

# Managing and Transforming an African University

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# **Managing and Transforming an African University**

Personal Experience at Makerere University

1973–2004

**John Pancras Mukasa Ssebuwufu**



Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa  
DAKAR

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## Preface

A friend once lamented that one of Africa's weaknesses was that Africans did not write much about themselves, that foreigners write most of what he reads about Africa and the major events shaping the future of the continent. Going by the volume of literature I had seen and read about our continent written by Africans, I thought my friend was unfairly criticising Africans. However, as I approached retirement, I began to wonder how many books had been written about the good and the bad at Makerere ever since it became a national university in 1970. Although a quick search indicated that, over the years, scores of scholars had written a lot about Makerere's glorious past, its fortunes and tribulations, most of this literature was scattered in journals and other academic publications not easily accessible to an ordinary person. With the exception of Professor Margaret McPherson's *They Built for the Future*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1964 and Professor Alexander Odonga's *The History of the Medical School*, published in the early 2000s, and one or two others, I could hardly find any other book written on the university. Neither had any of my predecessors written a full account of their experiences, perhaps understandably so, given the circumstances under which most of them left office, some never to be seen alive again. For that reason, I counted myself among the lucky former leaders of Makerere. I served a long tenure and was lucky not to be thrown out of office unceremoniously. Having been so privileged, I thought I had no excuse to let my long experience as staff and Vice Chancellor go undocumented. I was not only Makerere's student, leader and top manager but also one of its longest serving members of staff. I was there at the beginning of its long difficult years. I was also there when the university began to see some semblance of recovery. That was a rich experience.

Admittedly, I found writing this book an intimidating challenge. In spite of my long years in the academy, all I had ever written were journal articles. I had never written a book. But as luck would have it, just as I was thinking of dropping the idea, I received inspiration in late 2003 from an unexpected source. During an informal interaction with Dr Joyce Mook who was then Associate Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation responsible for overseeing the I@mak.com programme, I discussed with her my ambition to write a book about my long experience at Makerere. She thought I had a good idea and encouraged me to go ahead. Working with Cole Dodge, who was facilitating I@mak.com

and Nakanyike Musisi, Director of Makerere Institute of Social Research, we put together a funding proposal for a small grant, and quickly submitted it to the Rockefeller Foundation. Fortunately, it was approved. Initially, I wanted to confine myself to the period I was there as Vice Chancellor and the I@mak.com experience, but soon I realised that by confining myself too narrowly to that relatively short period from 1993 to 2004, I would not have done justice to the Makerere I had come to know so intimately. I believed there was a lot more about the university which had not been written. I had under-estimated the magnitude of the task ahead of me. In essence, I was taking on a mammoth task that would involve personal interviews and detailed archival research. That meant I could not complete writing such a book in one year, which the Rockefeller had given me. As Professor Odonga observes in his *The History of the Medical School*, the problem with Makerere is the difficulty of finding records and being able to extract the information you need. As files are scattered in many places and most members of staff are constantly busy with their work, progress was inevitably slow and arduous. My young research assistants kept shuttling back and forth between places, and more often than not, could not obtain all the details I was looking for. My relocation to Accra in 2005 did not help matters either. What is contained in the following pages is a personal account of my experience, how I saw it, heard it, read about it and lived it. It is not in any way a professional historical dossier on Makerere. That, I believe, is best left to the professional historians.

Although it is a subject of intense debate in the higher education circles, to many, Makerere is still a premier African university. It has enjoyed a distinguished past and I have no reason to doubt why it should not continue to enjoy that high academic excellence in the future. Although it fell on hard times in the '70s, over the years it has been able to bootstrap itself out of its problems. Makerere is an incredibly resilient institution which, against all odds, has continued to live up to its motto of "building for the future". Makerereians are found all over the world, many with successful careers. It has provided Uganda, East Africa, Africa and the world with high quality professionals in such fields as Medicine, Engineering, the Arts and the Sciences. I am one of those who feel intensely proud to have been a product of this great institution. As a tribute to those who have been at its helm, from its simple beginnings as a technical school in 1922 to its present status as a national university, I have decided to dedicate a few chapters to its principals, chancellors and vice chancellors. I am more than convinced that it is through the tireless efforts, commitment and vision of these men that Makerere has remained an academic force to reckon with all these years. However, I must hasten to add that some of its chancellors were also responsible for its misfortune and its near-collapse.

I am deeply indebted to many people who directly and indirectly contributed to the writing of the manuscript. They made their time freely available so I could formally and informally interview them. I met some of them in many odd places

– airport lounges, hotel lobbies and conferences. Through these formal and informal interactions, they have helped me to validate most of the manuscript. I wanted to interview many more but, for circumstances beyond my control, this was not possible. To those I ought to have interviewed but could not reach, I can only offer my sincere apology. In the same token, I wish to express my gratitude to my former colleagues of all categories at Makerere and at Kyambogo who generously provided me with a lot of useful documents and informative ideas that, no doubt, enriched this account immensely. I know how hard it is to retrieve information in a big and complex institution like Makerere University where archival automation is still in its infancy.

In the course of writing this account, I was assisted by Annet Nakabiri Okoth, Doreen Kiconco, John Kateete and Sifa Nakiyaga. I am grateful to them for the legwork. Above all, I am extremely grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for the funding, which made it possible for me to concentrate on writing this account and for their exceptional patience and understanding as deadlines came and passed and I was still nowhere near the end. I am also grateful to Dr Joyce Moock for supporting the idea of documenting this story, and for going out of her way to source for funding for me; as well as Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Cole Dodge, who assisted me so much during the funding proposal writing. As Director of Makerere Institute of Social Research, Dr Nakanyike Musisi kindly provided working space and facilities for my research assistants. A special ‘Thank you’ to my wife, Alice, for constantly reminding me that the work was yet unfinished, and that I ought to get on with it; my sons, Michael Kavuma and Martin Mwanje, for their efforts in constantly browsing the internet for good material; and my daughter, Cathy Sanyu Nabulya, for checking and filing the research material in a logical sequence. I am also grateful to my Ghanaian colleagues, in particular Vera Doku, for editing the entire manuscript.

Although I have tried to verify the facts and events documented in this book, it is practically impossible for a story of this kind, about events and people, to be absolutely error-free. I am the first to admit that this account is no exception. I also know that due to memory lapses, I may have inadvertently left out a lot of exciting events which happened at Makerere and Kyambogo during my time there and which deserved mention. As the popular saying goes: time is memory’s worst enemy. I take full responsibility for all factual errors and inaccuracies.

Let Makerere continue to build for the future!

**John Pancras Mukasa Ssebuwufu**

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## About the Author

**John Pancras Mukasa Ssebuwufu** was born in 1947. He attended St Peter's Junior Secondary School Nsambya, Namilyango College before joining Makerere University, in 1970, for a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry where he was retained as a staff development fellow. Soon after, in 1974, he was admitted to Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, initially for a Master's degree, but after one year it was upgraded to a PhD which he received in 1977. In the same year he was appointed post doctoral fellow in the same department for two years (1977-79). It was during this period that he made an outstanding discovery, which the journal *Nature* – one of the most prestigious and influential scientific journals in the world – published in 1983. John Ssebuwufu's discovery won him and his postdoctoral supervisor a gold medal and diploma.

He taught Chemistry at Makerere from 1979 as a lecturer, rising through the ranks to full professor in 1990. He was later appointed Principal of the then Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo. After heading Kyambogo for three years he was transferred back to Makerere University as its Vice Chancellor – a position he held for nearly eleven years from 1993 to 2004. As VC, he and his colleagues innovated many new things and introduced several changes, including the semester system which is now used in all universities in Uganda; Makerere's Internet and Intranet running on a 15 kilometre optical fibre backbone; Management Information Systems such as the Academic Information System (ARIS) and others that enabled the university automate its management systems; a Wilken radio-call based security system; a training FM radio station for the Mass Communication Department; several new academic programmes; international partnerships; and several new and renovated buildings.

After retiring from Makerere University in 2004, he went to Nairobi where he briefly served as a consultant to the Kenyan public universities Chancellors Committee during which time he worked out the terms and conditions of service for the Vice Chancellors of Kenyan public universities.

In 2005 he joined the Association of African Universities (AAU) based in Accra, Ghana where he spent eight years as Director of Research and Programmes and returned to Uganda in December 2013 as Principal of Kisubi Brothers University College (KBUC). In 2015, KBUC was transformed into the University

of Kisubi and Ssebuwufu was appointed its first Vice Chancellor. He also serves as Chancellor of Kyambogo University and Kampala International University respectively.

Outside of higher education, John Ssebuwufu served as the first Chairman of the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology; as member of the first Appointments Board of Uganda Martyrs University and as Chairman of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). He has also served as Chairman of Uganda Management Institute Board of Directors; as Chairman of the Taskforce that planned Mutesa One Royal University and the return of Masaka Technical Institute to Buganda Government; as Chairman of the Board of Directors and Non Executive Director of Citibank Uganda, which is part of Citigroup New York, USA for twelve consecutive years; and as Chairman of the Board of the UbuntuNet Alliance – a regional ICT network covering Eastern, Southern and Central Africa with its Secretariat in Lilongwe, Malawi.

He is a recipient of three honorary degrees (*honoris causa*), namely: Doctor of Education (EdD) from Ohio State University in USA; Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) of the University of Bergen, Norway; Dr of Laws (LLD) of his alma mater, Queen's University Belfast; amongst other awards.

He is married to Alice Evelyn Nalwadda Ssebuwufu and they have four children.

## Makerere the University is Born

Ever since it opened its doors with 14 boys and 5 instructors in 1922, Makerere, as seat of higher learning in East and Central Africa, has been in constant change. It started as a simple Technical School established by the Department of Education under the British Protectorate Government; appropriately located on a hill with a name which, according to legend, connotes daybreak. According to one version of the tale (and there could be several other versions), the hill we now know as Makerere was once a scene where history involving love and royalty was made. Some traditionalists believe the incident occurred during the reign of King Jjuuko in the late seventeenth Century.

Legend has it that King Jjuuko had an eye for beautiful women and when he was told of a dazzlingly beautiful girl, Nalunga, living on the other side of the hill now called Makerere, he decided to go and look for her alone on foot. Traditionally, kings were not supposed to be seen walking around on foot in public. They had to be carried on the backs of special court servants. King Jjuuko had to sneak out of the palace in the dark of the night. Unfortunately, dawn found him on top of the hill now known as Makerere. In frustration the king exclaimed, “Oh, it is dawn”. Henceforth, the hill took on the name Makerere – the dawn of King Jjuuko.

By coincidence, the British Protectorate Government chose to build an institution of higher learning on the same hill, in preference to Bombo, which signalled the dawn of new knowledge for Uganda and Africa. However, throughout its many transformations, first as a technical school then a college, a university college of Eastern Africa and constituent college of the University of East Africa, Makerere never acquired the status of a full-fledged university. That had to wait until 1970 – almost 50 years later.

The first major institutional transformation was a change from a narrowly focused national technical school into a regional college of higher education for East and Central Africa in 1940, following the recommendation of the De la Warr Report of 1937. At the same time, under the inspiration of Governor Sir

Philip Mitchell, the college acquired more land and an endowment to expand. In spite of the then ongoing Second World War, the Government found money and began to construct new buildings for the young college. His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester, laid the foundation stone for the present main building and the twin chapels behind it. They were completed and commissioned in 1941.

The Asquith Commission of 1945 recommended further changes, asking the British Government to prepare the college to become the centre of university studies in East Africa. However, the colonial administration was not quite ready to turn the college into a full-fledged university. Nevertheless, following the Asquith recommendations, a scheme of special relationship with the University of London was entered into in November 1949, which gave the college a new title of Makerere College, the University College of East Africa. But it was at the beginning of 1950, over a quarter of a century after its founding, that the college started offering courses leading to the general degrees of the University of London. When the relationship with the University of London ended in 1963, it became Makerere University College, under the federal University of East Africa. It acquired the long-awaited status of a full-fledged national university in July 1970, which was celebrated on October 8, 1970. The occasion marked the end of the University of East Africa, which was replaced by three national universities; Makerere University for Uganda, the University of Dar es Salaam for Tanzania and the University of Nairobi for Kenya. In 1970, these three universities were the only public universities in existence in the whole of East Africa.

As part of the East African Community, which collapsed in 1977, the University of East Africa was created with a broad aim of minimising duplication of academic programmes, particularly the professional programmes of engineering, law, medicine, veterinary medicine and commerce. From the beginning, each constituent college within the federal university was assigned a mandate to produce graduates in one or more professional courses for the whole of East Africa, which then comprised Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar. Later, Tanganyika and Zanzibar formed a single political union with a new name, Tanzania. Nairobi trained the engineers, accountants, architects, veterinary doctors and land and quantity surveyors. Dar es Salaam trained the lawyers while Makerere trained all the doctors (physicians and surgeons), agriculturalists and teachers. However, the sciences, arts and humanities were the duplicated courses offered at each college. This arrangement was seen as the most efficient way of utilising scarce resources. It was also viewed as a way of cementing the East African spirit, because the University of East Africa was part of the common services of the old East African Community. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, then President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the most senior of the three Presidents in terms of length of incumbency at the time (the others being Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Apollo Milton Obote of Uganda), was nominated by his colleagues as the first Chancellor of the new University of East Africa.

However, in 1968, the three East African heads of state made a historic decision which required each country to train its own lawyers. At the time, majority of the lawyers trained at Dar es Salaam ended up as state attorneys in the chambers of the Attorneys-General of their respective countries. Some believe that the decision which led to the break-up of the federal university was prompted by the more flamboyant Jomo Kenyatta who had his own misgivings about lawyers trained at Dar es Salaam. However, the official explanation given for the change was that each country wanted to evolve its own unique legal system, which required home-trained lawyers. Secondly, the capacity of the Faculty of Law at Dar es Salaam was small, and therefore, could not satisfy the growing demand for lawyers. But there was also the unofficial version about the growing uneasiness and concern centred on the way law was being taught at Dar es Salaam.

Many had come to the conclusion that the law professors at Dar es Salaam were putting too much emphasis on Marxism and other radical political philosophies at the expense of the law disciplines. The dose of these left-wing political philosophies, fuelled at the time by the liberation movements in Africa and elsewhere, and by the rivalry between the two super powers, was becoming unacceptably high and had started worrying the more western-oriented Jomo Kenyatta and, to a lesser extent, Uganda's Milton Obote. Unlike Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who was a confessed socialist, Jomo Kenyatta and Milton Obote were politically moderate. In fact, some political observers have described Jomo Kenyatta as right-wing and Obote as middle-of-the-road. From a personal point of view, I am tempted to believe that in the heart of their hearts, Jomo Kenyatta and Milton Obote were concerned about the influence of the many radical leftist lawyers filling up the chambers of their Attorneys-General. At the time, we did not realise the far-reaching consequences of this decision on the future of the East African community. The writing was clearly on the wall that all was not well. Cracks were slowly developing, threatening to break it up. It is argued that the abolition of the single currency – the East African Shilling in 1966, together with the East African Currency Board that regulated it, and the dissolution of the federal University of East Africa in 1970, were the precursors to the demise of the East African Community. Idi Amin's coup of 1971 was the last nail in the coffin.

Soon, the argument about limited capacity extended to other professional courses offered at Makerere and Nairobi. The University of East Africa was being seen as incapable of producing graduates in the numbers that were required. This was seen as a hindrance to national development. It is now believed that these arguments, at least in part, paved the way for the final break-up of the University of East Africa and the creation of three separate national universities in its place. Unfortunately, the break-up of the university left the islands of Zanzibar without a university of their own and therefore dependent on the University of Dar es Salaam, situated on the main land of Tanzania. Each national Parliament enacted an Act that established

each university as a national institution. In effect, the Act constituted the Charter or Bill for each national university. The 1970 Makerere University, Kampala, Act had a lot in common with that of the University of Nairobi and the University of Dar es Salaam. The position of Chancellor was a prominent feature in each Act. The Head of State became the automatic Chancellor of the university, which had dire consequences for Makerere. Apollo Milton Obote became the first Chancellor of Makerere University, Uganda; Jomo Kenyatta became the first Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Kenya; and Julius Nyerere became the first Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. As soon as he assumed the role of Chancellor, Milton Obote dropped Yusuf Kironde Lule, the first African Principal of Makerere University College, and in his stead appointed Frank Kalimuzo as Vice Chancellor. Although Frank Kalimuzo was a seasoned civil servant, he was not an academic. At the time of his appointment, he was Permanent Secretary, Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Civil Service. Therefore, to most people within and outside Makerere, Lule was the obvious candidate for the job; however, from Milton Obote's political point of view, he was unacceptable.

For some curious and unexplained reason, Obote retained Bernard Onyango as Academic Registrar of the university, a position Onyango held until his retirement in 1992. By nature, and perhaps unlike Lule, Bernard Onyango always steered clear of controversy and, as much as possible, tried to keep a low profile. I believe in a way, this trait helped him survive the misfortunes that befell many of his contemporaries. One prominent Makerere political scientist, Apolo Nsibambi, attributed Onyango's ability to survive where others perished to the fact that he knew how to sense danger and how to avoid it. Although he was a known supporter of the Democratic Party, I do not recall an occasion when I heard him express his political views openly. The first and only time I ever saw him adorn the Democratic Party colours was during the 1980 election campaigns. Again, according to Nsibambi, one of the survival tactics he relied on was "withdrawing from public engagement".

Beyond his role as Academic Registrar, Onyango rarely participated in high profile public functions, either as a speaker or as a chief guest. Nevertheless, among his peers, he was one of the most sociable and down-to-earth persons. One found it hard to dislike him or to annoy him. I am tempted to believe that Obote kept Bernard Onyango as Academic Registrar because he considered him as politically benign or mild. He did not perceive him as politically dangerous unlike the many he locked up. Another equally plausible explanation could have been the very office Onyango held within the university hierarchy. It is also probable that the well-positioned people who might have had ambition for some high office at Makerere did not see the office of Academic Registrar as glamorous and significant as that of Vice Chancellor and, therefore, were not attracted to it.

Onyango's presence during those difficult years was a blessing to the university. He used his wealth of experience and administrative skills to keep the university

afloat, academically. While Vice Chancellors were dismissed as soon as they were appointed, some disappearing without a trace, Onyango was always there to maintain some semblance of order and continuity. It was through his efforts that the university put in place a strong staff development programme. This scheme has served Makerere University well and enabled it to continue offering academic programmes of reasonable quality after an almost mass exodus of its senior academic staff during the long years of turmoil. Indeed, Makerere's recovery from the academic ashes is largely due to this scheme. Onyango had the knack of spotting talent. I am one of those he recruited as Special Assistants in 1973, soon after my graduation, although up to that point I had never considered an academic career. My interest as a chemist was in industry. Onyango was a strong believer in the university's motto, "We Build for the Future".

The launching of Makerere University as a national university and the installation of its first Chancellor and Vice Chancellor on October 8, 1970 was an occasion to remember. I had not witnessed such an occasion marked with so much paraphernalia and pomp since the independence celebrations of October 1962. Among the important dignitaries who attended the ceremony were several Heads of State, notably among whom were Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. Before Dr Milton Obote and Frank Kalimuzo, dressed in their new academic robes were officially enthroned as Chancellor and Vice Chancellor, Bernard Onyango, who had been the Registrar at Makerere University College under the University of East Africa, and was now the Academic Registrar of Makerere University Kampala, cited the relevant sections of the 1970 University Act from which both the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor derived their authority. It seemed the Government had not spared any expense to make the occasion one of the most memorable in the annals of the university. This was also the time the Army Commander, General Idi Amin, had fallen out of favour with his Commander-in-Chief, Milton Obote. Rumour was rife that the General was under house arrest but to our surprise, Amin turned up for the ceremony, though late. Clad in military attire, the General came driving himself in an open Jeep. He had neither bodyguard nor the usual escort. As expected, the students cheered and applauded when they saw him, probably because they looked at him as a man who had the guts to defy authority. He must have enjoyed what he saw. It was as if he was making a point that come March 1971, he would be the one in the Chancellor's seat, receiving all the ululations and accolades which Milton Obote was enjoying at this particular occasion.

After waiting for almost half a century to transform into a university, Makerere's honeymoon as a full-fledged national university was short lived, rudely interrupted by Idi Amin's coup d'état of January 25, 1971. I was then a first-year undergraduate in the Faculty of Science and, by fate, a witness to the events that were unfolding in Uganda and at Makerere. What follows is a simple

account written in non-professional language, much of it based on my personal experience. It is a simple account of how Makerere has grappled with the myriad of problems through the years of its existence and its glorious days when it was described as the “Harvard of Africa”. It is also about the misfortunes that befell it immediately after it became a national and the first public university in Uganda in 1970, and the revival of its fortunes up to 2004, when I left. Furthermore, the account is also, in some ways, a recollection of some of the events that have shaped Makerere as an institution of higher learning in Africa, since its beginning in 1922, and the personalities that have been behind the several transformations it has gone through over the years. It is intended to show, from a personal point of view, how this once great institution in some very innovative ways, survived and moved on.

However, the story would be incomplete without rolling the time back a little, to the very beginning of the institution in 1922. Much of this experience is captured in Professor Margaret MacPherson’s book, *They Built for the Future*, published in 1964. In it, Margaret MacPherson ably describes in detail Makerere’s development from its beginning in 1922 up to 1962, the year Uganda gained independence from Britain. While this account will attempt to fill in the gaps for the period 1963 – 1992, the thrust is on the period 1993 – 2004, the time I was there as Vice Chancellor. The inspiration to write this account came from the many informal discussions I had with colleagues, particularly Cole Dodge who used to fly in from Nairobi to facilitate the I@mak.com meetings, Dr Nakanyike Musisi, the I@m ak.com’s Executive Secretary and Dr Joyce Moock, Associate Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation. As the volume of I@mak.com work grew, I soon realised that, contrary to the critics and popular belief that Makerere University was an ivory tower and as such had little to offer to society beyond churning out graduates whose pre-occupation were white-collar jobs, Makerere’s academic and administrative staff actually had a lot to offer to the community. The problem was that few people knew or cared to know about Makerere’s contribution to the development of our country. The fact that the university too had no well-developed outreach programme, which could have served as a direct link with society, compounded the problem further.

As we shall see in some detail later, the I@mak.com experiment was a revelation that – indeed – Makerere had a lot of untapped capacity to transform itself and the wider society as well for the better. The university had no shortage of powerful innovative ideas coming from the rank and file of its staff; all that was needed were resources and an inspiring and visionary leadership. I also realised that much of what we were doing in I@mak.com and much of the recent experiences the university had gone through were largely undocumented. Even, the little that had been written about Makerere’s harrowing period since 1971, its dramatic recovery from the brink, was fragmented, with much of it written by

outsiders. I conceived the idea that I should do something about it as soon as I stepped down as Vice Chancellor. The big advantage I had over my predecessors was that, unlike most of them, I had been Vice Chancellor for the longest period. Secondly, I was not forced out of office against my will. If anything, I was the one agitating for my retirement. From that point of view, I believed I was best placed to write about my experience as a member of staff and Vice Chancellor of Makerere, as well as about the short spell I spent at Kyambogo as Principal of the Institute of Teacher Education (ITEK) affiliated to the university. Subsequently, I submitted a small funding proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation through Dr Joyce Moock to support this idea. The Foundation kindly approved the funding, which enabled me to write the manuscript.

From about the beginning of the 1950s when its status changed from that of a College of Higher Education to the University College of Eastern Africa, (a status which in effect turned it into a constituent college of the University of London under a special relationship, as one of what some historians call the Asquith colleges), through the glorious 1960s up to the time it broke away from the University of East Africa in 1970, Makerere had built a solid reputation as an intellectual and academic centre of excellence, in and outside Africa, in teaching and research. Its internationally recognised high academic excellence and intellectual prowess earned Makerere the nickname, “Harvard of Africa”. At the time, the college was attracting high calibre scholars from every part of the world and had some of the best professors on its staff, though I should hasten to add that the majority these professors were expatriates, with just a handful of Africans.

Cambridge and Oxford Universities supplied a sizeable number of staff to the college. Makerere Medical School had become Makerere’s flagship. The clinical disciplines had acquired a new teaching hospital, appropriately called New Mulago, opened by the Duke of Kent on October 9, 1962 as part of the Independence Day celebrations. The school and old Mulago Hospital had also made significant breakthroughs in cancer research, which led, for the first time, to the discovery that certain types of cancers were caused by external agents such as viruses. This discovery came out of Dr Denis Parsons Burkett’s study on the ‘cancer of the angles of the jaws’, which commonly attacks children. Dr Burkett published the discovery in the *British Journal of Surgery* in 1958. This type of cancer is now internationally known as Burkett’s lymphoma. Meanwhile, the young Dr Sultan Karim of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics and his co-workers were making big breakthroughs with their pioneering research on the naturally occurring prostaglandins, known to induce labour in pregnant women and publishing their findings in such prestigious journals such as *Lancet*. This was also the period the Medical School was pioneering the new concept of primary health care in the medical profession.

Meanwhile, Professor Kibuuka Musoke of the Department of Medicine was busy establishing a nephrology/renal unit in the new Mulago Hospital, which would have given many Ugandans with malfunctioning kidneys access to dialysis facilities.

The Department of Literature and English under the stewardship of Professor David Cook, was cranking out literary works of outstanding quality in the form of the novel, poetry and prose. James Ngugi, a Kenyan student who later changed his name to Ngugi wa Thiong'o, is among the celebrated African writers to have come out of Makerere at this time. He published his first play, *The Black Hermit*, while still a student at Makerere. It was performed as part of the festivities that marked Uganda's independence in October 1962. The Department of Political Science and Public Administration had Ali Mazrui and Yash Tandon, among others, as its intellectual gurus. Philosophy and Religious Studies had among its ranks the controversial Kenyan Professor Mbiti who published a lot on African religions. The Margaret Trowell School of Fine Art had Lord Todd, Kingdon, and Gregory Maloba – who designed Uganda's independence statue, which stands in the gardens of the Kampala Sheraton Hotel, Kakooza and Ntiro, among others. Professor Boschhoff of the Department of Agricultural Engineering and his colleagues were busy designing and testing prototypes of a mini-tractor, Kabanyolo Mark I and Kabanyolo Mark II, which was suited to the local soils. At the Physics Department, Professor David Thomson, a product of the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge, and his colleagues were busy tracking neutrons, one of nature's elusive nuclear particles, within the equatorial belt. In the Zoology and Chemistry Departments, Professors Biddle, Crawford and Dr Alan Dandy were churning out PhDs and publishing research results of outstanding quality on local problems in reputable international journals like *The Transactions of the Faraday Society*.

Another brilliant Kenyan, David Wasawo, had returned from Oxford and joined the Department of Zoology, while William Banage was also doing well as an agricultural zoologist in the Faculty of Agriculture, later becoming the first African Professor of Zoology at Makerere, having obtained his DPhil from the University of Durham in the UK. Like Banage, John Ilukor had also scored a first by becoming the first African Professor of Physics at Makerere, after returning from the University of Rochester in USA with a PhD in Solid State Physics. The East African Institute of Social Research, now Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), was a busy hive of local and international scholars researching on all aspects of African social issues. The governments of the three countries that made up the then East African Community were meeting their funding obligations to the college. It was during this period that Makerere saw an unprecedented infrastructure expansion, which included the construction of several new buildings. And although some politicians and a handful of African academics on the staff of the college had started voicing concern that the Africanisation process at the college was unacceptably slow, this and other important issues were being seriously addressed by both the college

administration and the Government, after all Yusuf Kironde Lule – the first African Ugandan Principal, was now in charge of the college's affairs. One could safely say that by all accounts, Makerere was doing exceptionally well and developing at a satisfactory pace. It is therefore little wonder that the 1950s and 60s are fondly remembered by many as Makerere's golden years. Unfortunately, all this came to an abrupt and tragic end during the years of Idi Amin, which witnessed a horrendous military rule that lasted for almost eight years – from 1971 to 1978. I have little doubt that had it not been for this interruption, Makerere would have been one of the topmost and finest universities in Africa and beyond. Life then was good and Makerere was the place to be.

Idi Amin came to power on January 25, 1971 through what many naively thought was a bloodless coup but which, in a relatively short time, became one of the bloodiest and brutal regimes in modern African history. At the beginning of his rule, Amin enjoyed unprecedented popularity, which probably had never been seen in Uganda. Amin overthrew a Government and a President that had become increasingly dictatorial, ruthless and unpopular, particularly in Buganda. The abolition of the century-old Buganda Kingdom and other equally old kingdoms of Bunyoro, Ankole and Toro; the involuntary exile of the king of Buganda, Sir Edward Muteesa, in London did not go down well with most people. The subsequent arrest and imprisonment of prominent opposition leaders and politicians such as Benedicto Kiwanuka, Abubakar Kakyama Mayanja without trial; the imposition of a state of emergency in Buganda in 1966, which was later extended to the rest of the country after an attempt on Obote's life at Lugogo in December 1969, also angered many Ugandans. All this provided Idi Amin with an ideal environment to stage a coup. As one of the means he used to legitimise his coup, as soon as he came to power in 1971, Idi Amin freed all political prisoners, including Obote's five ministers, and also lifted the state of emergency, which had lasted for almost five years.

Since, by the 1970 Act, the Head of State of Uganda was the automatic Chancellor of Makerere University, it was General Idi Amin Dada's turn to take up his predecessor's mantle in 1971. His installation at the Freedom Square in March that year was more or less a replica of Obote's a year earlier. The pomp and fanfare that went with the ceremony was also the last for the then Vice Chancellor, Frank Kalimuzo. Many students and graduands, particularly those who were staunch supporters of the deposed president, stayed away. On the subsequent graduation ceremonies over which Amin presided, this had become more or less the norm, a practice which did not go down well with the General. To ensure that every graduand attended the ceremony in person, he instructed the university authorities to rescind the degrees of graduands who absented themselves from the graduation ceremony. I am not sure whether the university ever enforced this rule because, despite this threat, many students still continued to graduate in absentia.

Amin's installation ceremony as Chancellor was also, in a way, a test of things to come. At the beginning of his rule, Amin's command of the English language was not up to scratch. He had difficulty pronouncing some academic jargons like the word "surgery" which he kept pronouncing "sugary" and "agriculture" which he pronounced, "kagirikacha". Typical of students, when they heard him say, "*I confer apponi you the degree of Bachelor of Kagirikacha,*" they burst out in a bout of uncontrollable laughter and those who were outside the marquee started mimicking what the Chancellor had said. However, unknown to the students, Amin had his secret service agents disguised as students and strategically placed in the audience. As if requesting to share in the joke, some of the agents asked students who appeared most bemused by the Chancellor's unusual pronunciation of otherwise common words in the academia, to repeat what they had heard the Chancellor say. There was no shortage of volunteers and most of those who obliged were quietly told to board a truck parked nearby. They ended up in the Military Police Barracks at Makindye, headed by a notorious Sudanese Colonel, Hussein Malera. Under him, Makindye had started earning a reputation in some sort for ruthlessness and cold blood murder. It took the intervention of the University Administration and a few other people to have the students released. I am not so sure whether Idi Amin, as the newly installed Chancellor of the university, had a say in their release. Many of them came back with shaven heads. That was the worst way of humiliating a person. Unlike today, in the 1970s, no self-respecting person, and for that matter a university student, would go around in a clean-shaven scalp. It was unthinkable and did not happen. This was the era of the Afro hair-do and the like. My old friend and room-mate at Namilyango, Ochan Omwoya, was one of the victims who tasted what it was like at Makindye in those early days of Idi Amin's rule. Hailing from Acholi, he was lucky to have come out alive.

The graduation in 1972, over which Amin presided for the second time as Chancellor, was an anti-climax for the university. Rumours had started circulating that the Vice Chancellor had disappeared under mysterious circumstances; and indeed, Frank Kalimuzo had not been seen on the campus for some days. His appointment had been resented by some at the university, mainly on the account that he did not come from the academia, but was rather a government functionary. However, over time, as a result of his astute administrative skills, he had won over the hearts of both staff and students.

Professor Asavia Wandira, who was then the Dean of Education, was acting as Vice Chancellor. Staff and students wanted to know where their Vice Chancellor was. The university community was anxiously waiting for an explanation about the whereabouts of the Vice Chancellor but no explanation was forthcoming. Therefore, everybody expected either the acting Vice Chancellor or the Chancellor himself to offer an explanation at the graduation ceremony; after all a Vice Chancellor was an important person and when he went missing without explanation, it becomes everyone's concern, not least the Chancellor. To the

disappointment of everyone, no explanation was offered, and not even a mention of his name was made in any of the speeches. The ceremony proceeded with the usual pomp as if everything was normal. Kalimuzo's disappearance sent shock waves throughout the University community. It also marked the beginning of the university's "dark" period during which its academic activities literally nose-dived and from which it would take decades to recover. The exodus of its high calibre and seasoned academic staff, painstakingly built up, had begun in earnest and with this its reputation and glorious days.

After the military coup, it had become common knowledge that Kalimuzo's days as Vice Chancellor were numbered; it was just a matter of time. Nevertheless, no one expected him to go the way he did. Although he was an excellent technocrat, many considered him Obote's confidant and naturally his continued presence at Makerere in such a high position must have made Idi Amin uneasy. Amin must have looked at him with a lot of suspicion and at some point considered him Obote's mole. The absence of an official explanation fuelled speculation of his disappearance. Those who claimed to be in the know said that Amin's intelligence boys had picked up Kalimuzo from the Vice Chancellor's Lodge on a Sunday. They took him to an unknown location, but most probably Macintyre Military Barracks, for questioning about his alleged constant contacts with Milton Obote in Tanzania. The deposed President had taken refuge in Tanzania, and in 1972 launched an unsuccessful invasion of Uganda in a bid to come back, which ended in disaster. It was further alleged that Frank Kalimuzo had issued Makerere University identity cards to suspected saboteurs who wanted to overthrow the Government. Unconfirmed reports said that after the interrogations at Macintyre, he was summarily executed and his body disposed of in an unmarked grave at a secret location. Whatever the truth, that was the last time Frank Kalimuzo was seen alive. Up till today, no one knows where his remains are. Kalimuzo was the first among the many casualties the university was to suffer in the hands of Idi Amin and his terror machine.

Makerere's woes were further compounded by Amin's decision to expel all Asians, even those with Ugandan citizenship. He gave them only ninety days to leave Uganda. As they started leaving *en masse*, the university lost all its Asian staff and students, including the renowned Pharmacologist, Professor Karim. Majority of the expelled Asians were of Indian origin. As soon as the Asians had left, Amin issued another directive requiring all British citizens to vacate Uganda by December 31, 1972. Although there were caucasians of other nationalities such as Americans, Norwegians and Canadians on the teaching staff of the university, there was no exception. As far as he was concerned, all whites were either British or Jews and all had to go. He could not tolerate imperialists and economic saboteurs in the midst of Ugandans any longer. Such people could easily subvert his recently declared "Economic War". According to him, Uganda was an independent country and, therefore, it was high time the indigenous Ugandans took charge of

their affairs, including the management of their economy. Whether some of the Ugandans who had become quite vocal, agitating for rapid Africanisation had an influence on Amin's decision, we will probably never know. But, for Makerere, what followed was the beginning of a real nightmare.

