AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN UGANDA INCLUDING A FRAMEWORK FOR A PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM RENEWAL

A REPORT

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE:</strong> INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the Curriculum Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO:</strong> TRENDS IN CURRICULUM PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION IN THE PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN UGANDA UP TO 1967</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-independence education in Uganda</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pre-colonial and Pre-missionary Era</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Early Post-colonial and Post-missionary Period (1877-1924)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Work of the Commissioned Groups to Review Education (1924-1962)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Phelps-Stockes Commission</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Other Four Commissioned Groups</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Work of the Commissioned Groups during the Post independence Era Up to the Advent of the National Resistance Movement Administration (1963-1984)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Castle Education Commission (1963)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Post-Independence Primary Education Curriculum</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims of the First Post-Independence Primary Education Curriculum</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Curriculum Development Centre</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE: THE EXISTING/OLD PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM. ............................................ 10

The Content Areas in the 1967 Primary - Education Curriculum ............................................. 10

Changes in the 1967 Primary Education Curriculum.......................................................... 10

A Review of the Existing/Old Curriculum Within the Environmental Context.................. 12

A Summary of the Situation Between 1981-1988 12

The Pupils ............................................................. 12

The Teachers .......................................................... 13

Instructional Materials............................................... 13

Textbooks............................................................. 13

Teaching/Learning Aids............................................. 14

Some Curriculum Implementation Problems..... 14

The Teaching at Primary Level......................... 14

Assessment of the Primary Education- Curriculum ......................................................... 15

The Strengths and Weakness of the Old Curriculum.................................................. 16

The Strengths .......................................................... 16

The Weaknesses........................................................ 16
CHAPTER FOUR: THE NEW/REVISED PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM. 17

The Activities in the Curriculum Review Process........................................ 18

The Education Policy Review Commission........ 18

The Government White Paper......................... 19

The Curriculum Review Task Force.................. 19

Some Views on the New Primary Curriculum...... 22

How the New and the Old Primary Education-Curricula Will Differ.................... 22

Why the New Curriculum Will Be More Effective 25

The Progress of the Curriculum Development Exercise................................ 26

Strategies for Implementing the New-Curriculum ....................................... 27

Expected Enabling Factors......................... 27

Assessment Modalities and Strategies........... 30

Current Situation ................................. 30

New Directions ................................. 30

CHAPTER FIVE: FRAMEWORK FOR REFORM FOR A PRIMARY EDUCATION-CURRICULUM .......................... 32

Introduction.................................... 32

Assumptions .................................. 33

Component Processes of the Framework...... 33
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Conclusions
1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Background to the Curriculum Analysis:

Nations use their educational systems as one of the strategies to meet their goals and aspirations.

In order to ensure quality education, nations plan and develop elaborate curricula for their different educational levels. Elaborate Implementation Strategies are also put in place.

The effectiveness of each curriculum is determined by the performance of its products, using the curriculum aims and the national goals and expectations as indicators. If the performance of the curriculum products falls short of the national expectations, efforts are usually made to identify the causes and problems. These may be the curriculum itself in its totality or one of its components of objectives, content, methodology or evaluation. The problems may also be identified in the implementation strategies.

If it is the curriculum which is defective, it revision is undertaken.

Uganda has been developing and revising its curricula since the pre-colonial/missionary education days, depending on changing national situations and expectations. The latest revision of the primary education curriculum started in 1993.

The purpose of this particular study was to take Uganda as an example of an African country where curricula reform had taken place or was about to take place, and compare the old and the new curricula on some aspects. The study places particular emphasis on identify if key factors that have largely necessitated, facilitated or hundred effective curricular reform and renewal.

1.2 Terms of Reference:

There are four broad terms of reference concerning this analysis. They are as follows:

a. To review the components of the existing/old primary school curriculum.

b. To identify the conditions that necessitated a review of the existing/old primary school curriculum.

c. To compare the existing/old and the primary school new curricula.

d. To propose a framework for reform for a primary education curriculum.
2.0 CHAPTER TWO

2.0 TRENDS IN CURRICULUM PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION IN THE PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN UGANDA UP TO 1967.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact period when the existing/old primary school curriculum came into existence without briefly tracing the historical trends of education at this level. This overview therefore focuses on these trends. It covers roughly the following four periods:

This review covers roughly the following four periods:

a. Before the coming of the colonial government and missionaries.

b. The early educational efforts of the missionaries (1877-1924)

c. The work of the different commissioned groups of educationists and others to review the educational system in general and the curriculum in particular, before independence (1925-1960)

d. The work of commissioned groups of educationists and others after independence up to the advent of the National Resistance Movement Government (1963-1987)

The review will mainly concentrate on the aims of the curriculum and the products of the primary educational systems during each of those periods.

2.1 Pre-Independence Education in Uganda.

2.1.1 The Pre-colonial and Pre-missionary Era.

The youths used to be given indigenous or traditional forms of education. The following were the main aims of such education:

a. To mould children to fit into their respective societies.

b. To promote harmony in the societies.

c. To enable the youths to solve individual and societal problems.

d. To equip the youths with production skills.

e. To promote cultural heritage.

f. To develop character training and respect for elders among the youths.

g. To enable the youths to acquire and apply life skills.
The following were the main characteristics of indigenous education:

a. There were no formal institutions, like schools, for this education.

b. There was no formal curriculum. The curriculum was the sum total of the societal experiences with regard to culture, customs, beliefs and values.

c. Instruction was basically given freely by elders and peers.

d. Instructional methods were through demonstrations, modelling, stories, folklore, songs, etc.

e. Evaluation was through observation of an individual's performance in real situations in life, for example through battles, production, marriages, civic duties and leadership.

2.2.2 The Early Post-colonial and Post-Missionary Period (1877-1924)

The Catholic and Protestant missionaries were sent to Uganda, like anywhere else they went, by their respective societies to preach Christianity to, and spread it among the different peoples of the country. One of the ways which these missionaries conceived to be most effective was to make sure that the converts could refresh their religious knowledge in their homes by reading the bible and other simple books.

Between 1900 and 1924, the Missionaries established schools and taught children and adults with no, or little, Protectorate Government financial assistance. They designed their own school curriculum to suit their missionary purposes.

Between 1877 and 1879, children and adults were taught religion, reading, writing and arithmetic. The missionaries' houses and compounds formed the initial formal schools.

In 1901, a Catholic chief, Stanislaus Mugwanya, requested the missionaries to start a school that would mainly teach English. It was this that made the missionaries think of offering a form of education designed to help build character of pupils and prepare them for the changing world in which they lived.

Therefore, between 1902 and 1906, seven boarding schools were opened to serve this purpose. The majority of these schools were attended mainly by children of chiefs and influential families who, it was assumed, would sooner or later hold positions of responsibility in the society. The curriculum consisted of religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, mathematics, music and games.

However, one weakness of the missionary education was that instead of producing educated Ugandans, it produced educated Catholics and Protestants, who progressively cherished Western culture more than their own.
This largely happened during the period stretching to just before independence. During this period, the Protectorate Government appointed five different commissioned groups of educationists and others to review the education situation in Uganda and make recommendations.

The following were the five Commissions:-

- The Phelps - Stockes Commission (1924)
- The Earl de la Warr Committee (1935)
- The Thomas Education Committee (1940)
- The de Bunsen Commission (1952)
- The Binns Study Group (1957)

Let us briefly comment on the work of this Commissions.

2.2.4 The Phelps - Stockes Commission:

The Phelps - Stockes Commission was a humanitarian commission formed by the trustees of the Phelps - Stockes Fund of U.S.A.

Its broad term of reference was to look into the education of Black Americans, American Indians and Africans.

