



UGANDA DEBT NETWORK (UDN)

PROSPECTING FOR SCHOOL FEEDING AND NUTRITION UNDER UPE IN UGANDA



**Position Paper
No. 20**

August 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	2
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	3
1.0 INTRODUCTION:	4
1.1 <i>Introduction and Context</i>	4
1.2 <i>The Legal, Policy and Institutional Frameworks for School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP)</i>	5
2.0 THE PROBLEM	6
3.0 ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING AND NUTRITION PROGRAMME (SFNP).....	7
3.1 <i>Comprehensive Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) sub-component;</i>	7
3.2 <i>CCPGs supplies to Primary schools through Government purchases;</i>	9
4.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING AND NUTRITION PROGRAMME (SFNP)	10
5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND ROLL-OUT OF THE SFNP	11
6.0 CONCLUSION	12

OVERVIEW OF SFNP

With support from the Ministry of Education and Sports, plus Save the Children International, Uganda Debt Network (UDN) has undertaken policy proposals in form of a Concept Note towards enabling School Feeding and Nutrition under the Universal Primary School Education (UPE) in Uganda. We also recount that Universal Primary Education (UPE) is legally provided for¹ in Uganda. We believe that under frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, National Development Plan (NDP III), the Parish Development Model (PDM), DINU and NUSAF IV or even the program based budgeting, the ideas contained herein on (i) Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) in Primary schools and (ii) Community Commercial Producer Groups; would both go a long way in prospecting for a sustainable national School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) in Uganda.

This Concept Note (CN) prepared by Uganda Debt Network (UDN) and with technical support from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The CN provides an overview and stakeholders' discussion on prospects for a sustainable national School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP), towards improved UPE Programme performance (outputs and outcomes) e.g. (a) immediate termly and end-of-year class performances, (b) inclusiveness, growth and gender responsiveness in Uganda (c) broader outcomes in the contributing to human capital development; as envisioned under Uganda's National Development Plan III, Government commitments/ NRM Manifesto 2021-2026, Sustainable Development Goals and others. The CN takes contextual consideration of the pre-existing challenges by parents/ guardians to provide food to children while at school since 1996 at dawn of UPE; fact of some schools with limited/ no land and others without land tenure security; erosion of household capabilities occasioned by COVID-19; and global practice and continuous call to utilising existing or prospecting Government programs, synergy and stakeholder partnerships. The

CN, therefore, considers the development challenge of school feeding in Uganda, but in the outlook suggests a Goal of, “A sustainable national School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) in Uganda”, through the following two major specific objectives;

- 1- To promote comprehensive Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) in Primary schools in Uganda;
- 2- To ensure Community Commercial Producer Groups' supplies to adjacent Primary schools for enhanced school feeding and national development in Uganda.

The justification for the sustainable national School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) in totality through the two sub-components of (i) Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) and (ii) Community Producer Groups (CPG), is that they can be implemented in a step-wise phased manner to leverage synergy with stakeholders/ partners, complementarity and optimization of Government programs². The SFNP (two sub-components SSD and CCPGs) would be through inter-ministerial and stakeholders' partnerships (e.g. CSOs, Development Partners) in the strategic interim coordination by MoES (e.g. the School feeding Department), to harmonise policy, institutional, programming and financing streams involving OPM, Magistrate Courts, MoFPED, National Children's Authority, MoLG and other actors. This would also include the District Agricultural offices, District Commercial offices, DISOs, GISOs, Parish chiefs and School Management Committees and CSOs like Uganda Debt Network, Save the Children International and others. While the specific roles, contribution and complementarity by each party will be articulated later, the operational implementation locus for SFNP is the school.

¹ The Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act (2008)

² E.g. DINU and NUSAF III (under OPM); OWC/ NAADS, Parish Development Model (under office of the President, Ministries of Agriculture and Local Government); National Community Service Program (under Ministry of Internal Affairs); nutrition (under Ministry of Health); tree planting (under NFA), titling Government property (under Uganda Land Commission) and others.



