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School Inspectors do not add Value to Teacher Instructional Effectiveness in Government-Aided Primary Schools of the Least Developed African Countries: Case of Uganda

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Uganda, a former British protectorate that won her independence in 1962, located within the tropics of cancer and Capricorn also has the equator imaginary line horizontally running through it. According to its Vision 2040, primary education is one of the fundamental bases the country hopes to use to achieve the middle income social – economic development status. Uganda hopes that to achieve a strong primary education base, teacher instructional effectiveness will be the way to go.

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School Inspectors do not add Value to Teacher Instructional Effectiveness in Government-Aided Primary Schools of the Least Developed African Countries: Case of Uganda

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Abstract- A least developed country is one with a less developed industrial base and low human development index relative to other countries. In Africa, there are thirty- three countries that are classified as least countries. Such countries in Africa include: Burundi, Eretria, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Togo, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic and Uganda to list a few (Mwanazia, G.M, 1985).These countries are doing everything possible to cause social, economic, industrial and agricultural development so as to be among the developed countries. They visualize education as the key to the development status they intend to achieve. Their budgets are targeting strengthening primary education which will be enhanced by the school inspection systems they each have (Wanga, H. K, 1985).

Uganda, a former British protectorate that won her independence in 1962, located within the tropics of cancer and Capricorn also has the equator imaginary line horizontally running through it. According to its Vision 2040, primary education is one of the fundamental bases the country hopes to use to achieve the middle income social – economic development status. Uganda hopes that to achieve a strong primary education base, teacher instructional effectiveness will be the way to go. It is hoped that not only will factors like quality of teacher training, experience of teachers, teacher knowledge and collaboration, support supervision, attitude of teachers towards work and the environment in which work is conducted contribute to teacher instructional effectiveness (Lockeed & Vespoor, 1991) but as according to Glickman & Tashmaro, (1980) learner motivation, attendance, collaboration and constant practical work on the other hand all promote teacher instructional effectiveness. Instructional effectiveness is not only a task for teachers and learners *par se*, but for all stakeholders like parents, community members and chiefly school inspectors because school inspectors provide technical advice that improves the teacher instructional process (Gruwe, 2000). School inspection, however, is still faced with challenges that need to be addressed so as their efforts yield into teacher instructional effectiveness.

In Uganda, lack of appropriate funding for inspection activities, a weak local government law that fails to link properly the central and local government inspection bodies, the existing corruption tendencies at the centre and in local governments, failure to implement the inspection recommendations are some of the challenges, like it is elsewhere in least developed countries, the school inspection arm has to overcome to achieve teacher instructional effectiveness. It is concluded that since teacher instructional effectiveness is very instrumental in achieving Uganda's vision 2040 then the existing inspection challenges should be addressed. Among the key strategies is for the government of Uganda to transfer the school inspection functions from the Ministry of Education and Sports and also from the Ministry of Local government and to create a School Inspection Authority that gets funding directly from the central funding source. This Authority should report directly to Ministers' cabinet meeting of the Central government.

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I. Introduction

In most least developed countries, the classroom learning environments are so congested that the only one available teacher finds no space to stand in to deliver effectively the lesson, the teacher – pupil ratio is usually 1: 200 or above. Its common practice for learning to take place without teachers preparing lessons and under shades of trees e.g in South Sudan, Chad and Central African Republic. Classroom instruction is not effective, given, the performance of learners in examinations and the quality of learners from the primary schools especially the government- aided schools. Despite there being departments for school inspection in these countries, their roles are more of collecting data from schools than providing technical advice for instructional effectiveness.

Uganda is a country located within the tropics of cancer and Capricorn, south of the Saharan desert, along the equator and within the East African Community block. Uganda is a former British Protectorate that won her independence in 1962. Like other developing tropical African countries, Uganda faced political turbulences shortly after attaining independence that curtailed its social economic development. However, they calmed down in the 1990s. These years adversely affected many of its social sectors including classroom instruction.