Its specific terms of reference in Africa included the following:

a. Find out what and how much education work was being done for Africans,

b. Find out the educational needs of the people with reference to religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions,

c. Ascertained the extent to which their needs were being met;

d. Make suggestions as to how these needs might be best met.

Of the five commissioned groups above, the Phelps-Stockes Commission was the only one whose terms of reference, findings and, recommendations were mainly concerned with the Primary School Curriculum.

When the Phelps - Stokes Commission visited Uganda in 1924, there were six types of schools. These were:

a. Subgrade (equivalent to Primary 2). This was of uncertain educational value. Teachers were unqualified and unsupervised. It was intended largely to make pupils literate enough before baptism.

b. Maternity schools to produce mid-wives.
c. Central Schools (equivalent to Primary 4). They provided rudimentary education.

d. High Schools (equivalent to primary 7). English was taught to all classes. Those for boys prepared them for the Colleges. Those for girls prepared them for being housewives and their curriculum was inferior to that of the boys.

e. Normal schools. These were meant to produce teachers for High Schools.

f. Colleges. These aimed at producing moral, upright and honest Christian clerks, traders, interpreters and chiefs. They were taught in English.

The Commission found out that the education offered in Uganda by the missionaries was too literary. The educational activities in the schools were not related to the community needs of the people. Among the essential components missing from the curriculum were:

- agriculture
- health science
- hygiene
- care of children by the women.

The Commission also found out that the inspection of schools was inadequate. The missionary inspectors were mainly concerned with finding out whether the pupils were ready for baptism and confirmation.

The Commission attributed the two weaknesses to lack of government involvement in education.

Through the Commission's recommendations, the government set up a Government Department of Education to oversee what was happening in the schools.

By 1926, there was a strong view that the educational system for Ugandans should, in addition to academic subjects, provide vocational education and prepare the majority of the pupils to live well in the villages.
Therefore, the government regraded the schools, and prescribed what was to be taught in each grade, as follows:

a. Subgrade Schools. These were not to follow Government syllabus.

b. Elementary Vernacular Schools. These were to follow the Government Syllabus. They were to teach elementary agriculture to pupils, through school gardens, to prepare them to live in villages.

c. Special Grades. These were to train pupils in technical aspects and teaching.

d. Intermediate Schools. These were to offer Secondary Education to students who would enter Makerere College.

e. Makerere College. It was to train teachers for the intermediate schools and other professionals.

The Phelps-Stokes Commission recommendations and the Government response were reinforced by the 1927 Education Ordinance. This required the Government to control what the owners of the schools could do in their schools and the teachers they could employ.

However, this Ordinance had very little impact on the educational system.

The Government avoided owning schools because it lacked concrete ideas and policy about African Education, unlike the missionaries who had been in the field for long. Therefore, the school educational objectives and the curriculum continued to be determined by the missionaries.

The anticipated agricultural and technical education was offered only by some schools. In addition, the attitude of most teachers, pupils and parents towards these activities were largely negative.

2.2.5 The Other Four Commissioned Groups.

a. The Earl de la Warr Committee (1935) mainly examined the state of Makerere College and its source of inputs. Among its other recommendations were the following two:

   i. To improve and expand primary education
   ii. To develop education for girls.

b. The Thomas Education Committee (1940) dwelt on the administration and financing of education.

c. The de Bunsen Commission (1952) looked into teacher education and the educational structure.

d. The Binns Study Group (1957) was sent to East Africa towards the period of granting independence to the colonies in order to study and recommend on how to:

   i. improve education
   ii. increase enrolment in schools.
Uganda attained independence from Britain in October 1962. The Government of the day attempted to re-examine the education situation. It therefore set up the Castle Education Commission of 1963.

a. The Castle Education Commission (1963)

This Commission was given the following three terms of reference:

i. In the light of the approved recommendations of the International Bank Mission Survey Report and Uganda Financial position and future manpower requirements, to examine:

. the content of education in Uganda
. the structure of education in Uganda.

ii. To consider how education in Uganda could be improved and adopted to the needs of Uganda.

iii. To make recommendations.

The Commission considered the needs identified by the following people:

a. the members of the Commission themselves; and

b. the members of the public through memoranda.

One memorandum, for example, criticised the curricula for concentrating on physical training, spiritual training and character building and neglecting science and technical education.

On the curriculum aspect, the Commission found out that the missionaries still had firm control on the education system.

The Commission recommended the primary education syllabus to be revised to prepare the pupils for life. Agricultural and Technical education were to be included. These recommendations guided curriculum development effort up to the late eighties.
2.2.7. The First Post-Independence Primary Education Curriculum.

Revision of the first post-independence primary school curriculum was started in 1963 and completed in 1965.

Each subject was handled by a National Syllabus Panel. Each panel comprised of the subject classroom teachers, teacher educators and school inspectors. The panels were first based in the Ministry responsible for Education. In 1964 the responsibility was transferred to the National Institute of Education at Makerere University.

2.2.8 Aims of the First Post-Independence Primary Education Curriculum

The first two Independence Uganda Constitutions (1962 and 1967) had the following seven national goals and principles:

a. Forging national unity and harmony.

b. Evolving democratic institutions and practices in all sectors of life.

c. Guaranteeing fundamental human rights, including personal security and property rights and the rule of law for all citizens.

d. Creating national wealth needed to enhance better quality of life and self-reliance.

e. Upholding and maintaining national independence and patriotic feeling.

f. Promoting moral and ethical values in citizens.

g. Promoting a feeling of humanitarianism and cooperation in the citizens.

However, according to the Education Policy Review Commission Report (1989), the public was not aware of the above national goals and principles. Moreover, there is no evidence to show that the national goals and principles were ever translated into a national policy on education. They had never been translated into practical and feasible national aims and objectives of education either.

Therefore, in the 1965 Primary School Curriculum, the broad aims of the education curriculum, and the aims of the individual subjects, were not deliberately guided by national aims of education. Each subject panel determined its own subject aims, objectives and content arbitrarily.

The first post-independence (1965) Primary Education Curriculum had two broad aims:
a. To meet the needs of the school leavers in the new society.

b. To indicate to the children their place as citizens of Uganda and Africa.

It claimed that the changes in what was to be offered in Science, History, Civics and Geography reflected the stated aims. The 1965 Primary Education Curriculum was first revised in 1967. It again underwent another major revision twenty two years later in 1989, by the National Curriculum Development Centre.

2.2.9 The National Curriculum Development Centre.

The National Curriculum Development Centre was established as a parastatal body of the Ministry of Education by Decree 7 of 1973. Among its functions were the following three:

a. To investigate and evaluate the need for syllabus revision and curriculum reform at primary and other levels.

b. To initiate new syllabuses, revise existing ones, carry out curriculum reform, research, testing and evaluation, bring up to date and improve syllabuses for school and college courses.

c. To draft teaching schemes, textbooks, teachers' manuals and examination syllabuses in co-operation with the teaching institutions and examining bodies.

The Centre was established, and started its work during Uganda's turbulent years of the seventies. It therefore faced several operational constraints, such as, staffing and shortage of other resources.

Under such circumstances, the Centre carried out only those activities it could manage at the time. Among them were the production of instructional materials for the 1967 primary school curriculum which was still in existence.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THE EXISTING/OLD PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM

This was the third post-independence curriculum. In 1989, after the National Resistance Movement had ushered in relative peace and stability, the National Curriculum Development Centre undertook a revision of the 1967 Primary Education Curriculum. The work was completed in 1990. It is this 1990 Curriculum which will be referred to as the "existing/old curriculum" in this study.

3.1 The 1967 curriculum had the following twelve subjects:

a. Art and Craft
b. Science
c. English Language
d. Mother Tongue
e. Luganda
f. Mathematics
g. Music
h. Physical Education
i. Religious Education
j. History
k. Geography
l. Civics.