Under SFNP, the comprehensive Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) sub-component theory of change is that with modest resources and synergy, the SSG intervention registers better UPE results and subsequent bigger outcomes towards human capital development for Uganda's social-economic transformation. Meanwhile, the theory of change under the Community Commercial Producer Groups (CCPGs) sub-component is that Government interventions that enable communities to work together for enhanced quality agricultural productivity expand Uganda's domestic

market through community producer groups' bulk marketing and supplies to adjacent primary schools. Government in turn guarantees the payment that directly goes to the producer groups, thus increased incomes and households from subsisting to commercial production and bracket of money economy. This then enhances effective demand in Uganda's economy, human capital development and meeting other targets under Vision 2040, NDP III, Government commitments/ NRM Manifesto 2021-2026, realisation of rights of children, SDGs and others.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCPGs	Community Commercial Production Groups
DAOs	District Agricultural Officers
DINU	Development Initiatives for Northern Uganda
DCS	Directorate of Community Service
FAO	The UN Food and Agricultural Organisation
GoU	Government of Uganda
JLOS	Justice, Law and Order Sector
MDALGs	Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Local Governments
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDP III	National Development Plan III
NUSAF IV	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund IV
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OWC/NAADS	Operation Wealth Creation/ National Agricultural Advisory Services
SCI	Save the Children International
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFNP	School Feeding and Nutrition Programme
SSG	Sustainable School Gardening
PDM	Parish Development Model
WFP	World Food Program
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UPS	Uganda Prisons Service
UPE	Universal Primary Education

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 introduction and Context



President Museveni autographs a commemorative book in celebration of the 20years of UPE existence in 2018

The Government policy for social transformation through interventions such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Program was established in 1997. While the idea of UPE was first mooted in 1962 by the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) then, it was only actualized in 1997. UPE since has expanded and remained one of the strategic interventions towards improved education for all, human capital development and transformation in Uganda, challenges notwithstanding. Initially complemented by the debt relief resources under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in 1996 through 2000s, Government took on a bold step to provide the legal, policy³ and institutional frameworks for enhancing the UPE results (outputs and outcomes) within a decentralized framework and funding strategy realization through the Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAPs), continued increased funding to the program even under the current program-based budgeting. Indeed, UPE has, for instance, contributed to Uganda's literacy increase from 43% in 1997 to 76% in 2018. Even numerically, UPE enabled enrolment of children from 3.1 million in 1997 to 10.7 million pupils in 2019. Beyond UPE, Uganda has implemented the Universal Secondary Education since 2007 to absorb those transitioning from primary to secondary level, but also to broadly enable access to education. Despite the achievements, challenges like absenteeism, low quality of education and school cycle completion rates are still obtaining, with adverse gender implication that mainly undermines the girls and women at large. Limited and/ or lack of sustainable School Feeding and Nutrition of pupils, teachers and school workers in some schools has been cited as one of the major factors affecting the desired education outcomes in Uganda.

³ E.g. *Guidelines on Policy, Roles, and Stakeholders in the Implementation of Universal Primary Education (1998)*

In line with the above, the Ministry of Education and Sports and partners like Uganda Debt Network recognize that feeding at school is an essential and integral component of a child-friendly school environment, cognitive brain development and excellence. On the contrary, not feeding a child at school is a violation of children's rights under the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international protocols and conventions to which Uganda is signatory. As such, UDN has so far had bilateral or segmented preliminary conversation with the following institutions (see Annex 1) on the subject matter, upon which their input is also integrated.

1.2 The Legal, Policy and Institutional Frameworks for School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP)

Various policy and legal instruments such as the UNCRC and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are categorical on protecting the wellbeing of the children. Others include the SDGs, e.g. Goal 4 (on *Quality of Education*) that leverages inclusive and equitable quality education plus, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all directly; and indirectly Goals No.1 (*No poverty*), No.2 (*Zero hunger*), No. 3 (*Good health and well-being*), No.5 (*Gender equality*), No.10 (*Reduced inequalities*); and No. 13 (*Climate Change*). Uganda's 1995 Constitution (as amended), as well as the School feeding and Nutrition guidelines (2013), National Gender policy, The Education Act (2008) and commitment of the Government/ NRM Manifesto 2021-2026 also refers to inclusive and quality education.

