



The Significance of Education in Promoting Mentality Transformation and Accelerating Economic Growth for Wealth Creation in Uganda

Asaph Kabakyenga,
Uganda Christian University
Email: asaphkabakyenga@gmail.com

Abstract: *The role of inclusive education in enhancing mindset change in propelling economic growth in Uganda and early childhood development and promoting a mindset change towards inclusivity, diversity, and equality in Uganda that can drive economic growth and prosperity for all has not been emphasized. The purpose of this study was to discuss the significance of education in promoting mentality transformation and accelerating economic growth for wealth creation in Uganda. The study was guided by a qualitative research design involving a secondary data review. Collected data was subjected to textual analysis to create and analyze meaningful themes related to the topic. The key finding was that an inclusive planning process involving all relevant stakeholders is necessary for any inclusive process of skills development in education in promoting mentality transformation to accelerate economic growth for wealth creation in Uganda to be successful. It was recommended that all government consultations and decision-making procedures about the agenda for inclusive education programs should include the industry sector.*

Keywords: *Economic growth, Wealth Creation, Mentality transformation, Inclusive Education, Mindset change, Early Childhood Development*

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1. Introduction

Education is key in promoting mentality transformation and accelerating economic growth for wealth creation for any country in the world. But for nations to adopt an education that satisfies the demands of holistic all-inclusive skills development (ISD), they must do so to attain this aim efficiently and effectively. Higher education levels and a population with highly educated workers through inclusive education programmes make nations more competitive in the global economy and enable their inhabitants to act rapidly to address problems and exploit

opportunities (International Labor Organization (ILO),2012). Inclusive skills involve those elements of education that include, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences as well as the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to people who work in various spheres of economic and social life (Becker et al., 2015, p.7, (Sani, 2017)). Other scholars such as Dikeledi Mahlo have noted that if ISD is to be successful, it must consider the entire inclusive education philosophy by ensuring that all students are brought together in one classroom as a community, regardless of their abilities and strengths (Patel, 2019). Additionally, Sani opined that indeed

countries such as the European Union and the national governments in Europe have prioritized policies to close the skills gap in ISD in education programmes, resulting in the establishment of institutions with mechanisms to foresee the demands of future professions and skill sets (Sani, 2017). Accordingly, any future skills strategy must provide people with the knowledge and tools they need to successfully negotiate the increasingly unpredictable work markets through improving employment and business to achieve equitable development (Sakamoto, 2019, p.70). To achieve this requires a broad strategy that encompasses a lifelong learning strategy that includes a range of methods that people who are looking for work or who are working continue to learn and pick up the skills and competencies that have an impact on their employment and earnings (Becker et al., 2015). By encouraging coexistence, tolerance, and citizen participation in national affairs, lifelong learning strengthens people's ability to deal with the changes occurring in the economy, culture, and society and helps people and communities feel more autonomous and responsible (Becker et al., 2015). This not only supports students' personal growth but also improves their employability, social mobility, and capability to effectively engage in community improvement activities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Global case studies of successful inclusive skills development

To create skills for the twenty-first century, education reforms, especially in the Global North, have made the idea of ISD a key component. This strategy has been wholly embraced by fast-growing countries such as China whose main focus has been on harnessing skills development, especially in higher education of learning. This concept was well-collaborated by Hong Zhu and Shiyun Lou, who observed that China must retain the diversity of higher education to enable graduates to satisfy varied requirements of society to improve the quality of higher education and ensure a high employment rate of graduates (Chris Rowley, 2011). The same theme of inclusive skills development has been extensively covered in Fernando M. Reimers' comparative study in his book entitled, 'Audacious Education Purposes: How Governments Transform the Goals of Education Systems' (Saavedra & Gutierrez, 2020), which includes a description of the fundamental principles of the education reforms implemented in Brazil, Finland, Japan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, and Russia. In his discussion, the author makes a fundamental observation that there are many different reasons that educational institutions serve, and it is concerning these goals that judgments about how to educate can be made (Saavedra & Gutierrez, 2020).

Transversal competencies like self-care, managing daily life, multi-literacy, digital competence, working life competence, entrepreneurship, participation, creating a sustainable future, learning to learn, and cultural competence were emphasized in the education reforms of the countries under study to achieve ISD (Saavedra & Gutierrez, 2020). In line with the above analysis, Finland serves as the best illustration of an ISD program that has been successful in addressing 21st-century education in the Global North through all-inclusive curriculum design and teacher training changes. The Finnish reform process was successful because it involved the Ministry of Education, teacher unions, schools of education, professors from a variety of universities, teachers, school principals, and teacher educators (Garcia Coll, 2009). Another noteworthy feature was that the curriculum planners took into account research on 21st-century skills to enable them to define a set of transversal competencies that served as the foundation for the redesign of the curriculum and the creation of teacher professional development. The government waived tuition fees for its residents (Federick, 2020). Additionally, the education policy law was entrenched to ensure that any state leadership change does not affect education policy, allowing what has already been planned by those in charge of setting education policy to remain (Federick, 2020). In 1999, Peru on the other hand adopted the approach of giving incentives to teachers (Balarin, 2021). This was in addition to a thorough curriculum review that included all interested parties and focused on important topics essential for the national good. Literacy, mathematical reasoning, scientific thinking, communication skills, Information Communications Technology skills, capacity for learning, and capacity for collaborative work were the civic skills that were prioritized to achieve the country's ISD strategy.