Although efforts were underway to phase out the white expatriate staff and replace them with well-qualified Ugandans and other Africans, the process was taking its pace. This was partly on the account that, at the time, the country did not have a big pool of Ugandans who possessed the higher degrees – Masters and PhDs, which were the preferred qualifications for appointment to academic posts in the university. Other Africans, in particular the Kenyans and Tanzanians from whom the university could recruit, were in high demand in their own countries to join the teaching staff of their national universities, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Even the few who were already on the Makerere staff were leaving. The university was least prepared for the sudden mass departure of its expatriate staff who made up the majority of the teaching staff. Unfortunately, that was what happened. Although some of the expatriate staff affected by the President's order stayed on up to March 1973, which was the end of the academic year and others stubbornly refused to comply with the directive, there were many who could not wait for the unpleasant consequences of their unwanted stay in Uganda. They had seen and recognised the warning signs and what they saw written on the wall was not good news for them. Professor Ian McAdam of the Department of Surgery in the Faculty of Medicine at Mulago was a case in point and was still fresh in the minds of many. Ian, later Sir Ian William James McAdam, a Scottish man, was one of the distinguished professors of Surgery at Makerere. In December 1969, he was the surgeon who performed an emergency surgery on President Milton Obote after he was shot at Lugogo. He was also responsible for the establishment of the blood transfusion services in the country and had pioneered the setting up of the Polio Treatment Centre at Mulago. He had also played a critical role in ensuring the recognition of Makerere's Master of Medicine in Surgery by the various Royal Surgical Colleges in the UK. In 1972, Amin gave him and two of his colleagues 72 hours to leave Uganda or else face the consequences. The damage was done. Perhaps for those who were calling for faster Africanisation at the university, this might be a good step taken by Amin. However, I doubt whether this was the way they wanted to see it happen. I am sure they had expected an orderly Africanisation process. To say the least, this was far from being orderly; it was simply Africanisation in chaos, and in later years Makerere would find it painfully hard to recover from this chaos.

All of a sudden, the academic departments were facing acute staff shortages or left with just a skeletal staff, many of them junior lecturers. What Bernard Onyango and his colleagues did was to persuade as many of the graduating students who had obtained either first class or second class upper-division honours in the February-March 1973 examinations to stay on and join those who had been recruited in the past few years under the new Special Assistant grade – a

training grade. Even graduates who had obtained degrees of similar quality from other universities, like the graduate engineers from the University of Nairobi were quickly recruited into the scheme. One of the attractions attached to this position was a tax-free stipend of Sh1,666.66 per month, which at that time was much higher than the Sh1,300.00 the Civil Service was paying a fresh graduate and which attracted a tax then known as Pay As You Earn (PAYE). There was also the promise of a scholarship for postgraduate training and accommodation in the new postgraduate hostel, Daghamarsjold Hall. Those who had lower degrees were also kept on but under the old grades of Tutorial Fellow, Graduate Assistant and Demonstrator, which at that time were part of the regular University Establishment.

The sudden staff shortage the university was experiencing called for some radical thinking. The choice was either to close down some departments or abandon some programmes altogether, or do what at the that time was considered unthinkable: allow the newly recruited fresh graduates, the Special Assistants in particular, teach full-time loads which under normal circumstances would be handled by a senior member of staff like a professor. However, these were not normal circumstances. This was how my university teaching career was launched. The experience we went through can best be summed up this way: "Today you are a final year undergraduate student with badly written notes, possibly full of inaccuracies, but you managed to pass well in the just ended final examinations. The next day, the Head of Department calls you and tells you that as a Special Assistant, you have been assigned to teach the final year undergraduate class but hardly gives you time to prepare because the time is simply not there. Students are waiting to be taught. The subject you are asked to teach is the one you avoided in the examination because you thought it was too hard or you did not like that British professor who taught it. You thought his English accent was odd. The professor who used to teach it left yesterday after marking the last examination script. Sorry young man, there are no senior members of staff to guide you. He was the only expert the department had in that field. You are totally on your own. Do the best you can and good luck". Inevitably, in such a situation, you found yourself lost. Moreover, instinctively, you found yourself relying heavily on your badly-written undergraduate notes and on the few textbooks that were there and you hoped what you said would make sense to the students. You also prayed that the students would not be too smart to notice your mistakes. Many of us faced that scenario in July 1973. That is what happened to us and there I was teaching final BSc students some of the subjects I had not been too comfortable with during my final year. Nevertheless, when I look back at the number of students my classmate and colleague, Dr Wilfred Ddamba, now at the University of Botswana, and I taught soon after we completed our BSc in 1973, I cannot help but to giggle with delight for the simple reason that many of the students we taught have succeeded beyond our expectations. The pack includes Dr James Ntambi who is now a full

Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, USA and Dr Florence Isabirye Muranga, who obtained a patent for her research on banana starch. Whenever I meet them, I get some sense of satisfaction that although it was tough to teach such bright students, it was rescue work well done.

In spite of Makerere's good intentions to retain some of the best students graduating each year, the situation was becoming increasingly difficult, so much so that even the young Special Assistants were now having a tough time coping with the heavy teaching loads. At the same time, the purchasing power of our meagre teaching allowance was rapidly decreasing. Almost overnight, Amin's economic war had created an unprecedented scarcity of most of the basic necessities of life. Making ends meet became a tough struggle, which necessitating taking on more than one job if you had to survive the economic hardship. This was the beginning of "moonlighting" as a way of life for most Makerere dons as well as such practices as "chasing lines" and *kusammula*, which literally meant buying an item on high demand such as sugar, salt or soap and reselling it at an inflated price. Besides the economic hardship and the heavy teaching loads, opportunities for postgraduate training were also dwindling. There were many of us who had registered for higher degrees (Masters and PhD) at Makerere but found ourselves without supervisors who for reasons of personal safety, had to leave the country in haste. Then all postgraduate degrees at Makerere were by research and thesis. Even the few members of staff who had promised to continue supervising their students through correspondence found it impossible to continue, partly because the postal services between Uganda and the rest of the world had become unreliable and partly on the account that the Government of Uganda had made it a policy to read all outgoing and incoming mail. Communicating with the outside world had become risky business.

Frustrated, many Special Assistants started leaving the university and those who stayed had a rough time finishing their degrees. An unfortunate case in point is late Dr Sam Mukasa in the Chemistry Department who in 1969 graduated with a first class honours degree in Chemistry. As was the practice, he had registered for the MSc in Organic Chemistry and was being supervised by the Head of Department, Professor Stephen Landor. However, a year later, he had made such an impressive progress that his supervisor decided to upgrade his MSc to a PhD, a rare occurrence then, and even today, at Makerere.

Professor Landor who had been Head of the Department of Chemistry since 1970, left Uganda abruptly in the middle of 1973. Rumours had it that Professor Landor was Jewish and if that was indeed true, we could understand his sudden and unceremonious departure. For a Jew in Uganda at that time, it was doubly dangerous. We figured the Landors did not want to play dice with their lives. In spite of his training as a paratrooper in Israel, Amin had developed an obsessive hatred for Jews, thanks in part to the influence of his Arab friends. Over time, Sam Mukasa lost touch with his supervisor. It took him almost 15 years to complete his PhD.

There were many other examples of postgraduate students, particularly in the Faculty of Science, who suffered similar fates. I know of another colleague who spent 11 years on his MSc in Physical Chemistry. Many just gave up and left before completing their postgraduate degrees because they were hardly making any progress. The lucky few who were able to complete theirs in reasonable time had either Ugandan supervisors or foolhardy expatriates like the famous geographer, the late Professor Langlands in the Faculty of Arts and Dr Peter Childs in the Department of Chemistry. But they too were forced to leave Uganda against their wishes. At that time, the Faculty of Agriculture was the best staffed with Ugandan PhD holders, many of them America trained – the late John S. Mugerwa, J. J. Oloya, Julius Kitungulu Zaaake, Gabriel Kiwuwa, Joseph Mukiibi, Patrick Rubayihayo and John Ddunga – thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation, which had sponsored the Special Lecturer Scheme under which they were recruited. These “daredevil” Ugandans became the faculty’s pillars of survival in those turbulent times. They never abandoned the university. They stayed and weathered the storm, although later JJ Oloya who had been doubling as Deputy Vice Chancellor had to flee.

I left Makerere at the end of September 1974 when the Queen’s University of Belfast offered me a full visiting studentship through the efforts of my supervisor. In July 1973, I registered for the MSc in Coordination Chemistry at Makerere under the supervision of Dr R. J. Morrison, a graduate of Queen’s University, Belfast. He was one of the few expatriates of British nationality who had defied Amin’s order and stayed on, but as the situation rapidly deteriorated, he had to leave Uganda in a hurry in 1974 for his and his family’s safety. Suddenly, I found myself without a supervisor. I started thinking about the jobs I had been offered immediately after graduation. Uganda Development Corporation had offered me one, and so had the Department of Geological Surveys and Mines at Entebbe. Tororo Cement had made me a similar offer but I had turned all of them down in favour of the Special Assistantship at Makerere. Before the turbulent times, it was glamorous to teach at Makerere. In essence, it meant that your grey matter was a little thicker than that of an average folk walking on some streets in Kampala. Now I was not so sure if that was true anymore. I wondered if I had not made a serious mistake by accepting the appointment at Makerere. It seemed to me that, contrary to our egos that we were the smartest, the folks in town were demonstrating that they were actually smarter than the lot of us at Makerere. They appeared to have learnt quickly how to survive in the Uganda of Idi Amin, and had actually mastered the art of beating the odds much better than us. The thought was too depressing. I even thought of quitting the academia all together. At that time, I strongly believed that the jobs I had turned down offered better prospects than Makerere. I had come to the conclusion that, by sticking to Makerere longer than was necessary, I was wasting time and prolonging the inevitable. Like my friends who had quit before me, I saw no future at Makerere.

Therefore, the Queen's University scholarship came in the nick of time. Because of it, I changed my mind and decided to stay in the academia. I guess that is how fate works.

As the exodus of staff continued unabated, the university realised it could not sustain its academic programmes by relying more and more on young and inexperienced staff like Special Assistants, and keeping departments perpetually understaffed. The decision was to look for more experienced and qualified staff wherever they could be found. The big question was where to find them. Could anybody in his or her right senses dare to come to Uganda? The solution came from the most unexpected quarters. Cunnning Idi Amin had successfully convinced his Moslem fraternity that Uganda was a Moslem country. Indeed, Uganda was offered membership of the World Islamic Conference on that basis. The Government advised the university to look to countries like Pakistan and India for staff. Apparently, Amin had forgotten that most of the Asians he had expelled in 1972 came from the Indian subcontinent, or was it a question of short memory or perhaps there was nobody willing to tell the emperor he was naked?

On the advice of the Chancellor, the University started sending missions to the two Asian countries to recruit staff in various disciplines and, indeed, there were many enthusiastic candidates from the two countries. However, as the newly recruited staff started arriving in the country and taking up their appointments at the university, nasty rumours started circulating, alleging that most of those who finally came to Uganda were not the ones who had been interviewed by the Makerere team. The students too started complaining about the quality of their new professors. For a start, their command of the English language was an issue. Ugandans were more used to the Queen's English accent, and not the Indian subcontinent accent. Nevertheless, given the serious staff shortages at the time and the fact that the professors from India and Pakistan were at Makerere at the invitation of the President, there was no way the university could afford to be picky or even to be seen to be entertaining imperialist-inspired complaints. To be fair, a good many of them were quite competent academics and did an excellent job. Their presence helped Makerere University to weather the storm of the most difficult period in its history. Of course, there were a few question marks about the competence and qualifications of some of them. For instance, an Economics professor who ended up doubling as an Economic Advisor to the President was alleged to have told Amin that as a well-trained economist, he would help him fix the economy in a very short time. It never happened. I am almost certain that had Idi Amin not been overthrown in 1978, this man would have been labelled a 'Bogus Professor' and even expelled from the country for failing the President. He was lucky to have gotten away with it. By the time I returned to Makerere in July 1979, more than half of the academic staff in the Chemistry Department came from Pakistan and India.

In order to attract the nationals of India and Pakistan to a country that had kicked out their cousins and acquired for itself a worldwide notorious reputation and negative publicity, the incentives had to be sufficiently attractive. Adi Amin made sure his new expatriates were well paid. Their salaries were paid in US dollars, and it was said that for a lecturer, the starting pay was about \$1,100 per month. Where the dollars came from, I am unable to hazard a guess, but given the huge volume of applications and bio-data the University was receiving from India and Pakistan before the scheme was abolished, I am tempted to believe what they were earning at Makerere was much better than what many of them would earn in their respective countries. Another incentive the new expatriates enjoyed was easy access to the so-called essential commodities like sugar and rice. Amin made sure his new guests were not subjected to the same indignity of queuing for foodstuffs, sugar, salt or simple beverages like soft drinks, which he had subjected the Ugandans to without remorse. Instead, they were to buy whatever they wanted from special outlets like the diplomatic shop on Kampala Road or direct from Foods and Beverage, a government company Amin had set up to provide Ugandans with essential commodities that were in scarcity. Unlike Ugandans, expatriates were even free to import these commodities into the country for their own consumption. They were also free to repatriate their earnings in foreign currency to their home countries. Apparently, an illusion was being created to convince them that, even in the absence of the imperialists, economic parasites and other saboteurs, Uganda was doing fine.

Egypt was one of the countries that assisted Makerere alleviate staff shortage. The Government of Egypt, under the late President Anwar Sadat and his successor, entered into a technical cooperation agreement with Uganda, under which Egypt would provide Uganda with professionals like doctors. I remember one sad incident at Mulago in 1974 which involved an Egyptian doctor. Dr Mbaalu, a Consultant Haematologist and by the special relationship which existed between Mulago Hospital and Makerere University Medical School, a *de facto* member of staff of Makerere University, had been admitted to Ward 6 in a critical condition. At the time, I was visiting my cousin, late Mrs Florence Nannono Lutwama, who had a sick child in the same ward. Dr Mbaalu was dying from a large overdose of sleeping pills. He had also administered the same pills to his wife and children. They were also in serious condition. The medical officer on duty when Dr Mbaalu was wheeled in happened to be an Egyptian doctor. I remember him trying hard to fix an oxygen mask on Dr Mbaalu but apparently with little success. He seemed to have been overwhelmed and shocked by the experience. He simply gave up and walked out of the room, never to return. A Ugandan intern, Dr Mawejje, who many years later became the Chairman of Mubende District Local Council V, had to take over. In the end, none of them was able to save Dr Mbaalu's life but his wife and children survived. It was said that Dr Mbaalu committed suicide. Apparently, he had stretched his luck a little too far

with one of Amin's wives, Kay Amin. Kay Amin was pregnant. Fearing that her unpredictable husband would soon find out, she decided to have an abortion. In the process, things went terribly wrong and, as a result, Kay Amin died. Dr Mbaalu tried to dispose of Kay's dismembered body but failed. In the end, he convinced his wife and children to take a large dose of sleeping pills under the pretext that they had to go on a long journey the next day so they needed plenty of sleep. In desperation, he nearly wiped out his entire family. I have narrated this experience to illustrate how grave the situation was in the Uganda of Idi Amin. Both Kay Amin and Dr Mbaalu knew very well the wrath that awaited them had Amin found out about his wife's 'unexplainable' pregnancy.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was at the time assisting the University to re-start the Faculty of Engineering, which later became the Faculty of Technology and Veterinary Medicine respectively. The UNDP was also requested to extend its support to other departments in the Faculty of Science which were in dire need of staff. One of the departments which benefited from the extended UNDP support was the Chemistry Department, with the appointment of Professor W. Popiel, a British Physical Chemist of Polish decent. After the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979, Makerere University refused to renew Professor Popiel's contract. I never figured out why. While preparing for his departure back to Britain, unknown gunmen broke into his residence in Bugolobi and shot him dead.

Professor Popiel's cold blood murder sent shock waves throughout the University, which was reeling from almost a decade of chaos and wanton killings. The motive for his murder was never established but some speculated that it might have been a revenge murder. His assailant was thought to be one of his former students the University had dismissed on grounds of poor academic performance. Apparently, the young man blamed his dismissal squarely on Professor Popiel. The disgruntled ex-student who bore a grudge against the Professor had joined the "liberation" forces in Tanzania and when a chance presented itself, he used it to settle an old score. However, the truth may never be known although, indeed, Professor Popiel was known to be a very strict man who insisted on upholding high academic standards and had little mercy for mediocre students. In him, the Department of Chemistry had an asset. He used his good offices as a UNDP expert to ensure that his students had enough chemicals and other supplies for their practical work. When the University water system broke down, he improvised a means of gathering rain water by installing a few aluminium tanks behind the main building of the department. Besides collecting the rainwater from the roof of the building, the tanks could be filled from a water tanker. When he realised that he had neither the staff nor the equipment and supplies required for the more specialised single-honours course – the 3.1.1 option, he decided to discontinue it. Dr Olwa Odyek, the first African head of the Chemistry

Department at Makerere, succeeded him. I took over from him in 1987, thus becoming the second Ugandan to head the department.

Throughout the '70s, staff shortage continued to dog the University, in spite of concerted efforts to recruit expatriate staff. To ameliorate the situation, even people like graduate assistants, tutorial fellows and demonstrators who did not possess either a first class or a second class-upper division honours degree were mobilised and recruited as full-time lecturers, as long as they had Masters degrees. Time to be choosy about the quality of staff appointed had sadly long gone! Before this crisis, Makerere University could not appoint such people as lecturers unless they had a doctoral degree. Several members of staff were promoted as a way of inducing them to stay. Unfortunately, such promotions did not find favour with many returning Ugandan academics after the fall of Idi Amin in 1978, who rightly or wrongly, believed that most of the people who had been promoted during Amin's time did not measure up academically and, therefore, did not merit the promotions. Phrases like "academic war professors" and "dead wood" were commonplace, coined to refer to the members of staff who stayed and braved the full brunt of Idi Amin's regime which led to some inevitable antagonism between those who stayed – the "stayees" and those returning from exile – the "returnees". It was an unfortunate situation based on the misunderstanding of the horrific times the University had endured and its efforts to remain afloat. There is no denial that some people might have peddled influence to get promoted but there were also many accomplished Ugandan academics who chose to stay and keep the University going and who, therefore, rightly deserved their promotions. Indeed, it was through them that Makerere was able to retain some semblance of a respectable university. Fortunately, as the University faced the new and even more formidable challenges of the 1980s, that talk was soon forgotten.

That was the environment in which Makerere, as a newly launched full-fledged national university, started its academic life. One is tempted to speculate that the transformation of Makerere University College of East Africa into Makerere University, Kampala in 1970, which Amin's Amendment Decree of 1975 changed to Makerere University, was near a still birth. The 1970s which had been predicted to be a decade of rapid all-round development for the country, and for the university, turned out to be a decade of shuttered dreams, stunted growth and bitter memories. The "Harvard of Africa" almost became a laughing stock in the eyes of the international academic community. Many people who did not know how the Makerere University, Kampala Act of 1970 worked wondered why a self-respecting institution could have chosen a semi-literate man for a Chancellor. Little did they know that the University had no say whatsoever in the choice of its Chancellor. The award of a honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, LL.D, to him in 1976; the admission of his son who some say was not qualified to enter university; the murder of the pregnant Warden of Africa Hall, Teresa

Nanziri; the unexplained disappearance of a Kenyan female student at Entebbe Airport; the brutal suppression of the students revolt of 1976 in which some students were killed, and other wanton killings which were being perpetrated by State operatives with impunity, did not help matters either. Although, Makerere came out of Idi Amin's era somewhat bruised and its reputation somehow dented, it had demonstrated resilience and its ability to resist all bad practices at variance with good academic traditions. Whatever it failed to do right was beyond its control. In my view, some of Makerere's woes of that era could be attributed to a bad law, the 1970 Act. I doubt whether it ever occurred to Milton Obote and his colleagues, as they drafted the Makerere University, Kampala of 1970 that one day, Uganda would have a person of the calibre of Idi Amin as its President who would go all lengths to become the Chancellor of Makerere, Uganda's premier university.

As we have seen before, the practice of a Head of State being the Chancellor of all public universities by law has been the norm throughout East Africa since 1970. At the time these laws were written and put on the statutes, no one could have foreseen the serious consequences of such legislation. No doubt, Makerere was the first causality of the Government wanting to have excessive control. A significant change during my tenure as Vice Chancellor was the repeal of the 1970 Act in 2001 and its replacement with new Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, which reduced Government control over public universities and did away with the Head of State being the Chancellor of every public university in the country. Under the new Act, the appointment of Chancellors became the prerogative of the universities themselves.

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## Makerere's Chancellors and their Times (1970 – 2004)

Under the British system, every public university has a titular head called the Chancellor who is largely a ceremonial official without executive powers. Most university charters prescribe in some detail who can be Chancellor, how one is appointed to the office, as well as the duties and functions of a Chancellor. In principle, any person of good standing in society could be appointed Chancellor. One of the important functions of a Chancellor is to preside over the university's graduation ceremony and confer degrees and other academic awards of the university. The Chancellor may also be called upon to preside over other ceremonial functions of the university. Another role a Chancellor plays is to appoint the Vice Chancellor who is the executive head of the university. In the system commonly used in the North America, Japan and elsewhere, the President of the university is the equivalent of the Vice Chancellor.

The Francophone system uses the title of Rector, meaning ruler in Latin. There are other minor roles a Chancellor carries out. Under the defunct University of East Africa, the late "Mwalimu" Julius Kambarage Nyerere was its first and last Chancellor until the position was dissolved in 1970. Milton Obote, who was then President of Uganda became the "Visitor" to Makerere University College. This position empowered him to direct a visitation to inquire into the affairs of the college. As far as Makerere College was concerned, this was the only role assigned to the Head of State of Uganda by the charter that set up the University of East Africa.

### **Apollo Milton Obote, the First Chancellor of Makerere University – First Term**

When Makerere University College became the national University of Uganda in 1970, a precedence was set. A ruling President of Uganda was its automatic

Chancellor and as we have seen, the practice was enshrined in the Makerere University, Kampala Act of 1970. The strong argument advanced in support of this practice was that with the Head of State, being the Head of Government as well as Chancellor, the university stood to receive sympathetic attention when it came to the allocation of resources. To a certain extent, this argument made sense because at the time, society and government viewed the university as a special institution that required some sort of preferential treatment from the State, which only the Head of State could confer. But many academics were skeptical about that simplistic argument, which they believed was flawed right from the beginning and had serious consequences for the future of Makerere. They were fearful of the excessive control of the university by the state and its functionaries. They saw this as the beginning of direct political interference in the affairs of the university and the erosion of the long cherished academic freedom. Perhaps, the events that followed in the latter years vindicated them.

Milton Obote, the architect of the 1970 Act, was installed as the first Chancellor on October 8, 1970. Had Obote not abrogated the 1962 national Constitution, it is probable that Sir Edward Muteesa who, until the 1966 Buganda crisis was the non-executive President of Uganda, would have been the first Chancellor. Up till then, Milton Obote was Prime Minister and not the Head of State. Obote replaced Muteesa as President with full executive powers in 1966, a status which was later enshrined in the Republican Constitution of 1967. Milton Obote was no stranger to Makerere. He had been, though briefly, a student there in the latter part of the 1940s. In 1949, he left the college, as we shall see later, for unclear personal reasons before completing the two-year diploma. Obote did not continue with his studies, and therefore, never graduated. Instead, he went to Kenya to look for employment. It is believed that his political thoughts were shaped and moulded in Kenya when he joined the Trade Union movement there.

One is tempted to speculate that when Milton Obote became Chancellor of Makerere University, he must have had some lingering resentment of the institution he had unceremoniously left almost 30 years earlier. Indeed, in his inaugural speech as Chancellor, he lamented the cold reception he had received when he visited the college in the 1950s, as one of the activists agitating for Uganda's independence. Apparently, the college's intellectual community had no time for his small talk, moreover as he was a dropout. He also warned in the same speech that although for the time being Makerere was the only university in Uganda, it would not take the Government long to establish other public universities. However, it took almost 20 years for his prediction to be realised, with the opening of Mbarara University of Science and Technology, the second public university in the country, in 1988.

Obote's chancellorship hardly lasted a year. It abruptly ended with the military coup d'état of January 25, 1971. We can only imagine what Obote had in store for

Makerere, had he lasted longer as Chancellor. For an academic institution used to enjoying freedom of speech and independent thinking, the little some of us saw left much to be desired. The university was flooded with Akena Adoko's General Service operatives, which included both staff and students. Political polarisation was slowly but surely taking root, as those who did not support the Ugandan Peoples' Congress (UPC) were intimidated into silence. The politics of fear had pervaded the university. Organisations like the National Union of the Students of Uganda (NUSU) and the National Union of Youth Organisations (NUYO) had become UPC youth brigades on the campus.

Some students were over-politicised to the extent that they had made it a habit to follow the President wherever he went. In late 1970, seven students were burnt beyond recognition when the small bus they were traveling in overturned and caught fire in the Kyalusowe swamp, some 10 kilometres from Masaka town, on the Kampala–Masaka Highway. They were returning from Kabale after attending Obote's political rally there. Soon after his overthrow in 1971, many students who were his staunch supporters wept openly and bitterly, lamenting that their revolution, which was essentially the move to the left, had been raped. Every evening, some diehards would assemble in front of Northcote Hall and sing UPC praise songs, urging the world to condemn the coup d'état and castigate Idi Amin for overthrowing a legitimate Government.

Perhaps they had conveniently forgotten that Obote was supposed to have called a general election in 1967, but did not, using the state of emergency he had declared in Buganda as an excuse for postponing the election. In fact, his extended stay in power up to 1971 was as illegitimate as Amin's coup. Luckily for them, at the time, their utterances against Amin's popular military regime went unnoticed, perhaps on the account that Idi Amin was still enjoying his political honeymoon and nothing appeared to threaten him then. Some of the final year students who were bitterly opposed to Idi Amin, like Masete Kuya, a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences, went into exile immediately after writing their last examination papers to join their mentor in Tanzania. Many came back as part of the combined Tanzania/Uganda invasion force, which overthrew Idi Amin in 1978.

In spite of his real or perceived political shortcomings, one cannot fail to recognise Obote's contribution to the infrastructural development of the university. Buildings such as the Mathematics block in the Faculty of Science, Africa Hall – the second female hall on the campus, Lumumba Hall, the West Road staff flats, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine complex, and the Faculty of Technology, to mention a few, were all constructed in Obote's time, before and after becoming the university's first Chancellor. Given his apparent lackluster interest in the university affairs, we can sum up Obote's relationship with Makerere as a love-hate one, as he himself used to tell the press.

### Idi Amin Dada – Makerere's Second Chancellor

General Idi Amin, who later promoted himself as Field Marshal, was installed as Makerere's second Chancellor in March 1971. One thing he seems to have enjoyed as Chancellor was rubbing shoulders with the academic fraternity, and he relished the fact that he could appoint and dismiss a Vice Chancellor at will. But as he enjoyed the trappings of the office, one could detect in him a deep-seated hatred and mistrust for the educated, in particular the highly educated Makerere dons. The murder and disappearance of several prominent academics at the time is linked to this mistrust. As a result, it became too dangerous to be found in possession of a Makerere University identity card. Many members of staff nearly lost their lives at the hands of Amin's security operatives because of this. As a precaution, Professor Lutwama, the then Vice Chancellor was prompted to issue a quiet warning to staff to be extra careful and not to overstay in their offices and laboratories after office hours.

For Makerere, Amin's chancellorship was a very disruptive one and this contributed to the erosion of the university's prestige and reputation as a fine academic institution, not only in Africa but also in the whole world. The mass staff exodus almost paralysed the once vibrant institution. It was also during Amin's time that salaries of the academic staff at Makerere as well as other categories of salaried staff in Government departments started losing purchasing power. The era of the *mafuta mingi* had arrived. *Mafuta mingi*, a term Idi Amin coined, were the Ugandans who were allocated or took over the businesses of the expelled Asians and other foreigners as part of Amin's economic war spoils. No doubt, the smart ones with good business acumen made a fortune and became extremely rich almost overnight.

On the downside however, several of Idi Amin's *mafuta mingi* were either semi-illiterate or lowly educated school dropouts. This is not to say there is anything wrong in being an illiterate or a school dropout, after all the world is full of very successful people who never went to school or who dropped out of school early. It was the way they suddenly became businessmen without a clue as to how successful businesses are run. Perhaps Amin's economic war would not have been so disruptive if the people who took over the businesses of the expelled Asians had made a success of them. Secondly, the fact that most highly educated Ugandans, who had not partaken in Amin's economic war booty could not make as much money and therefore could hardly afford, not only the basic necessities of life but also simple luxuries such as beer or whisky, made Makerere dons and indeed most professionals a real laughing stock. How could people with mountains of degrees and other academic qualifications, and with the architect of the economic war as their Chancellor, be wallowing in poverty? It was simply incomprehensible as it was paradoxical! And so the slogan *Abasooma batusinza ki?* was coined. The phrase literally meant that those who did not go to school were doing far

better off than those who wasted their time going to school up to university. Makerere professors, who were seen as academically rich but economically poor, provided an excellent illustration of this paradox. While those who had made it in business were enjoying the good things of life amid severe scarcity and economic deprivation, Amin's economic war was also giving rise to another phenomenon: many otherwise bright children started shunning education, preferring to engage in petty trade on the streets of Kampala. Going to school was losing appeal. If anything, it was seen as a sure road to poverty.

Interestingly, Idi Amin enjoyed conferring degrees and addressing the academic fraternity at Makerere. Although, at the beginning of his chancellorship, he struggled a lot with the English language, by the time he was overthrown he had sufficient mastery of the language for him to read the written speeches intelligibly. However, apart from chaos, academic decline decay and unleashing terror, I doubt if Makerere ever benefited from Amin's long-term chancellorship. One is reminded of the horrific incident that saw the brutal suppression of a student rebellion in March 1976 after a Law student, Paul Serwanga, was shot dead by an army captain who had an interest in his girlfriend. Students took to the streets of Kampala demanding, among other things, the resignation of the Chancellor and his government. That was anathema to Amin. By calling for the resignation of the President, the students had overstepped the line. This was treason. The army retaliated with unprecedented brutality. A former graduate student of mine, Dr Yusuf Kizito, who was an undergraduate student at the time and a participant in the protest, narrated the incident to me. Besides other horrific punishments meted out to them in addition to severe beatings, the soldiers forced the students to crawl on their knees for long distances. Many severely beaten students were hospitalised. Caught up in the incident as he approached the Department of Chemistry, my friend and colleague, late Dr Sam Mukasa was arrested and severely tortured by the errant soldiers swarming the campus. In the process he lost an eye. His only crime was that he was going to work. A few days later, a Kenyan female student, Esther Chesire, believed to be a relative of then Vice President and later President of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi, was picked up from Entebbe Airport as she was about to board a Nairobi-bound plane and whisked away to an unknown destination.

She was never seen again despite the pressure the Kenya Government put on Idi Amin to launch a commission of inquiry into her mysterious disappearance.

Another of the terrible episodes of Amin's chancellorship was the heinous murder on June 22, 1976 of Mrs. Theresa Nanziri Bukenya, the first Warden of Africa Hall and a brilliant Mathematician. At the time of her murder, she was eight months pregnant. It is said that as warden of an all-female hall of residence, Theresa Nanziri had tried hard to stop Amin's soldiers from kidnapping and raping the female students in her hall, something that obviously infuriated the men in

uniform. Moreover, on the day she disappeared, she was due to testify before the Committee which was investigating the disappearance of a Kenyan female student who was also a resident of Africa Hall. That was never to be. She was picked from her residence by Amin's State Research Bureau operatives and quietly driven away without arousing any suspicion. Two days later, her bullet-riddled body was found dumped along the banks of River Sezibwa, on Kampala-Kayunga highway. Kayunga town is about fifty kilometres north-east of Kampala. For her students and the Makerere community, it was a grisly discovery. She was 37, just married to Achilles Bukenya and expecting their first child. No doubt, 1976 will go down in history as one of Makerere's worst years. The State Research Bureau agents were behaving like the legendary man-eating lions of Voi in Kenya, which feasted on so many helpless workers during the construction of the Kenya-Ugandan Railway at the turn of the twentieth century. Amin's chancellorship came to an abrupt end in 1978, when the Tanzania-led forces dislodged him from power, forcing him to flee to Saudi Arabia where he died some two decades later.

### **Yusuf Kironde Lule – The Uninaugurated Chancellor**

The final overthrow of Amin in 1979 was greeted with a lot of jubilation and euphoria. After almost eight years of Amin's misrule, Ugandans were looking forward to a better future. Sadly, the euphoria was short-lived. Optimism and the great expectations soon turned into disappointment, as the various factions that made up the ruling Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) engaged in a power struggle. The UNLF was an amalgamation of various political groupings and individuals, who met in the northern Tanzanian town of Moshi and cobbled together a political coalition that would take over the reign of power after the overthrow of Idi Amin. Former Ugandan President, Apollo Milton Obote did not attend the Moshi meeting but several of his prominent party members were in attendance. As the fall of Idi Amin became imminent, the Moshi meeting elected Professor Yusuf Kironde Lule, a former Principal of Makerere University College and former Assistant Secretary General of the Commonwealth and first Secretary General of the Accra-based Association of African Universities, as the new President of Uganda.

Towards the end of the liberation war in May 1979, Professor Lule returned to Uganda to take up his new job as the fourth president of Uganda and third Chancellor of Makerere University, one of the many roles of a Ugandan president. However, the political intrigues, and in particular the forces that wanted Milton Obote back as president, made it impossible for Lule to govern the country. The National Consultative Council (NCC), which was acting as the Parliament of Uganda, apparently with the full knowledge of President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who, at the time was wielding a lot political and military power in Uganda, orchestrated his overthrow. After only 67 days in office and

before he was inaugurated as Chancellor of Makerere University, Yusuf Lule was unceremoniously removed from power and sent to Dar es Salaam, where he remained for some time before Nyerere freed him. Thus, Makerere was deprived of an opportunity to have its first African and Ugandan principal as its Chancellor. So, late Professor Yusuf Lule was “a Chancellor who never adorned the Chancellor’s gown”.

### **Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa**

Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa (QC), succeeded Lule as the fifth president of Uganda in July 1979 and by the provisions of the Makerere University Act of 1970, amended by the Decree of 1975, he automatically became Makerere’s fourth Chancellor. Binaisa was more fortunate than Lule. He was actually inaugurated as Chancellor in October 1979, presided over a graduation congregation and conferred degrees and other awards before he was overthrown in the same year. Like Milton Obote and Yusuf Lule, Binaisa was a Makererean who had left for Britain to study Law. Although some Ugandans were apprehensive about the way he came to power, for Makerere University, Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa, (the Queen’s Counsel (QC) as he was popularly addressed), was much preferred to Idi Amin. However, Binaisa’s presidency lasted just about three months, after which Paulo Muwanga of the Ugandan People’s Congress (UPC) wing of the NLF forcefully removed him from office on the instigation of Lt. Colonel David Oyite Ojok.

Seemingly weary and suspicious of the increasingly powerful Sandhurst-trained soldier – Oyite Ojok – with strong ties to ex-President Milton Obote who at the time was still in Tanzania, a man who had made himself chairman of the Coffee Marketing Board and a member of the powerful Foreign Exchange Allocation Committee of the Bank of Uganda, Binaisa believed that as president, he had the powers and perhaps the clout to keep him far from the centre of power. In a bold but highly risky move, Binaisa appointed Oyite Ojok Uganda’s Ambassador to France. Unfortunately for President Binaisa, it was a blunder and a bitter lesson he learned the hard way. By omission or commission, Binaisa must have been oblivious of the fact that Oyite Ojok was the real power behind the throne. In his hasty decision to redeploy him as a diplomat, Binaisa had unknowingly touched Oyite’s raw nerve. Oyite Ojok perceived Binaisa’s move as an attempt to sweep him aside and also a sign of ingratitude to those who put him in power. However, in all probability, Oyite Ojok was just playing a waiting game. His real mission was to facilitate the return of his former Commander-in-Chief, Apollo Milton Obote. In Paulo Muwanga, Oyite Ojok found a powerful and close ally. It was actually Muwanga who announced to the nation and the world that Binaisa was no longer president of Uganda. A three-man military commission had taken over the power with Paulo Muwanga as Chairman, the other two being Yoweri Museveni, then Minister for Regional Cooperation and Colonel Marulu. The position of

the president was to be overseen by a Presidential Commission comprising three Judges of the High Court of Uganda. That was the end of Binaisa's short-lived Makerere chancellorship.