The School feeding and Nutrition guidelines observe that where nutrition and feeding programs are not well developed, or are lacking altogether, the results are negative effects on child growth, development and educational achievement. In addition, returns to family and national investment in education are compromised; with gender implication where the girls and womenfolk become the bigger losers in this situation. Anecdotal evidence and experience of some stakeholders suggest that a national comprehensive, sustainable School Feeding and Nutrition Programme is pivotal; thus, is viewed as a contributing tool to enhanced school enrolment, an equaliser of the rich and poor families in providing children with food while at school, strengthening access to quality education and broader national development.

Similarly, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in interpreting and operationalizing Article 24, states in General Comment 15 that, "*School feeding is desirable to ensure all pupils have access to a full meal every day, which can also enhance children's attention for learning and increasing school enrolment. The Committee recommends that this be combined with nutrition and health education, including setting up school gardens and training teachers to improve children's nutrition and healthy eating habits.*" To this end, a national comprehensive School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) is proposed through two strategic sub-components of **i)** Sustainable School Gardening (SSG); and **ii)** Community Commercial Producer Groups (CCPGs).

2.0 THE PROBLEM



Uganda has the highest fertility rates (with average of 5 children per woman) in the East and southern Africa. Amidst a number of challenges, the implication is that families especially in rural areas fail to provide the basic family needs, with statistical evidence that more than 30% of the total population faces some level of chronic food insecurity (USAID 2017), despite several Government interventions. Under education, the Education Act 2008 gives the responsibility of feeding the children to the parents/ guardians, yet majority has failed to support the feeding of their children at school, moreover now worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While on school feeding and nutrition, the “Guidelines on School Feeding and Nutrition Intervention Program” task the parents/ guardians to contribute beans, maize and other foodstuffs in cash or kind to feed their children at school, as well as the teachers, support staff and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), this has largely not happened across the over 20 years of UPE implementation. Government through the UBOS report of 2014 acknowledges that up to 66% of learners in primary schools study on empty stomachs. Despite the Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAPs) in 1990s and 2000s, continued increase funding to the program (or even today under the current program-based budgeting) with over 20 years of Universal Primary Education (UPE) implementation, researches show that, only up to approximately 33% of UPE children receive a meal at school in Uganda, leaving out the 67%. In the urban and peri-urban Uganda its only 41% of UPE children who receive a meal while at school, compared to 32% in rural areas. Dismal as it may, three quarters of the feeding for children while at school is by parents/ care-takers in both urban and rural Uganda. Additionally, according to the 1998 UPE guidelines, the fifth objective of the UPE program is to “Ensure that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans”. As such, the assumptions hitherto made under The Education Act (2008) or even the School feeding and Nutrition guidelines (2013) have not helped this unwarranted “hunger at school” situation, for which new strategies are being proposed in this CN and sought through stakeholders.

The Concept Note (CN) is cognizant of a degree of possible back-and-forth controversy on school feeding perspectives and practice-oriented education experiences, or even child labour and boarder labour rights (e.g. of offenders) from the traditional society education and later the pre-colonial and post-colonial education system on practical skills versus theory⁴. School gardening in general, for instance, is not a new thing in Uganda’s historical school system but has

⁴ E.g. see UDO BUDE, *The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1983 (

overtime been disrupted partially by a plethora of the country's past war eras and their cascading adverse effect on societal order and practices. There have also been elements of dotted/ linear efforts, mainly in refugee community environment and/ or only targeting selected sub-regions of the country. The CN is also aware of perceptions on what may even reasonably be considered as 'manual' or 'communal' activities in a school setting or an ICT and machine-driven world. Precisely and concisely, each society has its style of education based on the country aspirations and, *inter alia*, what it wishes to bequeath to the future generations. Even so, from a review of "Western Education in Uganda, 1878-1939, there is evidence which suggests that there was always the mini-lecture or instructional time combined with practical trials to concretise what would have been taught, until the learner got it correct (e.g. see D. Khadidja, 2014, <https://theses.univ-oran1.dz/document/TH4326.pdf>). As such, the enthusiasm for a pedagogy that contributes to an education syllabus that is tilted to skilling Uganda (technical skills), cost-effective in running a school through partnerships, has a place for discussion. To this end and from this Concept Note, it is further strongly believed that there is an opportunity to fill certain gaps or overlaps, by consciously constituting an inter-sectoral and stakeholders' collaboration to leverage innovation and existing resources/ programs for a national comprehensive and sustainable School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) in Uganda. These realities highlighted above otherwise adversely affect the children's wellbeing, nutrition, cognitive, physiological growth and academic performance. Aggregately, it undercuts human capital development for Uganda, children's rights, the SDGs and others.