An inspector of schools is a technical person charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the quality of education provision in all education institutions prevails at all cost. In Uganda like it is in the least developed countries of Africa, according to MoES (2016), there are school inspectors for pre-primary,

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primary, secondary and post secondary institutions other than the universities. Inspectors not only guide institutions of learning to achieve desired management standards but also ensure that the curriculum is effectively and efficiently implemented. As the practice is in most African least developed countries, in Uganda, school inspection is done at two levels:

i. There are local government inspectors that have their mandate majorly focused on pre-primary and primary schools and,
ii. Inspectors from the center mandated with monitoring what local government inspectors do and also to ensure quality service provision in secondary and post secondary education institutions. The central inspectorate not only sets the operational standards but monitors compliance to them.

The inspector's work is a demanding one and as an experienced educator uses available resources to optimally meet desired goals. They make valid judgments based on accurate evidence and offer valuable advice. Modern inspection approaches emphasize collegial approach to work - this is one that is developmental rather than punitive. An inspector is expected to give professional support to educators and managers to improve the quality of delivery. The impact of this work will be maximized if there is a high degree of mutual respect and trust exhibited among all concerned. Therefore inspectors require experience, knowledge; skills and positive attitude towards what they do (MoES, 2016).

On the other hand, instructional effectiveness is the achievement that teachers attain when they prepare for teaching; apply appropriate teaching methods to result in learners performing well in tests and examinations. Learners should not only perform well but also acquire and apply skills for example in numeracy, literacy, writing etc to address challenges in their day to day life situations. In order to achieve teacher instructional effectiveness, teachers demonstrate preparedness to teach including scheming, lesson planning, assessment of their learners, sharing assessment results with the appropriate stakeholders and providing technical assistance that will lead to learner recovery. Since school inspection is an externally oriented examination and systematic evaluation of schools (Mwanazia, 1985, Aguti, 2015) if appropriately applied, it adds value that will lead to instructional effectiveness.

Today, there are individually owned private primary schools and public schools owned by government. While in the running of private schools, government has limited hand , in the government-aided both the local communities and government have a big hand extended to providing the infrastructure, teaching – learning materials, training and re-training teachers but most importantly paying the teachers' salaries.

As it is in most least developed countries, Uganda's national quality assurance body is called the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) and in the local government there are district inspection units. The local government inspectors majorly focus on pre-primary and primary schools and those from the center are mandated with monitoring what local government inspectors do and also to ensure quality service provision in secondary and post secondary education institutions. The Central inspectorate not only sets the operational standards but monitors compliance to them. Inspectors at all levels guide institutions of learning to achieve desired management standards and to ensure that the curriculum is effectively and efficiently implemented.

II. Challenges to Inspection that Could be Addressed to add Value to Teacher Instruction

Conceptually, inspection is done to ensure that teacher instruction is effectively and efficiently carried out (MoES, 2016). For teacher instruction to take place appropriate inspection approaches must be applied because inspection in pivotal in teacher instructional effectiveness.

- As required by law in every country, the Uganda school inspectorate is staffed with people of the desired training levels and experience, but they lack the financial facilitation to do their work as expected. The financial provision is so poor that they cannot acquire appropriate transport means and even when they acquire the means of transport in form of vehicles or most commonly motor cycles they may not be as efficient as required to deliver them to their destinations timely and efficiently.
- Inspectors in Uganda, like it is in most least developed countries, frequently complain about lack of fuel and mechanical service to their vehicles or and motorcycles and yet lack of these two or even one of them is enough to fail them to reach their work destinations. It's common for inspectors to use cumbersome rural buses or even to use own bicycles to avoid embarrassment caused by their unreliable transport means that often break down on their way to work.
- Some of the inspectors recruited five or so many years back lack appropriate capacity to appropriately execute their work due to lack retooling to equip them with the desired subject content knowledge and modern school inspection approaches. All this is due to lack of facilitation from both the central and local governments.