3.2 Changes in the 1967 Primary Education Curriculum.

The 1989 Primary Education Curriculum revision, resulting into the existing/old curriculum, covered all subjects, but the major revisions were in Science on the one hand and History, Geography and Civics on the other.

3.2.1 Changes in Science:

The 1967, Science Syllabus, like the rest of the syllabuses, was meant to prepare pupils for secondary education. Therefore, it had a lot of academic content, some of which was a bit beyond the cognitive developmental stages of the primary school pupils.

Yet various communities in Uganda had teething problems which they could not avoid or solve because they lacked the relevant knowledge and skills. One such problems was health. Many children in Uganda were dying of immunisable diseases, nutrition-related diseases, water and sanitation-related diseases and others. At the same time HIV/AIDS became rampant, especially among the youths.

This required the Government, with the assistance of UNICEF, to put together a package of essential health education messages for, initially, primary school going youths. The rationale for this was that such pupils had not yet formed rigid behaviours and could be changed. Again, since almost every home had a child going to school, such a child could transmit the health messages learnt at school, back to the parents, siblings and community at large.
Instead of creating another subject in an already crowded curriculum, it was decided to transfer some of the existing science topics to secondary school syllabuses and create room for the health education messages. Hence the introduction of a subject called Science and Health Education. Components of agriculture and animal husbandry were also included.

3.2.2 Changes in Geography, History and Civics:

The 1967 curriculum had maintained the traditional subjects of Geography, History and Civics. However, it was felt that instead of presenting compartmentalised knowledge to a child at this level, it would be more beneficial to assist the child to gain an integrated understanding of the world and promote his/her intellectual and social development.

It was with this basic aim that subjects like Geography, History, Civics, and Environmental Education were integrated into twelve topics, ranging from the family to the world, which formed a new subject called Social Studies, whose theme is Living Together.

3.2.3 The Introduction of Population and Family Life Education in Primary Education Curriculum

Another contemporary problem, which the Uganda Government faced, and which it had to address was to balance the rapid population growth, which had increased from 6.6 million in 1960 to 16.6 million in 1991, with the available resources and services.

One strategy of handling this problem was to equip the youths in schools with the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes about population and family life. It was hoped that this would enable these youths to take informed decisions about family issues when they became adults.

Therefore, in 1988, with the help of the United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA) as the donor agency, UNESCO as the executing agency and the Ministry of Education and Sports as the line Ministry, the Government of Uganda introduced Population and Family Life Education in the Ugandan formal Education System as a Project.

Initially the project was introduced in the last two years of the primary education cycle, (and the first two years of the secondary education cycle). Population and Family Life Education was not introduced as an independent subject.

The strategy adopted was to select suitable carrier subjects from the existing list of subjects. The project messages were, therefore, just integrated at suitable points by the teachers while teaching the carrier subjects. This approach again avoided the creation of another subject in the curriculum and a separate slot on the school timetable. The carrier subjects selected were Science and Health Education, Social Studies and Religious Education.
### 3.3 A Review of the Existing/Old Curriculum Within the Environmental Context.

#### 3.3.1 A Summary of the Situation Between 1981-1988.

During the seventies and a larger part of the eighties, although most of social institutions were in a state of disarray due to economic and political instability, the schools continued to function without serious erosion of quality of education, if only in terms of pupils performance in the public examinations. However, at the end of the seventies and early eighties, the civil strife led to the neglect and destruction of many educational institutions.

Since the coming to power of the National Resistance Movement Administration, there has been a serious effort to increase educational opportunities at primary level.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No. in 1981</th>
<th>No. in 1988</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primary schools</td>
<td>4585</td>
<td>7905</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pupil enrolment (millions)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average enrolment per school</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary teachers</td>
<td>40500</td>
<td>76000</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average teachers per school</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil-teacher ratio</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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The figures in the table above are briefly discussed below:

**a. The Pupils:**

Although the table shows that there was an increase of 72% in the pupils' enrolment between 1981 and 1988, few of the eligible pupils had the opportunity to go to school at all and complete the primary education cycle.

For example, the 1991 Population and Housing Census showed that, of the children aged 6-14 years, 37.6% had never gone to school, 44.7% had only reached P1 - P3 and only 17.7% had reached P4 - P7.

The same report showed that while the number of youths, aged 15 years and above, who completed Primary Education was small, it also differed from region to region. The figures given were: Central 34.81%; Western 25.1%, Eastern 24.23% and Northern 18.65%.
Different reports, for example, the hitherto unpublished report of "The Profile of School Drop-out and Teen-Age Pregnancies" (NCDC 1995), showed that the greatest cause of children's never going to school at all, or dropping out early, is general poverty which results in lack of school fees. Other causes include loss of interest due to economic attractions like bicycle transport (for boys) and petty trading.

b. The Teachers:

The figures given in the table do not differentiate between trained and untrained teachers. But there are many untrained teachers, especially in day schools in rural areas. Sometimes, it is quite common to find that the headteacher is the only qualified member of staff in a school. These untrained teachers are mostly school drop-outs who could not go anywhere. Most qualified teachers prefer to stay in urban areas or boarding schools where there are other school incentives to supplement their meagre salaries. Others just leave the service to engage in more financially rewarding activities.

The average number of teachers per school was, by 1988, still less than ten. This means that, considering that some schools in urban areas and some boarding schools do have large staff establishments, some schools in the rural areas have very few teachers. But, on the other hand, day schools in urban areas have large enrolments per class, sometimes as many as 80-100 pupils. This means that although the average pupil teacher ratio of 34:1 is not too large, some teachers in urban day schools teach large classes.

3.3.2. Instructional Materials:

Instructional materials, like textbooks and other teaching/learning aids, have been a problem in curriculum implementation since the first post-independence primary education curriculum was developed in 1965.

a. Textbooks:

The National Curriculum Development Centre has, since the mid-seventies, been writing textbooks in the four core subjects of English Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies for the whole primary education cycle. The Centre has also developed the corresponding Teacher's Guides. Other authors have also produced books which have been available to both the teachers and the pupils.

However, most individual pupils, especially pupils in rural day schools, cannot afford a copy of each, sometimes any, subject textbook. Therefore, a single copy of a particular textbook can be shared by several pupils. A research study in "The Factors that led to the Poor Performance of Pupils in the 1992 PLE Social Studies Paper" revealed that as many as 5 pupils shared one book in a school, and only during class time because the copies belonged to the school. The situation could not have been any better in the other subjects.
In case of projects, instructional materials are supplied to the schools free of charge. For example, UNICEF has assisted the, Ministry of Education to provide the primary schools with pupils books and the teachers guides for the School Health Education (SHEP) component of the Science Syllabus. UNFPA has done the same for the Population and Family Life Education component. But, because of large numbers of pupils, again it has not been possible to provide each child with an own copy. Therefore pupils' books had to be shared between 2 - 3 pupils. This situation was again aggravated when, in cases like the School Health Education Project, some of the books found their way to some bookshops//book stalls for sale.

b. Teaching/Learning Aids:

The most common teaching/learning aids are the non-projected, two dimensional types, especially diagrams and charts. But most schools in the rural areas do not have enough funds to buy the necessary materials like manila paper and markers in adequate amounts. In many cases, therefore, the little that is available is given to teachers of lower primary classes (P1-P3).

Again, donor - funded curriculum components, like SHEP, provided elaborate kits to schools, free of charge. Fortunately, such materials have not found their way on the open market. Some well established boarding and urban day schools can afford to use slides and video tapes. However, rural poor schools lack both the gadgets and the electricity supply to operate them. Therefore the teaching/learning aids most available to most schools are still the board and chalk.