Against this background and with support of National Children's Authority and Save the Children International to Uganda Debt Network (UDN), the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with UDN are mobilising other key stakeholders in Education sector on strategies for a sustainable national comprehensive School Feeding and Nutrition Programme in Uganda.

3.0 ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING AND NUTRITION PROGRAMME (SFNP)

The Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with UDN are proposing a two-pronged step-wise phased strategic focus; with two sub-components as an entry point in delivering the national comprehensive SFNP as follows;

3.1 Comprehensive Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) sub-component;



Pupils of St. Michael's Girls Primary School Busembatia in Eastern Uganda attending to their school Garden.)

Again, school gardening in general is not a new thing in Uganda's historical school system, as complemented by purposive sampling work by UDN and National Children's Authority in Acholi and Karamoja in 2020 and national stakeholders' consultation in 2021, but had kind of been run unsustainably. In fact, Government under MoES has in place an institutional mechanism including the Karamoja School Feeding Department and has supervised the food provision programming actions by WFP and INGOs (especially in North, East and Karamoja). From the said sampling work by UDN, a few schools are also implementing some school feeding based on school gardening at a micro level. Meanwhile, SNV Uganda was also said to be implementing the school garden programme through approaches regarded as, *"inclusive, sustainable and cost-effective given the school as an infrastructure makes it possible to engage a wide array of stakeholders including school-going children, parents, school administration, other community members, different government ministries, research institutions and the private sector"*, across eight district Local Governments: Arua, Nebbi, Nwoya, Arua, Nebbi, Nwoya, Kasese, Kyenjojo and Bundibugyo)⁵.

The SSG sub-component of the SFNP, therefore, is simply to take lessons, scale-up, coordinate and harness interventions by a diversity of stakeholders. The School gardens will act as a "laboratory" for agricultural skills transfer to learners (not child labour), school feeding- food and nutrition availability: vegetables, tomatoes, etc. Subsequently, there will be an SSG intervention monitoring indicator in the overall M&E framework of the MoES (and by default/ extension amongst partners) to track extent of success rate. The SSG will initially apply to UPE running Government schools that have land that is not under dispute, under the following proposals:

- i) Budget allocation for 2 FYs;** A one-off approximately 2-Financial Year modest financing to the schools, phased through annual Government budget under MoFPED to MoES (a given sum to school per capita) for farm implements like hoes, pangas, pick-axes and others, in custody of the School Management Committees (SMCs) on behalf of their respective schools in Uganda. From the initial opening up of the school gardens with the said farm implements and planting materials and labour from community service orders (see later below), the school gardening intervention will be self-propelling and sustainable by keeping part of the materials for next planting seasons, fencing off the school gardens and replacing farm implements under management by the respective PTAs and SMCs.
- ii) Inter-ministerial and stakeholders' collaboration;** The MoES would coordinate the partnerships and the program based budgeting, so that MDALGs without recourse to additional funds, simply recast some aspects of their existing budget provisions across selected Government institutions (like OWC/ NAADs, DINU and NUSAF III, Uganda Prisons Service) and partner CSOs/ INGOs) for school gardening inputs/ planting materials to schools without stepping out of jurisdiction of current operational frameworks.
- iii) Leveraging community service orders under broader JLOS;** This would be with a focus on community service orders - where the responsible Ministry of Internal Affairs would collaborate with other MDALGs, stakeholder CSOs and School Management Committees and Magistrates/ courts of Judicature; so that there is a preferential posting of the offenders through the community service orders to serve sentence by opening up and consequent labour on school gardens, cooking at schools (with supervision), collecting school firewood, etc. The arrangement would contributed to enhanced implementation of community service legislation, policy, plus optimal utilisation of the community service staffing (national and district structures) and programming spheres with other stakeholders' participation. Such is envisioned to yield strengthened offenders'

⁵ <https://snv.org/project/school-gardens-key-community-transformation>



skilling, supervision and compliance, positive rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders back into their respective communities. While alone not sufficient, this extent of school feeding intervention for improved UPE performance contributes to decongesting prisons and reducing the associated penal custodial costs off the national budget, while improving delivery of the community service that by end of 2020 was responsible for 66.6% of all country convictions⁶ under JLOS.