### **Paulo Muwanga and the Military Commission**

The Military Commission presented a serious dilemma to the university as the Chairman of the Military Commission, Paulo Muwanga, was not the president of Uganda and therefore according to the 1970 Makerere University Act, he did not qualify for the position of Chancellor, neither was the Presidential Commission provided for in the Act. Who then should be Chancellor? While the university was embroiled in this legal fix, the general election of December 1980 provided the unexpected solution. After the election, Uganda People's Congress, the Party of Paulo Muwanga and Milton Obote, was declared winner, thus paving the way for Milton Obote as its leader to become the president of Uganda for the second time and Makerere's next Chancellor. Paulo Muwanga showed no serious interest in Makerere's affairs or being made its chancellor. Perhaps he had too much on his mind to worry about Makerere, an institution he never attended.

Before Dr Milton Obote was re-installed as Chancellor, the university was due to hold a graduation ceremony but it would this time take place in the absence of a Chancellor, something that had never happened before. Although considered precedence at the time, it was provided for in the Act. According to the 1970 Makerere University Act, in the absence of a Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor was empowered to perform all the functions, which would ordinarily be performed by the chancellor. Professor Asavia Wandira who was the Vice Chancellor at the time presided over the ceremony, thereby becoming the first Vice Chancellor at Makerere to perform the functions of a Chancellor.

### **Apollo Milton Obote – Second Term**

Obote's second term as president of Uganda was one of the most difficult episodes in the recent history of Uganda and the university. As soon as he came to power, he had to contend with a guerrilla warfare, which started in December 1980 and lasted until the army, under the command of General Tito Okello and his cousin Basilio Okello, ousted him again in July 1985. The military offensive against the insurgency put a lot of pressure on the country's meagre financial resources, a country that was just emerging from the worst dictatorship and a war that ousted Idi Amin from power. Government made serious attempts to revive the economy through what Obote termed the Recovery Programme that included, among other measures, the floating of the Uganda shilling, the introduction of Window I and Window II at the Bank of Uganda for the purposes of controlling and allocating the meagre foreign exchange. In spite of these well-meaning measures, the economic hardship persisted.

Shortages of most essential commodities such as drugs, sugar, salt and soap continued to dog the country. Industrial production was at a trickle. Like in Amin's time, the practice of rationing the allocation of essential commodities continued. People had to stand in endless and humiliating queues for endless hours in order to get something for their families. However, this time there was a difference; political patronage dominated the process, as it was being used as a way of rewarding the ruling party supporters. I vividly recall seeing some senior professors and Heads of Departments who were supporters of the ruling party, shamelessly engaging in the allocation of sugar and other essential items to their fellow party supporters. When a commodity was in acute shortage, unknown party members used to walk away empty-handed. One prominent professor in the Faculty of Science and a prominent member of the party had actually turned his small office into some sort of a warehouse.

State-owned factories were turned into party branches, as each factory was required to have a UPC Workers' Council. In such a situation, it was almost impossible for a person who did not belong to the party to find employment in the factories controlled by the UPC Workers Councils. In some instances, the UPC branch chairmen were more powerful than the factory managers. Makerere too had its fair share of UPC branches. Despite the fact that Uganda was once again a multi-party state, no other political party could dare open a branch in a factory, at Makerere or anywhere in the country. This was also the era of the yellow maize flour in Uganda, imported from the USA. For the first time, Ugandans were forced to eat this strange maize flour, which in the USA is essentially animal feed. Since there was nothing else available, the only alternative was to go hungry.

When UPC ascended to power again, many Ugandans expected a different approach to the nation's affairs. For example, they expected the UPC leadership to engage the guerrillas in some form of dialogue as an attempt at reconciliation and the healing of the nation. After Idi Amin, Uganda was not prepared for more bloodletting. Unfortunately, and to the dismay of many Ugandans, the Government behaved as if nothing had happened between 1971 and 1980; instead it became more repressive. The National Security Agency (NASA) agents routinely picked up people they suspected to be sympathisers of the guerrillas and took them to Nile Mansions, now Serena Hotel, many never to be seen again. The lucky ones like Matayo Kyaligonza made spectacular escape. It became extremely dangerous to discuss politics in the open, especially if it involved criticising the Government. The infamous Operation *Panda Gali* was one of the anti-insurgency campaigns Ugandans dreaded most. In what appeared to be a desperate attempt to rout out the insurgency at all cost, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) hatched the idea of rounding up unsuspecting members of the public at dawn, loading them on trucks and taking them away for mass-screening.

Residents of Kampala city centre as well as the suburbs of Kampala and Makerere, like Wandegaya, used to be rudely woken up at dawn while sleeping or

picked up on their way to work and herded like cattle to a designated collecting point. There, they were forcefully loaded on the trucks, which were often commandeered from the Uganda Transport Union (UCTU) at Kawempe – a suburb about ten kilometres north of downtown Kampala. The command to board the truck was *panda gali*, which in Kiswahili means board the vehicle; hence the operation was nicknamed *Panda Gali*. In the majority of cases, the trucks and their cargo ended up at Kibuli Police Training School sports grounds, another suburb a few kilometres south of Kampala. There, everyone would be ordered to file past supposedly “captured rebels”. The rebels’ task was to identify their collaborators from amongst those filing past. If you happened to be unlucky that day and the so-called “rebel” pointed a finger at you, that was it. Your fate was sealed there and then. You were picked from the queue and whisked away, most often to the dreaded Nile Mansions. Many who were picked were never seen again.

Although Makerere University was spared this indignity for reasons best known to those who were responsible for the *panda gali* operation, it was still risky for students, members of staff and their families to go outside the campus in the early hours of the morning. You could be caught up in such an operation as it almost happened to me once in 1984. I was on my way to Kampala High School where I used to “moonlight” as a Chemistry teacher. It was national examination time and I was on my way to the school to administer a Practical Chemistry examination. As usual, I chose to use the small university west gate. Unknown to me, that morning the Army had mounted a *panda gali* operation in Makerere Kivulu and the areas surrounding the Full Gospel Church on Sir Apollo Kagwa Road. As I approached the Nakulabye-Bwayise junction opposite the Full Gospel Church, I could see from a distance a brown Leyland truck with the all too familiar UCTU markings parked right in the middle of the Makerere-Nakulabye road.

My initial reaction was to assume the truck had broken down but the absence of commuters on the road scared me. In those days, Kampala had very few public transport vehicles and privately owned cars, so most commuters walked to work on foot. Those living near the Kasese-Tororo railway line which runs from the east to the west of the country were using the commuter train, nicknamed *Kayoola* because, no matter how many passengers he was carrying, it still always had room for more. An elderly man who had spotted the parked truck earlier saved me from the danger ahead. The stationary truck was waiting to load and carry the captives away. I heeded the old man’s advice and quickly returned to the safety of the campus. My colleague, Dr Yusuf Kizito, who had used the south Makerere College gate, had a narrow escape too. Some of our students who were caught up in the same operation but managed to escape, missed the morning examination session. They had to wait for the afternoon group. We were lucky to have escaped, but it was a very narrow escape!

Unfortunately for the Government, all these measures did not yield the desired results. The insurgency did not end as the Government had assumed it would. If anything, the desperate counter-insurgency measures just inflamed anger and made Obote's Government more unpopular. If anything, the *panda gali* operations just helped beef up the ranks of the various rebel groups that were fighting the Government. Some of the people who joined the rebel groups said they did so out of anger. They wanted to rid the country of the unending state-sponsored terror. After Idi Amin, many Ugandans did not expect to go through another traumatic experience. The arrogant attitude of some of Obote's ministers and party officials did not help matters either. Whoever advised President Obote to resort to such desperate measures did him a big disservice. Obviously, there were other and better ways of ending the rebellion, which were never explored. For instance, one would have expected to see gestures towards some form of a negotiated settlement, perhaps through mediation. This did not happen. To most people, Obote's return to power after eight years in exile was a disappointment and too much of a reminder of Idi Amin's tyrannical rule, which was still fresh in their minds. After getting rid of the tyrant, people were yearning for healing. In the end, the inevitable happened. Obote was once again overthrown in a military coup in 1985.

Obote's second tenure as Makerere's Chancellor lasted almost five years. However, this time around, the Chancellor had become more security conscious than ever before, which almost bordered on paranoia. Every time there was a graduation ceremony, those of us who were in the Faculty of Science had to put up with a lot of inconveniences. Due to its location, the university had decided that the graduation ceremony had to be held in the Science Quadrangle, which offered better security than the more open Freedom Square. A week before the ceremony, the Faculty of Science would be subjected to a thorough security check and, two days to the ceremony, the place would be cordoned off. If you had experiments running, which required constant monitoring; you were advised to switch them off as the security personnel would not allow anybody to enter any building within the faculty premises. Lectures had to be cancelled too.

The Chancellor has an official room next to the Vice Chancellor's office in the university's main building. The Chancellor's robes, chair and ceremonial regalia were kept there. On occasions like the graduation ceremony, the Chancellor is dressed in his room and joins the academic procession from there. For all I know and remember, Milton Obote hardly ever used this room. His academic gown used to be carried up to the entrance of the Science Quadrangle where he would be robed and where he joined the procession for a short walk to the podium. At the end of the ceremony, he would again walk for a short distance and quickly board his car without waiting for the usual hand shaking with university officials, parents or graduates. Security was always tight and nothing was left to chance. I recall an incident when late Professor Gabriel Kiwuwa of the Faculty of Agriculture, who

had a metal implant in his hip joint, was made to walk through the metal detector several times. Each time he walked through, the detector beeped, confusing the security personnel the more. In fact, the detector was sensing the metallic implant embedded in his body. Eventually he was allowed to proceed.

Obote was known for making long speeches. No matter the occasion, his speeches always took on a political overtone and could be outrightly boring. His verbal artillery was targeted at his political opponents who had no way of hitting back. Besides the scathing attacks on his opponents and the opposition, he also used the occasion to exalt his leadership, his economic policies and the success of his economic recovery programme. But once in a while, he would crack a nice joke or say something exciting. One of such exciting anecdotes was a salary increase for Makerere staff and public employees. He called the pay rise *kakobogo*, a Luganda word meaning “something hefty”. That was the first time I heard him use vernacular in his speech. Although I was not able to find out how much the rise, it was a substantial pay rise. However, like all pay rises, the hyperinflation raging at the time quickly eroded it.

The nastiest comment I recall from one of his graduation speeches was a comparison he made between the *matooke* (banana) eaters who are mostly the Baganda from the central region and millet eaters, the majority of whom hail from other parts of the country, the north region in particular. He was critical of the *matooke* eaters who he believed were deluding themselves as superior to other tribes. I never figured out what prompted him to make such a remark, moreover in a highly cosmopolitan community like Makerere University where nearly all tribes of Uganda were represented in its rank and file. His wife, Miria Kalule, also hailed from Buganda! If his quarrel was with those who were in the bush fighting him, then in my opinion, the comment was out of context and made at the wrong forum. Obote had many supporters at Makerere, including the Bagandas. I am sure he was well aware of this fact. The remark therefore left many of us puzzled.

One cannot forget the day the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, late Professor John Sebastian Mugerwa, was picked up by Obote's security agents. Although he was a well-known member of the Democratic Party, John Mugerwa was first and foremost an academic. He was not known to be actively involved in national politics, let alone participating in the insurgency. However, we learnt later that he was arrested on the suspicion that his fishing boats were ferrying rebels to and from the many islands in Lake Victoria. John Mugerwa, a native of Buvuma islands survived the ordeal. Kagoro Byenkya, the former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitala was another senior member of staff taken into custody by Obote's security agents. At the time of his arrest, he was the Secretary to the university's Appointments Board. Mr Avitas Tibarimbasa, a former Member of Parliament for Ndorwa East Constituency in Kabale District, was another Makerere University staff who was also picked up

and taken to “Argentina House” at Mbuya, which was both a torture and death chamber. He too survived and went on to become the University Secretary before joining politics in 2001. Supporters of the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) were particularly targeted because their party leader, Yoweri Museveni, was in the bush leading one of the rebellions against the Government.

Academic freedom is a tradition highly cherished by many university dons and is therefore jealously guarded. But it has also turned out to be the curse of many an academic, the world over. The freedom to speak out your mind on any subject under the sun without fear or favour is basically what academic freedom is about, at least in theory. Many academics take this freedom as a God-given right. But to some political leaders, academic freedom is tolerable only if it is about things they want to hear, things said in their favour; not about relentless criticism of government or politicians in power, a practice that preoccupies many academics. Many academics are outspoken critics of government policies. Some even claim to be the vanguard of the human rights, speaking out on behalf of the voiceless, silent and oppressed majority. But most governments simply hate what they perceive as negative criticism and leftwing activism. Oppressive governments cannot tolerate what they believe is dissent. As a consequence, the quest for academic freedom has gotten many dons into trouble with their national governments and they have paid a heavy price for it. We remember the long suffering the famous Soviet Physicist and father of the Russian hydrogen bomb, Andrei Sakalov, had to endure at the hands of the Soviet Union regime. Sakalov was ostracised for his outspokenness against lack of freedom in the then Soviet Union. He was banished to the Gulag in the bitter cold of frigid Siberia.

Obote was one of those African political leaders who did not entertain negative criticism. His large spy network ensured that whoever engaged in open criticism of the president, the government or his ruling political party was quickly reported to the appropriate authorities for immediate action. Professor Mahmood Mamdani, a Ugandan of Asian extraction, was one of the outspoken Makerere dons who experienced the full wrath of Obote's hatred for criticism. Mamdani, a Harvard-trained political scientist and then a staff in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, returned to Uganda from the University of Dar es Salaam after the fall of Idi Amin and once again found himself in very serious trouble with the Obote Government.

The Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Makerere has a few things to boast about. Ali Mazrui launched his long and distinguished academic career in the 1960s when he was a professor there. In spite of belonging to the same Islamic faith as Idi Amin, Ali Mazrui was forced to abandon his promising career at Makerere. This was the department where Mamdani was also carving out an academic niche for himself. Mamdani made no secret of his left-wing inclination and usually expressed his views openly. However, during the Obote II regime, you

had to be careful about what you said, where you said it and who in the audience was listening to you. It also mattered who read your writings and the papers you presented at conferences you attended outside the country. We were shockingly surprised to hear from one of Obote's Ministers that due to his conduct, which was unacceptable to the Uganda Government, Dr Mahmood Mamdani had been stripped of his Ugandan citizenship and declared *persona non grata* in Uganda. At the time, Mamdani was in Spain attending a conference. Despite the numerous protests and pleas by the local and international community, Obote would not rescind his decision. By a stroke of a pen, Mahmood Mamdani found himself stateless again; Uganda was back to 1972. The Government never disclosed Mamdani's crimes but the decision left Makerere staff profoundly shocked and stunned. Whatever Mamdani said or wrote which Obote's Government found objectionable, remained a matter of conjecture.

As the old adage goes, "every dark cloud has a silver lining". So was Obote's second chancellorship. In spite of the difficulties, Obote was able to find the money for the emergency rehabilitation of the university. It was a big contract awarded to a British firm trading under the name Systems Building Services or SBS as it was popularly known. The contract involved the renovation of the students' halls of residence, especially those with flat roofs. SBS did what it could under the prevailing economic circumstances but came under criticism for what some people saw as bad workmanship. The replacement of terrazzo with burnt clay bricks in some kitchens was a case in point. Terrazzo is durable while clay is a brittle material. Clay tiles could not stand the rough handling and the heavy saucepans carrying the maize dough, which was the staple food of the students during those hard times. During Amin's rule, most of the university's physical plants fell into disrepair. The flat-roofed buildings were leaking profusely. Therefore, the rehabilitation was a timely intervention. The drawback was the Ministry of Education's refusal to let the University Engineer, who had a better knowledge of the university buildings participate in the supervision of the works. Officials of the Ministry did all the supervision. If the University Engineer had been part of the supervision team, perhaps some of the mistakes made could have been avoided. It was through this project that the roofs of Lumumba Hall, the tower of Mary Stuart Hall and parts of Africa Hall were pitched and covered with aluminium roofing sheets. However, after some years, the aluminium sheets lost their shiny lustre due to exposure to the elements.

Before 1980, Makerere salary scales were pegged to the traditional Civil Service U Scale with its various complicated segments. But Makerere University was not part of the traditional civil service. Therefore, the university wanted that distinction to be reflected in the pay scales as well. Obote listened and appointed a commission to look into the matter and make recommendations to Government. The commission, which was headed by a Kenyan and former Makererean,

Professor Simeon Ominde, was called the Ominde Commission. It recommended the creation of a new scale unique to Makerere University. The Government accepted the recommendations and created the M Scale for Makerere. The new scale ran from M1 for the Vice Chancellor down to M15. Employees on the grouping scheme had their own scales, which were not labelled as M, but were treated as being part of the M scale. This was the first time Makerere's autonomy was fully recognised within the limitations of the 1970 Act. The M scale has been in continuous use ever since it was introduced in 1981 with minor modifications added from time to time. When the new scale became operational, Makerere staff were enjoying a higher pay than their counterparts on the Government U Scale. Unfortunately, over time inflation, currency devaluation and unfavourable economic factors impacted the scales negatively.

Another of Obote's significant contribution to the rejuvenation of the university in his second term was the invitation extended to the United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1983 to re-equip and provide technical assistance to the Faculties of Science and Technology. It must have been a difficult decision for the UNDP to return to Makerere after the cold blood murder of Professor W. Popiel in 1979. The beneficiary departments of the new UNDP/ UNESCO support included Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics and Zoology. The Institute of Computer Science, which started as a unit in the Department of Mathematics, was born out of this project. It started with two microcomputers, Apple IIC and Apple IIE, donated by the UNDP. Prior to the creation of the Institute of Computer Science, the Department of Mathematics had an ICL main frame, purchased towards the end of the 1960s. After almost twenty years, it had aged; so, the university decided to board it off. The new Institute of Computer Science inherited the premises of the former Computer Centre.

By all accounts, the Chemistry Department took the lion's share of the UNDP/ UNESCO project. The department received a fully-equipped unit operations laboratory for its new Industrial Chemistry programme and an experienced professor of Chemical Engineering, Dr Somer, from the Middle East Technical University in Turkey, who also doubled as the project's first Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). Professor Somer and one other expert from the same university designed the Industrial Chemistry curriculum.

In addition, the department received numerous pieces of equipment, which unfortunately the project experts refused to hand over to the department when the project ended.

When the equipment was finally handed over, many instruments had no users' manuals. Some of the available manuals were not in English. Also, a lot of equipment was supplied with missing parts. Worse still, the department had no use for some of them. The project's technical experts failed to consult members of

staff on the type of equipment to buy. We knew what equipment we needed but the experts decided to think for us! In the end, funds were spent on equipment no one had use for. Although the UNDP brought in an expert to install and commission the new equipment, by the time his contract ended, he had failed to do so. As a last resort, Professor Somer had to install all the equipment in the Unit Operations Laboratory himself.

The Department of Geology received a big consignment of laboratory and field equipment, including the badly needed camping gear, most of which are still in use. The technical expert, Dr El Etri, an Egyptian Geology professor who later took over as the Project's last Chief Technical Advisor until the project ended in 1989, clearly internalised the needs of the department. As a result, most of the equipment purchased for the department was relevant and useful. Professor El Etri, who doubled as Head of Department, revolutionised the way Geology was taught at Makerere. Emphasis shifted from the lecture room-based teaching to more fieldwork. Under him, students spent more time in the field than ever before. His only handicap was the fact that Geology was offered in combination with Chemistry. This imposed a limit on the number of hours the students could spend on the field. If Geology were to be offered as a single subject, I am sure students would have spent a lot more time on the field. Since its inception as an autonomous department in the Faculty of Science in 1969, after splitting away from Geography, Geology had never graduated a PhD student. As a matter of fact, after the departure of its founding head, Professor McDonald in 1974, the department did not have a single member of staff holding a PhD degree. When McDonald left in the mid-1970s, a classmate of mine, Patrick Mazimpaka, took over the reins. Later, he returned to Rwanda where he was appointed a Minister in the Rwanda Patriotic Front Government. At the time he became a Head of Department, he had only a Bachelor's degree obtained in 1973 and a Postgraduate Diploma in Geology obtained the following year under Professor McDonald. In effect, by the time he took over the headship of the department, he was essentially a Special Assistant, a position equivalent to a Graduate or Teaching Assistant. That was how desperate the staffing situation was after Amin's war.

Late Stephen Sinabantu succeeded Patrick Mazimpaka as Head of Department. Sinabantu made history by becoming the first Ugandan to obtain a Makerere registered PhD in Geology in the early 1980s. I was one of the examiners for his *viva voce*. It was Professor El Etri's idea that Stephen Sinabantu registers for his PhD at Makerere under his supervision. Funds were secured from the UNDP to facilitate his travel to the University of Cairo for literature review, and for experimental work that could not be done at Makerere. Sinabantu was a good student and made rapid progress which enabled him to write up his thesis before Professor El Etri's contract expired. Sadly, he died shortly after the PhD was conferred on him.

The Department of Zoology also received an assortment of equipment and an expert in Wildlife Biology, Professor Derrick Pomeroy. The idea was to strengthen the department's wildlife curriculum, because Uganda's wildlife was a big tourist attraction. It was, therefore, essential to put in place good conservation measures based on solid science. Professor Pomeroy was no stranger to Makerere. He had taught in its Zoology Department in the early 1970s, but left during Idi Amin's expulsion of the British expatriates in 1972.

As the project approached its end, it became evident that there was need to consolidate the wildlife work and make it a permanent feature of the university's curriculum. The Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources was the answer. It was set up to ensure, among other things, the continuity of the wildlife programme beyond the UNDP/UNESCO funding. The institute had a humble beginning in one room in the Chemistry Department. The room had just been vacated by the last UNDP/UNESCO CTA. Dr Elidad Tukahiirwa, a Cambridge PhD zoologist was seconded from Zoology as its first Director, with Professor Derrick Pomeroy, who had accepted a local contract at the end of the UNDP/UNESCO project, as his deputy. Besides the direct assistance to the three departments, the UNDP/UNESCO project provided the Faculty of Science with a Leyland bus purchased in 1984, two small Suzuki off-road vehicles, two Land Rovers and motor bikes, all supplied with several years supply of spare parts; and its first photocopier.

In addition to the equipment, a few special assistants were provided with scholarships towards their postgraduate training. The Chemistry Department badly needed to train Ugandan staff to take over the teaching of the newly introduced Industrial Chemistry course. Some of the special assistants who benefited from this scheme included Moses Bogere, who had an MSc in Chemical Engineering from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara and a PhD in the same discipline from the University of Akron in Ohio, USA; Henry Aryamanya Mugisha, who went to the University of Ohio at Athens for the MSc and PhD, and is now the Executive Director of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA); as well as Dr Paul Sagala, who was then Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering in the Faculty of Technology. Sagala had his PhD in Mechanical Engineering from the Middle East Technical University. Professor Albert James Lutalo-Bosa who was Dean of Science at the inception of the project and his successor, Professor Paul E. Mugambi who worked flat out to ensure its success, deserve a lot of credit for the successful implementation of this very important project. The project was the faculty's first shot in the arm after the Idi Amin's destructive regime. These were some of Milton Obote's major contributions to the renewal of the university and, indeed, they set the stage for the transformation process which we shall describe in some detail later. By the time he was overthrown again in 1985, the university and the Government of

Uganda had entered into negotiations with the European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union (EU), for a major grant for the rehabilitation of some academic buildings. The Government had also negotiated and secured a big grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the rehabilitation of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry.

One of the intriguing things about Obote's second chancellorship was the retention of Professor Asavia Wandira as Vice Chancellor. As we shall see later, Professor Wandira had served briefly in Lule's Government as Minister of Education before returning to Makerere in 1979 as Vice Chancellor for the second time. He was Senteza Kajubi's replacement. Professor Wandira was always seen as an apolitical person. Whatever political views he had, he kept them tightly to himself – at least that was my impression of him. I believe that among Obote's staunch supporters at Makerere, there were many contenders for the job but Obote preferred to keep Asavia Wandira.

Likewise, the legendary Bernard Onyango also kept his job as Academic Registrar. By that time, the mathematician and physicist, Garshom Odeke Eyoku, who had transferred from the Ministry of Education where he had been serving as Under-Secretary for Higher Education, had joined Onyango as his deputy and was promoted to Senior Deputy Academic Registrar on personal-to-holder basis a few years later. The education psychologist, Professor Twaha Nsereko, was then the University Secretary. He had made history by being the first Moslem to occupy that position at Makerere, replacing the long-serving Michael Ssozi. Ssozi moved to the Main Building from the Centre for Continuing Education. Like Professor Wandira, Nsereko too came from the Faculty of Education. He had joined the University Administration during Idi Amin's chancellorship. His deputy was the economist, David Nyonyintono Sentongo and, like Eyoku, he too had joined the university from the Ministry of Education where he had been Head of the Planning Unit. Again, like Eyoku, Sentongo was also promoted to Senior Deputy Secretary on personal-to-holder basis.

### **Tito Okello Lutwa – Another Uninaugurated Chancellor**

After the overthrow of Milton Obote for the second time in July 1985 in a military coup by some disgruntled soldiers, led by General Tito Okello Lutwa and Bazilio Okello, Uganda was once again plunged into chaos. Shops were looted and confusion reigned everywhere. Obote escaped in the nick of time and went back into exile, this time in Zambia where his fellow Mlungushi Club member, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, provided him with amenities befitting a former Head of State.

The Okellos, as they were called, naively hoped that after overthrowing Obote, Museveni would immediately come out of the bush and join them. In fact, in the statement which was read over Radio Uganda in the mid-morning of July 9,

1985 informing the nation that the Army had taken over the Government and giving reasons for the take-over, a passionate plea was made to “comrade” Yoweri Museveni to come out quickly and join his fellow patriots who had overthrown Obote’s tyrannical Government. But this turned out to be mere wishful thinking. Museveni never heeded the Okellos’ call. Rather, he stayed put wherever he was. General Tito Okello Lutwa was sworn in as Uganda’s seventh president and *de facto* Chancellor of Makerere University on July 9, 1985. Like Idi Amin before him, Okello Lutwa also had little formal education. His limited English was further complicated by the natural handicaps of his mother tongue. He had difficulty pronouncing some words, which made it extremely hard for his hearers to understand him. Makerere was once again faced with the prospects of having a partially literate man as its chancellor. According to the 1970 Act, there was no way the university could reject Okello Lutwa as its titular head. But for some reason, Okello Lutwa was not installed as chancellor. Once again, Professor Wandira was left to deputise for the chancellor at the graduation ceremony of 1985. Okello Lutwa’s Government lasted less than a year, from July 9, 1985 to January 26 1986. Lutwa was overthrown by a ragtag army of guerrillas and ordinary people led by a young revolutionary; Yoweri Museveni, after the failed Nairobi peace talks brokered by President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya and which some Ugandans had started calling “the peace jokes”. Yoweri Museveni, a graduate of the University of Dar es Salaam, was no stranger to the armed struggle. While studying at the university, he had joined Frelimo of Samora Machel, which at the time was fighting the Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique. He had also participated in the 1972 invasion of Uganda, which was an attempt by some Ugandan exiles in Tanzania to overthrow Idi Amin by force of arms, an invasion which, in my opinion, was premature and doomed to fail. By 1972, Amin’s popularity in Uganda was still peak high. The expulsion of the Asians business community did not seem to have overly angered Ugandans. After all, many Ugandans had been looking forward to it for years. Ugandans were increasingly becoming resentful of the majority of Asians whose preoccupation seemed to be making money without making any deliberate effort to integrate with the local communities.

Worst still, despite the fact that Milton Obote was one of the sponsors of the invasion, no sane Ugandan, let alone the Baganda, could give support to the invading force that was entering Uganda through back places like the southern border town of Mutukula. The invasion failed and, sadly, several people – some of who were once prominent Ministers in Obote’s Government, like Alex Ojera who was Minister of Information and Broadcasting – were captured by Amin’s soldiers and paraded in public before the insensate Idi Amin in the full glare of Ugandan television cameras before they were whisked away and executed. In short, whoever was involved in that invasion was clearly on a suicide mission. Museveni was among the survivors. He details his experience and struggle to rid Uganda of Idi Amin in his book *Sowing the Mustard Seed*.

## **Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**

Yoweri Museveni was sworn in as the eighth president of Uganda on January 26, 1986 on the steps of the Parliament of Uganda. Amidst a huge jubilant crowd, he told the nation that by capturing state power, the National Resistant Movement (NRM) had ushered in a fundamental change and not a mere change of guard. A few months later, he was installed as Makerere's seventh chancellor at another colourful graduation ceremony. Flanked by the new Vice Chancellor, Professor George Kirya, he delivered his inaugural speech. He made it clear that he did not want to serve as chancellor for too long. In his opinion, a prominent person in society and not necessarily the Head of State was best suited to occupy the position. But implementing the President's wish required the repeal of the 1970 Act and that was the hardest part. President Museveni had to wait for 15 years to realise his wish. It was also the duration of his tenure as the university's titular head. One of the immediate and noticeable early changes of Museveni's chancellorship was the relaxation of the security arrangements at the graduation ceremony. Although still thorough, they were not the big inconvenience they used to be. Even on the day of the ceremony, security was minimally visible. The graduation ceremony was much a relaxed occasion. It was in the last years of his chancellorship that security on graduation ceremonies became more visible and stringent; prompted in part by the constant anonymous telephone calls warning of bombs planted in the drainage channels running underneath the Freedom Square and a surge in worldwide terrorism. Although more difficult to secure, the Freedom Square became once again the venue for the graduation ceremony when the Science quadrangle could no longer accommodate the increasing number of graduating students.

One of the many things I remember about Museveni was his uneasiness with the academic pomp and regalia. As a student, he did not attend Makerere; his University of Dar es Salaam was unofficially known to have very little respect for western academic traditions and values. Therefore, when he was first installed as chancellor and robed in the ceremonial gown, he must have thought that universities were weird institutions, totally out of touch with the modern world. Why should a modern institution stick to ancient traditions such as the antiquated academic gowns and other forms of ceremonial attire? Even the graduation ceremony itself was antiquated. Perhaps, the new chancellor did not know that universities are institutions that cherish tradition and where change takes time. Unlike Dar es Salaam, Makerere was part of the older university fraternity and therefore was not an exception to the old academic traditions and practices. However, in time, Chancellor Museveni adjusted to the realities of his office and learnt to live with the antiquated traditions, such as the conferment of degrees, which the office of Chancellor required him to perform. But in so doing, he also learnt to be notoriously late for the ceremony. Being more than an hour late was not unusual for him. There were very few occasions I can recall when he arrived

on time. On one of such occasions, he flew by helicopter from his country home at Rwakitura straight to the university, but even then he was over half an hour late. Some speculated that Museveni's late-coming for the ceremony was perhaps bad scheduling by his staff, who did not give him ample time to get ready on time. Others attributed it to security reasons.

Another one of Museveni's problems in his early years as chancellor was his refusal to deliver the chancellor's speech from a written text. Initially, he would come without one or if he had it, he would make no reference to it. He would make his mental and written notes as the ceremony proceeded. Apparently, he hated reading written texts, particularly when they were written for him. However, over time, he learnt to read from a prepared text but of course with a lot of the off-the-cuff stuff thrown in. His argument was that written texts were sometimes not able to accurately convey the message he wanted to pass on to the audience or were unnecessarily long and boring. Even when he began to read the speeches, he preferred to summarise the written text. But, more often than not, the summary was far longer than the written text.

Museveni's chancellorship ushered in several changes, which in many ways contributed significantly to the transformation of the university. When Museveni became president of Uganda in 1986, Professor Asavia Wandira was still vice chancellor. By then, he was Makerere's longest serving vice chancellor. For some reasons, Museveni felt that Professor Wandira had served long enough, and it was time for a change. That same year, he appointed Professor George Banabas Kirya, a medical microbiologist, as the new vice chancellor. Amanywa Mushega, who had taken over as Minister of Education from Joash Mayanja Nkangi, later appointed Professor Wandira full-time Chairman of the then Teaching Service Commission. Professor Fredrick I. B. Kayanja who was then Dean of Veterinary Medicine, took over from Professor Anthony Gingera Pincwya as Deputy Vice Chancellor. Reverend David Nyonyintono Sentongo replaced Professor Michael Agurochai Owiny as University Secretary. Sentongo had been acting in the position since 1985 when Michael Owiny resigned and took up a professorship in the Department of Zoology.

Bernard Onyango was another key senior administrative staff that Museveni retained, thus achieving the record of being the longest serving academic registrar at Makerere. David Sentongo's appointment as substantive University Secretary generated some unexpected controversy. For some reasons, the university decided to fill the position of University Secretary through an advertisement instead of confirming David Sentongo who had acted in the position for some time. David Sentongo decided to present himself as a candidate for the job. At the end of the interview conducted by the university's Appointments Board, news leaked out that the job had gone to Professor Charles Katongole, a former Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. This sent some shock waves into the university

community. We could not believe that David Sentongo had failed the interview. Reverend Sentongo was perceived as an honest and competent administrator. The rumour was premature. The Minister of Education appointed the University Secretary; the Board just identified people suitable for appointment. At the end of it all, Joash Mayanja Nkangi, who was Minister of Education at the time, confirmed Sentongo for the job. Professor Katongole went to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as Permanent Secretary. Sadly, he died a few years later after an official trip to Djibouti.

For many years, Makerere staff had not gone on strike. After the restoration of the rule of law and guaranteed freedom of speech, Makerere's academic staff through their association, Makerere University Academic Staff Association (or MUASA as it is popularly known), started agitating for better pay and improved terms and conditions of service. These demands coincided with the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) initiated economic reforms, which among other things, put emphasis on limiting Government expenditure and bringing down the run-away inflation as well as other structural adjustment programmes (SAP).

The currency reform of May 1987, which included the devaluation of the Uganda shilling by 30 per cent after removing two zeros, had not translated into the intended economic benefits. For example, Shs1000 before May 1987 was worth Sh10 after the currency reform but after 30 per cent devaluation, the actual value was Shs7. Initially, the public had welcomed the reform, referring to the new currency as Museveni's "dollar", literally and metaphorically. The reform found the people tired of carrying huge wads of worthless bank notes. For example, by 1986 one US dollar was equivalent to USh1,450. After the reform, one dollar was going for USh60; literally, because the new green bank notes bore a close resemblance to the American dollar bills, and metaphorically because the new currency was supposed to be as strong as American dollar. To the surprise of many, the new notes did not bear Museveni's portrait, which was a departure from Amin and Obote's practice of printing their portraits on all bank notes. However, the currency reforms were not as successful as was expected for several reasons. One of those reasons had a lot to do with timing and inflationary pressures. The reform came too early in the country's economic recovery, when most of Uganda's industries were producing at very low capacity. Important industries such as the sugar mills, the tea and soap factories, had totally collapsed and in dire need of urgent rehabilitation. Without the local factories working at a reasonable capacity, the country's industrial output could not sustain consumer demand. So, the country had to continue importing most of the consumer goods like sugar, rice and maize flour. All this importation required foreign exchange, which unfortunately was in very short supply. The dollar black market or *kibanda* as it was popularly known, which put a lot of pressure on the local currency, also

continued to flourish as traders looked for dollars wherever they could find them. All this contributed significantly to the weakening and constant devaluation of the new currency.

