRM has promised to start a phased implementation of the Universal Health Insurance Scheme.

Further, the NRM says it will undertake the rehabilitation and construction of many hospitals across the country including a women's Hospital at Mulago, Mulago National Referral Hospital, Kawolo, Kayunga, Yumbe, Uganda/East Africa Cancer Institute and National Laboratory Centre.

The NRM will provide beds, mattresses, side lockers, medical blankets and bed sheets to all hospitals within the current financial year.

Other deliverables include:

Continued implementation of the health infrastructure policy relating to setting up and functionalising Health Centre IVs in every political constituency and Health Centre III's per Sub-County. Health Centre II's in Sub Counties without Health Centre III's will be upgraded and expanded in line with the policy to have Health Centre III's in every Sub-County. Scaled up installation of oxygen generation plants to all regional referral hospitals and general hospitals.

Conclude construction and equip the Uganda Cancer Institute as well as establish specialised Radio-diagnostic and cancer treatment centres at Mbale, Mbarara, Gulu and Arua Regional Referral and Teaching hospitals.

Complete expansion, construction, equipping and staffing of the Uganda Heart Institute.

Recruit community health extension workers and place two at every Parish.

Recruit health workers to 100% staffing level by 2018.

Continuously improve the remuneration of health workers, especially those in hard-to-reach parts of the country. Increase funding to National Medical Stores. Currently, government supplies medicines and drugs to all Health Centre III's and IV's every two months.

ISER Analysis

President Museveni's manifesto is spot on. It speaks to almost all of the challenges confronting the health service delivery in Uganda today. If all the above were to be implemented as spelled out, then Uganda will make important strides in realizing the right to health. Funding is a major impediment to health care service delivery in Uganda, with the local governments being the most affected. Uganda's health budget has averaged 8 percent of the national budget in the last five years, which is short of the 2001 Abuja Declaration of 15 percent commitment by African States. Medical referrals abroad for government officials consume billions of shillings that could be used to strengthen the health sector.

Another important factor in health service delivery that President Museveni highlights is the National Health Insurance, which he intend to implement in a phased system.

However, a crucial consideration that is overlooked is the issue of the scheme's financing and sustainability plan. We need an elaborate articulation of the plan and how the phased implementation will work to ensure that eventually no one is left behind as per the language of the post 2015 development agenda.

Recruitment, remuneration and retention of health workers is one of the concerns that the NRM government has failed to address for the last 30 years. Unfulfilled promises of this nature have lead to numerous strikes and migration of health workers (brain drain) to countries that have favourable policies, including neighboring Rwanda among others. This invariably and significantly reduces the size of Uganda's health workforce, leading to overcrowding at public health facilities and resulting in preventable deaths. It is time for government to move beyond promises by effectively implementing policies aimed at creating tangible outcomes.



Call it curiosity, call it a child with dreams, call it the reflection of life experiences. What do you see?

Ugandans deserve better than “As Long As We Can Sleep”: Citizen Manifesto 2016-2021

Note: The only publication reference is the Citizen Manifesto, some page numbers are indicated in brackets for ease of reference.

Ugandans say they deserve better than just ‘kasita twebaka otulo’ meaning ‘as long as we can sleep’, pointing out that they need their social and economic needs addressed as well (pages 10-11). Though people in Uganda appreciate the prevailing peace and stability in the country, they also need prosperity.


This sentiment is contained in the Citizen Manifesto for 2016- 2021 coordinated by the Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform under the leadership of the Uganda National NGO Forum. The Citizen’s Manifesto was arrived at after consultations with 50 civil society organisations and 20,000 citizens nationwide (page 5). The Manifesto contains ordinary citizens’ aspirations for the country and calls on whichever political party that wins the upcoming 2016 national elections to get to work immediately. The citizen manifesto was launched on 9th November 2015 at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

According to the Citizen Manifesto, breakdown in service delivery is a major problem confronting the nation (page 9). After 53 years of independence, the country is still yearning for basic services such as hospitals, schools, good roads, clean water among many others needs.

The document underscored the fact that although the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government had tried to invest in basic services, evidence shows limited success. The Citizen Manifesto cited the Universal Primary Education (UPE) introduced in 1997 as a good initiative, but highlighted that it is currently suffering because of poor financial investment (page 9). It is argued in the Manifesto that though the UPE created opportunity for millions of children to enroll in primary one, the system still struggles to account for over 16 million children who abandon their education before completing primary seven (page 9).

In addition, the Manifesto cites low budget allocation to health centres as an impediment to the retention of qualified and motivated staff. Low drug stock in the health centres and a lack of basic equipment also negatively affects health care delivery.

Beyond service delivery, the Citizen Manifesto states that Ugandans have also lost faith in the empty promises made by political parties including NRM to eradicate and entrench zero tolerance of corruption – Ugandans yearn to see real, concerted action against corruption not merely lip service. “... We see half-hearted commitments, isolated prosecutions of alleged corrupt public servants, and generally lack of will to take political responsibility for failure to stop the theft of public funds” (page 21).



This is a serious concern: according to the manifesto 24 trillion UGX has been lost to corruption in the last ten years, which is enough to pay for the construction of six hydroelectric dams to generate more power for industrialization (page 10). The document states that citizens are unhappy with the arbitrary discrepancies in civil servant's salaries with Members of Parliament allocated huge salaries while for example health professionals and teachers earn very low wages. To illustrate this point, and a Member of Parliament's salary and allowance for one month can pay the monthly salaries of 145 primary school teachers (page 3).

In relation to employment, the manifesto states that with 75 percent of the youth unemployed, many become desperate and fall into the trappings of wicked employers who exploit their situation by offering low wages if any (page 6). For instance, many young girls have reportedly been smuggled to Gulf States where they are subjected to emotional and physical abuse and work under violent conditions. The most heart breaking news is that "Uganda government recently officially signed memoranda for exporting Ugandan graduate girls to work as housemaids in the same region" (page 20). The document says such abusive actions and many more that go unreported completely negate the dreams for a New Uganda.

Demands in the Manifesto related to health and education

In light of the many challenges highlighted above, the Citizen Manifesto asserts that Ugandans now demand the following:

- Improving access to quality compulsory education at primary and secondary school level. Investment in vocational training and transition-to-the-job-market programmes evidenced through appropriate budgetary allocations shall be the basis for supporting any political party or Government (page 19).
- Improving health services delivery system to ensure survival of mothers giving birth, the survival rates and health of our Nation's children, and the productivity of our Nation's labour force (page 19).
- Demand for the establishment of a national health services delivery system and a national health insurance scheme to support and deliver a robust health services infrastructure, the quality of medical and support personnel, availability of drugs and essential supplies, and an inspectorate system capable of detecting and correcting service delivery failures within the system (page 19).
- Improvement in the salaries and good working conditions of teachers, health workers, and security forces (page 19).

The coalition of NGOs involved in the Citizen manifesto drafting have promised to mobilize Ugandans to effectively engage leaders seeking the mandate to govern to prioritize issues raised in the Citizen Manifesto.

About the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights - Uganda

ISER is a registered national Non - Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Uganda founded in February 2012 to ensure full recognition , accountability and realization of social and economic rights primarily in Uganda but also within the East African region.



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