- iv) Ministry of Health and programs like DINU and NUSAF IV:** These are already running nutrition-oriented components would join in and enrich the strategy towards programming for a national comprehensive and sustainable School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) through the SSG sub-component.
- v) National Forestry Authority and MDALGs;** Through institutions like NFA and LGs through or District Forestry Officers, there would be a provision for tree planting around/ within schools, towards climate change mitigation and for future firewood lots);
- vi) Uganda Land Commission (ULC) aboard;** Within the broader space of securing public land and public infrastructure, ULC would come in for purposes of titling of school land for tenure security of such vital Government facilities.

3.2 CCPGs supplies to Primary schools through Government purchases;

Again, anchored on the inter-ministerial and stakeholders' collaboration, the Community Commercial Producer Groups (CCPG) sub-component will specifically contribute to enhanced agricultural productivity, domestic market and household incomes in Uganda. As a complementary window to the SSG, it is proposed the CCPG is implemented as follows;

- i) MoES liaison with Ministry of Trade and Industry and MoLG;** There is an opportunity through MoES liaison with MITI (through District Commercial Offices) and MoLG (through parish chiefs) to map the Community Commercial Producer Groups (CCPGs) that will be resident in communities and supplying adjacent primary schools. The trio can even determine which Government body takes lead under this sub-component. Challenges notwithstanding, this will be achieved through a designated Government coordination and verification mechanism involving Trade and Industry/ District Commercial Offices, Education Departments, District Agricultural offices, DISOs, GISOs and School Management Committees among others.
- ii) Leveraging PDM, SACCOs to enhance school feeding and domestic market;** In the 1st phase, the agricultural products from the Parish Development Model, SACCOs and/ or private sector associations can consciously be organised as CCPGs but focused on a few farm products for purposes of supplying adjacent schools within a sub-county or otherwise defined locality. The CPGs can, therefore, be nurtured to supply schools for primary processing, quality and nutritious food items (e.g. where maize floor is mixed with milk) for a meal, with payments settled by Government of Uganda. In the 2nd phase, there would be emphasis on quality commodity management by the CCPGs along the value-chain pathway (tapping into the PDM that will also have value-chain consideration when implementation starts) and supplies to schools. Over time in the 3rd phase, the CCPGs would mature into or draw linkages with agro-processors for purposes of min-manufacturing (e.g. maize into maize floor, milk into milk products and packaging) for school market and other markets. The intervention will as such improve community production skills like making local yoghurt for schools. With an outlet for farm supplies to adjacent primary schools, this will expand Uganda's domestic market, anchored on community producer groups' bulk marketing.

⁶ MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, Directorate of Community Service, Annual Report FY 2019/2020, 2021, P. V

Clearly, therefore, the CCPGs sub-component demonstrates that such Government interventions can enable communities to work together from subsisting to enhanced quality agricultural production and productivity while attaining good UPE performance. Moreover, it will provide market outlets for crop and livestock products but also increase predictable incomes to households (e.g. to OWC/ NAADs, DINU and NUSAF III groups) through Government structures and systems that will optimise nutrition efficacy of the learners. This in reciprocity will enhance effective demand in Uganda's economy, human capital development and meeting other targets under Vision 2040, NDP III, Government commitments/ NRM Manifesto 2021-2026, realisation of rights of children, SDGs and others.

4.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING AND NUTRITION PROGRAMME (SFNP)



Children visibly active and enjoying their class time.