After attempts to bring the attention of the new Government to the dire economic plight of Makerere University academic staff had failed, the moribund MUASA turned into a vocal and militant organisation. Fred Juuko who was at the time the Dean of the Faculty of Law, was its new president. Soft-spoken Juuko had attended the University of Dar es Salaam for his Master of Laws degree but for some reason, he left Dar es Salaam and returned to Makerere where he completed the degree. Juuko did not hide his socialist inclinations. On several occasions, he openly disagreed with Museveni and his Government over many political and social issues. So, when the Government failed to meet MUASA's demands, the politically astute Juuko and other Makerere firebrands, including late Joseph Carasco and Mahmood Mamdani mobilised the otherwise docile staff for strike action. The 1989 academic strike was part of the long struggle for a living wage and was probably the first staff strike at Makerere. However, MUASA avoided calling it a strike in the traditional trade union sense. According to MUASA, its members had simply decided to lay down their tools until Government met their demand for a living wage.

By all accounts, the strike was well organised and popular. Government supporters and its foes alike were solidly behind it, perhaps a reflection of the level of frustration that existed at Makerere at the time. The message the academic staff were putting across to Government was a simple one. "We have had enough! Our patience has run out. After all, Museveni came to fix Uganda's problems, why not fix ours too?" Makerere staff could not understand why the president was unable to do something about their miserable situation. For how long could a respectable full professor continue to live on a salary of less than the equivalent of a hundred US dollars a month? This was the level of expectation Ugandans had in Museveni. He had fought a five-year protracted guerrilla war to liberate Ugandans from the yoke of tyranny and despair. Now was the time for him to deliver. It was a difficult time for both Government and the University Administration. Despite the concerted efforts of the Minister of Education, Amanywa Mushega, to resolve the problem, his words were falling on deaf ears. The strike simply continued. When MUASA refused to call off the strike, all staff were invited to an emergency meeting in the Main Building, which Eriya Kategaya, one of the senior Ministers in Museveni's Government addressed. Kategaya promised that Government would consider MUASA's demands but on condition that the strike was called off and staff resumed teaching. Staff booed and jeered him, an act that prompted him to walk out. The following day, Government issued a statement requiring all staff to hand over their house keys and vacate the university premises within 24 hours. This, in effect, meant we had been sacked *en masse*. Panic ensued and

in the midst of the chaos, some started blaming the Government for resorting to strong arm and scare tactics to force staff to call off the strike. Staff could not imagine that their popular chancellor, a long time freedom fighter and a believer in resistance against injustice, had turned against them for what they thought was a legitimate demand.

Some members of staff were determined to defy the order and call Government's bluff. MUASA's trump card was the acute lack of qualified personnel to replace the sacked lecturers at short notice, unless Government was seriously intent on closing the university indefinitely. Soon, rumour came flying that a former Makerere don who was now a Minister had advised the president and government to issue such an ultimatum, the reason being that since most members of staff did not have personal accommodation and were therefore totally dependent on the university, asking them to vacate university houses would make them think again, forcing them to make hard choices. The obvious one would be to end the strike. This was the government's tramp card. Whether the ploy would have worked, we can never tell. From what I gathered after the strike, several members of staff were prepared to hand over the keys rather than capitulate to the Government's ultimatum. It was a humiliation some staff were not prepared to accept. Ironically, the students and their leaders kept out of our conflict with Government. If there was any support from them at all, it was indirect and at best lukewarm. I was intrigued why the students did not show solidarity with their lecturers in their hour of need! But with or without the students' support, the solution to the standoff between MUASA and Government was about to come in a dramatic way.

Although students had not played an active role in the staff strike, we later learnt that it was one of our former students, a female Psychology graduate working in one of the President's offices located in the International Conference Centre, who successfully brokered a meeting between the President and the MUASA executive that led to the end of our industrial action. She was able to convince the President that there was still merit in holding last minute talks with MUASA before enforcing the ultimatum. Fortunately, the President agreed to meet the executive at the State House at Entebbe. Fred Juuko and some members of the executive were invited to meet the President at short notice. Given Uganda's recent history when state operatives randomly picked up people who were never to be seen again, the sudden invitation to the State House was a matter of extreme concern to staff and left many MUASA members worried for their safety. Fortunately, this was a new Uganda where the state had respect for human rights and security of person.

The President met the MUASA team late in the evening. In his usual jovial mood, he informed them that he was meeting them when the decision to sack all striking staff had already been communicated to the public over the radio. At the time, Radio Uganda was the only radio station in the country.

Nevertheless, the meeting went ahead as scheduled and turned out to be cordial and productive. The President agreed to rescind the order sacking all of us and promised improved terms and conditions of service, which included transport for Makerere staff to buy food directly from the farmers at reasonable prices, upgrading Makerere University Primary School to cater for the children of staff, as well as giving children of members of staff preferential admission at Makerere College School, which was started as a demonstration school for the Faculty of Education. President Museveni also promised to review the salaries and other allowances paid to Makerere staff in the following financial year. In return, the President asked MUASA to resume work. Juuko and his team came back late at night to an anxiously waiting crowd of MUASA members. He did not reveal much of what had transpired at Entebbe but asked members to attend a special meeting in the Main Hall the following day. The following day, the Main Hall was packed to capacity. Everyone was anxious to hear the news from the State House. After Juuko had briefed an attentive audience, the majority of staff believed the Government had made a good gesture, and agreed to resume work while waiting for Government to deliver on its promise. In the MUASA language, the strike had been suspended but not called off, and could resume any time if and when the conditions warranted. However, one could detect anxiety and fatigue.

Fred Juuko had proved himself a good mobiliser and a persuasive communicator. By all accounts, the strike had succeeded in drawing Government's attention to the plight of Makerere staff. Indeed, Government made good on most of its promises except the living wage, which remained elusive up to my departure in 2004. The strike gave MUASA the clout and militancy it did not have before. Suddenly, MUASA had become an organisation that instilled fear in Government officials. Many institutions of higher learning in the country took a cue from MUASA and formed similar academic staff associations to champion their demands. Members of staff of the new Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo (ITEK) formed the Institute of Teacher Education Academic Staff Association (ITEASA) which tried to mirror MUASA in militancy. Apparently, staff in some institutions believed that MUASA had succeeded because of militancy. In my view, they missed the point. MUASA succeeded largely because of Juuko's leadership. He was neither excessively militant nor too confrontational but had the knack to mobilise and carry the people along with him.

There was a mistaken belief in some institutions that to be effective and feared, an academic staff association had to be led by firebrands. More often than not, such leaders did not achieve much. Another attribute I saw in Juuko was "objectivity". During the strike, some of the more vocal members of staff from the Department of Political Science started attacking the Vice Chancellor, Professor George Kirya, and his administration, accusing him of corruption. Juuko stood up and told the meeting that there was no evidence to suggest that

Professor Kirya or the University Administration for that matter was corrupt. In his words, the strike was not about unfounded allegations against the Vice Chancellor or the University Administration; it was about a struggle for a living wage, decent terms and conditions of service. I guess this attribute stems from his background as a lawyer.

Although the strike ended amicably, thanks to the intervention of the Chancellor, it left a few casualties in its wake. As we learnt later, some Government ministers and top civil servants had started apportioning blame to the university officials, claiming that the strike could have been averted if the University Administration had handled it properly. Frankly, I could not figure out how the Vice Chancellor could have handled it differently. I vividly recall the many attempts Professor Kirya and Professor Lutalo-Bosa, who was acting as Deputy Vice Chancellor, made to resolve it within the confines of the university. Indeed, several meetings were held between the University Administration and the strike committee without success. The university authorities failed not because they were incompetent administrators, but because members of staff were in no mood to listen. The problem of poor pay had been a thorn in the flesh of staff for a long time. By the time the staff decided to go on strike, the problem had reached flash point. There was little the Vice Chancellor could have done to prevent it. In any case, it was not the Vice Chancellor's fault that staff were poorly paid, Government was the paymaster. MUASA knew very well that the University Administration had no capacity to address their pay grievances. The solution lay elsewhere; at the source of the resources. Therefore, whatever acrimonious feelings Government officials had against the Vice Chancellor and his administration were based on a total misunderstanding of why the staff went on strike. Staff were angry and decided to vent their anger and frustration the way they did. To paraphrase one of Martin Luther King's famous speeches, "we were tired of working full time jobs for part time wages". The strike was a popular uprising.

Apparently, Government had not taken kindly to what had happened at Makerere. Soon after the strike, we started hearing rumour that some heads in the Main Hall were about to roll, that some high-ranking officials in the University Administration were on their way out. Initially, we dismissed it as unfounded rumour but in March 1990, the rumour became stark reality. During an evening news bulletin, Radio Uganda announced that Makerere had a new Vice Chancellor, in the person of Professor William Senteza Kajubi. There was no mention of Professor Kirya's fate. There and then, Professor Kirya was unceremoniously relieved of his duties as Vice Chancellor. The dismissal of Professor Kirya over the radio was too reminiscent of the Idi Amin era.

Professor Kajubi had been Vice Chancellor of Makerere before, but he too had been relieved of his duties once before during the era of the Uganda National Liberation Front, and had gone back to his old National Institute of Education

in School of Education. However, when Government created the Institute of Teacher Education in 1988 to replace the National Teachers College at Kyambogo and the National Institute of Education at Makerere, the Minister of Education, Joash Mayanja Nkangi, sent him there as its first Principal. He was, therefore, coming back to Makerere as Vice Chancellor for the second time.

Professor Lutalo-Bosa, who was acting as deputy to Kirya during the strike, did not suffer the same indignity as his boss. Instead, Government decided to confirm him as substantive Deputy Vice Chancellor. Before moving to the Main Building, Professor Lutalo-Bosa was Dean of the Faculty of Science. He had been picked by Professor Kirya to act as his deputy in place of Professor Fredrick Kayanja who left Makerere in 1988 to start Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Western Uganda.

The return to Makerere was a difficult period for Professor Kajubi. During this time, the university experienced a lot of turbulence, largely as a result of the new policies the Government, and the Ministry of Education in particular, was trying to implement at the time. From time immemorial, Makerere undergraduates used to enjoy a lot of monetary privileges including pocket money, which students fondly referred to as the “boom”; money for transport to and from the university; a textbook and stationery allowance and special faculty allowance pegged to the students’ peculiar course requirements. Students taking courses like medicine enjoyed a far bigger special faculty allowance than those in the Arts. All these various allowances were in addition to the free tuition. However, given the rising student numbers, the increasing higher education expenditure and the recommendations contained in the report of the Education Review Commission of 1987, which Professor Kajubi chaired, Government decided to act. The Kajubi Commission had recommended that Government should stop meeting non-instructional costs in tertiary institutions. This in effect meant the end of the “boom”. To the students, this was anathema, a pill too bitter to swallow. The battle lines had been drawn in the sand and it was going to be a spirited fight. Students were determined to protect their cherished privileges Museveni’s Government was abolishing.

Government left it to the Minister of Education, Amanywa Mushega, to implement and enforce the new Government policies and reforms. Amanywa Mushega, a Major in the Army and a fighter in Museveni’s bush war, was a battle-hardened soldier who was ready to do battle with the students. In the early 1980s, when Obote’s Government was harassing the UPM supporters and everyone suspected to be close associates of Museveni, Mushega had hurriedly left the Faculty of Law where he was teaching and joined Museveni in the bush. Like Museveni, he is a Dar es Salaam Law graduate. After a stint as political commissar in the Army and one or two other appointments in Government, in 1989 the President appointed him full Minister of Education, replacing Juash

Mayanja Nkangi, who had moved over to the Ministry of Finance. Mushega served as Minister of Education and Sports for nine years. During those years, a lot happened in Uganda's education system.

In March 1990, Amanywa Mushega made an important and bold policy statement. He announced that Government had henceforth abolished the boom, transport, book and stationery allowances at Makerere and in all higher educational institutions. Hell broke loose at Makerere. The Students' Guild, with Wilbod Owori who went to Namityango College for his high school as its president, started organising a series of protest strikes. I remember an incident when the late Joseph Carasco, Mahmood Mamdani, Rutanga Murindwa and I tried frantically to protect Owori from arrest after leading a protest march. In spite of their spirited efforts, Government never barged. Instead, the Government decided to send the students home and close the university.

Unfortunately, the student protests led to misunderstandings within the MUASA executive of which I was a member. At a meeting called to discuss the students' plight, at which some members including myself were absent, the executive decided that MUASA should support the students in their demands. It was further agreed that MUASA should condemn Government for its high handed handling of the situation and demand that it should rescind its decision and call back the students immediately.

The meeting was held on a Sunday, and as was my usual practice then, I was away from the university, spending the day at my parents' home. Late in the evening when I returned to the university, Mrs Noridah Kiremire, who was also a member of the MUASA executive, accompanied by Dr Ezra Twesigomwe of the Physics Department, who some years later became MUASA Chairman and led another staff strike, came to my Quarry House flat and informed me of a meeting some members of MUASA executive had held in our absence. They also informed me about the important resolutions passed on behalf of MUASA, which they had circulated to Makerere staff and the wider public.

We wondered why our colleagues had decided to hold such an important meeting in our absence. We also wondered why we should support the students when they had kept a safe distance from us when we were on strike, even when we were threatened with *en masse* dismissal. We did not understand why MUASA should get involved in their struggles with Government beyond extending our simple sympathy to them. In fact, some of us had already gone out of our way to help their Guild President escape arrest at our own risk! Thirdly, a general meeting of MUASA had been called for Monday, why did our colleagues not wait and discuss such a crucial matter in the general assembly? We later learnt that MUASA Chairman was also absent from the meeting. In the event, we thought it was better to make our views known. Naturally and understandably so, our disagreement with some members of MUASA executive invoked a lot of anger

and ill feelings. Our action was perceived as a betrayal of our association and a stab in the back. During the general meeting held in the lower lecture theatre of the Faculty of Arts the following day, we apologised, but pointed out that as a matter of principle, we disagreed with that method of work. Some of us had joined MUASA to fight for staff welfare and not for any other agendas, adding that we were simply calling for more transparency in the way the executive made decisions. Some people in the audience tried to move a motion to have us expelled from the executive and MUASA. However, before the motion was debated, we tendered our resignation, which was accepted. It was one of those regrettable occasions in one's life.

Soon after our resignation, we started hearing stories that MUASA had been infiltrated by some anti-government elements who were trying to use its popularity to destabilise the Government. It was impossible to discern the truth, but one thing I certainly heard said about us was that we were Government supporters who wanted to wreck MUASA from within, which unfortunately was far from the truth. My difference with some of my colleagues in the executive had nothing to do with my support for Government if I had any. But even after leaving the executive, I remained loyal and committed to MUASA, because I was well aware of the tremendous sacrifices MUASA leadership had made to bring the welfare of Makerere academic staff to the front of national priorities. In the past, they could have lost their lives for speaking out and leading a strike. Although the living wage was still an illusion, Government could no longer afford to ignore the plight of Makerere staff. Whatever political or ideological differences Fred Juuko might have had with the NRM, he had fought for the good of all of us. The “killing wage”, as we used to call our pittance wages, was slowly giving way to something close to a living wage.

After a few weeks, Government re-opened the university with the understanding that there should be no more strikes and demonstrations. For a while, the university was peaceful but when Norbert Mao succeeded Owori whose term had ended, the issue of the scrapped allowances resurrected; this time with all the might the students could marshal. The strikes resumed and took on a more violent tone. On several occasions, students engaged Police in pitch battles but all to no avail. Government stood its ground and refused to capitulate to the students' demands. This perhaps was one of the fundamental changes Museveni had promised the nation after he was sworn in as President in January 1986 and one he was not about to backtrack on, lest he was perceived as a weak leader. Norbert Mao, another Namilyango boy and Law student, was undeterred too. He became even more relentless than his predecessor in mobilising his fellow students to continue with the struggle for what were once privileges but now rights. The fight had to be fought to the bitter end and the battles, mainly of words, would be fought in the Freedom Square.

To ensure that students did not assemble in the Freedom Square, the Police was to cordon it off. On the fateful Monday, December 10, 1990 the students defied the Government order and started gathering in the Freedom Square for an important message from the Resistance Council III Chairperson. Although by now I was at Kyambogo, I used to go for Sunday mass at Makerere because I used to enjoy Father Kanyike's mass. The Sunday preceding what the students now call "Black Monday", I attended the 9 o'clock mass. It is common practice at the end of the mass for the priest or some other person to read announcements, including marriage banns, shortly before the final blessing. This Sunday was no exception. Father Lawrence Kanyike, the Chaplain of St Augustine's Chapel, was the day's mass celebrant. At the end of the mass, he read the announcements. One announcement was from the RC III Chairperson asking the students to assemble in the Freedom Square the following day, Monday, at 9am to hear an important message she had for them from the Minister. The announcement ended by telling the students that Government was willing to consider their grievances. I was told that the same message was also read in the St Francis Chapel. The following Monday morning, the students started assembling in the Freedom Square as instructed.

Later, we learnt that the Minister of Education had visited a friend, a resident of Kasubi View Estate on Saturday night, December 8, 1990 and discussed the ongoing students' strike. In the course of their discussion, they agreed to persuade the students to resume classes, while Government reconsidered their demands. The RC III Chairperson, who was living almost next door to the Minister's friend, was seen as the right person to deliver this important message to the students. In a way, it was a message of hope that Government was finally willing to loosen its stance on the students' demands.

Apparently, no one informed the Vice Chancellor who was living off the campus of this new development. Also, the Minister of Education seemed to be unaware of the ban his colleague, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Police, in consultation with the University Administration, had imposed on the student assemblies in the Freedom Square. The Vice Chancellor had left the university for the weekend in the full knowledge that there would be no more assemblies in the Freedom Square and that the Police would be deployed there to ensure the ban was enforced. Unfortunately, lack of coordination turned all these good intentions into a Makerere tragedy and the Vice Chancellor's worst nightmare.

As the students started gathering in the Freedom Square to listen to the RC III Chairperson as told, Police ordered them to leave immediately. The students ignored the Police order and continued with their assembly. The Police decided to charge in a bid to disperse them. In the ensuing commotion and chaos, a young and timid Police constable opened fire, hitting two students; Tom Onyango a second year BA student and Thomas Otema, a first year BSc/Education student.

One died instantly, the other died on the way to hospital. We later got to know that the two victims were not even part of the big crowd which had assembled in the Freedom Square.

At the time the two students were shot, the Vice Chancellor was just on his way to the university. In the pre-cellular phone days, it was left to Professor Lutalo-Bosa, the Deputy Vice Chancellor to deal with the immediate aftermath at great personal risk. Hell had broken lose. Government had no alternative but to close the university. Fortunately for the University Administration, the closure coincided with the Christmas and New Year break; so, in a rather dramatic way, the closure cooled the situation. By the time the university re-opened, the students were either too tired to carry on fighting or deeply regretting the death of their two innocent fellow students. This was the first deadly confrontation between the Uganda Police and Makerere students resulting in the loss of life. No doubt, it was a painful experience for the parents, student leadership, Uganda Police and the University Administration. Although it was hard to come to terms with the tragedy, the Police learnt some valuable lessons from it. They started paying serious attention to good riot control techniques and practice, especially when it involved students.

In spite of this tragedy and the students' efforts to force Government to change its mind, all was in vain. The Government did not capitulate to the students' demands. After failing to secure their demands through strikes and other confrontational means, a new crop of student leaders cleverly devised a new scheme of getting free money from Government, which they dubbed the "Needy Students Scheme". The new scheme was the brainchild of Charles Rwomushana, a BA Education student who replaced Norbert Mao as Guild President, together with Fox Odoi, a Law student as Guild Speaker. Charles Rwomushana successfully campaigned on the platform of helping needy students secure Government funding to cover such expenses as transport, stationery and pocket money. He succeeded mainly because he had in a way won the heart of the Chancellor. He came from very humble beginnings in rural Rukungiri in western Uganda. Unlike most Guild Presidential aspirants at Makerere who used to hire fleets of buses and all sorts of vehicles to ferry their supporters during the campaigns, Rwomushana conducted his campaign on foot. It was a clever tactic. It won him the votes and the Guild presidency. Rwomushana had another advantage; access to the President of Uganda, which he put to good use.

After his election, he immediately went about putting his campaign pledge into action. He started demanding for the immediate implementation of the "Needy Students Scheme". Although it was true that many students studying at Makerere come from very poor families, it was impossible for the University Administration to identify a needy student with absolute certainty. In Uganda where most people, particularly those working in the informal sector, do not file

income tax returns, there is no reliable source of information and good data on which the university could base an accurate assessment of a student's economic inadequacy. Whatever criterion the University Administration devised was arbitrary, at best subjective. However, Charles Rwomushana, the architect of the scheme had his own way of identifying his fellow needy students. He organised them into an association, Makerere University Needy Students Association (MUNSA). He also made sure that the money came from the Treasury direct to them through the association of which he was the chairperson. Rwomushana did not realise that taxpayers' money came with strings attached – accountability. The Ministry of Finance required him to account for the money, moreover through the university system he was trying to circumvent. Perhaps in the haste, he did not realise he had inadvertently assumed the responsibility of an accounting officer, which required him to keep good records. For failing to file a satisfactory accountability on time, the University Administration decided to withhold his final year examination results until he did so. His over-zealousness had put him into trouble. Eventually, he sorted out his problems and graduated. When he left, MUNSA died a slow death.

After the deadly students' strikes, the relationship between Professor Kajubi and Government went into a nosedive from which it never recovered. At the same time, some of his seasoned senior colleagues were retiring. In 1992, Bernard Onyango retired at the age of 60. Although he had the option to continue as Academic Registrar on a post-retirement contract until he was 65, Onyango decided to call it a day. Instead, he joined Uganda Martyrs University at Nkozi, a young private university founded by the Catholic Church where he spent the rest of his last working years as its first Academic Registrar. Although I was not able to interview him on grounds of failing health, I strongly suspect that after over thirty years at Makerere, he was looking forward to a change. He had been in the Main Building far longer than any of his colleagues and had seen it all, the good, the bad and the ugly.

Other senior administrators were also fast approaching the mandatory age of 60 and would soon be on their way out. The retiring group included the University Secretary, David Sentongo and the long serving Dean of Students, George Kihuguru, who was the first Ugandan to be appointed to that position after the departure of his British predecessor, Mr Dindwidy in the early 1970s. Uncle George, as the students fondly called him, had also become a legend at Makerere. He had been an eyewitness to all the staff and student upheavals. He too had seen the best and the worst of Makerere.

Garshom Eyoku, the Senior Deputy Academic Registrar was also due to retire in the early 1990s. Eyoku's main responsibilities were Senate affairs and admissions. In the days when nearly everything was done manually, his strong background in Mathematics came in handy during the annual undergraduate

admissions exercise. He was particularly good at fixing cut-off points for each course and arriving at the exact number of students within each cut-off points. Although the exercise was always laborious and could take up to a week or longer, the presence of Eyoku was always an asset to the Deans. He was thorough and incredibly honest. Nowadays, the computer does most of the work and the admission exercise is more or less a one-day affair. John Katuramu, who was Deputy Secretary in charge of personnel and administration, was also on his way out and so was Mrs Deborah Etoori, one of Mr Onyango's long serving deputies. In short, Professor Kajubi's second term coincided with the retirement of most of the first and second generations of Ugandan senior administrators at Makerere.

Although a few wanted to leave as soon as they attained the retirement age, every retiring Makerere University member of staff, irrespective of rank and position, was eligible for a two-year post-retirement contract, renewable by mutual agreement until the age of 65. That was the practice then. For some reason however, Minister Amanywa Mushega was not keen to extend the same privilege to the retiring administrators. He wanted them to leave immediately. After the staff and student strikes, the Minister seemed to be fed up with Makerere administrators. However, there was a stark reality that could not be overlooked. The political chaos and economic turmoil of the 1970s and the 80s had deprived many Ugandans, especially those on fixed incomes, of the opportunity to save for their retirement. Besides, at that time, Makerere University did not have a meaningful retirement scheme. Even if it had one, inflation and the currency reform of 1987 had rendered such schemes almost worthless. The low wages notwithstanding, most working people had become totally dependent on their jobs for survival – literally a hand-to-mouth existence. The university did not only provided staff with a regular income, it also gave them free housing – a privilege staff had come to take for granted. As a consequence, few members of staff had adequately prepared for their retirement.

At the time, a personal house was a luxury few could afford. It was therefore small wonder that retirement was not a topic that featured regularly and prominently in staff's small talk, beyond the casual complaint that the existing retirement schemes were inadequate. It was not a topic staff spent time discussing seriously. It seemed the university had employed us for life. So, when the Minister refused to give the retiring senior administrative staff post-retirement contracts, it was an agonising moment for many of them. Panic and hyped anxiety gripped the Main Building. Most of these old men had no clue how they would cope with the new life without a roof of their own over their heads and a regular income, little as it was, to fend for their families.

To make an already bad situation worse, this was also the time Professor Kajubi was relieved of his job as Vice Chancellor. On September 23, 1993, I was named the new Vice Chancellor, with Professor Justin Epelu Opio as my deputy. I was

being transferred from Kyambogo where I had been serving as Principal of the Institute of Teacher Education since 1990 and taken back to Makerere as Kajubi's successor. It also meant that I was inheriting Makerere's myriad of problems. I had entered the fray. To add to my heavy burden, the Minister made it clear to me that the remaining old men in the Main Building had to go as soon as they reached their retirement age. There and then, my work was cut out for me. But as a rookie Vice Chancellor, the Minister's decision posed a serious problem. If all the old men suddenly left, the first hurdle I would have faced was loss of institutional memory. With no senior person familiar with the university's administrative structures and functions to guide us, learning the ropes would have taken much longer. I also knew that the recruitment of the new senior administrators would take a long time; but after a series of consultations, I discovered that the Vice Chancellor had some powers to make temporary appointments for a period not exceeding six months. This came as a great relief. I had found a safe way of managing the exit of the retiring old men. Having served the institutions for so long, I thought it was unfair to let them go with a bitter taste in the mouth. So, as we advertised and prepared to fill their positions, I asked David Sentongo and George Kihuguru to stay on as University Secretary and Dean of Students respectively for six months more.

Allowing the old officers to stay on for six more months relieved us of some pressure. With their help, I was able to find my way about in Makerere's administrative maze, but in a jocular way, the Minister kept reminding me that he was about to ask me to refund the money I was paying them as salary. My response was that as soon as he, the Minister, appointed a new University Secretary and Dean of Students, I would have no reason to keep the two officers any longer than necessary. Reverend Sentongo was an extremely efficient accounting officer, conversant with the Government accounting systems, and a good financial manager. He really helped me settle in. I actually learnt a lot of valuable lessons from his vast experience in the first few months as Vice Chancellor. George Kihuguru was equally an asset in helping us to implement our first reforms. He knew how to handle students; he had no fear of rowdy student mobs. We should remember that not so long ago students had been fighting Government for abolishing their allowances and, although most students had given up all hope of ever again enjoying free money from Government, there were still pockets of them masquerading as needy students, and from time to time they would stir up some commotion if, for some reason, Government could not release their money on time. Uncle George knew how to quell the commotion and calm the riotous students. In the end, I kept both of them for over a year. Indeed, it was a win-win situation for me and for them.

Reverend Sentongo was able to secure a new job at Nkumba University. George Kihuguru managed to complete his house in Kikoni, and also ended up in a new job with the Nile Power Company. This, in my opinion, was the

best way to manage the exit of such retiring staff who had served the institution so diligently for so long. I am sure that when time came for them to go, these officers did not leave the university with a bitter taste in the mouth. They must have gone away not thinking that their long loyalty to Makerere was misplaced or that they had toiled in vain; they had ample time to sort themselves out. The lesson I learnt out of his experience was that managing staff exit is as important as managing their entry.

It was equally sad to see Garshom Eyoku leave. I have already alluded to his invaluable contribution to the undergraduate admissions when the exercise was still manual, which in turn helped the university maintain a high level of integrity and credibility in a very sensitive area. During admissions, the university was always under enormous pressure. There were always too many worthy candidates competing for very few places. That was how intense the competition was, but under Eyoku's watchful eye, no unqualified student could enter the university.

In addition to his role in keeping admissions clean and transparent, he had another rare attribute. He used to amaze members of Senate with his detailed knowledge of the workings of the university and his ability to remember Senate decisions made five years ago as if he had an intuitive way of anticipating the kind of questions that were likely to be raised at any Senate meeting. He always came to the meetings well prepared with the appropriate reference documents – some new, some old – and when a question was asked, he would quickly open the relevant document and read out the answer. He would then follow it with his usual high-pitched laughter as if to say, “I had anticipated that question and I knew where to look for the answer in the forest of old documents”. In fact, before he left the university, he had earned himself the title of “Walking Encyclopaedia”.

Because Makerere University did not have a meaningful pension scheme, he too left almost empty-handed. To address this problem in the short run and in anticipation of a more meaningful pension scheme in the future, the University Council had taken some stop-gap measures and put in place the interim award retirement package whose computation was based on an elaborate mathematical formula. One of the variables in this formula was one's length of service in the university. Unfortunately for Mr Eyoku, his service in the university was short. Since he had transferred from the Ministry of Education headquarters in the 1970s, he had not been in the university service long enough; so when his interim award was computed, he did not have much to carry with him to start a new life. Although we were able to give him and other retiring officers a decent send-off, the fact that after many years of dedicated service they were leaving the university almost empty-handed hurt and haunted me, but there was nothing I could do at the time.

The interim award scheme, which I put in place was under the stewardship of John Katuramu who was the Deputy University Secretary in charge of Administration. He did all the calculations for each retiring member of staff.

Despite being in charge of the scheme, he too left the university with very little. Like Garshom Eyoku and David Sentongo, he too had joined the university from Government in the 1970s after a stint in the UK as an Education Attaché at the Uganda High Commission.

Sorting out the retiring staff issues was one of the many things that happened during Museveni's 15-year chancellorship. I think it is fair to say that what happened at Makerere when Museveni became President of Uganda reflects some of the changes which took place in the country as a whole during his presidency. For example, for the first time in the history of Makerere University, students could constantly boo the Chancellor, who was also a Head of State, at graduations and other functions, and even walk out of the graduation marquee when he was delivering the Chancellor's speech and get away with it. This was in stark contrast with his predecessors, who had no tolerance for such behaviour.

In addition, Museveni attended several students' functions at Makerere, including fundraising for the renovations of their halls of residence like Lumumba Hall, whenever he was invited and available or whenever he chose to come to the university on his own. His wife too was very active in the students' HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns, strongly advocating behavioural change and warning the young undergraduates against the dangers of unsafe sex. She also participated in several counselling sessions, all aimed at minimising the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. She was a regular visitor to the various halls of residence at the beginning of each academic year and would give talks, lasting several hours to first-year students, particularly the female students, whom she felt were most vulnerable to risky behaviour. Each session would be followed by a general discussion, which at times involved frank exchange of ideas on such matters as abstinence and other forms of protection against the HIV virus. She is also on record as the First Lady who studied for a degree at Makerere when her husband was the sitting Chancellor of the university.

President Museveni was also instrumental to the restoration of Mahmood Mamdani's Ugandan citizenship and his return to Makerere. But like all good academics, Mamdani could not help being critical of some of Museveni's policies, particularly the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), which he saw as being imposed on Uganda by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to impoverish the already poor Ugandans. Mamdani even founded a private research organization – the Centre for Basic Research – at Kololo to study, among other things, the effects of the SAP. Instead of locking up Mamdani for being too critical of his Government, Museveni decided to engage him in a public debate. This was unheard of in Uganda. I am sure most people like me, when we heard the news that the President had decided to engage Dr Mamdani in a public debate about his Government's economic policies, decided that it could not be true! But indeed it was true. Mamdani accepted the challenge and came back for the battle of wits.

In his opening remarks, Mamdani narrated his fears when he received the President's invitation. He said that his first thoughts were that here was another Ugandan President either wanting to lock him up or to send him packing again in exile as it had happened to him before. Professor Sempebwa of Katende and Sempebwa Advocates, one of the prominent law firms in Kampala, and a former member of staff of Makerere University, chaired and moderated the debate hosted in the Kampala Sheraton Hotel. The President presented and defended what he called his thesis and Mamdani did the rebuttal. At the end, both men shook hands and, as his last remark, Mamdani thanked Museveni, saying that it was like a dream to him that after debating the President, he could go back to Makerere, live and work in peace. Indeed, Mamdani continued to lecture at Makerere and to work at his Centre for Basic Research undisturbed until, on his own accord, he left for a professorial appointment at the University of Cape Town. In being critical of Government, Mamdani was not an exception. There are many Makerere academics who are equally critical of Museveni and regularly wrote stinging articles in the newspapers and have continued to live and work in peace. Such was Museveni's chancellorship.



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## Makerere's Principals: The Men who Built for the Future (1922 – 1970)

Since its humble beginnings in 1922, there have been a small number of visionary and outstanding men – no women yet – behind Makerere's success and tribulation, who have been at the helm of its affairs, serving as its Chief Executive. These are the Principals and Vice Chancellors. These are the men who had and continue to provide the leadership and stewardship which has continued to enhance Makerere's reputation as centre of higher learning in Africa and beyond, even when the sun appeared to have set on its hard earned reputation and fortunes as a centre of academic excellence. Some have even lost their lives in the service of the institution. From 1922 to 1970, Makerere College, and later University College, was headed by Principals. Margaret McPherson has given most of them sufficient coverage in her book *They Built for the Future*, so I will not bore the reader by repeating their stories and their times beyond giving each of them a mention in passing.

### **H.O. Saville**

Makerere's first and founding Principal, H. O. Saville was a civil engineer, who had been working for the Public Works Department before the Governor, Sir Robert Coryndon, tasked him to establish the first Government Technical School on Makerere hill, some two miles north of downtown Kampala. He started the school in 1922 with fourteen boys and five instructors, two of them Ugandans – Matayo Sempala and Erasito Tabyetise. Makerere hill was given to the Protectorate Government by the Buganda Kingdom for the purpose of establishing a college there. Saville is credited for producing the first development plan for Makerere College, which later replaced the technical school.

Besides the technical disciplines of automotive engineering, carpentry and joinery, civil and building engineering, the plan included the establishment of a normal school for teachers, agricultural plots, administrative and departmental

offices, playing fields and a timber plantation. Saville's Administration Building whose foundation was laid in 1923, now houses the Department of Science and Technical Education in the School of Education, near the former site of Kagugube Market. He left in 1925 for a new appointment as Head of Technical Education in the Department of Education. The Colonial Government was compelled to start a technical school in Uganda soon after the First World War, after realising that there was a huge shortage of artisans in its East African territories. It had, therefore, become necessary to train native artisans to fill the gaps. Bombo had been the favoured site, in which case we would have had Bombo College and subsequently Bombo University. However, on the recommendation of a minority report, the Governor, Sir Robert Coryndon, who is credited for having founded the college, settled for Makerere hill.

### **Douglas J. Tomblings**

Douglas J. Tomblings succeeded Saville. A Cambridge graduate, Tomblings had come to Uganda as an administrative officer and in that role, served in many places in Uganda. Besides organising the first college academic programmes, he oversaw the transformation of the simple technical school into a college of higher education in East and Central Africa. It was the only college of its kind in this part of Africa. Due to his efforts, the De Lar Warr Commission of 1936 established the college at such an advanced stage that it did not hesitate to recommend that Makerere College should rapidly advance to the status of a University College.