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- At times school inspectors during inspection visits come across teachers who are better knowledged in the subject area. This not only embarrasses the inspectors, resulting in a bad working relationship but adds no value to the inspection exercise.
- The school inspectors, who are supposed to be as regular as once each term in schools for inspection, have been reported to be missing for even a full year. Some of the reasons given are technically acceptable but many times failure is due to inspector individual weakness.
- There is un- resolved controversy between the Ministry of Education and Sports and Ministry of local government supported by the district local governments which are responsible for primary school inspection activities. While local governments claim poor funding taking place, Ministry of Education claims that appropriate funding is effected and calculated based on a unit cost for inspecting a school. For now long no solution has been found.
- Further, the local government school inspectors have also claimed that some of the local politicians encroach shamelessly on the insufficient inspection funds leaving the balance too insufficient to enable them do their work as planned.
- The district local leaders at the end of it all turn around to accuse the inspectors of schools for adding no value to teacher instructional effectiveness because they are always very thin on the ground. For fear of their jobs, inspectors have never pointed any accusing finger into any of their bosses who confront them after misusing the inspection funds.
- Inspectors who use motorcycles on long and dusty roads claim that by the time they reach the schools, they are too dirty to talk about cleanliness and tidiness to any of the teachers and learners. They have also claimed that the bad roads and their old motorcycles have affected their back bones rendering them physically less functional too early.
- The local government policy is not decisively clear about the link between local government school inspectors and the Directorate of Education Standards. While DES has the mandate to monitor local government school inspections, it lacks the mandate to reprimand them. DES can't take any action. This implies that even if DES cites a weakness such weakness may not be easily corrected if local government inspectors don't voluntarily accept to do so. Since the relationship between DES and local government school inspectors is just cordial, the retraining, advice and accountability over inspection is only for those districts freely willing to corporate.
- While monitoring and supervision of the inspection activities would add value to teacher effectiveness, the education officers at the district and DES lack sufficient funding to supervise the way inspections are conducted in local governments.
- The district education officers who would implement the inspection recommendations on behalf of the district council lack sufficient facilitation to make them always available on the ground to enforce such recommendations.
- For lack of sufficient funding and being very thin on the ground, there is serious lack of peer-support within the inspectors in districts neighbouring each other.
- Inspectors of schools fail to oversee the planning and implementation of school performance review meetings due to funding problems. This has left schools failing to invite their stakeholders to participate in school performance review meetings or for those that make attempt not to do it efficiently.
- Inspection recommendations that would be disseminated to the schools' stakeholders many times have not because the inspectors of schools who would oversee this important activity fail for various reasons like time, funding and knowledge on what to be done.
- Peer review meetings are not regularly organized for the benefit of the weak teachers because inspectors are either not facilitated or lack knowledge on what to do.
- Inspectors of schools who are mandated with organizing remedial and demonstration lessons have failed to do it for financial reasons or lack of knowledge on what to be done.
- Capacity building renews teachers' performance levels but because the inspectors who are mandated with this pedagogical activity either have no time, lack knowledge on what to be done or are never financially facilitated.
- The inspectors of schools are mandated with school mapping but because they are overwhelmed by selfish politicians have allowed whoever has the money to construct schools anywhere without technical advice. This has led to mushrooming of schools and leaving other areas sparsely supplied with schools.
- The school inspectors are not independent in their work. They cannot provide their technical advice without interference from the political or local authorities for selfish ends. Therefore, whatever mistake in quality assurance matters in Uganda is not squarely the weakness of the inspectors of schools.
- The inspectors of schools are mandated with overseeing the welfare of the educators in Uganda but because their welfare is equally dilapidated, they

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tend to forget all about taking care of the educators' conditions.