Uganda can utilise existing opportunities, resources and innovations to reduce short-term hunger so as to improve on cognitive development of learners while at schools in Uganda. The SFNP offers an advantage of contributing to increased school enrolment, retention and attendance of both boys and girls. By providing food at school, there is an expectation of gender parity and inclusive growth through increased school attendance of both boys and girls. Moreover, the Community Commercial Producer Groups' supplies to adjacent primary schools through Government purchases. This is innovative to the extent of participation of communities in school feeding, better educational outcomes and increased household incomes. The comprehensive Sustainable School Gardening (SSG) sub-component will enable skilling of pupils (also teachers and school workers by extension) while at school for positive mindset to agriculture as a business. Besides the SFNP contribute to agro-forestry as means of environmental protection and sustainable development, while complementing Government effort for better education investment outcomes through partnerships for synergy.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND ROLL-OUT OF THE SFNP

- 1) Based on her previous experience under the Karamoja School Feeding Department and supervised the actions by WFP and INGOs (especially in North, East and Karamoja) on school feeding initiatives, the MoES will be the overall coordinator and host of the inter-ministerial and stakeholders' partnership for a national comprehensive sustainable School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP). The Programme will be implemented in a phased manner, beginning with schools under the UPE programme in Uganda and subsequent lessons.
- 2) The key stakeholders/ partners initially mapped to deliver the SFNP include: the UN system (e.g. FAO, UNDP and WFP); Ministries, Departments, Agencies (e.g. MoES, MAAIF, MoFPED, MoW&E, MoLG, MoH, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Uganda Land Commission). Others are Local Governments, Parish Chiefs, National Children's Authority). They also include SNV Uganda, Save the Children International, Uganda Debt Network, Feed the Children, PTAs, SMCs and the communities.
- 3) The key Government programs initially mapped to deliver the SFNP include: OWC/ NAADs, Directorate of Community Service, DINU and NUSAF III.
- 4) Implementation arrangements, coupled with the operational and roll-out plans will be developed to guide the implementation of the two sub-components of the SFNP in Uganda. Even so, joint partners' Needs assessments and regional consultations to inform the SFNP will be undertaken. Meanwhile, an M&E framework matrix will also be developed, accordingly.

6.0 CONCLUSION



Pupils of UP Hill Junior School in western Uganda show off their harvest from one the school gardens.)

The national comprehensive School Feeding and Nutrition Programme (SFNP) is proposed two sub-components of **(i)** Sustainable School Gardening (SSG); and **(ii)** Community Commercial Producer Groups (CCPGs), are not the panacea to the aggregate improved UPE performance in Uganda. Rather the intervention contributes to the UPE cause and the Concept Note invites stakeholders to a discussion on how to enrich Uganda's pedagogy through partnerships and cost-effective strategies for running a school feeding program; while enhancing overall increased incomes and households from subsisting to commercial production; effective demand in Uganda's economy, human capital development; meeting other targets under Vision 2040, NDP III, Government commitments/ NRM Manifesto 2021-2026, realisation of rights of children, SDGs and others.

National News

The report recommends that government takes over school feeding through partnerships rather than leaving the initiative to parents or schools.

BY ISMAIL MUSA LADU

At least 70 per cent of primary school children are studying hungry because the school feeding programme continues to be ignored or neglected by government, according to a collaborative research conducted by three organisations.

The research was carried out by Uganda Debt Network (UDN), Save the Children International-Uganda (SCIU) and National Children's Authority (NCA). The finding corroborates a similar previous government report by the Ministry of Education.

To deal with the school feeding programme, which the researchers described as the "elephant in the room", the report recommends that government takes over school feeding through partnerships and policy mix rather than leaving the initiative to parents or schools, who cannot afford to provide porridge at a regular basis.

The report titled: "Challenges and Prospects for Financing School feeding under Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme in Uganda" asks government to provide funding for school gardening in order to boost food security in schools. The researchers say the initial funding for schools to open up gardens should be picked from the central and local government budgets.