Tomblings was one of the longest serving Principals of Makerere College. He held the position for almost 15 years, from 1925 to 1939. During his time, it became evident that the simple technical school, which was now transforming itself into a college, needed more land if it was to expand. Buganda was going through a lot of changes, naturally many of them unpopular, and the decision to give more land on Makerere hill to the Protectorate Government turned out to be a very contentious issue.

In 1938, a group of Baganda calling themselves *Baana ba Kintu* (the children of Kintu, the first King of Buganda) were bitterly opposed to giving more land to the college, calling it a sell-out to the colonialists (*abafuzi ba matwale*). It is said that the Governor had given the Mengo administration an ultimatum; either the Buganda Government provided more land on Makerere hill for the college's expansion or the college would be relocated to Kitale in Kenya. In the end, Mengo conceded more land uphill. The *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister), Martin Luther Munyagwa Nsibirwa, responsible for signing away the land was branded a traitor and he later paid for it with his life. He was gunned down by an assassin as he left Namirembe Cathedral after attending an early morning service in 1945.

Fortunately, the controversies had no effect on the development of the school. In recognition of his tremendous contribution to the growth of Makerere as an

academic institution of excellence, the University of East Africa honoured him with a degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) in 1964.

### **George C. Turner**

Douglas Tomblings was succeeded by Mr George C. Turner, an Oxford graduate. He was Principal of the college during the difficult war years, 1939 – 1945. He was appointed to begin the task of preparing the college's transformation into a college of the University of London under a special relationship. Besides getting the college ready to offer the University of London's general degrees, he focused much of his attention on the construction of new buildings for the college. It was during his time that the current Main Building, which also served as a teaching facility for some time, was completed and the Chapels of St. Augustine for the Catholic community and St. Francis for the Anglicans were erected. Turner left Makerere in 1946.

### **William D. Lamont**

Dr William D. Lamont was the fourth Principal of the college and served from 1947 to 1949. He held a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) degree from Oxford University, the first Principal to possess a doctorate. His main task was to kick-start the process of entering the college into a special relationship with the University of London, which was formalised in 1948. Before coming to Makerere, Lamont had been a lecturer in Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University and a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cairo in Egypt. In fact, Dr Lamont was the first true academic to head the college, which transformed into a University College of East Africa during his time. He resigned rather suddenly in 1949 shortly before the special relationship the college had entered into with the University of London was fully operationalised. Unofficially, it is suspected that he resigned over a disagreement with his superiors in the Protectorate Government over staff appointments.

However, according to Margaret MacPherson's account, he resigned because he believed the college needed a much younger person to propel it forward in the next vital years. He considered himself too old for that task. During his short tenure as Principal, he introduced very significant innovations which included staff expansion, properly constituted faculties, academic departments, faculty academic boards, as well as other boards of study. The college was not only truly on the way to becoming a university in its own right, its finances were impressive. As an example, in 1948, the college's annual capital and recurrent budget was a pretty sum of UK Pounds 1,039,097 or US\$ 4,156,388, or Ugx 20,781,940.

At that time, that was considered a very healthy and enviable financial position for the college. In today's terms, it is equivalent to slightly over Ugx 3 billion. This

was also the time Mr Williamson of Williamson Diamond Limited of Tanganyika gave the college U.K. pounds (GBP)50,000 for the construction a new building for the Department of Physics, which remains the department's only building to date. For his contribution to the college's development in such a short time, the University of East Africa recognised him with an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. It was conferred on him at the same occasion as Jomo Kenyatta, who was President of Kenya at the time.

Apollo Milton Obote, who later was to become the first Prime Minister of independent Uganda, twice President of the Republic of Uganda and twice Chancellor of Makerere University, entered Makerere in 1947 when Dr Lamont was Principal. We are told by Kenneth Ingham in his book *Obote – a Political Biography* that Obote who had distinguished himself as an excellent student at school, went to Makerere with the intention to study Law. However, Makerere was not offering Law at that time. He was disappointed, but he did not throw away his chance to study at Makerere, so he reconciled himself to whatever else was on offer. Although History was one of his favourite subjects, it was also not on offer. He therefore chose to study English, Geography and General Studies, a cocktail of subjects that included Sociology among others.

The programme of study Obote chose was for two years and led to either a certificate or a diploma in Arts at Makerere College. Students enrolled on this programme almost invariably ended up as secondary school teachers. However, being a school teacher never appealed to Milton Obote. Again, according to Kenneth Ingham, Obote was equally good in Science but avoided it partly because of the weak grade he had scored in Biology in the Makerere College entrance examination. He thought it might jeopardise his chance of being admitted to a professional course like Medicine. Because he was good in English and Literature, in 1948 his classmates chose him to play Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, a leading role in one of the Shakespeare productions the English Department used to put on every year.

Apparently, Obote's interest in Law never waned. In 1949, when he was about to complete his course at Makerere, the Lango District Council offered him a scholarship to study Law in England. Unfortunately, the Protectorate Government blocked it because it, rightly or wrongly (but perhaps more out of fear), considered Law studies as inappropriate for the African who was to be sponsored with public funds. Sensitive Obote did not take too kindly to what he perceived as an insidious attempt on the part of the Protectorate Government to frustrate Africans from perusing professions of their choice.

Coming as it did when the Kisubi humiliation was still fresh in his mind, this was another blow below the belt and, out of frustration, he decided on his own accord to leave before completing the diploma course. Some, particularly his adversaries, have argued that his sudden and unexplained departure from

Makerere was due to academic incompetence. Whereas, it is quite plausible that he left on academic grounds, in my view this was most unlikely. By all accounts, Obote was not an academically poor student. The only plausible reason he could have been sent away on grounds of poor academic performance was because he was neglecting his academic work in pursuit of other interests and one of his passionate part-time pursuits, even in those early years, was attending the debates in the Legislative Assembly. According to Ingham, he would miss lectures in order to go to the LEGICO to listen to proceedings. Could this have contributed to his poor performance? Now that he is dead, we may never know the truth. Inevitably, the misfortunes he went through created in him a strong resentment for Makerere and the British colonial administration. In later years, this had a profound impact on his political thoughts and his anti-colonial crusades.

### **Bernard de Bunsen**

Dr Lamont's unfinished business at Makerere fell on the shoulders of another Oxford graduate, Bernard de Bunsen. De Bunsen, who went to the prestigious Belliol College at Oxford, came to Makerere with a rich career in education. He had been a school master in the Liverpool Public Elementary Schools for four years; an Associate Director of Education of Wiltshire County in the UK for another four years and Director of Education in Palestine. He came to Makerere in June 1949 as Reader, (the equivalent of an Associate Professor) and became full Professor of Education in November of the same year.

When Lamont resigned, he was asked to act as Principal of the college. In 1950, after acting for about a year, he was confirmed Principal, thus becoming the fifth in line. Another Oxford graduate, F. L. Gee became the Vice Principal. De Bunsen was another long serving Principal of Makerere, which had now become Makerere University College of East Africa. The first London degrees at Makerere were awarded during his time, the teaching of which had begun in 1950, the year he was appointed Principal. During de Bunsen's time, the college experienced rapid expansion in buildings and range of academic offerings. Unfortunately, as the new developments were proceeding at a satisfactory pace, in October 1951, a greater part of the new Medical School, which had just been completed and opened, was wrecked by an explosion of unknown origin which caused substantive damage to the new buildings.

It was also during de Bunsen's time that the college had the first taste of a students' strike, which saw the expulsion of some key student leaders – Abubakr Kakyama Mayanja, Joash Mayanja Nkangi and some others. The strike was sparked off by what the students called a poor diet of *matooke*, *posho*, beans and the sauce which the college was feeding them on. In their memorandum to the Principal, dated August 11, 1952, the students had claimed that the food was not only poor but was also badly prepared. Does this sound familiar? The other

grievance was the College Administration's insensitivity to the undergraduate students' problems, such as the theft of their bicycles.

The students gave the Principal an ultimatum of a week within which they expected him to meet with them and provide some answers to their grievances. The Principal did not respond, insisting that the students had a democratically elected Students' Council and that was the only legitimate organ to speak on behalf of the students. He further pointed out that the Guild Council had a mess committee which should be able to handle matters of diet with the College Administration. Therefore, as Principal, he was not prepared to bypass or sideline the Students' Guild Council. The agitating students were also expected to do the same.

On August 17, 1952, the students met at night and suspended the Students' Guild Council and all its affiliated committees. They also declared a strike, which commenced the following day, August 18, 1952. In a written statement, which the agitating students sent to the Principal, a copy of which was given to the *Uganda Herald* newspaper, they tried to explain why they were resorting to strike action. In part, the statement read, "All undergraduates found it impossible to feed on the food the college provided them. They are now going without food and this has inevitably incapacitated them from attending their lectures and other college activities". The statement was signed by three students; Abubakar K. Mayanja, Joash S. N. Mayanja and I. E. Omolo.

After declaring the strike, which its leaders called a hunger strike, the Principal, Mr de Bunsen conceded his original stance and decided to meet the striking students. He persuaded them to call off the strike, but his efforts came late and to no avail. The students refused to end the strike. The following day, the Principal decided to close the college a week before the end of term. He said the students were sent home for refusing to attend lectures; and added that, by picketing and preventing those who wished to eat the meals provided by the college and go for lectures, the striking students violated the principles of free society.

Students had to receive by post, letters informing them individually whether or not they would be re-admitted to the college the following term. Abubakar Kakyama Mayanja who was accused of masterminding the strike was among the students who were not re-admitted. Joash S. Nkangi must have counted himself lucky. Although he had also signed the memo the students sent to the Principal, he was re-admitted. Abu Mayanja, the troublemaker, was given a Uganda Government scholarship to study History at King's College, Cambridge in the UK, the Governor's alma mater, after which he studied Law at the Grey's Inn in London, graduating as a Barrister.

It was alleged that Governor Cohen gave Mayanja the scholarship to study at the prestigious Cambridge University, because in the Governor's opinion, if he were going to have an African opponent, and Abu Mayanja was likely to be such an opponent, he had to be well educated. On the face of it, it was as if the

Governor was rewarding Mayanja for leading the strike at Makerere and for his other misdeeds, but I strongly believe that the Governor's unofficial reason was a wise one. Apparently, even at Cambridge, Mayanja continued to be an outspoken student and a political animal. I was surprised in 1977 when, after knowing that I came from Uganda, my PhD external examiner, Professor Evelyn Ebsworth of Edinburgh University, who was also a student at King's College at the time Mayanja was there, asked me if I knew a man by name Mayanja whom she described as a Ugandan student who was politically active.

Indeed, in the later years, Abu Mayanja became one of the leading and most controversial personalities of Ugandan politics, and remained so for over half a century. But above all, Abu Mayanja was a brilliant student and denying him the opportunity to complete his university education would have been a flimsy excuse and a terrible waste of talent. I guess his dismissal from Makerere was a blessing in disguise.

For staging a strike at Makerere, which was considered to be the finest institution of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, Abu Mayanja and his fellow student leaders were heavily criticised. A Kenyan politician and trade unionist, Tom Mbotela, wrote a long letter to the editor of the *Uganda Herald*, which was published in the issue of August 30, 1952. He had only harsh words for the striking students. He accused them of despising African food, in favour of a European diet. He also reminded them that they were the future leaders of Africa and, by staging a strike on such a simple issue, they were setting a bad precedent for Africans aspiring to be leaders. He also criticised the Principal for a rushed decision to send down some students and for the premature closure of the college.

The *Herald* in its editorial of August 19, 1952 had no kind words for the striking students either. The paper, in its editorial, condemned the students' strike action and reminded them that the college had been developed at the British taxpayer's expense. The African students were getting the education the college was providing, next to nothing. It recommended that all ring leaders should be sent down for ever as a deterrent to others who may be contemplating a similar action in future.

That was the first strike at Makerere and the first time the college had closed prematurely. This strike was also to act as a catalyst for the future strike actions. One also needs to remember that the strike at Makerere coincided with the beginning of the *Mau Mau* rebellion in Kenya, and indeed the British colonial administrators not only in Kenya, but even in Uganda, were getting jittery. The *Mau Mau* supporters had started killing British farmers in the Kenya highlands together with some African chiefs who were perceived as collaborators of the British colonialists in Kenya. They feared Uganda would follow suit. The strike was also seen as a direct challenge to the British authority at Makerere and

someone had to pay for challenging that authority. The ring leader had to go. I am convinced that if such a peaceful strike happened today, it would not have led to the automatic dismissal of strike leaders unless it had become so violent and involved extensive damage to property and loss of life. Although Abu Mayanja was sent down as a punishment for leading a rebellion, the students' menu at Makerere was never the same again. The typically monotonous Ugandan diet was replaced with European meals until the turbulent times of Idi Amin. Indeed, when I joined Makerere as an undergraduate in 1970, *matooke*, sweet potatoes, *ugali* or *posho* and beans were not on the menu. The typical students' diet then consisted of Irish potatoes, steak, chicken, bread, eggs and occasionally rice, among others.

As we have seen earlier, Makerere severed its link with the University of London in 1963 and became a constituent college of the University of East Africa. As one of the common services shared between the three states that made up the first East African Community, the headquarters of the University of East Africa was based in Kampala. Professor Bernard de Bunsen became the first Vice Chancellor of the new federal university but served for one year and handed over to Professor James Cook from the University of Exeter. Besides being a seasoned administrator, Bernard de Bunsen was a good fundraiser too. Lincoln House is a good example of this attribute of his. Lincoln House was built in 1957 at a cost of US\$ 70,000 solicited from the Ford Foundation, a USA philanthropic organisation. Back then, it was rare for an American charity to fund projects in the British colonies. He was also concerned with the recruitment of Ugandans and other Africans to the college's academic staff.

Brilliant African academics such as David Wasawo, a native of Kenya, were appointed to the college staff during de Bunsen's time. Emelio Mwai Kibaki who had achieved an excellent academic record as a student was quickly spotted as a potential member of staff and sent to the London School of Economics on a scholarship solicited for him by the college, to read for an honours degree in Economics in preparation for his appointment as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Economics. Mwai Kibaki was one of the very few students at Makerere to have passed the London general BA degree in First Class division. Besides being a highly brilliant student, Kibaki had a bit of reputation as chairman of Kenya Students' Association, for leading students' agitation in the college. One would have thought that despite his brilliance, Sir Bernard de Bunsen would not have been keen to have him on the staff of the college. On the contrary, he encouraged him to join the college's teaching staff. Kibaki left Makerere in 1961 to engage in politics in Kenya, and is now President of the Republic of Kenya. For his services to education, Bernard de Bunsen was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1962.

## Yusuf Kironde Lule

Makerere had waited for an African Principal for 42 years. The long waiting ended in 1964 when Yusuf Kironde Lule was appointed as Principal of Makerere College. Lule came to Makerere with a varied background in education and administration. He studied Science at Fort Hare University in South Africa on a Uganda Government scholarship he won in 1936, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1939. The same year, he returned to his *alma mater*, King's College, Budo as a science master. He remained at Budo until 1948.

That year, Lule struck luck again. He was awarded another Uganda Government scholarship and went to Bristol University in the UK to study for a Diploma in Education. Some three years later in 1951, he was on the move again, this time to the University of Edinburgh in Scotland for a Masters degree in Education. On his return to Uganda, better things were awaiting him. In 1955, the year Sir Edward Muteesa returned from exile in England, Yusuf Lule was appointed Minister for Rural Development in the Uganda Protectorate Government, as part of an effort to put Africans in senior positions in the Protectorate Government. Before then, the majority of Africans in the Colonial Administration were confined to menial and low-level clerical jobs.

A few years later, Lule was made Minister of Education and Social Development in the Protectorate Government, a position he held up to the time of Uganda's independence in 1962. In that same year, he was appointed Joint Deputy Chairman of the Public Service Commission. After the inauguration of the University of East Africa, Lule was invited in 1964 to take up the position of Principal of Makerere University College, thus entering the annals of Makerere as its first African and Ugandan Principal. He served as Principal for six years.

In 1970, Lule left Makerere and went to London from where he joined the Association of African Universities as its first full-time Secretary General. Those who were close to Lule have narrated the difficult working relationship he had with the then Minister of Education, Dr Luyimbaazi Zaake. It is probable that this was because the two men belonged to different political parties. However, during his time, Makerere continued to grow. Lule had to perform because he had to prove that Africans were competent administrators too. The extension to the main library was constructed during his time. He is also credited for designing and constructing the all-red-brick Vice Chancellor's Lodge. For his excellent public service record, he was conferred with the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) award by the Queen of Great Britain.



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## Makerere's Vice Chancellors and their Times (1970 – 1993)

### **Frank Kalimuzo**

In the preceding chapter, we saw how Frank Kalimuzo became the first Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Kampala. However, his tenure was too short for him to make a significant impression beyond being remembered for the brutal and tragic way he met his death at the hands of Idi Amin's terror machine. Therefore, very little is known about him at Makerere. All we know is that he had a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Wales in the UK and a Diploma in Education. The late Professor Adonia Tiberondwa, who was the Principal of National Teachers' College at the time, told me that one day after the ill-fated invasion of 1972, he had a tip off from one of Amin's security operatives, that he, Tiberondwa, and Frank Kalimuzo at Makerere, were Obote's collaborators and were both due for arrest and subsequent execution at any time.

The security operative had warned him that if he was still interested in his life, he should immediately get out of Uganda. Tiberondwa was not prepared to gamble with his life, he took his friend's advice and quickly sneaked out of the country. On his way out, he called on his friend Frank Kalimuzo to warn him of the imminent danger. Kalimuzo was in the office at about 7:30 in the evening, working. That was typical of Kalimuzo's working routine, he was a real workaholic. Tiberondwa told Kalimuzo about the tip off he had received from Amin's intelligence agent, and how dangerous the situation had become for both of them. But Kalimuzo in his typical civil service way responded by saying that he had done nothing wrong to warrant arrest, after all he was not a politician and as such he was not prepared to run away. According to Kalimuzo, the President was being fed with unfounded rumours. Tiberondwa said that at that point, there

was little he could do to persuade his friend to leave Uganda. Kalimuzo continued with his work, only to be picked up a few days later as Tiberondwa had predicted. He was never seen again. Tiberondwa escaped to Tanzania, where he eventually registered for a PhD degree at the University of Dar es Salaam.

### **Asavia Wandira – First Tour (1971 – 1975)**

Kalimuzo was succeeded by Professor Asavia Wandira as Vice Chancellor in 1972. Besides an MA degree, he had an Academic Diploma from the Institute of Education, University of London. Before his appointment as Vice Chancellor, Professor Wandira had had an enviable record of holding the double title of Secretary/Registrar of the college under Yusuf Lule, and being able to move from administration to Professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Education. That was rare at Makerere. Normally, academics moved into administrative posts and not the other way round. He is also one of the two people so far who have served as Vice Chancellor twice under different Chancellors. Like his predecessor, Wandira too did not last long on the job. Uganda's turbulent times had begun. In 1975, he was forced to flee to Swaziland to protect his dear life. There is not much I recall about Professor Wandira's first vice chancellorship any more than I have already said in Chapter Two.

The little I remember about him was during our orientation week in July 1970. It was the university's practice for every faculty Dean to address the fresh men and women during the orientation week. The sessions used to be held in the auditorium of the Main Building. Professor Wandira, as Dean of Education, was one of those who addressed us. At the time, the university was phasing out the Bachelor of Education degree and replacing it with a concurrent Diploma in Education, which could be studied with either a BA or BSc degree. He had come specifically to explain this change to us. There were three things I noted about him; his eloquence and his Queen's English accent, smartness and his pipe. I really admired his good spoken English, which seemed to be devoid of an African accent. He was one of the few Deans at Makerere I saw smoking a pipe.

### **Joseph Winter Sekayala Lutwama (1975 – 1976)**

After the departure of Wandira, Idi Amin appointed Professor Joseph Winter Sekayala Lutwama as Makerere's third Vice Chancellor. Professor Lutwama came from the Medical School where he was Dean and was part of the first crop of African professors at Makerere. He is also reputed as one of the few professors who, at that time, had a long string of degrees, diplomas and fellowships to their names. He was a distinguished physician and a specialist in Maternal and Child Health, which was part of Preventive Medicine. He studied at Makerere, graduating in 1956 with a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery. In 1964, when Makerere came under the University of East Africa, the degree was converted to

the double degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, MBChB. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Physicians of London.

Professor Lutwama also studied at the Universities of St Andrews in Scotland for a Diploma in Tropical Hygiene and Public Health, London for a Diploma in Child Health, and Uppsala in Sweden for an Advanced Diploma in Maternal and Child Health. He was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Preventive Medicine in 1965. Two years later, he became the first African Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Makerere. His expertise was highly sought after. The World Health Organisation (WHO), hired him as a consultant to help the Somalia Ministry of Health with its health services and manpower development. On the academic and professional side, Professor Lutwama authored and co-authored several publications, including such books as: *The Agenda Women – What They Want to Know about Pregnancy and Child Birth* in two volumes, which was published in 1962 and 1963 respectively, and *Medical Manpower in East Africa – Prospects and Problems*, which was published in 1965. He was also an avid chess player.

His appointment as Vice Chancellor in 1975 coincided with the most difficult period of Amin's rule. As we observed earlier, Professor Lutwama as Vice Chancellor had to deal with the unexplained disappearance of his staff and students and a serious students' rebellion against Amin's Government in 1976 after a trigger-happy soldier shot dead a final year Law student, Paul Sserwanga, allegedly over a girlfriend.

In the same year, Amin's State Research Bureau agents arrested a Makerere Kenyan female student, Esther Chesire, as she boarded a Nairobi-bound flight at Entebbe. She was never seen again. The murder of the Warden of Africa Hall, Theresa Nanziri Bukenya, who was eight months pregnant, was a sure sign that Makerere University was in a state of quagmire. It was also during this time that the university awarded Idi Amin an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. He had also forced the university to admit his under-qualified son, supposedly to study English. At the time, Makerere was awash with State Research Bureau agents. Their presence made people afraid of one another. Some of my colleagues who witnessed some of these horrendous episodes put it even more dramatically. One said that the fear was so real that you could not even trust your own wife. However, those who were close to Professor Lutwama say that in spite of the difficult environment he worked in as Vice Chancellor, he was a really pleasant person although with one prominent weakness – looking down upon his colleagues who were not trained in the medical line.

Although Idi Amin had initially shown a lot of confidence in Professor Lutwama, the relationship between the two men was short-lived. In 1977, in the most humiliating manner and dramatic turn of events, Amin relieved Professor Lutwama of his job. As if to rub it in, the day he dismissed him, Amin invited all staff to an impromptu meeting at the Main Hall. After a few unintelligible

remarks, Amin informed the assembled staff that as Chancellor of the university, he had appointed Professor William Senteza Kajubi as the new Vice Chancellor. There and then, Professor Kajubi became the fourth Vice Chancellor of Makerere University. Without attempting to volunteer an explanation, he went on to say that he had decided to send Professor Lutwama back to the Medical School as Dean to continue improving its standards so that it could become the best Medical School in the world. Amin left soon after making the announcement, which must have left many in the audience stunned, if not baffled. They might have wondered what crime Lutwama had committed to deserve such a public humiliation in the presence of his peers and juniors. But in Idi Amin's Uganda, such questions were best left unasked. The life President was the giver and taker of everything, including life. Lutwama had no choice but to oblige. It also marked the dramatic beginning of Professor Kajubi's first term as Vice Chancellor. Lutwama's vice chancellorship, like that of Frank Kalimuzo, was also too short to have made a memorable impact on the development of the university.

Although it is normal practice in some universities for a former Vice Chancellor to return to his or her department after serving a term or more as Vice Chancellor, for Professor Lutwama, it was technically a demotion. Lutwama's summary dismissal served as an excellent example of a highly distinguished academician of international repute being humiliated by an elementary school dropout. I am tempted to believe that, out of self-deception and self-aggrandisement, he must have fantasised that in spite of his lack of formal education, he was sufficiently as well educated and therefore, the so-called academics had to take him as their equal and of course their superior. After all, he had the power to appoint and promote them to top positions in Government and parastatals and the power to fire them at will at the slightest detection of what he perceived as disrespect or when he was deluded into believing he was being demeaned. To Idi Amin, disrespect for the life President had another insidious meaning – harbouring ideas likely to lead to the overthrow of his Government or an attempt on his life. Lutwama must have counted himself lucky to just have been fired. He could have suffered the same fate as Frank Kalimuzo.

### **William Senteza Kajubi – First Tour (1976 – 1979)**

Professor Kajubi came to the Main Building from the former National Institute of Education (NIE), which was the university's unit responsible for upgrading and examining Grade II and III primary school teachers, and supervising their professional training in the several teacher training colleges scattered around the country. The institute was in the School of Education complex, established in 1964 on the recommendation of the Castle Commission of 1963. Senteza Kajubi was its first Director. Like Yusuf Lule, Senteza Kajubi had been a school master at King's College, Budo, where he taught Geography, among other subjects.

In 1958, he left Budo and joined Makerere, his *alma mater*, as a lecturer in the Faculty of Education. He was also the first Ugandan Fulbright scholar, earning a Masters degree from the University of Chicago. By the time he was appointed Vice Chancellor, he had been Director of NIE for 13 years, and a successful one too. He was extremely good at fundraising. To get the young and under-funded institute off the ground, he had managed to secure a big grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Other donors Kajubi turned to for help included the Nuffield and the Dulverton Trusts of the UK. With this substantial donor funding, the institute was financially sound and Kajubi had no reason to look back.

Professor Kajubi was also a political animal. He had been active in Uganda's politics for a long time, although he never made a career out of it. He was one of the Makerere dons who contested as MP in the 1962 elections and lost. He lost, not because he was an incompetent politician, but because he contested on the wrong ticket. Kajubi stood as a Democratic Party (DP) candidate in a constituency that included Makerere College, Kikoni, Nakulabye and a few places around the college. In this constituency, the DP stood no chance; it was a *Kabaka Yekka's* (King Only) stronghold.

Professor Kajubi's first tour as Vice Chancellor came at a time when Amin's rule was slowly coming to an end. Cracks in the regime had begun to appear. There had been an attempt on Amin's life at Nsambya Police Training School. Worst of all, Amin had suffered the worst and an unforgettable embarrassment when the Israelis raided Entebbe Airport and rescued the Israeli hostages under his nose. To many, these were tell-tale signs of things soon to come. At Makerere, the morale of both staff and students was at very low ebb. It had become almost impossible for the academic staff to attend conferences outside Uganda even when such attendance was fully paid for. We all know that conferences are an essential ingredient for a successful academic career. If you deny academics the opportunity to rub shoulders with their peers, you are killing them academically. More than ever before, too many Ugandans were leaving the country. I suspect that Amin was either beginning to get embarrassed by the large exodus of Ugandans from the country and the constant bad publicity his regime had generated outside the country. It seemed he wanted to turn things around but in a high handed way.

Some have argued that at this time, Idi Amin was becoming increasingly desperate and insecure. In an attempt to stem the never ending exodus of Ugandans, he abruptly introduced a policy which required whoever wanted to travel outside the country to seek clearance from the President's Office. Ugandans could only travel outside the country with a travel permit popularly known as *kitambulisho* issued by the President's Office. All Ugandans, without any exception, were subjected to this scrutiny. For a while, the new measure severely curtailed travelling abroad. Unless it was really inevitable for one to travel, most

academics at Makerere chose to forget about international conferences. People preferred not to over-expose themselves to the regime.

Unfortunately, the introduction of the *kitambuliso* coincided with an increase in the mail Makerere staff were receiving from abroad. Some of the letters coming from unknown sources were calling upon staff to revolt against the regime. Some were implicating staff in plots to assassinate the President or to overthrow the Government, using force of arms. To make the delicate situation more frightful, the letters were arriving at Makerere opened and stamped by Amin's State Research Bureau. All this was making the already tense situation worse. People were scared to death as they did not know what might happen to them as a result of these letters. No one knew who was writing them and why the State Research Bureau was letting them through.

Although there was still an influx of expatriates, mainly from Pakistan, of whom Amin was very proud, most Ugandan professors had either left Makerere or were dead. As Vice Chancellor, Kajubi too had to deal with very serious staff shortages and, on top of this, he was required to be present at every function the President organised or attended, including the President's private pursuits like motor racing and range shooting. But those in the know say it was too dangerous to be close to Amin and Kajubi was getting dangerously close to the man. Even, the job of Vice Chancellor had become a lot more risky. Amin had become extremely unpredictable. But Kajubi had very little choice in the matter, if any. He had either to resign and possibly run away or stay and hope for the best. As he himself put it, "The question was to be or not to be". He chose to stay and brave it.

One of the significant things Kajubi did as soon as he assumed office was to remind Amin to fill the vacant position of Deputy Vice Chancellor. The Act provided for a Deputy Vice Chancellor who had to come from amongst the academic staff, but up to Kajubi's appointment, the university had never had a full-time Deputy Vice Chancellor. Professor J. J. Oloya of the Agriculture and Forestry Faculty used to act as Deputy Vice Chancellor before he fled the country, but even that was not on a full-time basis. Although most people think it was Amin who appointed Professor Anthony Gingyera Pincywa as Deputy Vice Chancellor because he hailed from the same region of the country as him, the choice was actually made by Kajubi. I was reliably told that there were many people hailing from West Nile who nursed a lot of ambition of ascending to one of these top positions in the university, Gingyera Pincywa was not one of front runners among them.

If Kajubi had not proposed his name to Amin, it is probable the job would have gone to one of those who used to lobby Amin hard. Professor Gingyera Pincywa is a University of Chicago-trained political scientist, and Professor Kajubi is also an alumnus of the same university, but the two men were there at different times. At the time of his appointment as Deputy Vice Chancellor, Gingyera Pincywa was the Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration

and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Before coming to Makerere, he had served as District Commissioner in the Uganda Government. His coming to the Main Building must have eased Professor Kajubi's work somehow. The new Deputy Vice Chancellor was immediately assigned administrative chores, which included the allocation of staff housing and chairing the Higher Degrees Committee, among others.

Life continued at its uneasy pace, but the voices warning of the things to come were getting louder. One very tragic incident though interrupted this uneasy calm. The lift in the tower of Mary Stuart Hall malfunctioned and got stuck at the bottom of the shaft and the door locking mechanism on some floors also failed. A female student living on one of the top floors in the tower was unaware that the lift was not working she opened the door to get into the lift and plummeted to her death in the pitch black of the shaft. After this sad incident, the lift was permanently closed.

As 1978 drew to a close, Amin attacked Tanzania and bombed towns such as Bukoba. He further claimed that, as far as he was concerned, Bukoba and all the land within the Kagera crescent belonged to Uganda. The British imperialists had just not drawn the borders rightly, thus giving away Uganda's territory to Tanzania. Amin reasoned that time had come to correct the historical mistake. He had made similar claims to Kenyan territory before, saying that he had in his possession a map, which clearly showed that the genuine border between Kenya and Uganda passed through the Eastern Rift Valley and not at its present location. Therefore, according to him, all territories west of the Rift Valley belonged to Uganda and this included towns like Kisumu and Eldoret. Fortunately for Kenya, the territorial claim never went beyond verbal utterances. Whether Amin backed off because Kenya was quick to mobilise its forces along the Uganda-Kenya border or he feared a blockade of Ugandan goods and his military hardware passing through the Port of Mombasa, we shall probably never know.

Perhaps the difference between Kenya and Tanzania in Amin's mind was that Kenya was not being used as a sanctuary for Milton Obote and his henchmen. Although it is true that when Obote returned from Singapore immediately after Amin had staged the coup, he first went to Kenya, his stay there was a short one. Kenya did not grant Obote asylum. Secondly, the President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, had not taken the same tough stance against Amin as Nyerere of Tanzania. In fact, Kenya recognised him as a bona fide Head of State. So unlike Tanzania, Amin did not see Kenya as a hostile neighbour. Another factor which worked in favour of Kenya was the Port of Mombasa and the route to the sea. Amin depended on it and I think he recognised the fact that if he did anything silly, he might have forced Kenya to close the border to his detriment.

So, Kenya was spared his wrath. Nyerere was Amin's arch enemy and when he found a good excuse to attack Tanzania, he did not hesitate to use it. Amin

deluded himself into thinking he would get away with it, because the Tanzanian Army was inept and therefore, no match for Uganda's superior Army. He was dead-wrong. He did not realise that, by invading Tanzania and bombing its towns, he had dug his own grave. That very action marked the beginning of his end. Amin was blindly convinced that he had an indomitable army, which no other army anywhere in the world could defeat. As far as he was concerned, his Army was invincible and that was why he feared nobody except God. And even with God, there was very little he feared because, as he used to amuse his listeners, God had already told him the date he would die and it was still a long way off.

Tanzania had to defend itself against Amin's constant provocation, and in the process he had to be paid for his misdeeds in his own currency, in the language he understood. Time had come to flush the devil out of its den and it would be for real. The Tanzania Peoples' Defence Forces (TPDF), under the command of General Musuguri was mobilised for action. The Ugandan exiles living in Tanzania, including Yoweri Museveni, joined hands with the Tanzanians to form one combined force. It was a formidable force, one which Amin had not anticipated. What started as a walk over for Amin's Army and Air force, soon turned into his worst nightmare.

Tanzania's original intention was to get Amin's army out of the occupied Kagera crescent, but then the Tanzanians realised that they would not have solved the problem if Amin remained in power. For the job to be completed, Amin had to go. This meant taking the war to his doorstep in Kampala and beyond. Although Amin was sure of his army's capacity to halt the Tanzanian advance, years of economic chaos and indiscipline had eroded its capacity to almost nil. Promotions in the Army had long ceased to be based on the usual criteria of skills, competence, experience and training, but on patronage. Privates were promoted to generals, and those who had the proper training were rapidly falling out of favour with him.

In fact, Amin had unknowingly reduced the whole national Army to a ragtag army. Therefore, when the Tanzanians with their Ugandan allies started marching from Mutulula to Kampala in what was to become Uganda's first liberation war, whatever resistance Amin's army tried to put up quickly crumbled like a cake. It was slowly dawning on Amin that, in fact, he had no army. The Tanzanian Army was better equipped and above all, had morale and discipline. Their big artillery gun dubbed *saba saba* did most of the damage, much of it more psychological than real due to its terrifyingly loud boom whenever it was fired.

By April 1979, Amin was gone. The once life President became a refugee in exile in Saudi Arabia. It was the end of an era and Ugandans had every reason to celebrate. Makerere University had a new Chancellor in the person of the President, Yusuf Lule. Throughout the war, Professor Kajubi was fully responsible for the safety of his staff and students. As his Chancellor was now on the run, he handled the situation single-handedly and with admirable skill.

When the staff and students were on the verge of starvation, Professor Kajubi mobilised every university truck he could lay his hands on and sent them to Kabanyolo University farm for chickens and other foodstuffs, which were available on the farm. No student or member of staff was harmed or lost, although as would be expected in a war situation, some of the university buildings like Stuart House and some of the West Road flats received direct hits and sustained damage and a few were severely damaged. The West Road houses were later repaired by the students of the Civil Engineering Department, as part of their industrial training, with a grant provided by the UNDP/ UNESCO.