- Inspectors of schools are mandated with meeting different stakeholders to solicit constructive ideas and views that develop education service delivery. Since they are never facilitated or they lack such knowledge, they have left this mandate un attended to.
- School inspectors are pivotal in the development and implementation of school improvement plans but for lack of funding or and lack of knowledge on what to do schools are running without school improvement plans. This explains why they have remained stagnated or are collapsing very fast.
- Usually, the school inspection challenges of the Directorate of Education standards differ from those of local government school inspection yet challenges to inspection from both units are usually clamped together. No solution to the benefit of both units has ever been found.
- At times, there are school inspectors with a secondary school curriculum background recruited to work in local government school inspectorates yet here the work is basically supervising implementation of the primary school curriculum. These may not immediately add value to teacher instructional effectiveness in primary schools except after a long orientation and training.
- During implementation of inspection recommendations, there may arise conflict of interest by the district authorities like politicians who demand the law to bend in their favour if their schools are found operating far below the standards.
- School inspectors go to the field too poorly facilitated financially to resist any corruption attempts by the schools. This enables the schools that can buy off unfavourable reports to operate under the same unacceptable conditions yet the same practices leaves the poor ones reprimanded and possibly improve faster.
- Corruption in the inspection system in Uganda has reached a level where school inspectors invite head teachers in their offices for dialogues disguised as school inspections. As evidence that the inspector worked in the school the visitors' book is signed in the office of the inspector at the end of the dialogue and the head teacher is asked to disseminate the points referred to in the dialogue to the school stakeholders.
- Corruption having infiltrated the school inspection in Uganda, no local government school inspector will be pleased to see the central government school inspectors coming to monitor the management of the inspection activities. The local government staff have always make it difficult or impossible for the monitors from the centre to do their work as expected.
- Lack of knowledge, peer working relationships, capacity building among inspectors of schools has left them with little or no contribution to schools guarding against pandemics like COVID-19.
- The school inspectors who are too few on the ground are overwhelmed with the rising number of schools to work in efficiently. This has left them with the option of short visit or directive school inspection approach. This method of work has left many stakeholders grumbling on the effect of their visits to schools given the little time they spend there.

III. Conclusion

Currently, in all least developed countries, there are signs and factors that reveal that school inspectors for government- aided primary schools have not made substantial contributions towards instructional effectiveness. In these countries, like it is in Uganda, lack of appropriate funding for inspection activities, a weak local government linkage with the central government inspection bodies, the existing corruption tendencies at the centre and in local governments, failure to implement the inspection recommendations are some of the challenges the school inspection arms have to overcome to achieve teacher instructional effectiveness. It is concluded that since teacher instructional effectiveness is very instrumental in achieving National development visions like the Uganda vision 2040, then the existing inspection challenges should be addressed. Among the key strategies is for the governments in these countries to create National inspection Authorities, like it is in the United Kingdom with OFSTED, to independently oversee inspection activities in order to ensure effective instructional effectiveness. For example, the government of Uganda ought to transfer the school inspection functions from the Ministry of Education and Sports and also from the Ministry of Local government to create a School Inspection Authority that will be getting funding directly from the central funding source. This Authority should report directly to Ministers' cabinet meeting of the Central government.

IV. Way Forward

- The governments of each country should revisit their legal frameworks in order to address the issue of linkage between the local and their central government. For example, the government of Uganda should revise the local government Act (1997) to address the issues of linkage between the center and local governments, for example, in Uganda, the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) should be made a School Inspection

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Authority (SIA) that reports directly to the Uganda cabinet of ministers' meeting, made totally responsible for quality standards of education to the country. It should be responsible for planning, implementation and accountability of its activities without interference from anybody.

- The local government school inspectors should be recruited, oriented and retrained by the National inspection Authority for efficient service delivery.
- School inspection funding should be centrally budgeted for, disbursed to local governments which should account to the central school inspection authority which should finally be accountable about school inspection to the country.
- Inspection guidelines should ensure that all schools are inspected at least once a term. SIA should ensure that there is adequate manpower for each school (whether private or government – aided) to be inspected once a term.
- SIA inspectors should be monitored for accountability purposes by a competent team of people at Ministerial level.
- The institutions of higher learning should introduce the training course on quality assurance where students intending to be inspectors should get pre-service training with specialization of level of inspection.
- SIA should take up the purchase of vehicles and vans, fueling and serving to solve the transport problem of school inspection.
- SIA budget should be directly funded from the sourcing center.
- There should be an attractive salary structure and allowances for the Inspectorate Authority that will distract inspectors from corruption tendencies.
- The school inspection authority should be charged with developing and implementing inspection policies.
- The Inspection Authority should over-see the management of school performance review meetings at which all stakeholders in the school should among other things discuss the inspection feedback reports.

V. Recommendations

For school inspection to add value to teacher instructional effectiveness, school inspection challenges should be addressed by the Uganda Government. Key among the issues is to centralize the management of inspection activities that will make the implementation of the recommendations centrally done.

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