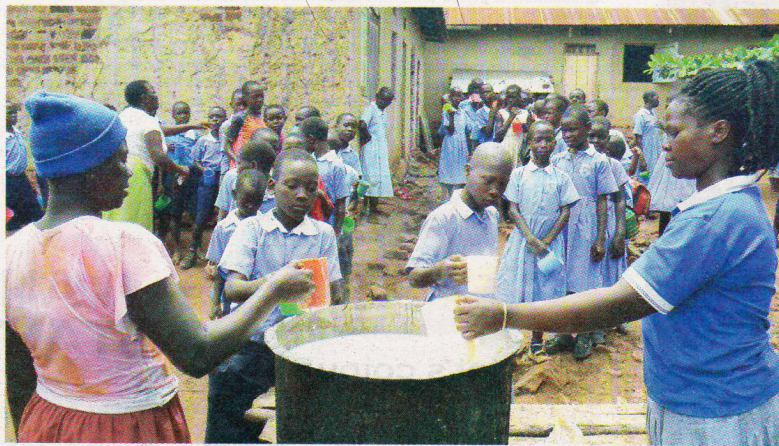
Presenting the collaborative research report at the weekend, Mr Julius Kapwepwe Mishambi, a development aid policy specialist, said the initial support should directly be through designated budget lines or even from already funded programmes such as Operation Wealth Creation (OWC).

"This funding and programming strategy would enable schools to be targeted along in providing agricultural inputs, without any additional recourse to the sectoral and overall governments' resource envelope," Mr Kapwepwe said.

He added: "Further the school gardens would enable schools teach agriculture for life skill lessons rather than punishment, so that there is progressive attitude and mindset change towards farming as a skill and a business prospect to both learners and teachers, during school or later out of school."

In one of the Cabinet memo, the Ministry of Education said hunger is one

70% pupils go hungry at school, says report



Pupils of St Mary's Kiryowa Primary School in Buikwe District being served porridge at break time on April 11, 2019. PHOTO/DENIS EDEMA

of the main reasons children perform poorly in UPE schools.

The memo further indicated that hungry children have poor concentration and mental abilities. This is in addition to causing absenteeism, bad behaviour, poor health and ultimately dropping out of school.

Studies by National Planning Authority (NPA), corroborated by the aforementioned research shows that there are up to eight million children who attend school in Uganda. However, the largest proportion go hungry with only 33 per cent of the children receiving meals at school. This, according to the NPA report, has implications on cognitive development, school performance and achievement.

Findings of another report by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UboS) indicate that at least seven of 10 primary school learners attend classes while hungry, with the most affected being the rural-based children. The lucky ones to have regular meals at schools are normally those whose parents are able to make some financial contributions towards the feeding.

Corroborating a World Country Bank report, the collaborative research paper commissioned at the weekend indicates that irregular student attendance has been partly attributed to lack of midday meals at school as well as low teacher attendance, low societal ap-

UPE

Government in Financial Year 1996/1997 introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, increasing enrolment and literacy rates to date. Despite this achievement, there is poor performance, especially in government-aided schools due to absence of school feeding mechanism.

preciation of the long-term benefits of schooling.

The findings also relate to a survey done by Twaweza, a non governmental organisation, between May and June to establish the effects of Covid-19 on people's livelihoods.

The report said 41 per cent of people across the country said their households ran out of food once or more in April, and a similar number (41 per cent) reported having not eaten due to lack of money or other resources.

Ministry of Education weighs in

According to the Assistant Commissioner in-charge of Primary Education, Mr Tony Mukasa, government recognises that feeding is an essential component of a child-friendly school as it improves physiological growth, school enrolment, learning and cognition.

Mr Mukasa said this is why in 2013, government designed the school feeding and nutrition guidelines to improve child health, nutrition and educational performance and in April 2018, the Minister of Education, Ms Janet Kataha Museveni, launched the national school feeding mobilisation campaign for parents and leaders at all levels to ensure all children get a meal while at school.

Despite all these efforts the problem of pupils studying on empty stomach remains an issue.

"I must tell you that school feeding is one item that we continue to grapple with on a daily basis," Mr Mukasa said yesterday, adding: "We must continue to have this discussion until we solve this problem or else we will be risking the future of our kids yet their feeding both at school and home is a debt that we must clear."

Under the school feeding and nutrition guidelines, governing bodies for each school are mandated to determine the amount of cash to be contributed by parents to facilitate the programme in agreement with the Education Act.