Unfortunately, one of the most diabolical vices the *wakombozi* (liberators), as the Tanzanian soldiers were called, introduced was looting. This was the first time in Uganda's history that looting of private and public property took place on such a massive scale. In fact, before the liberation war, the word looting hardly existed in the vocabulary of most Ugandans although they were used to isolated cases of stealing and pick pocketing. Sadly, the Tanzanian soldiers led the jubilant crowds in breaking into shops and Government offices. They looted everything and anything they could lay their hands on. But, thanks to Professor Kajubi's efforts, Makerere was spared. Students never participated in the looting spree; instead, they were busy helping to recover some of the looted property, which they stockpiled in the auditorium of the Main Hall.

Over time, Makerere students had discovered the joy of looting and regularly engaged in this diabolical vice whenever chaos broke out at the university campus. One only had to watch these students during their strikes and street demonstrations to fathom the magnitude of the problem. Unfortunately, when Yusuf Lule was removed from power in the same year, Kajubi also lost his job as Vice Chancellor.

The university was about to get its fifth Vice Chancellor within a space of nine years. In terms of serious developments, again Kajubi's first tenure was too short for him to make a meaningful contribution to the university. In any case, Kajubi took over as Vice Chancellor during a very turbulent period. Like Professor Lutwama before him, Kajubi decided to return to his old institute, this time not as Director but as a member of the teaching staff.

### **Asavia Wandira – Second Tour (1979 – 1986)**

Once again, it was an old hand who returned to continue from where Kajubi had left off. This was Professor Asavia Wandira's second tour as Vice Chancellor, after Amin had summarily dismissed him in 1975 with no explanation. In Swaziland where he had taken refuge after escaping the wrath of Idi Amin, he became Dean of the School of Education at the young University of Swaziland. While there, he wrote a book entitled, *The African University in Development*, which he published in 1977. It is a treatise on the role a university plays in nation building and the entire development process.

As we have seen previously, Asavia Wandira was returning to Makerere after a stint as a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Uganda. A demotion? Perhaps not. Wandira came back to Makerere in 1979 in the immediate aftermath of the war, which had toppled Idi Amin from power and in the midst of the political chaos that followed that war. Although Makerere had not been looted during the war, it was to suffer the looting of the worst kind during Wandira's tenure.

Although Idi Amin had gone, his economic legacy remained firmly in place. To add insult to injury, the liberation war had just made an already bad situation worse. Amidst acute shortages of virtually every basic necessity of life, Ugandans found themselves under pressure to make ends meet and devised all sorts of means to survive. University workers resorted to stealing important documents from files and selling them on the market. These vital documents were not being bought by the super spooks of CIA or KGB, they were being bought by market vendors and shop keepers at a place like the Owino Market to wrap food stuffs like beans, potatoes and smoked fish.

I remember buying smoked fish from a fish monger in Sauliyako Market and landing on a Makerere University document. The fishmonger was kind enough to wrap my fish in a reasonably clean paper. When I got home, curiosity took the better of me and I wanted to know what was written on the underside of my wrapping paper, so I turned it over to see. To my shock, the so called clean wrapping paper was a copy of an appointment letter of one Kaddu, duly signed by the former University Secretary, Professor Twaha Nsereko Gyagenda. I am sure this document came from Kaddu's personal file. The vendors had perfected the skill of making carrier bags out of the looted documents which, from a technical point of view, looked as good as factory-made bags.

It was almost impossible to keep any electrical fittings in buildings, particularly the top plugs, sockets and switches. Even toilet seats and their covers were not safe from the desperate university workers. Due to the scarcity of reference and other reading materials, students resorted to pulling pages from books in the Main Library and, in some instances, only the cover of the book was left. It would be carefully placed back on the shelf to deceive unsuspecting readers that the entire book was actually there. Orders for text books would be placed with the Bookshop Manager at the beginning of the academic year, only to arrive when the students are in the final term of the year. One of the major reasons the books could not arrive on time was shortage of foreign exchange. The Bank of Uganda did not have enough dollars. Even, the process of getting the little that was available was lengthy and tedious. Since Uganda did not have publishing houses for university textbooks, it meant that every book had to be imported from abroad.

Despite the tight controls the Government had put in place, the shortage of foreign exchange continued to dog the country. If the Bank of Uganda found

some foreign currency to take care of the university's needs, the university could not raise the local cover to buy it. That Milton Obote was the Chancellor of the university and Minister of Finance was of no consequence. The problem was compounded further by the fact that, at the time, no foreign publisher was willing to sell books to the university on credit; Uganda was not credit worthy. As a consequence, the students had to rely entirely on their un-supplemented lecture notes and on the books in the Main Library and departmental libraries.

To exhaust the money on their textbook accounts in the University Bookshop, some students resorted to buying novels and whatever else was on the shelves of the Bookshop. They would then sell the novels and books which were of no use to them to the street hawkers in town for cash. On those rare occasions when the university was able to buy the foreign exchange from the Bank of Uganda, the Bookshop Manager, late Kansiimeruhanga (or Kansiime as we used to call him), would physically fly to the UK to buy the books and stationery. It had become more or less a ritual for him. Unfortunately, he died tragically on one of such trips, when his flight from London crashed at Rome Airport in 1987. It was a painful loss to his family and the university.

Professor Wandira was a seasoned and experienced administrator whose extensive administrative experience enabled him to keep going, in spite of the myriad of problems that the university was facing. The constant water shortage on the university campus made maintaining hygiene very difficult. The result was the constant stench from the urinals next to the auditorium, which used to greet every visitor to the Main Building.

Another problem was the poor quality of food that was being served to students. I recall an incident when, out of anger and frustration, the girls of Mary Stuart Hall decided to carry saucepans full of badly cooked beans to Professor Wandira's office and asked him to eat the stuff so that he would know the kind of food students were made to eat on campus. I later learnt that they had done a similar thing to Professor Lutwama. The girls were complaining that they were being fed on beans and *posho*, which was not fit for human consumption, and they wanted the Vice Chancellor to do something about it. They argued that besides the food being monotonous and of poor quality, it was also poorly cooked. But what the students did not realise was that the university was indeed doing its best to provide them with some decent meals at the time it was severely resource constrained and the country had just emerged out of war and almost everything was in short supply. The small budget for the students' ration did not leave room for menu improvement beyond *posho* (cooked dough made from maize flour) and beans. The fact that most of the cooks were untrained just made a bad catering situation worse.

The teaching staff was equally frustrated by the constant absence of vital supplies for teaching such as chemicals and stationery. Government used to

allocate a lot of money to the university on paper but most of it was never released. The science-based departments, Chemistry in particular, which depended on a constant supply of consumables were hardest hit by the persistent shortage of chemicals. I remember back in 1983, we decided to take a drastic decision, as we had reached a point when we could not conduct practicals because the department had run out of chemicals. We stopped teaching until the university provided the essential chemicals, because we were concerned that we would only be producing half-baked graduates.

The Department of Chemistry had some expatriate members of staff as well, who convened a meeting to find a solution to the shortage of chemicals. We tasked our Head of Department, Dr Olwa Odyek, to convey our concerns to the Dean of Science and the University Bursar. We waited for the response but none was forthcoming. Exhausting all options, we again requested our Head of Department to write to the Vice Chancellor to inform him that due to the university's inability to provide the essential chemicals and other inputs, we were suspending all classes thenceforth. In our memorandum to the Vice Chancellor, we emphasised the importance of the practicals in our degree programme, pointing out that if the students were denied the opportunity to do them, we would not be in position to graduate them. By taking this action, we were fully aware of the university's precarious financial position, but we were equally concerned about the danger of unleashing half-baked graduates to unsuspecting employers.

We just wanted the Vice Chancellor to be aware of our predicament and if he could, do something about it. The Vice Chancellor acted swiftly and arranged for a meeting with us and the University Bursar in his office. This was my first time entering the Vice Chancellor's office. Contrary to our fears, the meeting was fruitful. The Bursar was instructed to source for money and to buy the chemicals, which he did. That was how desperate the situation had become, as it required the direct intervention of the Vice Chancellor to find an answer.

Negotiating for the Italian Government's assistance to the university, which culminated in a linkage with the University of Pavia, the first ever with an Italian university, was one of Professor Wandira's major initiatives. He was also responsible for organising the low publicised first donors' conference in Belagio in Italy, in conjunction with the Rockefeller Foundation. His other major contribution was the rehabilitation of the students' halls of residence. This was the time the university was beginning to enjoy a lot of international goodwill once again. The old friends were slowly coming back.

Australia was among the friends that came back early. As a gesture of goodwill and as if to say, "My friend, welcome back from the brink!", the Australian Government generously donated new office equipment, including modern typewriters and several scholarships that enabled graduate fellows undertake postgraduate training in Australian universities. This was a big shot in the arm

for the university because during Amin's time, many able students the university had recruited for staff development could not pursue postgraduate training.

Professor Wandira had also come up with the idea of using the occasion of the university's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1982, which due to unforeseen difficulties had to be celebrated a year later, to engage in fundraising activities. Indeed, the university had prepared well for the occasion. On December 2, 1982, the day earmarked for the celebrations, the nation received news that the Army Chief of Staff, David Oyite Ojok, together with 13 army officers, had died in a helicopter crash on their way from Kisozi in Luwero where he had been visiting the troops who were fighting Museveni and his guerrillas. The university had no choice than to cancel the celebrations and join the rest of the nation in mourning the passing away of a liberator and a national hero. This was the second anniversary which could not be celebrated due to circumstances beyond the university's control. The university's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was in 1972, but this was also not celebrated because of the sudden change of Government.

Professor Wandira's second tour as Vice Chancellor lasted almost eight years, then the longest tenure for a Makerere Vice Chancellor. Up to 1979, the average Vice Chancellor's tenure was two and a quarter years. By lasting in the job that long, Wandira had restored the hope that an incumbent Vice Chancellor could last long enough in the office and make some meaningful contribution to the development of the university. Milton Obote also kept Professor Ginger Pincywa as Deputy Vice Chancellor throughout Professor Wandira's tenure, thus making him the longest serving Deputy Vice Chancellor at Makerere so far. He served in that position for almost nine years.

One striking feature during their time was the conspicuous absence of private staff cars in the parking lot in front of the Main Building. Most of the time, one would see only the Vice Chancellor's official red Mercedes Benz and the Deputy Vice Chancellor's white one and one or two others, which was indicative of the prevailing economic situation at the university at the time. Members of staff could not afford the luxury of a personal car. Those who had them were the exceptions. They had either come back from exile with their cars or had a substantial side income.

Professor Wandira was one of the lucky Vice Chancellors to have served his term without a serious student or staff strike, until John Gitta was murdered at his residence. Perhaps, one could attribute Wandira's luck to the political environment he worked in at the time. The conditions that would ordinarily trigger a staff or student strike were present even in Professor Wandira's time: low salaries which were not paid on time, bad food and poor living conditions in the halls of residence. However, there was a difference, and that difference was the Government's intelligence machinery. It was everywhere, powerful and intimidating enough to scare anybody who was contemplating calling for a strike.

It should be remembered that this was the time the Government was engaged in a protracted war against insurgency and, unless you were looking for posthumous recognition, you wouldn't venture into doing something that would automatically brand you a rebel or a rebel collaborator.

However, one of the few serious misfortunes to have befallen Professor Wandira was a big fire which almost gutted the Nkrumah Hall. The fire started in the afternoon at the end of a graduation ceremony, soon after the Chancellor had left the university. The cause of the fire was traced to a home-made electric radiant coil in a student's room located on the top floor. Apparently, the student was cooking when power went off, and forgot to switch the coil off before he left the room. Subsequently, some combustible material was placed on top of it before power came back and when it did, there was no one in the room to switch off the coil. It took the Fire Brigade, with its poorly equipped fire engines, several hours to bring the fire under control, but not before most of the roof and most of the top floor had burnt down. Students on that floor lost all their property. There was hardly anything they could salvage. To some, especially the UPC supporters, this was an act of sabotage. To others, it had been an accident waiting to happen.

Professor Wandira's second tour as Vice Chancellor came to an end in 1986 when the NRM came to power. After leaving the university, Professor Wandira served as a member of the Kajubi Education Review Commission of 1987. During the army takeover on July 27, 1985 under General Tito Okello Lutwa, Kampala experienced the worst form of chaos. Law and order broke down, with thuggery and anarchy taking over. Shops were looted. What saved some business people from losing everything was the practice of carrying away their merchandise to another location at the end of each day. They had learnt from the bitter experience of the 1979 liberation war. Wanton killing of innocent people became widespread. Gun fire rocked the city every night.

This time around, Makerere University was not spared. One night, unknown gunmen broke into the residence of John Gita in Kasubi View. John Gita was then a Senior Assistant Registrar in Makerere and Secretary General of the Conservative Party. The gunmen shot him dead in the presence of his wife and children. This was a horrific incident which shook the university community to the bone. It was beyond anybody's comprehension why John Gita had been singled out. Despite being a member of a political party which by all accounts was benign and almost in limbo, Gita was one of the most genial people in the university and a workaholic too. In the absence of a plausible explanation for such a horrendous and senseless murder, people resorted to speculation and finger-pointing.

Unfortunately, the Vice Chancellor was not spared. Perhaps, people thought the Vice Chancellor had not provided enough security for his employee. But how could he have done it under such a chaotic and confused situation when

there were no effective law enforcement institutions one could turn to for help? Insensate students organised themselves to look for the Vice Chancellor. Having failed to find him, some rowdy students vented their anger on the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Pincywa who happened to be around. They marched him around the campus howling all sorts of insult and obscenities at him. Besides calling him names, some wanted to march him all the way to the city centre, perhaps with the intention of harming him on their way.

Indeed, it was a difficult time for both the Vice Chancellor and his Deputy. When Museveni overthrew the Okellos in January 1986, by coincidence, Joash Mayanja Nkangi who was the leader of the Conservative Party became the new Minister of Education, replacing Timothy Wangusa. Both Wandira and Pincywa were immediately relieved of their jobs. However, I must emphasise that this does not imply that their removal from office had a direct link with the murder of John Gita. For all the time Professor Wandira was at Makerere as Vice Chancellor, he had cleverly avoided being identified with any particular political party, although speculation was rife that he was a DP sympathiser. Some argued that there was no way Obote could have kept a DP supporter in such a significant and sensitive position at the university for so long without being his man. Whatever his political affiliation was, he kept it firmly to himself, and in so doing he managed to protect the office of Vice Chancellor from the vagaries of partisan politics of the day, which would have led to further polarisation of the university community reeling from the ravages of Idi Amin's regime. I know of many Deans, Heads of Departments and Hall Wardens who never hid their support for the ruling party. In my view, Professor Wandira's stance was the best way a good Vice Chancellor should conduct himself, no matter how he was appointed. Makerere is a cosmos of all shades of opposing political views and the Vice Chancellor should never be seen as favouring any particular side over another because that would compromise his ability to inspire confidence in the office.

One thing Obote's Minister of Education, Professor Isaac Newton Ojok did during Wandira's time was to replace Professor Twaha Nsereko Gyagenda as University Secretary with the little known Dr Michael Agrochai Owiny, a zoologist, who at the time of his appointment was lecturing at Kenyatta University in Kenya. Dr Owiny had a brilliant academic record at school and at Makerere. He left Uganda under unclear circumstances after the first overthrow of Obote's Government in 1971. He used to accuse Professor William Banage, Minister of Animal Industry in Amin's first Cabinet, of being responsible for his abrupt departure from Uganda, but he never substantiated his allegations beyond just saying that Banage disorganised his PhD scholarship. Professor Banage denied categorically ever having had anything to do with Agrochai Owiny's running away or his scholarship. However, while in exile, he was able to study and eventually obtain a PhD in Zoology from the University of London. When he was called

back from Kenya by Obote's Government, he did not come immediately. For some reason, he took his time, which necessitated Rev David Sentongo, who was then Senior Deputy Secretary to act as University Secretary for a while.

When Dr Owiny finally came, one of his first acts was to change the colours of all signposts in the university written in green against a white background. Many of the signposts, which were installed in the 1970s, had been professionally designed by a Government company called TUMPECO, based at Port Bell on the shores of Lake Victoria. Unfortunately, green and white happened to be the colours of the Democratic Party. They were the wrong colours and had to go. He therefore ordered the Estates Engineer to make sure that every signpost written with green letters was painted black. Black was one of the colours of the UPC flag. It was a very costly exercise, but it had to be done. Most of the original letters had not only been painted green, but were embossed and glazed as part of the enamelling process and, as such, ordinary black paint would hardly stick to the enamel. This did not deter the University Secretary from going ahead with the exercise. Overnight, the once beautiful looking signposts, big and small, had taken on an ugly look and it was not long before the black paint started flaking off, leaving a mosaic of black and green patches on every signpost. These signposts can still be seen today in their disfigured form dotted all over the university campus, and to some people, they serve as stark reminder of the bad times gone by.

Dr Owiny's colour crusade did not end there. He also painted the walls in the Chancellor's and Vice Chancellor's offices blue and replaced the carpets in the two offices with blue as well, another of the UPC flag colours. In fact, he was reputed to have given Professor Wandira a hard time. He strongly resented the idea of being lumped together on the same salary scale, the M3 scale, as his Senior Deputy and University Bursar. Unfortunately, he did not sort out this problem before he left office. This is how petty and obsessed some seemingly intelligent people had become with anything perceived anti-ruling party. I suppose out of fear no one in the university could dare challenge him or point out his idiosyncrasies. Another of such idiosyncrasies was the mass dismissal of hall wardens, carried out on the orders of the then Minister of State for Education and a former Makerere don. In a specially convened session of the Appointments Board, held in the absence of the Vice Chancellor and which the Minister attended, the Board decided to dismiss a number of wardens *en masse*. No explanation was given for what amounted to a purge. Once again, we were left to speculate. But one thing was clear; most of those who survived the axe were known to be strong supporters of the Government. For reasons best known to him, Dr Owiny abruptly resigned as University Secretary when the Okellos overthrew the Government. He joined the Faculty of Science as Professor of Zoology, a title conferred on him by the then Minister of Education, Professor Timothy Wangusa in the short-lived Okello Lutwa administration of July 1985 – January 1986.

As we conclude Professor Wandira's second tenure, we should cite one other example of a significant reform effected during his time, which was the introduction of the M salary scale, which de-linked Makerere University salary scales from the Government U scales. The introduction of the M scales was a significant break from a long tradition of lumping together Makerere University staff with the civil service. Although some sections of the university staff were unhappy with some of the U to M conversions, nevertheless the M scales were an improvement on the U scales. The only problem was that, given the hyper-inflation at the time of change, the difference between the two scales did not make much difference in real monetary terms.

One of the problems about the new M scale was the grading of Chief Technicians. When Professor Ominde did the conversions, he put them at M6, which is the lecturer scale. In their judgement, they thought Professor Ominde made a mistake, because on the old scales, they were already above the lecturer grade. The new grading seemed to have brought them a step lower. Although they argued that M5, the Senior Lecturer grade was the appropriate scale, the problem was never resolved. Over the years, numerous attempts have been made to resolve this dispute without success, because the fundamental argument was whether what the Chief Technicians were claiming had merit. Some people dismissed their complaint, saying that in fact, Professor Ominde made the right conversion. To complicate the matter further, none of the affected people pointed this out at the time Professor Ominde submitted his report to Government in December 1980. They waited until Museveni had come to power before raising the issue. At least, that was the first time I heard of this complaint. Perhaps at the time, the Chief Technicians were too scared to point out the anomaly when Ominde presented the report to Government, for fear of being misunderstood. It is also plausible that those who should have pointed out this anomaly were too loyal to the Government to point it out. As we shall see later, solutions to this long-standing problem were suggested, but I had left office before they could be implemented. Other problems which were identified in the Ominde scales were the excessive overlaps between the scales and the M10. Staff on M10 earned more than those on M8 and M7. The M9 scale was redundant.

Professor Wandira had a fair share of controversies and personal tragedies. One of the most outstanding controversies was the showdown with the young Dean of Law, Dr Edward Khidu Makubuya, now Uganda's Attorney General, over the admission of an under-qualified student to the Faculty of Law. When the young Dean of Law rejected the student because she had low grades, her parents decided to send her to the University of Papua New Guinea's Law School. After a year there, she came back and applied again for admission to Year One. Dr Makubuya was still Dean and, once again, the girl's application was turned down on the same grounds. The Vice Chancellor was incensed and sought an explanation from the

Dean why the girl could not be admitted after what Professor Wandira thought was a bridging year at the University of Papua New Guinea.

According to the Vice Chancellor, the girl had made up for her deficient “A” Levels, to which Makubuya did not agree. Professor Wandira insisted that the girl be admitted to the course of her choice, because she was now well qualified for it. Khidu too stood his ground. Finally, Dr Makubuya tendered his resignation as Dean, instead of bowing to the pressure. Professor Wandira had his way, and the girl was duly admitted to the Law course. What many of us failed to understand was the reason why the Vice Chancellor took such a keen interest in this particular student; after all, there were many others like her, who had not been admitted to the Faculty of Law because their “A” Level grades were not good enough, but the Vice Chancellor did not plead for them. Secondly, it remained a puzzle why the girl did not complete her Law degree at the University of Papua New Guinea which, like Makerere, was a recognised university and a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. This episode left many questions unanswered. As a result of Makubuya’s resignation, the faculty went without a Dean for a while. The Dean of Social Sciences was asked to take care of the faculty until Justice Joseph Nume Kakooza, the founding Dean of the faculty was called back to assume leadership of the faculty, once again.

One of the worst personal tragedies to befall Professor Wandira was the death of his daughter in a road accident near Nakuru in Kenya on their way to Nairobi in the Vice Chancellor’s official car, a new Mercedes Benz. Professor Wandira’s driver lost control and the car overturned, killing the girl instantly and injuring other members of the family. He was privileged to have worked with seasoned administrators like Bernard Onyango, Dissan Kizito, Namwanja Kyasanku, Garshom Eyoku, Rev David Sentongo and George Kihuguru, the legendary Dean of Students, to mention but a few.

After Makerere, Professor Wandira served as full-time Chairman of the Teaching Service Commission until the Commission was transformed into the Education Service Commission. He also served as a Government-appointed member of the first Appointments Board of the Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo (ITEK) from 1991 until a new Board was appointed.

### **George Barnabas Kirya (1986 – 1990)**

The responsibility of continuing to rebuild the university from the ashes of Uganda’s bad governance shifted from Professor Wandira to Professor George Barnabas Kirya, the second Vice Chancellor to come from the Medical School. He was appointed Vice Chancellor in 1986. This was one of President Museveni’s first major appointments as Chancellor of Makerere University. In fact, Professor Kirya’s appointment took most people by surprise because he was not one of the most prominent personalities at Makerere. However, as President of the Uganda

Medical Association, Professor Kirya had been an active participant in medical and health programmes, which Uganda Television used to air regularly. He also used to act as moderator of the popular Brain Trust series.

In the early 1980s, a strange disease was observed for the first time in Rakai and South West Masaka, especially among the residents of the fishing villages along the shores of Lake Victoria in that area. The victims of the new disease, who appeared to be in perfect health, were suddenly losing weight for no obvious reason. This was the beginning of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which we shall discuss in some detail later. Because there was no immediate medical explanation for this strange condition, some started calling it the slim disease. “Slim” was a popular word used to describe slender, beautiful women. Suddenly, the word slim had become an ugly word. As the scientific explanation was slow in coming, the locals in that area started speculating that those afflicted by the strange disease had participated in the looting of property belonging to some Tanzanian women who were well known for their evil spirits and other highly dangerous forms of witchcraft; they were now paying for their misdeeds in Tanzania. Professor Kirya and his colleagues were the first to bring this puzzling slim disease to the attention of the wider public, mainly through the medical programmes on Uganda Television (UTV). I suspect that it was through these presentations on UTV that Professor Kirya caught the attention of the President.

Before his appointment as Makerere's sixth Vice Chancellor, George Kirya had been Professor and Head of the Department of Microbiology at the Medical School. He is a specialist in Virology, a discipline in which he holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Birmingham in the UK. He also holds a Diploma in Bacteriology from the University of Manchester in the UK. After graduating from Makerere Medical School in 1966, he worked as a House Officer in Mulago Hospital and, in 1967 he joined the then East African Virus Research Institute based at Entebbe. While there, he also lectured undergraduate students in Virology at the Department of Microbiology/Virology on part-time basis as well as Postgraduate Diploma students in Public Health, which qualified him for the rank of honorary lecturer at Makerere University.

He joined the Department of Microbiology as an Associate Professor in 1977 and, a year later, he was promoted to the rank of Professor of Microbiology. In 1982, he was appointed substantive Head of the Department of Microbiology. Professor Kirya has several publications in his field to his credit. His well-known publications include: *Nairobi Sheep Disease in Man and Isolation of Congo Virus from the Amblyomma Tick*.

To many of us, Kirya's appointment appeared so natural that one was tempted to believe he had always been VC. He was extremely genial with a captivating personality, which made you feel that there was no difference between you and him. He socialised and mixed freely with staff and students, which in a way helped

take the mystique out of the office of Vice Chancellor, but also got him into some trouble with students. One quality he had as Vice Chancellor was to maintain his old friends as if his status had not changed. A good example of this quality was his close friendship with Mr Edward Kasolo Kimuli, formerly the Headmaster of Makerere College School and now Director of the Institute of Special Education which is part of Kyambogo University. The Kimulis were frequent guests of the Kiryas at their Garden Hill residence. They remained friends even after Professor Kirya had moved to the Vice Chancellor's Lodge. Professor Kirya was also enormously resourceful. His appointment coincided with what many saw as the end of terror in Uganda. Museveni had waged a relentless war against the Governments of Milton Obote and Tito Okello Lutwa, who were seen by many as the worst abusers of human rights. With Museveni now in power, most Ugandans were really in a festive mood. Gone were the bad old days of wanton killings and impunity of all sorts. But as we shall see later, the fundamental freedoms which Museveni and his NRM colleagues had ushered in when they captured state power were to be tested to the limit in the coming years; but for now, it was time for Makerere to start thinking seriously about rebuilding itself.

The gigantic tasks that lay ahead and which were necessary to turn the university around, needed a visionary Vice Chancellor to provide the kind of inspiring leadership that would help the university to quickly recover from the ravages of the past two decades. Professor Kirya was that kind of Vice Chancellor. To assist him in managing the university and implement the vital reforms was Professor Fredrick Ian Bintubizibu Kayanja. Fred Kayanja was appointed Deputy Vice Chancellor at the same time Professor Kirya was appointed Vice Chancellor. Kayanja was the second person to hold that position at Makerere. He is a veterinarian and a seasoned anatomist with gold medals and honours to his credit for his pioneering scientific work, much of it done at Makerere. Before his appointment as Deputy Vice Chancellor, he had been Head of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy and Professor of Anatomy there. He had also served as Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine during the difficult 1980s.

For as long as one could remember, Deans, Directors at the rank of Dean and Heads of Departments occupied those positions till they retired or left the university for one reason or another. One was not elected Dean, Director or Head of Department, one was appointed by the Minister of Education (in the case of Deans) or by the Appointments Board on the recommendation of the Vice Chancellor. Naturally, some of the people who occupied those positions were excellent managers, but there were also many who were mediocres. However, members of staff had no way of getting rid of the non-performers even if they had wanted to. Kirya changed all that when he introduced a system of elected Heads and Deans with fixed term limits.

A Dean or Director had to be elected by academic members of staff in a democratic and transparent election. Eligible candidates had to be at the rank

of senior lecturer and above. Aspiring candidates had to be nominated by at least three members of staff of that faculty, and were given time to canvass for votes. The term of office for the Deans was four years, renewable once. No one was allowed to stand for more than two consecutive terms. For the Heads of Departments, the term was three years, also renewable once. No individual was supposed to head a department for more than six consecutive years. This was the first time democracy would be introduced into the academia at Makerere and as would be expected, not everyone was happy. The conservatives argued that the new system was meant to demean the university's academic integrity. They could not imagine how a full Professor could serve under a Dean or a Head of Department of Senior Lecturer rank.

Despite the protests, Kirya stuck to his decision and, slowly, the university started implementing the new system. It is fair to say that MUASA provided a lot of inputs into the formulation of this policy, but it required a receptive Vice Chancellor and Minister of Education to implement such a fundamental break from tradition. In spite of a few weaknesses, the system worked well and the skeptics were by and large, proved wrong.

At the time the new system was introduced, there were real fears it would lead to weak administration. The fear had arisen from the suspicion that members of staff would elect weak leaders they could easily manipulate. Such leaders would be incapable of disciplining staff and taking tough decisions. There was also the added fear that such a competitive system would undermine the existing harmony amongst staff and eventually lead to permanent polarisation in departments and faculties. Fortunately, most of these fears were unfounded. Apparently, when it comes to electing their leaders, members of staff are careful who they elect. They even go out of their way to encourage those they think have good leadership qualities to stand for elections. From my personal observations over the years, members of staff do not like over-ambitious people who show no potential for effective leadership. Admittedly, they had been a few unsuitable personalities elected as Deans or Heads of Departments, but that was the exception rather than the rule. Once detected, they were not normally given a second chance. One had to deliver or risk not being elected again next time.

Indeed, a couple of Deans and Heads of Departments served only one term on the account of their poor leadership. There had been attempts to change Kirya's system but, each time, the attempt was met with resistance, which proved that once people have been given power to change leaders through a democratic process, they are reluctant to let go. Some of the modifications to the current system that some people had been asking for were to allow the non-teaching staff to participate in the voting. They based their argument on the fact that a Dean or Head of Department is not responsible for only the academic staff. While the debate about the inclusion of the non-academic staff in the electoral process continues, the system is still in operation in its original form, almost 20 years after it was introduced. Interestingly,

many members of staff have stood for election more than once and, on each occasion, the electorate has rejected them. It has been frustrating and painful for those who have tried and failed, especially when one strongly believed that one had all it took to make a successful Head of Department or Dean.

In the recent past, there have been accusations that the voting process has degenerated into tribal and religious allegiances. While I could not deny that, there could have been a grain of truth in what was being said, the allegations were never proven to necessitate a radical reform of the system. As one prominent proponent of the current system once put it, “the alternative was worse”.

Under the old Makerere University Act of 1970, the powers to appoint Deans and Directors were vested in the Minister of Education on the recommendations of the Appointments Board. Therefore, the new system introduced by the Kirya Administration was only advisory and not legally binding. After every election, the Academic Registrar who is the university’s official Returning Officer had to submit to the Appointments Board the results of all the candidates who participated in the election. The final decision lay with the Board and the Minister. In case of the Heads of Departments, the final say was in the hands of the Appointments Board. However, both the Appointments Board and the Minister reserved the right to reject a candidate, even if he or she polled the highest number of votes.

Normally, the Board went by the majority decision of the voters. However, during my time, I witnessed a few cases where either the Board or the Minister of Education rejected candidates who had polled the highest number of votes in the election and, instead, appointed the runners-up. I was told that there were valid reasons for each case, explaining why the Board and the Minister did not respect the voters’ decision. The voters had overlooked some serious weaknesses in the candidates they had elected. When the old Act was repealed, the Parliament of Uganda decided to enshrine the practice in the new Act of 2001. Under the new Act, the Minister of Education ceased to have a role in the appointment of Professors, Deans and Directors.

Before Kirya became Vice Chancellor, appointments, promotions and dismissals were by law the prerogative of the Appointments Board. Neither the Vice Chancellor, nor Deans or Heads of Departments had a say or any part to play beyond providing an appraisal of the member of staff under consideration, if the Board required one. In fact, the Vice Chancellor was not a member of the Appointments Board. During Kirya’s time, again all that changed. When the new Appointments Board was constituted, with Professor Josephine Namboozie as its Chairperson, Professor Kirya was appointed a full member, together with Professor James Lutalo-Bosa who was acting as Deputy Vice Chancellor after the departure of Professor Kayanja.

Before Amana Mushega’s time as Minister of Education, the Vice Chancellor merely attended at the Board’s meetings. He had no say in the decisions of the

Board; he could only be consulted. In fact, when it suited them, the Board could ask the Vice Chancellor to leave a Board meeting. It was rather odd for a chief executive officer of the university not to have a say in the important decisions which affected his or her organisation. In fact, there was no clause in the old Act preventing the Vice Chancellor from being a member of the Appointments Board, but for unexplained reasons, successive Ministers of Education had never seriously considered the importance of having the Vice Chancellor as a full member of the Board. This was to forget that the Vice Chancellor was expected to know his or her staff better than anyone else. Therefore, it went without saying that he or she should have a say in who was appointed, promoted or dismissed.

With a new Appointments Board in place, the stage was set for other fundamental changes in the way staff were appointed, promoted and disciplined. The democratic principles, which applied to the Deans and Heads of Departments, had to be extended to the recruitment and promotion of staff as well. Each department and faculty had to have an Appointments and Promotions Committee. Those committees were charged with the responsibility of vetting applications for new appointments and promotion. The Committees had to submit their recommendations to the Appointments Board in the form of minutes signed by all members present. The Senate and University Council had worked out detailed guidelines, spelling out the criteria which the committees were to follow when assessing one's suitability for promotion from rank to rank, and each criterion had to be allocated a mark or marks.

Publications were categorised in different forms and the number required for promotion to each level specified. For one seeking promotion to the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor respectively, the Board, through the Academic Registrar, had to send the applicant's papers to an external vetter. If, in the vetter's opinion, the publications were not good enough, the candidate would not be promoted. However, the candidates were free to appeal the vetter's verdict or make good the deficiencies pointed out in the vetter's report and resubmit the papers. Initially, some members of staff thought that given the fact that the university did not have money or adequate facilities for staff to do research and to publish, the standard for new requirements were unnecessarily high and too stringent and therefore, unattainable.

The University Council was not convinced by these arguments and decided to uphold the new policy. Council argued that it was the responsibility of members of staff to look for funding for their research; the university could only facilitate the process. The hardworking members of staff found the new criteria easy to satisfy. Others simply gave up and remained stagnant. The old adage, "publish or perish", was and is still alive and well at Makerere. However, attempts have been made to use other criteria, such as teaching, for purposes of promotion but these have been without any success so far.

Professor Kirya always appeared to be a step ahead of others, and always bubbling with innovative ideas. Since it was founded, Makerere's academic year had been based on three terms of ten weeks each with a three-month vacation for students on courses which did not have an industrial attachment or field work component, or an extra term like Medicine. Professor Kirya, however, wanted the university to move to a more flexible semester system. To explore the feasibility of such an idea, he set up a Committee which he chaired and of which I was privileged to be a member. I remember Professor Sam Tulyamuhika, who was then the Director of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, Mr Garshom Eyoku and late Professor J. S. Mugerwa who was Dean of Agriculture, as members of this Committee. The Committee worked hard and produced a blueprint which indicated that it was feasible for the university to change to a semester system, but some modifications had to be made for the existing curriculum to fit into the new system. When turmoil returned to the university in early 1990 and Professor Kirya had to leave, the blueprint was shelved.

Another of Kirya's concerns was the university's low revenue base. At the time he took over as Vice Chancellor, the university was totally dependent on Uganda's Minister of Finance for both the recurrent and capital development budgets. Given the state of Uganda's economy at that time and the competing demands on Government finances, what the university was getting from the Government Treasury was next to pittance. The Government allocation could barely sustain the university. This was indeed a big handicap to the Vice Chancellor. I remember him wishing he was an angel who could miraculously make money from nothing. However, instead of drowning himself in self-pity, he decided to be pragmatic about the money problem. He believed there were other ways the university could find supplementary income, and suggested the setting up a university consultancy bureau. He was convinced that the university could use its enormous brain power to generate extra income for itself and for its members of staff through high intellectual input activities, such as consultancy services, which were in demand outside the university.