3.4 Some Curriculum Implementation Problems:

3.4.1 The Teaching at Primary Level.

Since independence, Government has made a lot of efforts to expand secondary education facilities in order to provide the necessary high level manpower. However, the available secondary schools cannot absorb more than ten percent of the eligible primary school leavers. Also, there is a lot of variation in the quality of the secondary schools. This makes the competition for admission to the few high quality schools very intense. As a result, the teaching/learning process is rendered examination driven. Teachers largely employ instructional methods that will enable them to complete the examinable syllabuses before the final examinations, even if such methods do not develop other attributes, like manipulative skills and attitudes.

In addition, what is taught is, in some cases, determined by what is found in the past examination papers. Therefore, if at one time, a question paper contained some questions which were not, or are no longer in the syllabus, a certain teacher will still teach those aspects, just in case the questions re-appear. This situation has been found in Science, where some topics were removed long ago, and Social Studies, where some teachers still taught some Geography and History topics separately.
Because of this examination results-oriented approach to teaching, the quality of schools is predominantly determined by the number of pupils who pass in the different grades, and admitted to the good government-aided secondary schools.

This examination-results approach also means that the six remaining non-examinable subjects in the curriculum receive scanty attention by the teachers, pupils and parents.

3.4.2 Assessment of the Primary Education Curriculum:

The performance and the grading of pupils is done annually by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB). The Board sets and administers the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). The examination consists of four papers. These are English Language, Science and Health Education, Mathematics, Social Studies including Religious Education.

The scores on each paper range from 1 (the best) to 9 (the worst). Therefore, the results in the whole Primary Leaving Examination range from aggregate 4 (the best) to aggregate, 36 (failure). The candidates are then graded into about five grades. For example, first grade ranges from aggregates 4 to 12.

Candidates who manage to score first grade, and can hope to be selected by the good secondary schools, form only about ten percent of the total candidates. But the largest number of such candidates come from a few boarding or urban day schools.

Each subject in the curriculum has a set of objectives. Some of the objectives concern cognitive aspects (knowledge, comprehension and application of facts, concepts, principles). Others are concerned with developing manipulative skills, positive attitudes, behaviour and values. However, the examinations always give written tasks, and only determine cognitive aspects. The large number of candidates, coupled with the limited financial, human and other resources, make it difficult, at least for now, to determine the achievement of the practical skills, attitude and behaviour aspects, even for the four core examinable subjects.

The problems with the present strategy and scope of assessing pupils' benefit from primary education is that the quality of the pupils, schools and the entire primary educational system is judged by many people (pupils, parents, secondary schools and the general public) from only the academic achievements. The situation is compounded by the absence of national goals on education when the old curriculum was being developed. Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate the quality of the product of the old curriculum using national criteria. In any case, some of the national criteria, even if they existed, would require more years than the seven years of the primary education cycle, to manifest themselves in the products. For example, pupils who started the old curriculum when it came into operation in 1990, will be leaving primary seven in 1996. They may require another ten years (after graduation) to display their ability, for example, to be good citizens.
3.5. The Strengths and Weakness of the Old Curriculum.

3.5.1 The Strengths:
One of the strong points of the old primary education curriculum is that it attempted to produce pupils with a wide scope in their knowledge, through the study of the ten subjects.

Another strong point is that it included components like Health Education, Population & Family Life Education, which addressed contemporary societal problems. The knowledge, skills and attitudes so developed would assist the youths to live more meaningful and productive lives in their communities even if they drop out of school early.

Subjects like Mathematics prepared the pupils for the modern technological era.

Another strong point is that, by and large, the secondary school teachers have found the primary school products quite suitable for secondary school work.

3.5.2 The Weakness:
The greatest weakness of the Old Primary Education Curriculum is that it still caterers for the interests of the ten percent of the pupils who would continue with the secondary education academic work. The ninety percent who drop out are not adequately catered for. Work, for example in Science, is taught too theoretically. Even if some was taught practically, the nature of the prescribed content is such that it would not be of immediate application to problems. For example, in Agriculture, the study of seeds and soils is never related to the ability of the pupil to select suitable seeds for particular type of soils. The study of breeds of cattle does not assist a pupil to identify good cows even from the local breeds. Energy converters found in the local area, for example, paraffin lamps, are not taught. The evidence that the emphasis is placed on the needs of secondary education is the production of textbooks for only the four core examinable subjects. Another evidence is the way time is allocated for each subject for each class. Out of the nine subjects which form the curriculum, four of them (Art and Craft, Music, Mother Tongue, Physical Education) have a combined percentage weekly periods allocation as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
<th>P6</th>
<th>P7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This bias appears also in the Primary Teacher Education courses. Many pupils, who fail to continue with their formal education engage in small scale trading. In this respect, Subjects like business education, using the current economic environment and activities, would come in handy.

Art and Craft Subject also dwells predominantly on the traditional Fine Art for the elite. It should have been strengthened with more aspects of appropriate technology where pupils utilise locally available materials (wood, leather, clay/soils, scrap metal) for serious economic activities in the villages.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE NEW/REVISED PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

4.1 Need to Revise the Old Primary Education Curriculum:
A lot of changes have taken place since and even before, the old curriculum came into operation. Both in Uganda, the immediate region and globally, changes have taken place in the political, social, economic and technological arena.

The educational products, even at primary level, have to be prepared in such a way that they are not only able to cope with these changes, but they can also initiate other positive changes on their own.

Many people in Uganda had, for a long time, expressed great concern over the relevance of the prevailing system of education. There had been much discontent over the failure of the system of education to reach many of the would-be beneficiaries and its failure to deliver the right type of education to the people who went through it. Education was found to be too theoretical and academic oriented to be of much practical use. Therefore the need to revise the curriculum was found to be both great and urgent.

The National Resistance Movement, when it assumed state power in 1985, vowed to bring about fundamental changes in this country.

Chief among the priorities in the fundamental changes, was to improve the quality and affordability of education. Therefore, when the Government identified this priority, it was only echoing what Ugandans had felt all along.

A curriculum review exercise is both time consuming and expensive in terms of manpower and financial resources. Also, in developing countries like Uganda, curriculum development effort cannot ignore the prevailing political environment and direction; otherwise the implementation efforts become difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, the government's political initiative was necessary and timely.

However, the government just initiated the process of the curriculum revision and gave terms of reference. The actual work was left to teams of technocrats to translate the Government's general and long range intent into tangible results, which culminated into the NEW PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

Strictly speaking, there should have been an impact evaluation exercise to collect empirical data and information on the old curriculum. But, in the absence of criteria based on articulated national goals on education, and in the face of other constraints, this step was omitted. Therefore, the decision was primarily based on a qualitative general impression that the old curriculum left a lot to be desired, and had to be revised.
The curriculum review process for all levels of education had several major activities, although the discussion that follows will continue to highlight the Primary Education Curriculum.

4.2 The Activities in the Curriculum Review Process.

The process had the following major activities:


c. The establishment of the Curriculum Review Task Force (CRTF).

d. The writing of the subject syllabi by the National Curriculum Development Centre Subject Panels.

e. Implementation of the Curriculum.

The above five categories of activities are commented on briefly below:

4.2.1 The Education Policy Review Commission.

This Commission was set up by the Government in July 1987.

a. Membership:

It was a commission of twenty eight people. The Chairman was Professor William Senteza Kajubi, a prominent educationist both at national and international scenes.