In the same way, Portugal started a similar initiative. To reduce school dropout, certain methods were adopted, such as encouraging schools to offer the least performing children more academic support. Russia embarked on similar reforms in the 1990s allowing regions to choose their professional development programs for teachers in a market that was competitive, giving schools internet access so that teachers could find resources and collaborate online, and giving schools more discretion over their elective curricula. However, no plans were made to assist teachers in achieving this strategy. Japan started a thorough set of reforms in 1984 to bring education into line with a wider range of curriculum requirements. Although many schools found it difficult to make the transition from knowledge acquisition to knowledge application, the curriculum was changed during the 1990s to put more emphasis on helping students develop their agency, higher-order cognitive skills, and problem-solving abilities. Between 2013 and 2018, Brazil completed the first phase of a thorough curriculum revision for the development of

inclusive skills. Benchmarking was set up to allow the country to learn from other countries' experiences in picking common standards, and specialists from Canada, Chile, and Australia shared their knowledge with the Brazilian reformers. A sizable team made up of university professors, teachers, state and local education executives, and other educators established the curriculum after three rounds of consultation over several years. This centred on skills like entrepreneurship, self-care, empathy, citizenship, and ethics, as well as lifelong learning, critical thinking, aesthetic sensibility, communication skills, and computer literacy (Saavedra & Gutierrez, 2020). This holistic approach was vital in focusing the Brazilian education system in the direction of ISD in its education programmes.

2.2 Inclusive skills development in Uganda

The term "skills development" is typically used to describe the productive talents obtained through all levels of education and training, including on-the-job training and learning that takes place in informal and formal settings. Inclusive skills development on the hand takes into account training for all people from all walks of life including people with disabilities and under privileged persons to full potential (Sakamoto,2019).

The idea of developing ISD has remained a crucial component of the global agenda for advancing social and economic development. Uganda, like any other country is implementing the National Development Plan (NDP III), which is the third in a series of six five-year Plans aimed at achieving the Uganda Vision 2040(National Planning Authority, 2020). Whereas this notion can ably be achieved through education in the wealth creation of nations like Uganda, its significance in promoting mentality transformation for accelerating economic growth has not been taken into account. Uganda, like many other African nations, has been moving on to teaching syllabi that reflect colonial interests. This has in turn produced students whose mindset is a mirror white colour jobs as the only means to live a successful life and contribute to national development. As such, the role of inclusive skills development through inclusive education in enhancing mindset change in propelling economic growth in Uganda and early childhood development and promoting a mindset change towards inclusivity, diversity, and equality in Uganda that can drive economic growth and prosperity for all has not been emphasized. Uganda has of late embarked on a new strategy to emphasize inclusive education by revising existing curricula beginning with lower levels of learning. But to achieve Mentality Transformation and Accelerate Economic Growth, deliberate efforts are

required on how best the provided education can aid learners to meet this need of their nation.

Furthermore, Uganda presents an interesting population demographic structure. The population was previously estimated to hit an increase of additional 2.9 million population by mid-year 2020 with an estimated 78 per cent of the population expected to be under 30 years of age (MoFPED, 2012). The country's population was further projected to reach 54 million in 2025 (MoFPED, 2012). As noted in the National Population Report however, what may be at stake regarding demographic concern apparently could be age structure as opposed to population number (MoFPED, 2012). The same report revealed that the overall unemployment rate was 8.8 percent in 2019 and 2020. This necessitates a reassessment of our educational system to ensure that it meets the needs of modern society in order to produce wealth holistically. The existing curriculum has undergone modifications, but there are still parts that need to be decolonized to make the content more Ugandan so that students may fulfil both local and global demands. But to do so, there must be significant funding for the education sector. Evidently, in comparison to other economic sectors, the education sector remains underfunded in budgetary allocations. For instance, the financial year 2022/2023 budget allocated Shs 4.14 trillion towards the education and skilling sub-programmes and Shs. 274.4 billion towards advancing innovation and technological development respectively against the overall total budget of 37.472 trillion shillings excluding debt refinancing (Agriculture et al., 2022). Indeed, diverse practitioners worldwide have continued to argue about the idea of ISD in education. Indeed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), focuses on an inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all(Johnston, 2016).Reviewing the experience of education within the context of the global development agenda is therefore crucial if education, learning, and skills are to be understood as both enablers and drivers of equitable and sustainable development of any country(Unesco, 2012).