This was a resource, which had never been collectively tapped before. It was a known fact that many Makerere members of staff engaged in consultancy, but on an individual basis and the university never received any share of the income from consultancies undertaken by individual members of staff. This time around, the Vice Chancellor wanted to make it a collective university activity. To find out whether the idea was feasible, he set up a small Committee which he chaired, and of which Professor John Mugerwa and I were once again privileged to serve as members. Out of the efforts of this Committee, Makerere University Consultancy Bureau (MUCOBUB) was born. But due to the difficulties of the time, the idea was also shelved, though implemented later.

Much of the university, which Professor Kirya inherited, was in a dilapidated state. Besides the repairs which were done on the students' halls of residence during

Professor Wandira's time, there was no other serious attempt to give the university buildings a face lift. In addition, no new buildings had been constructed for almost ten years, yet the university was under pressure to expand the enrolment, which required extra space for teaching and accommodation. The big question on everybody's lips was where the money to finance the rehabilitation and the construction of new buildings would come from.

Professor Kirya tried two approaches: One was a self-help drive or *harambee* (as it is popularly known in Kenya). The other was to explore the possibility of organising a donors' conference. The self-help drive involved mobilising all staff and students to clean up the university and give a coat of paint to as many buildings as the available paint could cover. He solicited the paint and other materials from Makerere's well-wishers who included paint manufacturers. This was the first time in several years that the University reached out to the local business community for support and the response to the Vice Chancellor's *harambee* was good. Both staff and students also responded to the Vice Chancellor's call very positively. The late Dr Samson Kisekka, an old Makererian and Prime Minister of Uganda at the time was at hand to inaugurate and lead the drive. On the day the exercise was launched, Dr Kisekka took a brush and painted the front gates of the Printery. It was the first time those gates were being given a coat of paint. The result was dramatic. Many senior professors and administrators were seen in the company of their students with sleeves rolled up, slashing and pushing wheelbarrows full of rubbish. Although it was limited in scope, the initiative illustrated that a determined and innovative leader could inspire people to do what was sometimes considered impossible. I am sure no Makerere Principal or Vice Chancellor had ever attempted such a feat before. Unfortunately, the *harambe* was a one-day affair; it has never been repeated since.

The second initiative was a grand donors' conference, which unlike the first one, had to be held at Makerere. It is often said that "if you want to make money, you must spend money". Professor Kirya wanted to get money for Makerere from as many donors as he could possibly convince, but needed money to organise the big conference. He capitalised on the goodwill Makerere was enjoying in the international community at the time. The United Nations Programme (UNDP) agreed to assist the university organise the conference.

By 1987, when the donor's conference was held, the UNDP was already supporting several projects in the university. The UNDP not only provided cash, it also provided a consultant who had earlier worked with the late Lule, to assist the Vice Chancellor with the conference logistics. In fact, the donors' conference laid the foundations of what later became the Planning and Development Department. Participation in the conference was not restricted to only the international donor community, the local community was also invited. Every department had to prepare what you might call a shopping list of its needs or

more precisely, a wish list. The departmental lists were later synthesised into a single university document, which was submitted to every donor prior to the conference.

Given the fact that this was the first time the university was attempting this kind of undertaking on home ground, the turn-out of both local and international communities was impressive. The disappointment was that after the many long hours of preparation and the good presentations by the Vice Chancellor and other presenters, most donors picked what they traditionally support and left out what we considered to be the most critical needs. Few donors at the conference pledged new money, while others re-affirmed their ongoing commitments and the new pledges they had earlier made. For example, the African Development Bank pledged to support activities the Uganda Government was already negotiating for with the Bank. Other donors decided to support activities off the university's priority list, such as a play depicting the abuse of human rights in Uganda. Sadly, most of the science-based faculties came out of the conference empty handed. The Italian Government, represented by an official of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was one of the few international donors that pledged new money. The Italians promised to re-equip the Faculty of Technology and to provide scholarships for PhD training in Italy to its members of staff. Italy also pledged to send Professors of Engineering to Makerere to participate in teaching and research projects.

Unfortunately, a cheque the Ford Foundation had sent to Makerere after the conference was intercepted and cashed. The cheque, which went missing and ended up being cashed in Europe was, according to sources, part of the Foundation's pledge to the university to support human rights activities at the Faculty of Law. All efforts to recover the missing cheque turned up blank. This incident almost soured an otherwise cordial relationship between the university and the Ford Foundation. Makerere almost lost one of its most loyal friends. The Ford Foundation sent several officials to Makerere in an attempt to trace the whereabouts of the cheque. Neither the Vice Chancellor nor the Dean of Law had any idea as to who had stolen the cheque. The cheque was stolen in transit before it got to Makerere. Perhaps this was the beginnings of the now rampant white collar crime in Uganda.

In spite of the fact that the big donors did not respond to most of the university's critical needs, the conference produced some valuable outcomes. One of such notable outcomes was the presence of a local donors' group, which included traders from the Owino Market. No one at Makerere had ever imagined that it was possible to mobilise ordinary Ugandans to raise funds for their university. This was one of Professor Kirya's brilliant innovations. Not only did this group donate the little they could afford, they formed a local donors' association which was chaired by a former Managing Director of Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB),

Frank Mwine, with Dan Nsibambi, former Public Relations Manager of the same bank as secretary.

The Association opened an account in the UCB with an initial deposit of over UgSh20 million, a hefty sum in 1987, soon after a major currency reform. The idea was to use the fund to lend money to units which had the potential to generate income for the university at a small interest rate of about 8% per year. The University Printery and Makerere University Press were some of the university units which benefited from the Local Donors' account.

When Frank Mwine left UCB, his successor, Dr Ezra Suruma, now Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development took over as chairman of the Association for a while. Later, the former Governor of the Bank of Uganda, the late Nyonyintono Kikonyogo, was asked to take over as chair of the Association. When they all left their positions, UCB was sold to Stanbic Bank and with other leaders having died, the Association went into dormancy. When I took over as Vice Chancellor, I tried hard to keep the Association going but the momentum had been lost.

Professor Kirya's spirits were not dampened by the donors' conference, which did not yield the kind of results he wanted. He continued with his usual zeal to look for money elsewhere. It was not long before we were told by the Vice Chancellor that the Japanese Government, through its international cooperation agency, JICA, had agreed to donate and equip a new building to Makerere University, which was to house the Faculty of Science. This was the sweetest music to those of us who belonged to the Faculty of Science, as we had been in limbo for too long. This was the first time the Government of Japan was extending support to Makerere University in a significant way and frankly, nobody, including the Vice Chancellor, had any clue how the Japanese conducted business, because nobody had ever dealt with them before.

Before JICA approved the grant and released the money to the university, there were some tough and sometimes protracted negotiations between the two sides. The Japanese were very demanding. They were concerned with what one might call the finer details. For example, they wanted to be assured that the location would give the building enough prominence. In fact, they were insisting that the building should be constructed in the Freedom Square in front of the Main Building. The proposal had to be politely turned down and a compromise site was agreed.

I recall Professor Kirya telling us about the Japanese habit of switching to their language (Japanese) whenever there were points of disagreement during the discussions. He said he had no way of doing the same with his colleagues because of our many language problems. One day, he decided to take a gamble and addressed his colleagues in Luganda, one of the widely spoken local languages in Uganda. Fortunately for him, most of his colleagues understood Luganda

or had a working knowledge of it. This surprised the Japanese and presumably did the trick. After that, he said, points of disagreement were quickly resolved. Unfortunately, Professor Kirya left office before construction began. This had to be handled by his successor. Besides successfully concluding the negotiation for the JICA grant, Professor Kirya and his colleagues managed to convince the British Government to provide funds for the renovation of the Guest House and the construction of an extension. The guest house was used for accommodating external examiners, members of staff who had no accommodation and other guests of the university.

The British Government, which rarely provided support for infrastructure development, also gave Makerere money for the renovation of the two old wings of Mary Stuart Hall, as well as the construction of an extension on the western side of the old building.

Nonetheless, the university's dilapidated physical plant continued to dog the new Vice Chancellor. It appeared he had exhausted all possible sources of funds to carry out the repairs, some quite urgent. Then, during his speech at one of the graduation ceremonies, he presented the problem to Chancellor Museveni. In response, the Chancellor advised the university to set up a building unit, which would do some of the repairs the Vice Chancellor was referring to. There and then, Makerere University Building Unit (MUBU), was born. The Chancellor promised to provide some seed money to capitalise MUBU but the Treasury took a long time to release the President's pledge. Besides coming late, it was not enough for the kinds of jobs the unit was expected to do. Nevertheless, a start had been made. The MUBU started as a separate entity from the Estates and Works Department, with its own Director. It concentrated on major repairs and construction of new buildings, while the Estates and Works Department undertook the minor and routine maintenance work. After the departure of Mr Uddin who had come to Makerere from India as the University Engineer during Amin's time, the university recruited a British Engineer, Mr Penny, who took over as the new University Engineer. Penny was in charge of both MUBU and the Estates and Works Department; but when he left, MUBU went its separate ways. During Professor Kirya's time, MUBU built a couple of houses in the eastern staff quarters near Bombo Road and in the west end of the campus, along Springfield Road, overlooking Kikoni and Kasubi Tombs. However, MUBU's major problem was under-capitalisation. It was never given enough money to undertake big jobs. Initially it was not even making money on the jobs it was doing, because it was supposed to be a service unit of the university.

As we learnt earlier, as soon as Idi Amin was deposed, the European Union (EU) which was then called the European Economic Community (EEC) took a keen interest in Uganda's recovery and, at the request of the Government of Uganda, started extending grants to the country for various rehabilitation projects. Among the initial projects the EU funded in Uganda was the re-sealing

of the Kampala-Masaka Highway, which forms part of the Northern Corridor. Fortunately, Makerere University was among the institutions for which the Government sought financial aid from the EU for rehabilitation.

The EEC-funded rehabilitation was a big project, with the Faculties of Science and Medicine as beneficiaries. Most of the buildings in the Faculty of Science and a selected few in the Faculty of Medicine, in particular the Clinical Research building, had to be fully rehabilitated and re-roofed because they leaked profusely. The tender for the design and consultancy work went to an Italian firm. We had thought the Uganda-based firm of architects, Pitfield and Bougner, which had originally designed most of the college's buildings in the 50s and 60s, would win the tender for the architectural work, but the firm's bid was unsuccessful, and Makerere had no say in who was awarded the tender. In fact, many European firms sent experts down to Makerere to assess the magnitude of the job as part of the preparation of the tender documents.

The Italian firm which won the tender sent an elderly architect, Paulo Indrizz, to Makerere as the resident project consultant and supervisor. He had one interesting mannerism. Every time he wanted to make a point, he over-gesticulated with his hands and on top of the excessive use of hand gestures, he spoke English with a heavy Italian accent, which sometimes made it hard to comprehend what he was saying. Quite frankly, most of us found him irritating and difficult to work with, but with time, on the advice of our Dean Professor Paul Mugambi, we learnt to put up with him. The interesting aspect of this project was the liberty the University Administration gave to each department to work closely with the architects and other project consultants on how they wanted to modify their buildings, or what new things we wanted included in the plan before the final drawings were made and submitted for approval.

At that time, I was the Head of the Department of Chemistry, and over the years, my department had become a victim of theft. We suggested that the thoroughfare between the two departmental buildings be closed at the west end by joining them together with a high wall and a wide gate in the middle, which the security guards could easily manage. We further proposed the installation of steel grill doors to the entrance of every floor of the main departmental building, which could be kept wide open during the day for easy escape in case of a fire, but locked during the night to deny any would-be burglar easy access to the laboratories. We also wanted a covered walkway between the first year laboratory on the northern end and the main departmental building on the southern end. All our proposals were accepted, except the walkway. The idea was rejected on the account of limited funds. Roko, a locally incorporated Swiss civil engineering company, won the tender for these works.

This project presented a big challenge to both the University Administration and the construction company, Roko. As those in the trade know, rehabilitation

work is the most difficult to cost, for the simple reason that there are usually hidden and serious defects, which may not be foreseen until the actual work begins. By then, it is too late to alter the bills of quantities. Project funders do not like being asked to keep revising the costs upwards when the tender is already awarded, as tenders are awarded on a competitive basis and, in most cases, the winner is the lowest bidder. In fact, the practice of revising the bills of quantity above a certain percentage of the original tender sum is discouraged. In such cases, the contractor has to bear any extra cost arising out of unforeseen problems which were not taken into account when the bills were being drawn up initially. This may mean doing the work at a loss if the contingent budget line is insufficient to cover the cost of the extra works. In addition to this, most workers are not trustworthy. They steal cement, timber, paint, and so on. All these eat into the contractor's profits. I was told that, in fact, Roko was a victim of pilfering of cement and other construction materials. The workers used to ferry them out of the university through the small western gate popularly known as the Kikoni Gate. This could explain why in the end many things which were in the original tender document had to be omitted. The escalating costs necessitated the scaling down of the project. Neither Professor Kirya nor I was there to see the project to the end. In March 1990, Professor Kirya was relieved of his job as Vice Chancellor and in October of the same year, I left Makerere. But without a doubt, the implementation of the EEC-rehabilitation project was one of the best learning experiences in project design, planning and management for me and it put me in a good stead later in my career as an administrator.

There were other important initiatives, which Professor Kirya either spearheaded or found in progress and completed. These included the rehabilitation and re-equipping of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the UNDP/UNESCO Project in the Faculty of Science. The opening of the Departments of Pharmacy and Dentistry in the Faculty of Medicine, the Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Technology and female affirmative policy of 1.5 extra points to each female candidate to boost the chronic low female enrolment stand out as testimony of his visionary leadership. On the down side, I believe one of Professor Kirya's big disappointments was his inability to raise funds to build his dream modern sports complex at Makerere, which he believed would have made a significant contribution to the university's revenue.

The drawings for the complex were made and a project document written. On one of those occasions when I walked to Professor Kirya's office for a quick chat or to make a telephone call, he showed the drawings and asked for my comments. He was confident that, in spite of the high cost of the project, he would find a donor to finance it. Perhaps he was under the impression that I was as passionate about sports as he was, which, unfortunately, I was not. I had

to tell him that he was seeking the opinion from the wrong person. However, I thought the idea was excellent, after all the university did not have decent sports facilities, which befitted its name and reputation. I found the idea of generating some extra income by hiring out the facility very fascinating. Again, before he could get this project off the ground, he was out of office. The project stalled because, in the midst of a myriad of problems the university was facing, sports, important as it is as a recreational activity, was way down on the list of priorities. The subsequent Vice Chancellors were unable to sell the project to any donor. In his younger days, Professor Kirya was an ardent sportsman and good at games such as football. During the inter-departmental football competitions, Professor Kirya used to play for the Main Building team as a goalkeeper. That was how enthusiastic and serious a sportsman he was.

In my opinion, Professor Kirya's concern for Makerere as an institution, which once enjoyed worldwide recognition for its academic excellence, went far beyond the call of duty. He always wanted to involve as many people as he could find in decision-making. For example, the Central Executive Committee was his brainchild. Before Kirya, a Vice Chancellor could only consult a senior colleague, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Registrar or University Secretary – or all of them collectively – if and when there was need. There was no formalised structure where the Vice Chancellor could meet all his senior colleagues in the University Administration on a regular basis and discuss matters of interest to the university. The original membership of the Committee was made up of the Vice Chancellor as chair, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the University Secretary, the Academic Registrar, the Dean of Students, the Bursar and Director of Planning with Garshom Eyoku as a co-opted member. The Committee used to meet weekly to discuss and make decisions on a wide range of issues affecting the university or to deal with crises. Initially, the Committee did not have a legal status; it was only advisory to the Vice Chancellor. As Professor Kirya went about his job with his usual enthusiasm, he encountered a serious impediment – procurement. It was a frustratingly slow process. Orders for goods and supplies used to take months on end, even when what had been ordered was urgent. One of the reasons for the long delays was bureaucracy. Every purchase had to go through the Tender Board, a Committee of Council; and this, even at the best of times, was a long and tedious process. The other was, of course, lack of money. To fast-track the notoriously slow tender process, Professor Kirya set up a sub-tender board committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and made up of Deans and other categories of staff, which used to meet weekly. Its job was to approve relatively small purchases below the ceilings set by the University Council. The idea worked reasonably well, but the major bottleneck the Committee faced was money or, more precisely, lack of it.

At one of the Senate meetings which I chaired, I remember the late Professor Akiki Mujaju referring to George Kirya as a peoples' Vice Chancellor. He was dead right. Busy as he used to be, he had time for everyone. I was one of those who had the rare privilege to have known him reasonably well at close range, even before I became a Head of Department. Despite the fact that I had never trained as a Computer Scientist, computers had always fascinated me. As we have seen earlier, by 1986 when Professor Kirya became Vice Chancellor, there were only two micro-computers at the Computer Centre – Apple IRC and Apple ICE – and those were the only computers the university had at the time. Later the Department of Language Education also acquired a few Apples. The old main frame computer had long been sold off. At the time, the new micro-computers were under-utilised; so, whenever I had some free time, I would walk to the Computer Centre and try my hands on the keyboard. Soon, I learnt to word-process, using the then word processing software – WordStar.

One evening, I went to see Professor Kirya in his office on some small matter; I guess it had to do with a workshop I was due to attend in Harare. It was late but, like most of his predecessors, he had a habit of working late. While talking to him, he pulled out a personal document he had written. It was over 50 pages long and poorly typewritten. I told him of the new way of processing documents using a micro-computer, and that word-processed documents looked not only neater, but also professional. Word processing also made editing easy. Mistakes could be corrected without using the messy white-out, and you could clone as many copies of your document as you wanted; so, there was no need for wax stencils. Then in passing, I reminded him that the Computer Centre had two micro-computers, courtesy of UNDP/UNESCO, and if he did not mind I would assist him to word-process his document. Because of his easygoing nature, I even volunteered to give him a few tutorials if only he could find the time, although technically I was also a learner. He laughed it off, but not before agreeing to my offer.

That encounter, I must say, marked the beginning of a wonderful relationship between us. He was the only Vice Chancellor I ever shared a cup of tea with in his office. To crown it all, he even took trouble to come to see me in my little flat on Quarry House. I was touched by the gesture. In fact, he did two wonderful things for me. He sent me to Harare for a short course in micro-computing in 1988 and to the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) at Arusha for a specialised faculty skills development course, which exposed me to consulting process techniques and social science research methodology, among others.

On another front, Professor Kirya had to handle the return of the Faculties of Education, Commerce and Technology, which had relocated to Nakawa and Kyambogo a few years earlier back, to the congested Makerere campus. In the early 1980s, the Ministry of Education had decided to de-centralise the university. The Faculty of Commerce went to Nakawa, while the Faculties of Education

and Technology moved to Kyambogo. The institutions which were there before, namely the Uganda College of Commerce at Nakawa, and the Uganda Technical College and the National Teachers' College, both at Kyambogo, were relocated to other parts of the country. The move was intended to make room for the expansion of the university. However, when the NRM came to power in 1986, the new Minister of Education reversed the decision of his predecessor.

Makerere University had to move out of Kyambogo and Nakawa to make room for the new institutions which the Government was planning at the time. Nakawa was turned into a non-degree awarding National College of Business Studies. The former Uganda Technical College changed to Uganda Polytechnic, Kyambogo, and the former National Teachers' College, Kyambogo, was converted into the Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo (ITEK) and it also took over the National Institute of Education, which was based at Makerere. Professor Kirya, as Vice Chancellor, had to prepare for the return of the three faculties in their original buildings, some of which had long been allocated to some other university departments. It was a difficult exercise but he managed it well.

By the time Professor Kirya was in his third year as Vice Chancellor, a new phenomenon was emerging at Makerere. The university community was being organised into Resistance Councils, which to some were reminiscent of the ten-house cells system which the UNLF Government and Paulo Muwanga's Military Commission had tried to implement soon after the fall of Idi Amin, but had met with resistance. The cells were RC I, RC II and RC III, in order of hierarchy. The RC I represented the equivalent of a village, RC II was the parish and RC III was the *Gombolola* or sub-county. Each resistance council was run by an elected executive of nine people. The voting system used was similar to that the UPC used in the branch chairmen elections in the early 1980s.

It used to be a debacle some used to watch with a lot of amusement. Apparently, some officials in the NRM Government thought the system of lining up behind a candidate of one's choice was not a bad idea after all, so they decided to adopt it for the RC system. Like everywhere in the country, Resistance Councils were totally a new phenomenon at Makerere. The university had never had leaders other than the Vice Chancellor. But as we know, new things have a tendency to create new problems. It was therefore, not long before the RC system started throwing up new problems for the Vice Chancellor. Some RC officials, among them a prominent member of staff in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration (who will remain anonymous for now), started behaving as though the Vice Chancellor was subordinate to him. Some RC chairpersons believed, rightly or wrongly, that being elected officials through a popular vote gave them more power over the affairs of the people who elected them than the Vice Chancellor who, according to them, was a mere functionary appointed by the President. As a result, power centres began to emerge. If Professor Kirya

were not sufficiently cool-headed, this situation could have exploded into an ugly confrontation between the University Administration and the RC chairpersons. Fortunately, the confusion was later sorted out when the roles of the RCs were clearly explained and some of the firebrand RC chairpersons had to leave office.

Amidst all this, some members of staff and students had opened up direct lines of communication with Government Ministers and even with the President. There were even informal discussion groups on the university campus whose preoccupation was the future of the country and, perhaps, of the university. I strongly suspect that through such informal contacts, a lot must have been said about the leadership at Makerere, much of which must have been negative. After all, as the Baganda say, "Your neighbour is not always the first person to congratulate you when your cow gives birth to a female calf, lest your herd multiplies faster than his".

Although many members of the Makerere community thought that Professor Kirya was doing a fine job, there were also some who thought otherwise. Apparently, the staff strike of 1989 hurt many in Government and, after talking to some highly placed Government officials, I got the impression that some people in Government were holding the Vice Chancellor responsible for failing to avert the strike. However, such acrimonious feelings against the Vice Chancellor were misplaced and he was only being used as a scapegoat. To the majority of us who participated in it, the strike was neither about the Vice Chancellor nor a verdict on his leadership, although there were some who had an axe to grind and attempted to use the occasion to hit back at him. It was about poor wages that was how I understood it and the only reason for my participation.

As I have said elsewhere, it was a strike waiting to happen, regardless of who the Vice Chancellor was at the time. Makerere University academic staff was simply taking advantage of the newly found freedom to make known their pathetic economic situations. We should also remember that when he was appointed Vice Chancellor, Professor Kirya constituted several commissions of inquiry into the ways the university had been run during the years of turmoil. A few people in Administration were found guilty of financial impropriety and abuse of office, and so lost their jobs. It would be naïve to think that the people who were sacked wished Professor Kirya well. Consequently, a combination of factors led to the inevitable. Professor Kirya had to go. He left after four and a half years on the job. Makerere lost a dynamic, resourceful and innovative Vice Chancellor. So much was accomplished in so short a time. On a personal note, I doubt whether I would have become Vice Chancellor of Makerere if it had not been for the inspiration and indirect mentoring I received from him.

Like Professor Wandira before him, Professor Kirya decided not to go back to his old Department of Microbiology at Mulago. Instead, he chose to go into private practice downtown. However, it was not long before opportunity came

knocking at his door again. In an unexpected turn of events, the President decided to appoint him Uganda's High Commissioner to the U.K. He ended up being one of Uganda's longest serving Ambassadors. He was High Commissioner for 11 years. Was this Professor Kirya's vindication? After serving as High Commissioner, he returned to Uganda. Government appointed him Chairman of the newly formed Health Service Commission. In 2001, the University of Birmingham, his alma mater, conferred on him a Doctor of Laws degree, LLD (*honoris causa*). Part of Kirya's unfinished work had to be completed by his successor, Makerere's seventh Vice Chancellor.

### **William Senteza Kajubi – Second Tour (1990 – 1993)**

I remember I was watching the evening news on Uganda Television at 9 o'clock on our old 14-inch black and white Sony TV set when the news reader threw the bombshell: Makerere University had a new Vice Chancellor! Professor William Senteza Kajubi had been appointed the new Vice Chancellor with immediate effect, the news reader concluded. There and then, Kirya was gone. There was no mention of him in the news. I do not recall who read the news that evening, but it was devastating news. Not because I had anything against Professor Kajubi. It was because we had become too accustomed to Professor Kirya's warm and friendly personality. He was the kind of leader who had a way of making you feel at home in his presence. He was also resourceful. What had he done to deserve a dismissal over the radio? This was too reminiscent of Idi Amin's days. There were many questions that raced through my head that evening. Then I remembered the old Biblical story of Job, and that particular part that says; "He who giveth taketh away". The following day, I went to Professor Kirya's office and found him at his desk, I guessed he was trying to write his handing-over report. To my surprise, he did not look overly perturbed. He had managed to pull himself together quickly. His only regret as he told me was that there was so much unfinished business. He was, however, grateful he had been given a chance to serve Makerere, an institution he dearly loved. He thanked me for all my support. That day everyone in the Vice Chancellor's office was in sombre mood. Kirya had been a good boss to them.

Professor Kajubi's return to Makerere from Kyambogo in 1990 was greeted with excitement, especially by those who were there during his first tenure as Vice Chancellor in the 70s. They remembered how he had saved them from starvation during the war which ousted Idi Amin between 1978 and 1979. I had come to know Professor Kajubi fairly well through my friend James Mayanja, now living in Australia, who was one of the budding young lecturers in the Faculty of Law and a neighbour of mine on Quarry House. He was a very sociable man and so was Professor Kajubi who was by then residing at 151 Garden Hill. Once in a while, the two would drop by my little Flat C8 in the evenings and we would share a bottle or two of beer if we were lucky to get it.

There were a lot of projects that Kirya had initiated, which were awaiting the new Vice Chancellor to implement. As people usually say, "Honeymoon does not last forever". One of Kirya's major projects awaiting implementation, and which required Professor Kajubi's immediate attention, was the JICA building at the Faculty of Science. The first thing was to conclude the negotiations with JICA. It was agreed that the new building would house the Dean's Office, the Departments of Biochemistry and Geology, as well as general lecture rooms. The Japanese wanted the building to portray a Japanese architectural character and the university accepted the request. The ground was broken and construction of what turned out to be a magnificent building began in earnest, under Professor Kajubi's supervision. The opening of this building provided some badly needed space in the old Math-Science building.

It was not long before Kajubi's troubles with the students began. Professor Kajubi came back to Makerere at a time when Museveni's Government was embarking on a reform process which led to the scraping of most of the non-pedagogical allowances Government used to pay to students. Students had fiercely resisted the loss of their allowances and two students had been shot dead by Police during the scuffles at the Freedom Square. One is tempted to believe that Professor Kajubi was inadvertently a victim of a policy he had authored as chairman of the Education Review Commission.

The Education Review Commission of 1987 recommended in its report to Government that, given the dwindling financial resources going to the higher education sector, the Government should concentrate on meeting only instructional costs. Non-instructional costs should be borne by the students. In the White Paper on the Kajubi Commission report, Government accepted this recommendation. Kajubi's Commission wrote the report when he was Principal of the Institute of Teacher Education at Kyambogo. By the time he came back to Makerere, Government had started administering the bitter pill. This apparently seemed to have been the genesis of Professor Kajubi's problems. Again, lack of proper coordination between the Ministers of Education and Internal Affairs on one hand, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor on the other, compounded the confusion in a highly charged atmosphere. Students insisted on going on strike to protest the new Government policy. Moreover, students had argued that theirs was a non-violent strike, therefore the Police action amounted to provocation. Since most students did not know who gave the Police the order to shoot, they strongly believed it was the Vice Chancellor.

According to them, the blood of their dead colleagues was now on the hands of the Vice Chancellor and no amount of explanation would convince them otherwise. The incident, dubbed "Black Monday", turned into an annual commemorative event at which students lit bonfires in the Freedom Square and sang anti-Mushega and anti-Kajubi songs. Unfortunately, this unfortunate

incident was over-exploited by some students. Those who had an axe to grind or who were opposed to the NRM used the occasion to hit at the Government which had claimed to have abolished all forms extra-judicial killings and was championing human rights and the rule of law. In fact, some students were pressing hard to erect a memorial to the two dead students in front of the Main Hall. However, subsequent Guild Presidents after Charles Rwomushana vetoed the idea.

Over time, the situation cooled down and the incident lost most of its initial steam. Nevertheless, it left the image of the Vice Chancellor badly dented. It not only soured the relationship between him and the Minister of Education, it eroded his popularity amongst the students and led to the second premature closure of the institution, the first closure having taken place in 1952, when Abu Mayanja led the first strike at Makerere. Students were sent home in December 1990, a week before the first term was due to end.

As someone once put it, Professor Kajubi's second term in office as Makerere's seventh Vice Chancellor was a baptism of fire. We are often told by management experts that when you take on the job of a manager, you inherit both the assets and the liabilities; Professor Kajubi's case was a classic example. What was supposed to be Government's liability become Professor Kajubi's inheritance and, subsequently, his burden. It also came as a rude reminder that being Makerere's Vice Chancellor was still very much a risky business. In fact, Professor Kajubi was lucky to have survived this ugly episode unharmed. However, as a result of this protracted strike, Government realised the magnitude of the crisis the university had been plunged into. It was a pointer to a far more serious problem than previously thought. In a search for the cause and effect, and hence a lasting solution to Makerere's fundamental problem, in 1991 the Chancellor, President Museveni, sent a Visitation Team to the university to probe all problems it was facing and recommend corrective action. Gerald Sendaula, who later became the Minister of a combined Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, chaired the Visitation Committee.

Although Professor Kajubi confessed that, during his second term as Vice Chancellor, he failed to establish a good rapport with staff, he somehow managed to get along with them without much trouble. More staff strikes were to come later but not in his time. In this respect, he was successful. In fact, apart from the student unrest, the rest of his second term was relatively trouble free.

Professor Kajubi not only oversaw the construction and completion of the JICA building, he also oversaw the final phase of the EU-funded rehabilitation of the Faculties of Science and Medicine, as well as the final phase of USAID-funded Manpower for Agricultural Development (MFAD) project in the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry. To his credit, he also attracted more donors to the university.

By all accounts, the successful re-introduction of the private students' scheme, which began in the 1970 but was abolished by the UPC Government in the 1980s, was one of his notable achievements. When it was introduced in the 1970s, a privately sponsored student paid fees for one year. In the subsequent years, Government picked up the bill – that is to say the private students' scheme was for one year after which the Government took over the sponsorship. In the new scheme however, the student paid for the entire duration of the course. Initially, privately-sponsored students were admitted over and above the 2,000 students Government used to sponsor per year. As we shall see in more details later, the privately-sponsored students' scheme started modestly in the 1992/93 academic year in a few faculties, on experimental basis. However, the scheme proved an instant success. I recall Garshom Eyoku, at one of the Senate meetings, praising the scheme and pointing out how, with the little money it had earned from the few fee-paying students that year, the Faculty of Social Sciences had repaired its water closets which, for many years had been unusable.

The evening classes and external degree programmes were another important innovation introduced during Professor Kajubi's time. The first evening programme started in the Faculty of Law in the 1992/93 academic year, although the Faculty of Commerce kept claiming credit for pioneering the idea. Some say the reason for starting these programmes and for re-introducing the private students' scheme was, at least in part, MUSA's frustration with a Government that could not deliver on its promises. It seemed the battle for a living wage was not producing results, therefore, it was high time alternatives were explored.

I guess also the lawyers were tired of moonlighting outside to make ends meet. They wanted to moonlight in their own backyard, so to speak. The evening programmes targeted working people who had missed out on university education and those who already had degrees in other disciplines, but wanted a Law qualification. The lectures used to start at five in the evening and would go on up till eight o'clock and beyond. Members of staff teaching on the evening programme were teaching in their spare time to compensate for the short teaching time. An extra year was added to the evening programme; so whereas the regular LLB degree was three years, the evening LLB was four. In a relatively short time, the programme proved very popular with the students. Power outages would have frustrated the evening programmes, but given the students' volatile nature, Professor Kajubi managed to convince the Ministry of Energy and the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) to maintain a constant power supply to the university. UEB agreed to give the university its own line directly from the Mulago sub-station. With a power line of its own, the university was assured of constant uninterrupted power.

The Centre for Continuing Education, which had been transformed into the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (IACE), was next with the introduction of two external degree programmes; the Bachelor of Education

(BEd), which was designed along the lines of the ITEK BEd programme. I recall, as Principal of ITEK, attending a series of meetings at Makerere at which the new degree structure was discussed at length. Like the ITEK BEd, the IACE BEd was also targeting upgrading teachers, so the practicum was not a requirement. The second external degree programme was the Bachelor of Commerce, BCom (External), which targeted mainly holders of the Uganda Diploma in Business Studies (UDBS), or other equivalent qualifications. Students on these programmes were expected to study at home, using study materials provided by the institute. The Commonwealth of Learning, based in Vancouver, Canada assisted the institute with some of the learning materials which were essential to launch the two programmes. Other materials were sourced from the University of Nairobi; the rest had to be written. Since the IACE did not have a teaching staff of its own, the programmes had to be run in collaboration with the School of Education and the Faculty of Commerce respectively.

Like the evening LLB, an extra year was added to both programmes. Again, as we shall see later, this arrangement presented the University Administration with some serious problems which took time to sort out. The three new and totally private programmes, to which no Government-sponsored students were admitted, marked another turning point in the university's history. Suddenly, Makerere University had become accessible to many more Ugandans who, under the old rigid admission system, stood no chance ever of being educated there, albeit at a personal cost. Fair enough, the Faculty of Commerce had designed an evening Diploma course, which was supposed to have started in the 1992/93 academic year, but for some reason it failed to take off. Instead, the faculty replaced it with a new three-year degree – the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) – which was also an evening programme, the second degree to be offered by the faculty since it was established in 1969 as a department in the Faculty of Social Sciences, and later as a full-fledged faculty in 1980. The BBA took off in the 1993/94 academic year.

Ever since modern medical care services were introduced in Uganda, the nursing profession had been regarded as a non-degree discipline and, as such, it had no place at the university. In Uganda, nurses were only seen as auxiliaries to Physicians and Surgeons. But all that changed when in the 1993/94 academic year, Makerere University launched the first ever four-year Bachelor of Science degree programme in Nursing. Planning for the new degree took more than three years, culminating in the creation of a Department of Nursing in the Faculty of Medicine. Assistance to the new department came from the Bolton Pyne School of Nursing of the Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio. They not only provided training opportunities for would-be lecturers who had to upgrade their qualifications from Diploma to a Masters degree in Nursing, but also sent teams of professors to help with the teaching. In fact, the Dean of Nursing at Case

Western was a regular visitor to the department in its formative years. Additional assistance was solicited from McMaster University at Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; the University of Liverpool in the UK where some of the first members of staff of the department studied for their Masters degrees, as well as the Rockefeller Foundation. And as we shall see later, this was one of the departments that Rockefeller Foundation supported with an initial cheque of US\$90, 000, to get it off the ground. The idea of a graduate nurse in Uganda was new and indeed revolutionary, and perhaps not well understood. I have a feeling that at the time we launched the Degree in Nursing, the country was not yet ready for graduate nurses and this is likely to go on for some time. My gut feeling is based on the levels within the health service at which the graduate nurses are so far deployed by the Ministry of Public Service. They were still seen as just any other nurses. It required additional work to get the message across that graduate nurses had a lot more to offer than the non-graduate nurses and midwives. We shall see more about the BSc Nursing programme later.