The other twenty seven members included educationists, economists, administrators, scientists, social scientists, among others.

b. Terms of Reference:

The Commission was given the following ten terms of reference:

i. Review the present education policy.

ii. Appraise the current system, at all levels.

iii. Review the general aims and objectives of education.

iv. Give advice on effective ways of integrating the teaching of commercial, business and technical subjects.

v. Reassess the current system of funding education at all levels, including the possibility of making students contribute towards their up-keep without impairing academic standards.

vi. Assess the role of qualifying examinations and the adequacy of current methods of assessment.

vii. Review the role of private sector in the provision of education at all levels.
viii. Examine the structure of primary and secondary levels of education, bearing in mind the tender age at which the children leave primary school.

ix. Formulate new policy for education.

x. Suggest ways and means of bringing about improvement in the quality of education and in the efficiency of management of the educational system, ensuring greater welfare of the staff and students.

c. Duration:
   Two years (1987-1989).

d. Mode of Work:

   The Commission approached its work by taking three steps:
   
i. Formation of ten sub-committees for appropriate indepth study of the relevant sectors of education.

   ii. Co-opting 16 individuals to work on the sub-committees.

   iii. Solicit views, data and information, from the public through memoranda, public discussions, brainstorming, committee meetings and plenary sessions.

e. Constraints:

   There was a general lack of detailed, up-to-date and reliable data on education, which could have strengthened the Commission's findings.

f. Outputs Directly Related to Curriculum Development:

   The Commission, having examined the National Goals and Principles as outlined in the 1962 and 1967 constitutions, generated six aims of education which had never been articulated before.

   From these, the aims of primary education (and other levels) were formulated by the Curriculum Review Task Force.

4.3 The Government White Paper:


4.4 The Curriculum Review Task Force:

   This was appointed in September 1992, by the Minister of Education and Sports.
a. Membership:
This had a membership of 14 people. The Chairman was Mr. Basil-P. Kiwanuka, another prominent educationist. The other thirteen members were also educationists.

b. Terms of Reference:
The Task Force was given four terms of reference. They were:

i. Initiating and developing the strategy for implementing curriculum-related recommendations which were accepted in the Government White Paper.

ii. Formulating a National Curriculum that will guide syllabus development according to the National and Educational Aims and Objectives.

iii. Examining ways of improving the quality of Education, bearing in mind the following:
- the basic needs of the learner at the appropriate level of education;
- the concept of an all-round education as well as vocational preparations;
- the need to reconcile the evaluation of students performance with the curriculum and;
- the aim of achieving the highest quality of Education for all, and finally,

iv. Making recommendations to the Minister of Education and Sports including proposals for legislative changes.

c. Mode of Work:
i. The Members of the Task Force studied the Government White Paper and other Documents.

ii. It held two meetings a week for twelve months.

d. Outputs Connected with Primary Education Curriculum:
The Task Force made the following four recommendations:

i. All Primary Education must be made progressively practical beginning with P1.

ii. Science and Basic Technology must be cardinal areas of study in the system of Education.

iii. Emphasis should be put on acquisition of study and vocational skills and on development of healthy attitudes among the children rather than on factual knowledge.

iv. Primary Education must develop love for learning in order to lay a strong foundation for Life Long Education.
e. The Aims and Objectives of Primary Education:

Having studied the Government White Paper and other documents, the Task Force came up with the following fourteen aims and objectives of primary education:

i. enabling individuals to acquire functional, permanent and developmental literacy, numeracy and communication skills in at least one Ugandan language, English and Kiswahili;

ii. developing and maintaining sound mental and physical health among learners;

iii. instilling values of living and working co-operatively with other people and caring for others in the community;

iv. developing and cherishing the cultural, moral and spiritual values of life and appreciating the richness that lies in our varied and diverse cultures and values;

v. promoting understanding of, and appreciation for the protection and utilization of the natural environment using scientific and technological knowledge and skills;

vi. developing discipline and good manners.

vii. developing an understanding of one's rights and civic responsibilities and duties for the purpose of positive and responsible participation in civic matters;

viii. developing a sense of patriotism, nationalism and national unity in diversity through appreciation of the rich and diverse cultural background of the people of Uganda.

ix. developing pre-requisites for continuing education.

x. acquiring a variety of practical skills for enabling one to generate income in a multi-skilled manner;

xi. developing appreciation of the dignity of work and labour and of making an honest living;

xii. equipping the child with knowledge, skills and values of responsible parenthood;

xiii. developing skills in management of time and finance and developing respect for private and public property;

xiv. developing the ability to use problem-solving approach in various life situations.
f. The Content Areas in the New Primary Education Curriculum:

The Curriculum Review Task Force identified the following eleven subjects to form the curriculum:

i. Basic Primary Technology* (to include Art and Craft)
ii. Mathematics
iii. Language and Literature*, Mother Tongue/pre-language, English and Kiswahili*.
iv. Social Studies
v. Religious Education
vi. Music, Dance* and Drama*.
vii. Agriculture and Home Economics*.
viii. Business and Commercial Education*
x. Physical Education
xi. Community Service Scheme*

N.B. Asterisks (*) indicate new areas not present in the old syllabus.

4.5 Some Views on the New Primary Education Curriculum:

4.5.1 How the New and Old Primary Education Curricula Will Differ:

a. Aims and Objectives:

As pointed out before, there was no set of articulated national aims of education at the time the old curriculum was developed. Therefore the aims and objectives in the old curriculum were determined more or less arbitrarily. But the aims in the new curriculum, both the general and those for the individual subjects, were formulated in such a way that they reflect the primary education contribution to the achievement of the national aims on education and thereafter to the National goals.

b. Content:

The subjects identified in the old syllabus could not effectively produce pupils who are ready to face the social, economic, political and technological challenges of the twentieth century.
The new curriculum, if well implemented, is capable of producing well rounded primary school leavers who are well endowed with knowledge, practical skills, attitudes and values that will enable these youths to effectively participate in, and contribute to the socio-economic development of Uganda and beyond. This is the kind of youths who the Government and people of Uganda aspire for.

One significant thing to note is that the Curriculum Review Task Force found all the subjects offered in the old curriculum relevant and essential to the needs of the primary education products. Therefore, all these subjects were retained, reorganised and expanded to include new dimensions. Also some new subjects were identified and included.

The rationale for the expanded subjects, and the new subjects, will briefly be commented on as follows:

i. Basic Primary Technology:

This is a new inclusion in the curriculum. It is aimed at developing in the pupils, the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills towards hand-on activities.

ii. Music:

This has been extended to bring in the related component of Dance. Drama, as a component in which music and dance can be integrated together with other abilities, has also been included.

iii. Agriculture and Home Economics:

In the old syllabus, Agriculture just formed some units in Science and Health Education. Now it has been given its own prominence.

The Home Economics Subject was being offered only in a few secondary schools, mainly for girls. Now it has to be taught also in primary schools countrywide. Since a large part of it concerns nutrition, it was deemed appropriate to put it together with Agriculture which, at this level, will be predominantly concerned with food production.

iv. Business and Commercial Education:

This is a new subject which will be taught from Primary one to Primary eight. The inclusion will enable the children to cope with some of the activities and challenges in a business and commercial environment found everywhere in today's Ugandan society.

v. This has been changed to Science, Health, Environment and Population Education. The introduction of the environment component was to enable pupils to appreciate and continue with the Namutamba Pilot Project (1974) which encouraged them to learn Science through the environment, for the environment.
The component of Population and Family Life Education was, in the old syllabus, integrated with Science, Social Studies and Religions Education. Although it is specifically identified here, it will continue to be integrated in the other subjects as before.

vi. Community Service Scheme:

This is a new subject. It was designed to ensure that both the schools and the communities in which they are located, contribute to the development and well-being of one another.

The concept of Community Service will be encouraged to run through all the subjects and at all levels. Pupils will participate in activities that will bear tangible impact on their communities for purposes of development.