Uganda has over time made adjustments towards attaining ISD to re-position the education sector to meet the needs of the country and global labour skills demands. One such aspect was the implementation of a structural adjustment program that involved the implementation of Universal Education (UPE) and liberalization of the education sector. This goal however did not achieve excellent success for instance the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI) of 2001 stated that the improvements in the education sector did not reflect an all-inclusive skills development between rural poor and urban schools (SAPRI, 2001). Uganda's primary and secondary education curricula have undergone several revisions aimed at raising the skills acquisition of students. The Early

Childhood Development Policy, which sought to stimulate various regions of the brain to promote social and intellectual progress throughout life, was authorized by the government of Uganda in 2007 and a reviewed curriculum for secondary school commenced in the same year (Cambridge Education, 2017). The Lower Secondary School Curriculum was reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2020. A secondary school graduate with marketable skills who could compete on the labor market was the end goal of the evaluation (Yovan, 2007). The review further focused on reduced content overload, fewer contact hours in the classroom, learner-centered pedagogy, a competence-based approach, and the definition of criterion-referenced assessment were bottom-line goals. Even though these attempts were made in the education sector, what remained at large has been how to effectively attain a comprehensive ISD in Uganda's education programme.

For Uganda to succeed in having an education policy that promotes mental transformation to accelerate economic growth for wealth creation, there is a need to make a deliberate effort to develop human capital. Indeed, increases in human capital in fields like research, education, and management bring about improvements in participation rates, social well-being, and productivity, all of which support economic growth (Kuzminov, 2019). Expenditures on education may affect health and parental education may benefit children. Health expenditures may themselves affect the value of education. These links are important for understanding the potential range of benefits which accrue to expenditures on human capital. Ill health and poor nutrition may have indirect effects on labour productivity by adversely affecting schooling. Illness often leads to absence from school and nutritional deficiencies can reduce the ability to learn. One indirect effect of expenditure on education may be its positive effects on health. It has been noted that within developing countries like Uganda, the children of educated parents face lower risks of premature death (Jayathilaka, 2022 & Afshan, 2020). Children are typically more likely to go to school if their parents are educated. They also tend to perform better in school and some cases may earn higher incomes in adulthood. Therefore, Uganda needs to heavily invest in its human capital if overall wealth creation benefits are to be realized. This will be vital in changing Ugandan economy beyond take off stage to drive to maturity in the economic stages of development.

3. Methodology

The use of a case study design and qualitative research approach helped to lead the investigation. Specific case studies from countries that had successfully implemented inclusive skills development in their educational

programmes were discussed to provide insight into tried-and-true best practices and efficiencies required in resolving the research problem under study and to further illuminate the problem statement. Reviewed data was collected from textbooks, Journal articles, Reports from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), National Information Technology report and other reports like the 2030 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to clearly show the relevancy to issues, provide background to the study and prove the policy argument. The study used a textual analysis approach that was appropriate for the design of a case study. Descriptive statistics were also used in the study's analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

From the discussions, it is clear that an inclusive planning process involving all relevant stakeholders is necessary for any inclusive process of skills development in education in promoting mentality transformation to accelerate economic growth for wealth creation in Uganda to be successful. Cooperation between agencies must be taken into account for this method to be effective. This plan should also include a comprehensive thought strategy to map out the current demands of the century to put talks on policy directives in a global perspective and aid in the development of learners and the apparent workforce's competencies. Involving the industrial sector in all government deliberations and decision-making processes to achieve this goal of wealth creation was a strategic move that helped Finland become a global leader in the development of inclusive skills. Another crucial element that has contributed to the success of ISD implementation in various nations is the fact that any changes in state leadership have no bearing on education policy, allowing what has already been planned to continue. The literature study allows for the making of this observation. This maintains the national education strategic plan's continuity, as evidenced in the examples of Finland and Peru. This could be a significant aspect to consider if the government wishes to successfully integrate ISD into Uganda's educational program as part of the post-Covid-19 recovery strategy. Additionally, the case studies under consideration literature study identified a connection between the growth of inclusive skills and the employability of the trained population in the examined countries. Most of the countries had carefully thought-out exit strategies that linked employees and employers. The development of national employment centres, which functioned as data hubs for employee competency databases and job advertising, was found to be essential to the strategy's success. This closed the gap between employed people and job seekers in these countries.