Home-packed meals is government's recommended method, especially for rural schools which account for 80 per cent of the estimated 7.9 million learners in primary education.

editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

Court of Appeal halts release of ISO cyber expert

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

KAMPALA. Court of Appeal has temporary halted the release from detention of a cyber security expert attached to Internal Security Organisation (ISO).

The High Court had earlier ordered for the release of Mr Peter Odongo, who is facing charges of illegal possession of guns.

".....I also accept counsel for the applicant's (government) submission that unless the orders sought are granted, the appeal and the substantive application before this court shall be rendered nugatory in case Mr Odongo is unconditionally released," reads in part the court's interim stay order issued by Justice Cheborion Barishaki on October 27.

Adding: "An interim order of stay of execution of the orders of court in the High Court is granted pending the hearing and determination of civil appeal no.255 of 2020. The registrar of this court is hereby directed to cause list civil application no.255 of 2020 for hearing within 21 days from the date of this ruling."

Justice Cheborion said implication of the High Court order in his view would open flood gates of litigation in courts for unconditional release by persons running away from prosecution in the General Court Martial.

"The General Court Martial is a creature of the Constitution of Uganda and it must carry out its mandate," Justice Cheborion stated.

Government through the Attorney General, Chief of Military Intelligence and the Inspector General of Police, had objected to the order of the High Court to have Mr Odongo unconditionally released and sought for Court of Appeals intervention.

The government had successfully argued that if the Court of Appeal had not issued a temporary order stopping the release of Mr Odongo, his release would render their substantive appeal useless.

Government argued that if the order of the High Court to release Mr Odongo had not been stopped, it would set a dangerous legal precedent as the accused persons before the General Court Martial will go to court seeking release orders on a wide spectrum of allegations against them.

They further argued that this would be done without trial.

awesaka@ug.nationmedia.com

BY FRANCIS MUGERWA

LAMWO. Uganda and South Sudan are trading accusations over a shooting in northern Uganda on October 27.

Lt Col Deo Akiiki, the deputy Uganda People's Defence Forces spokesperson, said about 36 soldiers of South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) troops established an illegal roadblock and an ambush at Ted-Nagwe (Atwila) in Pangira Sub-county, Lamwo District several kilometres inside the Ugandan territory for unknown reasons.

In a press statement yesterday, Lt Col Akiiki said on receiving information

Uganda, S. Sudan trade accusations over shootout

from the locals, the UPDF in Ngomoro moved to Ted Nagwe on a fact finding mission.

He said while approaching the spot, one SSPDF soldier was spotted and the UPDF commander approached him for an explanation.

"While interacting with him, the rest came from the ambush and instantly opened fire towards the UPDF troops," Lt Col Akiiki said in the statement.

The SSPDF soldiers were reportedly subdued by UPDF retaliatory fire in which two SSPDF soldiers died and one

was captured with three guns. UPDF suffered no casualty.

SOUTH SUDAN SAYS

On October 29, Voice of America (VOA) quoted Maj Gen Lul Ruai Koang, the spokesman for the SSPDF, saying a mechanised, heavily armed unit of the UPDF made a major incursion on Tuesday into South Sudan. "That unit launched a surprise

"The two bodies, the captured soldier and the three guns were handed over

attack on our defensive border post at Pogee in Magwi County in Eastern Equatoria state. Our forces were engaged in a gun battle that got four killed - two from our side and two from the side of the UPDF," Koang said. Koang said following the incursion, the UPDF withdrew to Uganda and the SSPDF took full control.

to the South Sudanese authorities on October 29," Mr Akiiki said.

He said the continued incursions into the Ugandan territory by South Sudan armed elements presents a challenge not only to the border communities but to the relations between the two countries.

"The ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the two sister countries are working closely to address this matter. Diplomatic engagements by the relevant stakeholders are ongoing to complete the re-demarcation and reaffirmation of the common border to forestall future conflicts," he said.

editorial@ug.nationmedia.com



UGANDA DEBT NETWORK

Tel: +256-414-533-840 / 543-974 / 698-998 / +256-700-431-573

Plot 153/155 | Ntinda Rd, Ntinda

P. O. Box 21509, Kampala | Fax: 256 414 534856

Email: info@udn.or.ug | Website: www.udn.or.ug



Save the Children