The Curriculum Review Task Force recommended that emphasis should be placed on the following:

- local activities
- use of locally available and easily obtainable materials first.
- more reliance on the creativity and inventiveness of both the teachers and pupils.

vii. English Language:

This has been reorganised and increased to read as Language and Literature, Mother Tongue/Pre-Language, English and Kiswahili.

The old syllabus had concentrated on English, focusing on the Language abilities. The Literature component, however, was postponed to secondary education. The new syllabus intends to teach both the English Language and Literature at primary level. (This accorded Mother Tongue the same treatment). Luganda, which had a separate slot, is now covered in Mother Tongue. Kiswahili was also brought in to be studied by all pupils, with the hope that in future, it may become a national language.

The above arrangement will go a long way to translate into reality the National Language Policy as recommended by the Education Policy Review Commission. The following are some of the recommendations towards that policy:-

a. The Mother Tongue should be used as a medium of instruction, in all educational programmes up to primary four. (This, however, has been the practice except in boarding and urban schools with multi tribal pupils, where English is used).

b. English should be taught as a subject from primary one. From primary five, English should become the medium of instruction. (Again this has been the case with the more
homogenous rural schools). Thereafter, it will be taught as a subject and be examinable.

Kiswahili will be taught as a subject from Primary one to Primary eight and will be examinable at the end of Primary eight.

The situation was summarised in the Primary English Syllabus (1995) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
<th>P6</th>
<th>P7</th>
<th>P8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother Tongue</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: MI = Medium of Instruction
S = Subject.

4.6 Why The New Curriculum Will Be More Effective:

The revision of the old curriculum was initiated and undertaken after it was realised that its products were not adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge, practical skills, attitudes and values to face contemporary and future challenges in Uganda and beyond. This was because the subject offerings were mainly meant to prepare the pupils for the secondary level of education. But only a few pupils manage to reach this level because of constraints like the limited openings at this level and lack of financial support to pay for it. Therefore, the majority of the pupils who drop out of the system were not catered for. Moreover, at an average age of thirteen or fourteen, many of them were still too young to undertake any meaningful economic activities to support themselves even if they had the will and skills. Because of this early exposure to societal forces, many of them fell victims to social vices like crime, drug abuse, prostitution and unwanted pregnancies.

The new curriculum, if implemented, will result into a fundamental change in the quality of the products of primary education because the youths will be more rounded through the study of the syllabuses in the curriculum. The following are the particular examples of some of the attributes which will be acquired by the primary education product:

a. Entering the labour market when more mature by at least one year.

b. Ability to undertake secondary education, and beyond, in a variety of disciplines. This will ensure a steady supply of the much needed high level manpower for the country's all round development.

c. Ability to engage into income generating activities through the study of such subjects like Basic Primary Technology, Music, Dance and Drama, Agriculture and Home Economics and Business and Commercial Education.
d. Ability to financially support themselves, their families and possibly contribute towards the support of their siblings and parents. This, among other advantages, will enable the youths to avoid social vices which result from economic inadequacies.

e. Ability to cope more effectively with the intricacies of lower primary education through the use of Mother Tongue. This will make the work at this level more meaningful and enjoyable to the children.

f. Ability to communicate effectively with other people within Uganda, the region and beyond through the mastery and use of English and Kiswahili. This will increase understanding among the people as it will bridge both tribal and territorial gaps. This increase in inter-people understanding may result into a decrease in cultural biases, political tension and an increase in cultural, economic and technological co-operation.

g. Ability to plan for the exploitation and the preservation of the environment and its resources for the benefit of their (hopefully, well planned) families through the study of Science and Health, environment and Population and Education. This will lead to an improvement in the quality of life through indicators like decrease infant and maternal mortality rates and an increase in life expectancy.

h. Ability to plan for and use leisure time for the benefit of self and others through the study of Physical Education. This will assist in reducing redundancy among the youths which, in many cases, results into social problems.

i. Ability to identify themselves with, and contribute to the development of their respective communities through engagement into Community Service Schemes. This will enable the youths to move smoothly and live in their communities more comfortably, when they are in and/or out of school, without suffering some kind of "cultural shock". As of now, the present education system tends to create and maintain class segmentation. Children from the so-called middle and upper classes often have the greatest opportunities of going and staying at school. While at school, they keep within their more affluent urban families and friends.

On completing school they have more chances of securing employment, settling down and perpetuate the class structure. They therefore have little opportunity to stay with and understand the majority of society members who are mostly peasant farmers, who produce most of the food and the cash crops for export.

4.7 The Progress of the Curriculum Development Exercise:

The development of the different subject syllabi by National Curriculum Development Centre by the Subject Panels is already in progress. The following Six syllabi have already been completed:
a. Basic Primary Technology,
b. Mathematics,
c. Language (English),
d. Social Studies
e. Agriculture and Home Economics and

The syllabi for the remaining subjects will be completed as soon as practicable.

4.8 Strategies for Implementing the New Curriculum:

4.8.1 Expected Enabling Factors:

The Curriculum reforms will be implemented within the framework of two crucial enabling factors. The first enabling factor will be the political goodwill, commitment and support for the new curriculum which, hopefully, will be present even if the actors on the political stage change. The second enabling factor will be the Government's decentralisation policy of planning for and taking services nearer to the people within districts. This means that district political leaders and educators will be more able to plan for, monitor and evaluate educational activities within their districts more effectively and take the necessary corrective measures.

Within these two enabling factors, the following operational requirements will be provided:

a. Finance:

The districts will be retaining a substantial amount of the revenue they collect from the people. They will also be getting grants from the Central Government. Under certain conditions and arrangements, districts will be able to secure loans from within and outside the country. Then they will be able to finance educational requirements like rehabilitating and improving existing primary school infrastructures and opening new ones, paying teachers salaries and buying instructional materials.

It is also expected that at this level, education will be made progressively free.

b. Personnel:

At the moment, as pointed out before, there are still a lot of untrained teachers in many districts. However, efforts are being made, through projects like Teacher Development and Management Support (TDMS) basis, to give in-service training to such teachers in some districts where the problem is greatest. This involves producing study materials in form of modules for the teachers to study on their own while in their schools during term time. Face-to-face sessions are arranged, during the holidays, whereby the teachers get the assistance of the tutors. This arrangement, which takes about three years, enables the teachers to acquire the teaching competencies of
their pre-service colleagues without leaving their schools. Therefore both the in-service and pre-service routes of producing teachers will ensure an adequate and steady supply of teachers for the new curriculum. But the retention of these teachers for the effective implementation of this curriculum at classroom level will depend on the Government fulfilling its much awaited promise for a living wage for the teachers. The Government promised to implement this with effect from July, 1996. Others incentives, like further education and promotion opportunities will also have to be put in place.

c. Orientation Workshops for Qualified Serving Teachers:

It is a normal curriculum development practice to bring serving teachers up-to-date with any changes in the curriculum. Both content and methodology will be handled through a series of workshops. This will be done, on a subject to-subject basis, throughout the country. Cost-effective strategies to do this are being worked out.

d. Pre-service Teacher Programs:

The Primary Teachers Colleges (PTC) will continue to admit students of at least '0' level and train them for two years. The Institute of Teacher Education (ITEK) is in the process of revising these College syllabuses so that the teachers produced can competently teach the extra year of primary eight.

e. Instructional Materials:

Instructional materials are those aids and resources that support the academic delivery system especially in a formal classroom situation. They include textbooks, reference teachers' guides, charts, models and others.

This discussion will dwell on books used in primary schools in Uganda. These will be include:

Pupil's textbooks, pupils' supplementary books, teacher's guides and reference books.

i. The Present Situation:

The old primary school curriculum has been supported by books which were written by different authors and published by different publishers. One of such authors was the National Curriculum Development Centre, through its National Subject Panels. Its books were published by Longman and Macmillan.

