

Editorial

The meaning of sustainable development has in the recent past been a subject of animated debate not only in academia but also in government departments, bilateral and multilateral development partners, and local and international non-governmental organisations. These institutions have defined sustainable development variously. To achieve sustainable development, it would be essential to strike equilibrium within the economic, political, social and environmental aspects of development. Certainly, debates on how this balance should be achieved still remain – hence the contestations that have led to dichotomies of weak and strong sustainability (Adams, 2009). In answer to this complex question, recently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been set with 17 goals and 169 targets (United Nations, 2016). Whereas the goals have been criticised on the grounds that they are too broad and overambitious, they stand as the UN's major initiative in the pursuit of basic living standards in the world and addressing issues like poverty, armed conflict, climate change, and inequality.

In an effort to contribute to this debate, Uganda Martyrs University through its interdisciplinary *Journal of Science and Sustainable Development* provides a platform through which scientifically researched knowledge on this topic can be shared among academicians and practitioners in order to find ways of how science can be used to attain sustainable development.

This journal issue consists of seven peer-reviewed papers by authors who are mainly researchers and lecturers in various Universities in Uganda. There is also an additional text on the prevailing of poverty and inequality at the national and international levels from the Executive Director of Oxfam International, Winnie Byanyima.

In the first article, Inamahoro and her colleagues delve into the nutritional problems facing children under five years of age in the Republic of Burundi. They assess the effect of both positive deviance-hearth and the community health worker's nutrition promotion in improving the status of nutrition and recovery among moderately malnourished children less than five years. Although it was found that both approaches can be used to improve on the nutritional status of children, they went on to discover that after controlling for socio-demographic factors, the children who were enrolled under the community-based nutrition care programme were more likely to be cured at the time of being discharged than those that were in the positive deviance- hearth.

In the second paper, Wamema and Othieno argue for improved financial services delivery to communities in Uganda through micro-finance institutions. Their argument is based on a case study of Pride Micro-finance Limited, which is arguably the largest within this sector in Uganda. They observe that in the rural areas, the processes of account opening, loan processing and deposit taking are time-consuming and quite tedious. The authors provide a solution to these challenges by designing a target enterprise architecture that will enable these tasks to be performed faster and

easily. In future, it will be interesting for the authors or indeed any other researcher(s) to carry out a follow up study to find out how efficient and effectiveness of this enterprise architecture in reducing the customers' misery with regard to opening and maintaining accounts.

Musinguzi's paper addresses the concerns of policy makers in a developing countries and people working in government departments. He argues that Uganda can transit from a developing to a developed country if only it could take a cue from South Korea's development model. The author suggests that if Uganda employs a combination of traditional and contemporary factors, it would achieve the equivalent of what he termed as 'South Korea's miraculous development experience'. The traditional factors include prodigious savings, focus on exports, investment in human and infrastructure capital, strong macroeconomic policies, and a capable government with a long-term development vision. On the other hand, contemporary factors include effective economic planning, strong business-government links, investment in research and development, adaptable economic policies and an emphasis on tertiary education. If these factors are enhanced in a stable political and economic environment, then there is no reason why Uganda will not evolve from an aid recipient to an aid donor within the next six decades just like South Korea did. However, more research needs to be done to find out the direct applicability of this development model given that Uganda exists in a socio-cultural and political context that is different from that of South Korea.

Re-echoing the importance and challenge of balancing the three pillars of sustainable development, Namutebi's paper illustrates how Uganda is encountering a stern challenge of attaining sustainable development due to the negative ecological and social impacts of mining activities in the Karamoja region. She observes that the entities that are involved in mining in this region are more concerned with economic returns from their investments while neglecting the unwanted eco-socio effects of these activities on the health and environment of the people living in Karamoja. Consequently, there has been an increase in conflicts both between the mining entities and the communities; and among different ethnic groups. Although the mining industry in Karamoja is in its nascent stages, it has already generated visible environmental degradation and human rights violations. The author recommends that the current Mining Act of 2003 should be amended to reflect the Karamajong as primary stakeholders in the mining business. This way, they will ensure the protection of their health and conservation of the ecological surroundings. The study suggests further in-depth research on the effect of mining activities on the health and environment of the people of Karamoja to ascertain the extent and its implications, and propose corrective strategies.

Currently, teachers in general and specifically those that teach at the primary school level are poorly remunerated. This has had an inadvertent consequence that deflects some of the most brilliant students from pursuing careers in the field of education. It is such prevailing circumstances that led Wabule to provide solutions to this challenge by conducting a study that examines various participatory approaches that can be used to explain the negative perceptions associated with the choice and

motivation to be a primary school teacher in Uganda. The paper explains the declining numbers and quality of candidates that choose a career in teaching. The narratives obtained from some of the current teachers show that whereas a few of them voluntarily joined the teaching profession, the majority felt that they had taken the wrong career path. She concludes by suggesting that the government should invest more in improving the public image of the teaching profession to attract more young men and women.

Senkosi's paper examines the issue of urban refugees and the need to provide for their needs. Currently, Uganda is one of the countries that host huge numbers of refugees. These displaced people are mainly coming from countries within or near the East African region such as Southern Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia and others. However, the paper specifically looks at the situation of Somali urban refugees living in Kampala. The paper aims to assess their living conditions by determining the level of satisfaction of what he termed as their "objective human needs". The paper also explores the perceptions of the members of the host community on whether the needs of the Somali refugees are met. The needs that were investigated are: peace and security, housing, employment and education. It was discovered that although there are a few refugees who are not satisfied; on the whole, most Somali refugees living in the urban areas of Kampala are satisfied with their needs. This was attributed to a number of factors including a non-discriminatory host environment, freedom to engage in business and hence the availability of financial resources, and a culture of social support among themselves and from their brothers and sisters abroad. All these elements combine to avail urban Somali refugees in Uganda a relatively comfortable socio-economic wellbeing.

Kisekka and Tshimba provide an analysis of two phenomena which entail the environment in which all the other issues discussed in this volume would need to thrive, namely development and democracy. They explore what happens when the two phenomena interact by explaining nine types of development and democracy. In this regard, Uganda is deemed to belong to the class of bouncers which entails countries that are marked by numerous oscillations between democracy and dictatorship. Furthermore, they argue that society consists of two categories of people, i.e., those that are willing to work without coercion (willing goers) and those that do not want to work unless they are guided or even coerced (the unwilling goers). In this case, they postulate that the level of democracy and development can be determined depending on which category dominates the other. The authors suggest that people should work hard to achieve both democracy and development because nowhere in the world have these been received on a silver platter.

Finally, the issue presents the development practitioner's point of view. Byanyima's contribution argues that it would be quite difficult for developing countries to transform into developed societies if the prevailing levels of poverty and inequality persist both at national and international levels. In other words, it will take more than academic theories for developing economies to leap from one stage of development to another. Citing Oxfam's (2016) report, *An Economy for the 1%*, the author

demonstrates that the world's wealth is increasingly being held in the hands of very few individuals. Given such a scenario, unless economic inequality is reduced, we shall not manage to eradicate extreme poverty. Byanyima attributes most of this inequality to tax havens and tax avoidance by rich individuals and corporations. Therefore, she suggests that in order to reduce this problem, there is need to ensure that tax reforms are put in place both at national and international levels so that everyone pays their fair share of taxes.

In conclusion, it is evident that development is a wide study area and achieving sustainable development requires continued exchange and harmonising of ideas between academicians and practitioners. Hence, it should be an interactive and all inclusive process. Given the various shades of opinion presented in this volume, achieving sustainable development will require a sustained use of an interdisciplinary approach.

References

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