The contextualization of ISD from other countries is also a crucial and persistent common element in the literature we evaluated. For any nation to achieve fair skill development in educational programs, as was the case with Brazil between 2013 and 2018, benchmarking with successful nations and contextualizing findings to reflect the nation's strategic goals are crucial. The best course of action would be to involve all stakeholders in discussions about the findings before training teachers as key stakeholders and mobilizing the necessary infrastructures for the cause. The project's implementation might then be selectively piloted in different parts of the country to avoid any potential bottlenecks. This could go on until the job is finished. The bottom line is that for a nationwide inclusive skills program to be successful, a planned and methodical gradual implementation approach is required. In this reverence, Uganda should adopt this approach if it wants to be a pioneer in the development of inclusive skills in Africa and the rest of the globe. Additionally, it has also been noted that while there has been a great deal of academic research on the education system in Africa, most of the authors have concentrated on inclusive education rather than ISD, which has made ISD an ideal area to situate the research topic understudy. The investigation of additional elements that contributed to the success of ISD in the examined countries such as Finland found a purposeful effort made by those nations to spend extensively on infrastructure to accommodate the digital shift to online platforms.

The research findings also showed a connection between the strategic focus of the fourth industrial revolution and the development of inclusive skills. Numerous research on the contemporary effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) on education has been conducted (Grinshkun & Osipovskaya, 2020). It is thus crucial that Uganda emphasizes giving children the tools they need to build their 21st-century skills of critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (González-salamanca et al., 2020). This is because the lifestyle patterns of Rural Area and Urban Areas have a significant impact on student collaboration in the learning process (Khoiri et al., 2021). Since there are several difficulties relating to science and technology around the world, Uganda should likewise embrace scientific literacy if its population are to compete favourably in international marketplaces. According to digital literacy refers to the knowledge and comprehension of scientific principles and procedures needed for independent judgment, civic engagement, and economic output (Turiman et al., 2012). This method should be distinguished from the standard basic science process abilities currently taught in Ugandan schools, which include seeing, categorizing, measuring, and using numbers, as well as forming inferences, forecasting, communicating, and using the relationships between space and time.

According to the debate above, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) should assign new tasks to universities in Uganda to evaluate and develop curricula that promote the relationship between soft skills and student preparation for the workforce. Employers would take note of this since it would support their belief that graduates lack the requisite soft skills which include skills, abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude and behaviour rather than to formal or technical knowledge for the workplace (Teng et al., 2019). Therefore in general terms, as technology advances and businesses become more dependent on digitalization and intelligent ecosystems, labour and the meaning of employment continue to undergo revolutionary changes (Ross & Maynard, 2021). This change will necessitate striking a balance between technological advancement in the workplace and new employment models.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed at discussing the significance of education in promoting mentality transformation and accelerating economic growth for wealth creation in Uganda taking into account the concept of inclusive skills development. To adopt an organized, all-inclusive plan that incorporates partners from the public and commercial sectors, Uganda was found to be required to do so according to the examined literature, conclusions, and debates. Stringent legal procedures are needed to firmly establish education legislation to secure the program's legacy and its ability to continue achieving its intended aims even after regular democratic regime changes. Additionally, it has been observed that ISD may not be fully realized without enough funding for the educational sector to enable the development of necessary infrastructures for the cause.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Encourage professional development to raise the calibre of current employees and customize the knowledge and abilities of the teachers to the needs of the students and the school. This would give educators the skills and information necessary to guide students toward a mental shift that would enable them to actively contribute to accelerating economic growth and wealth creation in Uganda.
2. All government consultations and decision-making procedures about the agenda for inclusive education programs should include the industry

sector. To fill skill gaps in factories, ensure that students' skills are in line with the needs of the current industrial sector, and increase students' employability after graduation from all educational institutions, this is crucial.

3. The government should enhance both technical and vocational inclusive skills development for employability based on inter-agency cooperation such as the National Population Council, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education and Sports. This also may include promoting the establishment of intentional connections between technical and vocational training institutions and the labour market as well as making it more appealing for students to enrol in such programs as a way to advance the national development agenda rather than as a last resort.
4. Uganda needs to draft a well-defined national skills development policy vital for sustainable and balanced growth necessary for promoting mentality transformation and accelerating economic growth for wealth creation. Most importantly this would provide direction and focus to the skills system. By developing a national skills policy Uganda can, among others, bring coherence to the system, facilitate coordinated reforms, and clarify institutional arrangements.
5. There is a need to establish employer connections with employees through establishing National Employment Centers (NECs) across the country. These among other things should establish online skills competence repository databases of all professionals seeking employment. These locations ought to serve as career centres to connect young people with employers. To transform into integrated career centres, the established employment centers should provide the five services of assessment, counselling, apprenticeships, training, and jobs. The government should also resurrect the mandated National Youth Service program, which should be managed and connected to these NEC's facilities with updated websites with listings of available workers, their skill competencies and available job openings. The fact that a considerable number of the youth in Uganda is on social media provide such online platform with high accessibility chances.

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