The policy used to get books into schools was that the Central Inspectorate, through its subject inspectors, would study the books available on each subject. The Inspectorate would then compile a list of books it recommended and send it to the schools. The schools would then purchase the books according to their financial resources.
Although most authors were using the old syllabus to guide them draft the books, most serious teachers never found a single book which by itself met the syllabus requirements. They ended up using several books in a subject. This was found in a research study, undertaken by the NCDC Research and Evaluation Department, to determine the extent to which Mathematics books, published by Longman, were being used in primary schools. Teachers, for example, pointed out that while a certain book adequately treated a certain concept, it was weak on another one. Also in the 1992 study to determine the factors that led to the poor performance of candidates in the PLE Social Studies Paper, the teachers complained that the pupils' texts did not contain some of the topics found in the examination papers, while they were shallow on other aspects.

ii. The New Direction:

It is the responsibility of the Central Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Sports to ensure that all classroom materials meet a minimum standard of quality.

Having realised that textbooks produced from different sources, and used in primary schools, varied greatly in their qualities, when judged on some criteria, the Ministry of Education and Sports put into place the following two important policies:

- Instructional Materials Vetting:

  An independent National Textbook Vetting Committee was instituted to protect the educational system from commercial exploitation and to ensure that only relevant and suitable materials get into the school system. A wide range of evaluation criteria were developed to assist the committee to vet for the textbooks. For example, a book submitted to the committee as a pupils' textbook must be accompanied by a teacher's guide. Otherwise, it is considered among supplementary pupils' books.

- Instructional Materials Selection:

  The selection of instructional materials has been liberalised to the end-user level, which are the schools. Therefore the Ministry will set up Instructional Materials Resource Centres at all districts where copies of the vatted materials will be sent. These will assist the teachers to know the suitable instructional materials available on the market through examining them physically.

As soon as each syllabus for each subject is written by the NCDC Subject Panel and approved by the NCDC Academic Steering Board, books will be written and sent to schools within the above two guidelines.
4.9. Assessment Modalities and Strategies:

4.9.1 Current Situation:

At the moment, as pointed out earlier in this report, the following is the state of affairs concerning the assessment of the old curriculum.

a. The assessment for the whole country is done only once through the Primary Leaving Examination at the end of Primary Seven. The rest of the years are assessed internally by the individual schools. Some districts, however, set annual examinations for P5 and P6.

b. The assessment is done only in the four core subjects of English Language, Mathematics, Science Health Education and Social Studies.

c. The questions in the examination papers only cover cognitive aspects, and only a sample of them per year. Other aspects concerning practical skills, attitudes, behaviours and values are never covered. Therefore, the examination only determines the needs of secondary education.

4.9.2 New Direction:

a. Continuous Assessment

The Educational Policy Review Commission recommended, and the Government, through its White Paper, agreed to a reform in the assessment system so that:

i. Pupils' achievements are assessed continuously throughout the primary education cycle, instead of only once at the end.

ii. The assessment should aim at improving the teaching/learning process and not only on grading pupils.

iii. All the primary education curriculum aims and subjects must be assessed.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), charged with this responsibility, is already working out strategies for the modalities of implementing this new aspect of assessment. The continuous assessment scores will be combined with the final PLE scores in 1998, when the present primary four pupils will sit for their final examinations.

b. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Programme:

This is one of the programmes introduced by the Uganda Government in a bid to improve the quality of education in the country.

NAEP is a research-biased programme and is housed at the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB). It will be collecting data on the inputs (the curriculum, the teachers, parents, instructional
materials), the process (instructional methods, evaluation methods) and the outputs (what the methods) and the outputs (what the pupils know and can do in the various curriculum areas).

The studies will be conducted every two years. At the moment, it is proposed that the assessment should be limited to the following two classes:

i. Primary three, when the pupils are expected to have developed the basic learning skills of literacy and numeracy. If the results reveal any weaknesses, corrective measures will be taken.

ii. The terminal year of the primary education cycle (P7 or P8).

Information will be collected from pupils, teachers, parents in a sample of districts. The reports will be submitted to the important stake holders.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 FRAMEWORK FOR REFORM FOR A PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

5.1 Introduction

The preceding four Chapters of this analysis inform us that presently there is in progress a major and active curriculum reform process at all (except tertiary) levels of education in Uganda. The data available to us also reveals that at the primary level, the country has adopted a modern approach to curriculum development. This decision is particularly interesting because of a historical factor that we consider worth noting in this analysis.

Modern curriculum development may be said to have made its initial entry to Africa in the early 1960s through Entebbe in Uganda with the product of what became known as the Entebbe Mathematics. Given the fact that similar efforts in the more developed countries began in the 1950s, in this context of embracing the modern approaches to curriculum development, Uganda in particular, and Africa in general were not too far behind. However, the move to introduce this modern approach to the continent came primarily from the United States of America through the Africa Education Programme of the Education Services Inc. (E.S.I) in New Town, Massachusetts. Certain features of the new movement distinguished it from the traditional syllabus preparation. Among such features were the following:

a. Preparation of materials e.g. student texts, teachers' guides, manuals and A.V. equipment to go with prepared syllabuses

b. The concept of pre-trial of materials in actual classroom before final production and implementation

c. A consideration for teaching methodology

d. The need for continuously monitoring the curriculum with a view to improving it.

In light of the above observations, in the framework for curriculum reform which we are proposing below, we are going to be largely guided by the following main considerations:

a. The historical connection of Uganda to modern approaches to curriculum development.

b. The preceding analysis of the current process of curriculum reform in the country.

c. An assessment of the quality and promise of the new primary education curriculum as per assessment in Chapter IV of this Report.
5.2 Assumptions

The framework recommended below makes five basic assumptions. These are:

a. That the national philosophy and goals for future development are clearly established.

b. That the curriculum reform will be taking place in a country where the factor of external examination, still wielding critical importance and influence in the education system, is undergoing a reform to incorporate Continuous Assessment.

c. That the policy makers, especially in the Ministry of Education, see the need for, and are committed to supporting fully, the proposed curriculum reform process at the primary education level.

d. That professionally trained and competent personnel are available in adequate numbers and are willing to participate actively in the reform process.

e. That adequate funds will be available to readily and adequately support curricular reform at the primary education level.

5.3 Component Processes of the Framework:

In the framework for curriculum reform which we recommend, we begin by emphasizing that curriculum development or reform should be viewed and undertaken as a complex task, with many perspectives that dynamically intertwine with one another. Such reform cannot be seen as a series of distinct steps, but as a continuous process. However, in order to facilitate a clear perception of the main considerations and decisions involved in evolving, developing and reforming a curriculum, we have decided to organise the framework below into several component processes. We refer to these components as NODES.

Altogether we have identified seven (7) NODES that can provide a framework for effective reform of a primary education curriculum.
These include the following:

NODE 1: Setting for Curriculum Reform

NODE 2: Educational Goals and Objectives

NODE 3: Learning Opportunities and Experiences

NODE 4: Try-out

NODE 5: Feedback

NODE 6: Curriculum Implementation

NODE 7: Evaluation

These seven NODES are diagrammatically presented on the next page. In the following few pages an attempt is made to briefly explain and rationalise the main activities and decisions involved in each of the suggested NODES.
NODE 1

SETTING FOR CURRICULUM REFORM:
1. Society
2. Learner
3. Subject disciplines
4. National philosophy
5. Psychology of learning

NODE 2

EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:
1. National
2. Primary education
3. Primary education curric.

NODE 3

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES
1. Identification and selection
2. Organization
3. Teaching/learning materials
4. Teaching methods

NODE 4

TRY-OUT
Trialing of materials

NODE 5

FEEDBACK:
1. Revision of curriculum
2. Finalization of curriculum

NODE 6

IMPLEMENTATION
1. Manpower
2. Materials
3. Infrastructure

NODE 7

EVALUATION:
1. Continuous monitoring of the curriculum
2. Quality control

Figure 1: An Annotated Presentation of the 7 NODES of a Primary School Curriculum Framework
NODE 1: Setting for Curriculum Reform:

This can be at class, county, district or national levels. The curriculum reform process can also be started by an individual teacher, a group of teachers and other educationists or by a national syllabus panel of specialists.

The main function to be undertaken at NODE 1 is information gathering. The type of information gathered is expected to establish the direction and justification of curriculum reform. Normally, the source for such information will include society, the learners themselves, the disciplines taught in schools, the national philosophy and the psychology of learning.

The main outcomes of this information search is the establishment of:

a. Goals and objectives of education; and
b. The gaps that exist between "What is" and "What should be" in education.

This leads us to NODE 2.

NODE 2: Educational Goals and Objectives:

It is the national educational goals and objectives which largely determine the nature and direction of:

a. the primary education aims and objectives; and
b. the primary curriculum aims and objectives.

These objectives are derived from a careful analysis of NODE 1, namely the "Setting for Curriculum Reform".

An important requirement in the process of effective curriculum reform is that teachers and all personnel involved in the process must command a working knowledge of the educational goals and objectives at the national, primary education and primary teacher education levels, as well as their respective educational implications.

With the above educational goals and objectives, and with their implications clearly identified and articulated, the curriculum process is then ready to move to the third NODE.
NODE 3: Learning Opportunities and Experiences:

This is the stage in the curriculum process which is often particularly referred to as curriculum planning.

Here the following main processes will be carried out:

a. Understanding and operationally stating the objectives of the curriculum;

b. Identifying and selecting relevant learning opportunities, experiences and content;

c. Organising the learning opportunities into a coherent and harmonised framework of action.

d. Determining and stating the methods and techniques that would be utilised to implement the learning opportunities and experiences; and

e. Providing the mechanism that would be used to monitor and evaluate the progress and achievement of the lands.

After the described package of learning opportunities and experiences above has been put together, it is necessary that this package is subjected to a systematic evaluation process in order to determine both its quality and the practicability of its implementation.

This is the next component of this proposed framework.

NODE 4: Try-out:

This component involves trialling of the new curriculum and curriculum materials as well as equipment in some institutions for a given length of time. Some trials will be on a small and short time scale, while others will be on large long time scale; the determining factor in this regard will be the nature of and scale of the curriculum reform undertaken.

Some of the key points that should be addressed at this point include, for example, the sampling method used in selecting the institutions, how feedback would be obtained and how revision of the curriculum, materials and equipment would be carried out.

Once the necessary feedback letter has been generated during the try-out component process, then the curriculum developer(s) should focus on dealing with this data. Such pre-occupation constitutes the next NODE in the process of primary education curriculum reform.
NODE 5: Feedback:

This is a critical phase in the evolution and development of the process of curriculum reform because it will be the last component before the curriculum is passed for full implementation.

The main activities involved at this stage include:

a. Analysing the data generated during NODE 4;

b. Revising the curriculum in light of the above analysed data; and

c. Finilising writing the curriculum document and other related teaching/learning materials and equipment.

Once the outlined tasks above have been effectively carried out, then the curriculum is ready to go into the primary schools for initial implementation. This then moves the curriculum reform process into NODE 6.

NODE 6: Curriculum Implementation:

This is the outlet component process of curriculum inform for a primary education curriculum. At this stage, the curriculum will be introduced in all the primary schools in the country.

There are a number of important sub-processes which must proceed, go hand in hand with or follow a implementation of the curriculum. Among these are the following:

a. Scheduling of implementation;

b. The in-servicing and orientation of teachers and other educational personnel;

c. Provision of other support services;

d. Provision of the necessary facilities; and

e. Introduction of the process of informing the general public about the new curriculum and its implementation.

We now move on to the last, but ever actively present, component process of curriculum reform.

NODE 7: Evaluation:

At the beginning of this chapter of the analysis, we stated that curriculum development is not a distinct one-occasion activity. Rather, it is a continuous process, with insights identified through continuous monitoring and evaluation being fed back and providing a fresh starting point for further enhancement and reform. This is why the NODE of Evaluation is all embracing and ever actively
present in the process of curriculum reform at the primary education level at every stage of curricular evolution.

It is necessary that curriculum evaluation actively takes place continuously, throughout all the component process nodes of curriculum reform. Some of the main tasks to be undertaken in this regard include the following:

a. Determining what should be monitored and evaluated and why;
b. Finding out how the objectives and processes to be evaluated can be measured and evaluated;
c. Selecting or developing the necessary observation and measurement techniques or instruments; and
d. Collecting, analysing and using data to make decisions that can lead to and facilitate further curricular reform and enhancement.

As we stated earlier in this chapter of the analysis, we must confirm that the above recommended 7 NODES the proposed framework for reform of a primary education curriculum are not distinct components standing independently of one another. They do not form a systematic series of curriculum development steps. Some of the processes overlap, other run concurrently, and information gathering is continuous. The curriculum work with therefore often find it necessary to move back and forth as he/she works through the processes. Sometimes he/she may also find himself/herself having to handle some of these processes simultaneously.
CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

6.1 Summary:

This activity and the attempted to analyse the old/existing and the new primary education curricula in Uganda. It has outlined the educational activities from the three colonial/pre-missionary period to the present day.

In this document it has been pointed out that since the coming of the colonial administration up to the years preceeding independence the missionaries were in control of the primary education curriculum. They designed it in such a way that it fulfilled their primary aim of evangelising the indigenous Ugandans. Such a curriculum did little to prepare its products to leave healthy and productive lives in their rural communities. The major primary education curriculum reform took place in 1963, after independence, and was completed in 1965. It was revised again in 1967. The major aim of that post-independence primary education curriculum was basically to prepare pupils who would enter secondary education and beyond. This was so because there was an urgent need to produce middle and high level manpower for the development of the new independent Uganda. Therefore the selection of content, the instructional materials, the instructional methods and assessment strategies, were basically designed towards cognitive outcomes. In 1967 primary education curriculum remained in operations until 1989 when it was revised to produce existing/old curriculum except for the inclusion of some new content areas to address contemporary problems in Uganda, the curriculum has continued to cater basically for the secondary education requirements.

In 1987, the Government put in place strategies to bring about the fundamental change in the Ugandan educational system. Several prominent educationists and other professionals were commissioned to carry out several activities which have resulted into the production of the new (1995) primary education curriculum.

However, the curriculum review efforts did not strictly follow the curriculum review framework which, according to the writers is the most appropriate this was because in NODE 1, were the main function is to gather information there was no attempt to collect empirical data concerning the performance of the old curriculum products on non-cognitive aspects.

But the new curriculum has not yet been fully developed and refined. Therefore, in the meantime, the existing/old curriculum will continue to operate while the new curriculum is being gradually introduced. It is projected that the old curriculum will completely be taken out of circulation at the end of 1997.
6.2 Conclusion:

The revision of the existing old curriculum and the production of the new one were both necessary and timely. The new curriculum contains new content areas which, if well taught, will produce pupils with the necessary knowledge, practical skills, attitudes, values and behaviours that will enable them to contribute positively to the development of Uganda in a rapidly changing local and global situation.

There is a hope that the new curriculum will be effectively implemented because there is political goodwill and commitment. The Government's strategy of decentralising the planning for and provision of services to the district levels will also ensure prompt provision of the necessary inputs and the monitoring of the new curriculum implementation process.
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