Other equally important programmes initiated in Professor Kajubi's time included the introduction of the Master of Business Administration in the Faculty of Commerce, the first post-graduate programme ever in the Faculty of Commerce; the Master of Physical Planning in the Faculty of Technology with technical and financial support from German Technical Cooperation Agency, GTZ; the operationalisation of the Department of Women and Gender Studies with support from the Swedish Research Agency (SAREC) before it became part of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). By the time Professor Kajubi left Makerere, negotiations with the Rockefeller Foundation to allow Makerere University participate in the Public Health Schools without Walls (PHSW) programme had just begun. He was also responsible for Makerere's participation in the NUFU-supported collaborative programme, which linked several Norwegian universities with Makerere.

Professor Kajubi was a man who never shied away from bold and sometimes controversial decisions. In 1992, he supported a new but somewhat controversial undergraduate admission scheme – the Biological Children Admission Scheme. The intention was to assist the biological children of members of staff whose Advanced Level grades were not strong enough for them to enter the university under the open, but fiercely competitive admission scheme. In its original design, the scheme was open-ended, allowing children of staff to be admitted to a course of their choice. In other words, there was no restriction on the quality of the child's grades vis-à-vis the course of first choice. The scheme seems to have arisen out of the arguments advanced by some members of staff. The proponents of the scheme were mainly those that were complaining that they were teaching other peoples' children under very difficult conditions when theirs had been left out. It was as if they were justifying the old adage which says "man eateth where he worketh".

On the other hand, the opponents of the scheme were quick to point out that the scheme amounted to backdoor admissions; arguing that, out there, there were many equally deserving students, particularly from rural schools who could not gain admission to the university on exactly the same grounds of low grades. Now, here was the university giving preferential treatment to children of people who are well educated and reasonably better off than the rural folks. Unlike rural parents, Makerere University members of staff were in a far better economic position, at least in relative terms, and many could afford to educate their children at good secondary schools. The fact that their children scored poor grades was a clear indication that they were academically weak and therefore, did not merit preferential treatment. This school of thought believed that the Biological Child Scheme was unfair, making it easy for mediocre students to gain entrance to the university. To them, the university seemed to be practising double standards when everyone out there knew that, at Makerere University, admission was strictly on merit; why dilute a time tested and trusted system? However, when all was said and done, the proponents of the scheme carried the day. The case had been made for the University Council to approve the scheme, which commenced in the 1992/93 academic year.

In spite of the scheme being believed to be a done deal, the complaints persisted and eventually went beyond the confines of the university, and soon drew the attention of the Minister of Education, Mr Amanywa Mushega. Contrary to the anticipation of everyone at Makerere, the Minister allowed it to continue, but in a modified form. However, the Minister was concerned that leaving such a sensitive admission scheme open-ended would invite unending criticism and, perhaps, rightly so. He advised that students under this scheme should not be admitted to professional courses such as Law or Medicine. The scheme had to be restricted to general courses like BA or BSc and other courses of similar nature.

Secondly, for a child of a member of staff to qualify for admission under this scheme, his or her "A" Level scores had to be not less than six points below the cut off point for the course applied for. The Minister's modification took much of the sting out of the controversy. I am tempted to believe that the Minister chose not to abolish the scheme outright because the bitter battles with MUASA and the university students were still fresh in his mind. He therefore, saw it as some kind of motivation for the disgruntled staff. In fact, by the time I left in 2004, the scheme was still in existence and was seen as one of Professor Kajubi's lasting legacies at Makerere. It was interesting to note that, in 1997, one of the best students in Medicine – a female – was actually admitted under the Biological Child Scheme, beating those who had come in under the merit-based admission scheme.

Perhaps those students were, after all, not as academically dull as the anti-scheme lobbyists had perceived them to be. It can also be argued that, in a way, this female student's outstanding achievement, if not seen as an isolated case,

vindicated those who had always maintained that the “A” level grades were more of an admission instrument the university had to use to arrive at the required number of students it could admit per course each year, than a measure of academic competence.

Strategic planning was a relatively new management tool in most universities. It was considered more of a corporate tool. But when African universities started struggling for financial survival, they realised that they needed to run their affairs in a business-like manner and therefore, a strategic plan was a useful management tool for that purpose. However, Makerere was slow to adapt to this new way of planning; so, for a long time, it operated without a plan of any kind. The pressure to develop a strategic plan came from its donors who were becoming increasingly reluctant to give money to a university which did not have such a vital document. The donors wanted to know whether what the university was asking them to fund was among its top priorities, and the only way they could decipher the university’s priorities was from its strategic plan. The donors also wanted to see Makerere develop a clear and well-articulated vision and mission.

Professor Kajubi heeded the advice and initiated the process of developing the first strategic plan for the university. He did not hire professional planners; instead, he chose to rely on in-house expertise to develop a home-grown plan. On the advice of the Vice Chancellor, the University Council under the chairmanship of one of Uganda’s veteran political figures, Mr Mathias Ngobi, set up a Task Force chaired by Professor Livingstone Luboobi of the Department of Mathematics, to draft the university’s first ever five-year strategic plan. Although not written by professional planners, Luboobi’s draft marked the beginning of strategic planning at Makerere.

Professor Kajubi did not stay long enough to put his plan into action. Nevertheless, he laid the foundations on which his successors had to build. No doubt, Professor Kajubi was a high achiever but also a man dogged by several misfortunes. His first term as Vice Chancellor came to an abrupt end in 1979, hardly two years after he was appointed. His second term also came to a sudden end, only three years after his re-appointment. However, within those relatively short times, he managed to introduce so many innovations and transformations at Makerere, an institution which had earned an unenviable reputation of a very conservative university. Yet, despite these impressive achievements to his credit, he was never given the chance to consolidate them. His problems seem to have begun with the students’ protests of 1990. Perhaps, he could have gotten away with most of his problems but the controversial giving away of the university’s land in Kantanga Valley, which the university appeared to have signed away to dubious developers who had claimed to be the *bona fide* owners, was the last straw that broke the camel’s back.

The piece of land in question, which is about 30 acres in size, lies between Makerere and Mulago hills. Most of it is a water-logged swamp, but it is also home

to many Wandegeya slum dwellers. In the past, the university's Games Union rugby fields were located there but constant flooding and rampant insecurity made the fields unusable. In fact, in the 1970s and most of the 80s, Katanga Valley was a serious security risk to passers-by, mostly medical students who were using it as a shortcut to Mulago. A paved footpath had been built through the valley when John Butime was Guild President in the late 60s. Later, the students named it after another firebrand Guild President, Olara Otunu, who challenged Amin's Minister of Education, Brigadier Barnabas Kili, to explain his Government's poor human rights record and other excesses and abuses. Besides insecurity, neglect and lack of regular maintenance made the path totally impassable.

In a funny turn of events, Professor Kajubi had been approached by a group of developers who wanted to construct a secondary school in the north-eastern corner of the Katanga land overlooking the new Mulago Hospital. The investors claimed to have bought a plot there from a family that claimed to own the valley, nicknamed Katanga Valley. According to their story, the family had acquired the land in 1922. However, before they went ahead to develop their plot, they wanted to be sure Makerere University had no claim to that land. The Vice Chancellor instructed the University Legal Officer to check out the records at the Land Office. Nothing turned up after a search in the Land Registry. There was no record to show that Makerere University ever owned the Katanga Valley land. The title deeds found on the file belonged to the family that had sold the plot to the school developers and everything looked perfectly legal and genuine. Case closed, or so the Vice Chancellor thought. The developers were given a go-ahead to implement their project on their plot. What was not known at the time of the search in the Land Office was that the original title deed in the names of Makerere College had been destroyed and replaced with a fake one.

Apparently, Professor Kajubi had no way of knowing that the title deed in the Land Office had been tampered with. He was also unaware that copies of the original title deed had survived the looting and destruction of the 1978-79 liberation war and subsequent corruption in the Land Office. Neither did the officials in the Land Office who were involved in its disappearance know that copies of genuine title deed existed elsewhere. When the Governor, at the time, gave this piece of land to Makerere College in 1943, which was later confirmed by Governor Sir Andrew Benjamin Cohen in the 1950s, copies of the title deed were kept in the vaults of former Glindleys Bank on Kampala Road and in the Government's Cartographic Office at Entebbe. When some people started raising concern about the suspicious circumstances under which the school developers had acquired what was supposed to be Makerere's land, the then University Secretary, Reverend David Sentongo, commissioned the Head of Surveying in the Faculty of Technology, Nassani Batungi, to investigate and establish the facts about the ownership of the land in Katanga Valley.

After his investigations, which included a search at the Government Cartographic Office at Entebbe, Batungi wrote a four-page report in which he alerted the University Administration that the developers who had started constructing buildings on the land in Katanga Valley, had acquired the plots illegally. According to Batungi's findings, indeed the land belonged to Makerere University.

During the colonial era and soon after independence, it was common practice for institutions like Makerere College to keep very important documents in bank vaults. In the 1950s, Glindleys Bank was one of the college's bankers. It was therefore, decided that a check be made at the bank. When the bank's archives were opened, Makerere College's title deed for the Katanga Valley land was there, intact. This must have come as shocking news to the Vice Chancellor.

Soon, the story of the discovery of the original land title leaked to the press. On May 14, 1993 the *New Vision* flashed it as the lead story on the front page. The story, as the paper reported it, portrayed the Vice Chancellor as an accomplice in the scam. Unfortunately, most people believed the *New Vision* story instead of Professor Kajubi's version of the events. It seemed the Minister of Education was among those who chose not to believe the Vice Chancellor's version of the story. Moreover, Professor Kajubi had earlier queried the wisdom behind the appointment of a person who had been earning thousands of dollars a month on a World Bank job to the position of Academic Registrar, a job which carried a monthly pay cheque of less than US\$300. Apparently, the Vice Chancellor's seemingly innocent query had not gone down well with the Minister. The Minister seemed to have felt slighted by the Vice Chancellor who was questioning the judgement of the Appointments Board and his own. I was informed that the Minister made it a point to comment on Professor Kajubi's action during a speech he delivered at the farewell party for Bernard Onyango and other retiring university officials, which the new Academic Registrar attended. Any rapport that existed between the two men was fast disappearing. From then on, Professor Kajubi's fate seemed to be sealed. As far as the Minister was concerned, this was a point of no return. Kajubi had to go. From then on, the "mischievous" Vice Chancellor was simply marking time. The search for his replacement was on. As someone who had been at Makerere for a long time commented, what happened to Professor Kajubi was reminiscent of the kind of relationship Yusuf Lule had with Dr Luyimbaazi Zaake.

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## My Own Experience

### **My Entry into Academic Administration – Beginning as Head of the Department of Chemistry (1987 – 1993)**

In the line of succession, I was Makerere University's eighth Vice Chancellor and that was in a space of 23 years since Makerere was inaugurated as a national university in October 1970. Prior to my appointment, the average tenure of a Vice Chancellor at Makerere was just about three years. That was how insecure the Vice Chancellor's job was. As Professor Kajubi used to say, the Vice Chancellor at Makerere had become a casual labourer. At that turn-over rate, I thought I was about to become one. But as we shall soon discover, I had made that judgement rather prematurely.

There is an old saying that "chance favours a prepared mind", but I strongly doubt whether mine was ever prepared for this appointment. In spite of all the tribulations, Makerere still had a huge academic flare. It was, and is still an institution constantly in the eyes of the public. Most of its former Vice Chancellors had been intellectual giants in their own right. Was I one of them? This was one of the many questions which kept racing through my head when I was informed that I had been appointed as Professor Kajubi's successor. Fine, I had succeeded him at Kyambogo, but was I succeeding him again at Makerere? Was that not too much? Secondly, the job of a Vice Chancellor at Makerere had become too risky and without security of tenure. Vice Chancellors could be hired and fired any time at the whims of the appointing authority. Who wanted such a risky, thankless and insecure job? Was I prepared to take on a job with such known risks, for which I could be publicly humiliated and summarily dismissed? As far as I was concerned, I had long worked out a road map for my academic career and being Vice Chancellor was not one of the milestones in my career path. Even if I were to nurture such an ambition, the probability of ever being considered for the job was simply too low for me to waste my time thinking about it.

Whatever criteria the Chancellors were using to choose the Vice Chancellors, I did not seem to have the slightest clue or the required credentials. As I have said before, I was one of those Ugandans who had decided to keep Uganda's politics at arms length. My preoccupation was my academic work, which I was actually enjoying, and the survival of my young family. I had set myself specific milestones as I progressed towards the top of my academic career.

This account is not intended to be an autobiography. It is a compilation of some of the events that had an influence on my life during my long years at Makerere, which will give the reader an insight into how the son of a retired UEB Senior Charge man, born and raised along the shores of Lake Victoria, made it to the pinnacle of Makerere University, Uganda's premier university.

For me, the road to the top had been a road of incredible surprises. With the exception of those coming after the repeal of the Makerere University Act of 1970, I also strongly suspect that the same is true of the men who served as Makerere's Vice Chancellors before me. If, in the days of the pre-2001 Act, there were members of staff at Makerere who had cherished the ambition of being appointed Vice Chancellor, they must have been terribly disappointed, because back then the Chancellors never advertised the job. The appointment of a Vice Chancellor was entirely the prerogative of the Chancellor on the advice of his Minister of Education. In some instances, there were no prior consultations with the appointee. One would just suddenly hear the news over the radio that one had been appointed.

The Vice Chancellor had no written contract or letter of appointment. Only the instrument signed by the Chancellor served as the contract document. The duration one served as Vice Chancellor was also not specified. That is to say, at least in theory, that the Vice Chancellor's term of office was open-ended. In effect, this meant that he could keep the job for ever. However, as we have already seen, the practice was different. I guess that, by not giving Vice Chancellors written contracts, the Chancellors were cleverly avoiding being dragged to Courts of Law for breach of contract or for wrongful dismissal when they had reason to fire a Vice Chancellor without notice. So, they could hire and fire as they wished without fear of litigation.

I trace the genesis of my ascendancy to top echelons of Makerere back to the 1980s when Dr Olwa Odyek took over as Head of the Chemistry Department. Dr Odyek had a habit of entrusting me with the leadership of the department whenever he was away, in spite of the fact that there were other more senior colleagues around. I used to resist his requests, but he would insist that I stand in for him, though he never told me why he thought I was the most suitable person to act in his stead, and I too never bothered to ask.

Even then, I was not interested in the job of Head of Department because I knew that administration would tie me down and leave me with very little time for myself. I needed all my time for my academic pursuits and to moonlight for

my family. As I have said before, I used to like the eight o'clock lectures, specifically for that purpose. But one day in July 1987, all that changed. As usual, I went to give my eight o'clock lecture. I believe I was teaching second-year students from the small lecture theatre on the ground floor of the department's main building. Nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary, just another day, until I ended the lecture a few minutes before nine o'clock. As I was walking out of the lecture theatre, covered in white chalk, an elderly messenger in the Vice Chancellor's office by the name Saloongo Lutalo was waiting at the entrance with a letter marked "urgent". He told me he had been standing there for over half an hour. He had decided to wait until I finished teaching because he did not want to interrupt my lecture. His instructions were that he had to hand the letter to me in person. He also wanted me to sign for it in his delivery book.

Saloongo Lutalo was a person I had known for some time when he was a messenger at our Dean's office. He had just been transferred to the Vice Chancellor's Office, together with Ms Dorcas Muherya, who was the Dean's personal secretary. When he handed me the letter, I went straight to my office, which was on the first floor to read it there.

However, on my way up, I could not help wondering why the Vice Chancellor had written this urgent letter to me. Nevertheless, I resisted the temptation to open it before I got to my office, lest it contained bad news. Little did I know that I was in for a big surprise!

In the office, I quickly opened the letter and began to read. I could hardly believe what I was reading. The Vice Chancellor was brief and to the point. He had appointed me as acting Head of Department with immediate effect until further notice. I had to arrange for an immediate handover with the previous Head, Dr Olwa Odyek. I was not given a choice to accept or to refuse the appointment. There and then, my life had been transformed. I became destiny's child, so to speak. Besides a thumping heart, several questions came to mind. What had my friend Olwa done? After all, at the time he was fired, term limits for Heads of Departments had not yet been introduced; so the problem was not an expired term. What was it? Why did the Vice Chancellor not consult me before to find out whether I was interested in the job or not? Besides, the department had members of staff more senior than me, so why pick on me? How was I going to ask a friend who had put so much trust in me over the years, to vacate the office without notice and tell him to hand over all departmental keys to me? Was that not tantamount to betrayal and a stab in the back of an old friend? Could any sane person believe that I had not secretly conspired to have him removed as Head of Department? These and other questions were begging for answers, which only the Vice Chancellor knew.

Before I could break the bad news to Dr Odyek, I decided to seek audience with the Vice Chancellor for more details. I had been thrown into a state of unexpected confusion and I badly needed some quick answers. As I have said

before, Professor Kirya had one good attribute; he was always accessible if and when he was around. As soon as I entered his office, he congratulated me and apologised for not having consulted me before he made the decision to appoint me as acting Head of Department. He intimated me with the reasons which had prompted the University Administration to take an immediate corrective action. Why me? I asked. Did he think I had the Midas touch?

Professor Kirya had a quick answer. University Management thought I had the potential to provide leadership to the department. In a polite way, I protested saying that I was not aware of any leadership qualities in me, and that I had never been a leader before. He simply laughed off what to him appeared to be a lame protest and assured me that he and his colleagues would give me all the assistance I needed, and that there was nothing to worry about. How was I going to break this sad news to Dr Odyek? Again, the Vice Chancellor's answer came quickly. He had already informed him. With those reassurances, I thanked him for "putting so much trust in a rookie" and walked back to the department to start the unenviable task of preparing to take over from Dr Odyek.

I expected bitterness and resentment, but Olwa Odyek turned out to be a magnanimous colleague. He took the news calmly, which made the handing over a very smooth affair. I was simply fretting over nothing. As a friend reminded me, all the people in leadership positions, regardless of how they got there, were as human in flesh and blood as I was.

This was also a reminder that, contrary to the common belief in Buganda, no human being was born with a double umbilical cord, not even kings. It was time to stop fussing and get on with the job. As people usually, "the rest is history". When the Department of Pharmacy opened at the Medical School in the late 1980s, Dr Odyek asked the Appointments Board for a transfer to the new department. The Board granted him his request. I was sad to see him go. Colleagues were congratulating me and wishing me well in my new job, which helped me to settle quickly and with confidence. Two years later, the new system of electing Heads of Departments was introduced. I had to decide whether I should continue or step down for another person. Before I could make up my mind, some colleagues approached me, saying they had liked what I had done in the last two years and asked me to continue as Head of Department. As far as they were concerned, there was no need to change leadership.

When the time came to elect a Head of Department in 1989, I was returned unopposed. However, when my letter of appointment came, the University Secretary, Reverend David Sentongo, had back-dated my contract to July 1987. The implication was that I had only one year to serve on the new term. It also meant that the election had to be repeated in 1990. Although it was an odd contract, which seemed to just legitimise the period I had served as acting Head, I was not overly bothered, I just went about doing my job with the same vigour

and enthusiasm as before. Interestingly, as Dr Olwa Odyek used to entrust me with the leadership of the department whenever he was out of office, so did Professor Mugambi who was then Dean of Science. For some reason, Professor Mugambi had also found it convenient to leave me acting as Dean whenever he was away, instead of calling on his more senior colleagues.

Quite frankly, I did not know what to make of all this confidence my senior colleagues were putting in me. Occasionally, I used to feel embarrassed when Professor Mugambi asked me to act as Dean instead of Professor so and so or other Heads of Departments. It is plausible that Professor Mugambi used to pick me because of my passion for hard work, my obsession with order, or for what some used to describe as my genial and easy-going nature. I could never tell. However, with hindsight, I had reason to believe that these were pointers to what lay ahead for me. In fact, I recall a small conversation I had with Ignatius Bitariho, one of the long-serving laboratory assistants in my department. He jokingly told me that I was likely to go far, and that my success in life would be beyond my wildest expectations. That was years before I became Head of Department. I simply told him to knock it off. What had he seen special in me? I remember telling him to stop playing fortune-teller, and that was the end of that conversation.

In the late 1990s, the department was supposed to hold an election for a new Head and my colleagues had once again decided to elect me unopposed. However, before we were through with the election, destiny changed the course of my life once again. I had been doing part-time teaching at Kampala High School for several years to make ends meet and most of the students I taught thought I was a good teacher, though I had never trained as a teacher. In fact, all those years I taught at Kampala High School, I was technically a licensed teacher. I had continued to teach at the same school and to coach a few “A” Level students even when I became busier as a result of my new administrative responsibilities. Poverty was still real.

At the time, being a Head of Department at Makerere was just a high sounding title with additional responsibilities, without any meaningful compensation for the extra work. You had to earn your living the hard way or your family would starve, and mine was not a small family. Beyond the informal high school teaching and teaching content to the BSc Education students registered in the Faculty of Science, which was all I knew about the teaching profession, I had never been a student in the School of Education; but that did not stop unexpected things related to Education happening to me.

One day in 1990, the former Minister of Education, Amanya Mushega decided to pay an impromptu visit to the university. While I was busy at my desk, I received a message from the University Secretary that the Minister of Education was on the way coming and was likely to visit my department, so I should get ready for him. Although the notice was very short, fortunately we were

well prepared. During my time as Head, we had developed a system of keeping our department clean and tidy all the time and most members of staff were always around doing their work. True to his word, Amanywa Mushega came and I had the pleasure of taking him on a guided tour of the department. He found several members of staff busy in their research laboratories. He was particularly fascinated with Dr Olwa Odyek's work on natural products. He found him performing a soxhlet solvent extraction on some plant leaves. I was told that, in his subsequent discussions with the University Administration, the Minister kept making reference to the fascinating experiment of Olwa Odyek – "the man he found cooking herbs in the Chemistry Department".

The Minister visited several other departments in the University before meeting the Vice Chancellor and members of the University Administration. Later, I learnt that the Minister had expressed disappointment with most of the departments he had visited, except one. He was disappointed because the Heads of some of the departments were absent and no one seemed to know where they were, or because he had found some departments in shambles. The exception, according to what Reverend Sentongo told me later, was our department. While congratulating me on saving the day, Reverend Sentongo said that the Minister had told them that among the departments time had allowed him to visit, it was only the Department of Chemistry at the Faculty of Science he had found functioning properly. I took Reverend Sentongo's compliment as flattery and the whole episode was soon forgotten. Then in September of the same year, the Minister happened to be looking for a new Principal for ITEK, an affiliate of Makerere University, to replace Professor Kajubi who had returned to Makerere as Vice Chancellor. Also, the acting Principal had been rejected and chased away by the staff after the death of one prominent member of staff under suspicious circumstances. The Minister's choice fell on my unsuspecting self. This was in spite of my lack of any formal qualification in the field of Education; and it was the first time I was breaking ties with Makerere in about 20 years.

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## The Kyambogo Years (1990 – 1993)

### **My Years as Principal of the Institute of Teacher Education – The Unplanned Training for the Big Shoes**

Soon after the departure of Professor Kajubi, the first Principal, ITEK plunged into a serious crisis, the cause of which seemed to have been staff agitation for a living wage and the subsequent death of one of them under mysterious circumstances. As a result of those incidents, the institute had been receiving bad press for a good part of 1990. Apparently, some disgruntled staff had taken a leaf out of MUASA's book and had formed an academic staff association they decided to call Institute of Teacher Education Academic Staff Association (ITEASA), which was quite a militant group. When Professor Kajubi left for Makerere after serving for two years as Principal, his deputy, Dr John Bigala remained acting in his stead. Hell broke loose when the acting Principal received a request from the National Police Commissar to nominate some members of staff of ITEK to participate in a political education course, popularly known as the cadre course, at Kyankwanzi in Kiboga District.

At the time, it was routine for Government to direct civil servants to go for the cadre course at Kyankwanzi or at some other location. Regardless of rank, all Government officials had to attend the cadre course. The courses were numbered and the course number appeared on one's certificate of attendance. In what I think was a rushed judgement, the ITEK Administration decided to select some of the more militant members of ITEASA for the course, perhaps in the hope that, after attending the cadre course, they would tone down their militancy. As expected, those selected refused to go. The acting Principal and the Secretary/Registrar who was also doubling as the acting Deputy Principal, the late Jonathan Rusoke, insisted that those selected had no choice than to comply with the order, which had come from the Ministry of Education. Any member of staff who refused to abide by the order would face disciplinary action. This was construed

by ITEASA as coercion. Still, they refused to go. One of the members of staff who had been selected for the course, George Kyamuhangire, happened to be the Warden of one of the male students' halls of residence called Nyerere Hall. One day, Kyamuhangire went missing. No one seemed to know where he was, not even members of his family. After three days of searching, he was found dead at his office in Nyerere Hall under dubious and unexplained circumstances.

As expected, accusations started flying. The acting Principal, Dr Bigala, was the first Institute Administrator to be implicated in what ITEASA termed the cold-blooded murder of one of their prominent members. The ITEASA leadership accused Dr Bigala of having been excessively hard on Kyamuhangire for refusing to go to Kyankwanzi. The acting Deputy Principal was also not spared of ITEASA's wrath. What followed was mayhem. Members of ITEASA ran amok. They were determined to see both Bigala and Rusoke dead too. Bigala was chased out of his office with stones flying behind him. He had to take cover in the house of a staff member he was sending to Kyankwanzi.

Jonathan Rusoke had to flee for his life too. Suddenly, the death of Kyamuhangire had turned ITEK into an ungovernable institution. To calm the situation, the Minister of Education set up a Committee of Enquiry, chaired by the former Principal of the National Teachers' College at Nkozi, Emmanuel Kiwanuka, to probe into the circumstances which had led to Kyamuhangire's death, and other issues, such as how the Administration had used the funds Government had been providing to the institute. The Committee's terms of reference also looked into all staff grievances. While the Kiwanuka Committee was probing into the affairs of the institute, the task of keeping it running was assigned to Faustin Epeju and Innocent Byuma. Byuma had been acting as the institute's Secretary/Registrar while Epeju came from the Department of Agricultural Education and had been acting as the institute's Dean of Students. After an exhaustive inquiry, the Committee could not establish what had actually led to the death of George Kyamuhangire. However, according to the post-mortem report, the death appeared to have been an act of suicide.

Many good things came out of this tragic incident. Among other things, ITEASA had also been agitating for the legal status of the institute to be formalised through a statute enacted by the National Resistance Council, which was acting as the national Parliament at the time. ITEASA also wanted ITEK to have similar governing structures as Makerere University, such as the Academic Board, the Appointments Board and the Institute Council. Government conceded to all these demands.

In this respect, ITEK fared better than its neighbour, the Uganda Polytechnic, Kyambogo, which was never legally established until it became part of Kyambogo University in 2002. The ITEK Statute was modelled along the lines of the Makerere University of 1970, and only differed in a few aspects. However, the

Statute of 1990 had several lacunae, the most significant one being the silence on the institute's titular head. The Makerere Act was specific; it named the Head of State as the university's Chancellor. The ITEK Statute had no such provision. Perhaps, this was because ITEK was not a degree-awarding institution; therefore, it could not enjoy the same privileges as Makerere University, to which it was affiliated for the purposes of awarding the degree of Bachelor of Education. In other words, the BEd degree offered at ITEK was a Makerere qualification. It was left to the institute's Governing Council to sort this out. I also remember, as a member of the University Senate in 1988/89, how we had struggled to approve of the many BEd programmes ITEK had submitted to the university through the School of Education. The many voluminous documents made the approval process extremely slow; so, naturally, it took the Senate a long time to approve all of them.

Unfortunately, the Senate's dilemma was not appreciated by ITEK. ITEK perceived the slow pace at which Makerere was approving its programmes as a deliberate effort on the part of Makerere to frustrate, and even kill, its programmes. But in my view, Senate had a point; many important aspects of the programmes were either missing or inadvertently omitted, which called for substantial revision of some documents. In fact, several of the proposed programmes had been rushed through. In most instances, when Makerere rejected poorly drafted documents, the action did not please staff and management at ITEK, but because Senate insisted on the correction being made good before approving the programmes, ITEK had no choice but to comply. Eventually, most of the programmes were approved. The BEd degree was approved as a two-year programme as ITEK had requested and justified. Thanks to Professor Kajubi's skilful negotiation, the BEd became the first two-year undergraduate degree at Makerere. In fact, by the time Professor Kajubi left the institute, most of the programmes had been approved by Senate and the University Council.

Besides the Makerere BEd degree, ITEK had its own Diploma programmes. Some of them, like the two-year Diploma in Teacher Education which was the equivalent of a Grade Four teacher's qualification, were inherited from the National Institute of Education which had been transferred from Makerere. Holders of this qualification trained as Grade Three Primary Teachers College tutors. ITEK was also responsible for administering and managing the Grade Three Primary Teachers' examinations. There were also some residual Grade Five Secondary Diploma programmes which the institute inherited from the old National Teachers College, Kyambogo which, because of their specialised nature, could not be transferred to any of the ten National Teachers Colleges. Disciplines such as French, Fine Art, Music, Agriculture, Home Economics and technical subjects like Carpentry and Joinery, and Metal Work were retained. Some of the residual disciplines were being offered as part of the BEd degree as

well. ITEK was also responsible for supervising all the Primary Teachers Colleges in the country which, at that time, stood at 65 in number as well as all the ten Grade Five National Teachers' Colleges. Besides being the examining body, it was also responsible for the curriculum. However, ITEK was not responsible for the day-to-day administration of the colleges. In this aspect, the colleges were independent of ITEK.

With the Statute in place and after the Emmanuel Kiwanuka's Committee of Inquiry into the affairs of the institute had submitted its report to Government, it was time for the Minister of Education and Sports to implement the recommendations and operationalise the ITEK Statute. According to the Minister, the appointment of the institute's top management; the Principal, Secretary, Registrar, Dean of Students and Bursar was the appropriate starting point. Incidentally, the Statute of 1990 had split the post of Secretary/Registrar into two separate positions of Secretary and Registrar. In fact, members of ITEA wrote the original draft Statute, which they then submitted to the Solicitor-General. Naturally, as one would have expected, some of the authors of this important document would have had their eyes on the institute's top positions. Unfortunately, the Minister of Education thought otherwise.

The Kiwanuka Committee had been very critical of the previous management team, made up of professional teachers and teacher trainers. So, as far as the Minister was concerned, the institute needed a capable manager as Principal to get it out of the crisis it had been plunged into. The Principal did not have to be a professional teacher. For advice on a suitable candidate, the Minister turned to his old friend, Dr Katebalirwa Amooti, a Lecturer in the Department of Literature at Makerere and a member of Kiwanuka's Committee. I do not know how my name came up in one of their discussions but it did. It turned out that Katebalirwe Amooti knew a lot more about me than I imagined. I knew Amooti reasonably well as a colleague at Makerere, but not that intimately. I suspect most of what he knew about me must have come from his sister, Mrs Betty Musoke, who worked under me as Senior Technician in the First Year Laboratory in the Chemistry Department and was a strong trade unionist too. In the later years, she was promoted, becoming one of the two Chief Technicians in the department, and possibly the first woman to hold that position in the Department of Chemistry.

Apparently, Dr Katebalirwe Ammoti was strongly convinced that I had all the attributes the Minister was looking for in the new institute's Principal. I was later told that when Katebalirwe mentioned my name, the Minister remembered his impromptu visit to the university and the Chemistry Department, where he had found a man cooking herbs. As I learnt later, the herbs and what he had seen in the department generally made a good impression on him. As aforesaid, the Minister rated our department as the best managed department he had seen on his tour earlier in the year.

The Minister could have announced my appointment over the mass media without consulting me first, because he had the powers to do so. Instead, he decided to invite me to his office, which by then was on the top floor of the short tower of the Crested Towers building. The meeting was very friendly, brief and to the point. He told me that, after exhaustive consultations, Government had decided to appoint me Principal of the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo. The appointment would take immediate effect. There are times when crazy things you least expect happen and you are just left agape. For me, the Minister's decision was certainly one of those very crazy things. I did not know how to react. Going to ITEK, for whatever reason, was something that had never crossed my mind. It was not a place where I would spend part of my career. I knew ITEK as an institution for teachers and although I had been teaching for many years, I had never bothered to study for a formal qualification in Education. Now here I was, being asked to go and head a teacher training institution, moreover an institution in a serious state of turmoil.

A member of staff had died there in mysterious circumstances and the acting Principal had narrowly escaped being hacked to death by an angry staff mob. Did the Minister wish me an early death? That was not the place for a right thinking person to go. One had to be out of his mind to accept this appointment, so I thought. Besides, it was an appointment, which would take me away from my Chemistry. Unfortunately, I had not realised that Minister Amanywa Mushega had already made up his mind and there would be no negotiations; chapter closed! However, to be fair to him, he took time to explain why he thought I was the right person for the job, in spite of the fact that I had no formal qualification in Education. He allayed my worst fears, saying that he was fully aware of the possible risks, but the situation at ITEK had been sufficiently brought under control and, therefore, there was nothing to worry too much about. He further assured me of his support and cooperation, and the fact that I was going to ITEK on promotion.

After my usual due consultations with my family and a few friends, I accepted the appointment, although my family also had fears and reservation about going to ITEK at such a time. This was the first time I was leaving Makerere for a totally new place.

My immediate concern was my acceptance by the ITEK community. Would the staff welcome another Principal from Makerere after what they believed was a disastrous performance by the previous administrators from Makerere? I had to wait and see.

Although the Minister had said that my appointment took immediate effect, I had to wait for an appointment letter. This took a while to come and, actually, I had started hoping that the Minister had changed his mind. I did not tell the Vice Chancellor about my impending new appointment and subsequent transfer

to Kyambogo, for the simple reason that I did not know how to introduce the subject to him. I was also still unsure whether the Minister really meant what he said; so it could turn out to be a premature disclosure. I thought the Minister was in a better position to tell him, so I left it at that. The cat was let out of the bag late one evening in September 1990. It was on my normal routine to stay working until late in the evening. Professor Lutalo Bosa, the Deputy Vice Chancellor had been my Dean and knew about my long working hours. My appointment letter written by the former Permanent Secretary, Fr Tebenderana, was routed through the Vice Chancellor. It was delivered to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Kajubi late in the evening. Professor Kajubi and Professor Lutalo Bosa, like me, were also in the habit of working late. So, when the letter arrived, Professor Kajubi called Professor Lutalo Bosa and after some discussion over my abrupt appointment as Principal of ITEK, he asked him to find out whether I was still at my desk in the department. Indeed, I was still working. Professor Bosa said the Vice Chancellor had an important message for me and that I should report to him immediately. At first, I did not figure out what this important message could be. However, when I entered the office, the Vice Chancellor congratulated me on my new appointment as Principal of ITEK. He further commented that, apparently, I had also been appointed Professor. He handed the letter to me and expressed his disappointment at losing me. He thanked me for a job well done, adding that the university had appreciated my enormous contribution. He then asked whether I had been consulted before the appointment was made. The question took me unawares. I had to tell a white lie that no such consultations were made. He was amazed but not very surprised. This used to happen so often. Nevertheless, I suspected he did not really believe me.

Now that my appointment had been made official, it was time to inform my colleagues in the department that I was no longer part of them. I further told them it was not a choice I personally made; rather, fate had once again intervened in my career path. I assured them, as I had assured the Vice Chancellor, that although I would be gone, I would continue to assist the department with some teaching and supervision of postgraduate students. In fact, this I did religiously all the three years I was at ITEK. Every Saturday I would go to Makerere to teach a final year course on Group Theory, Molecular Symmetry and Electronic Spectroscopy – a subject I enjoyed teaching free of charge.

It was time to say goodbye to the department and the people who had become very much a part of me as I had also probably become a part of them. Dr Sam Mukasa, now deceased, was a colleague I had known right from my undergraduate days in the 1970s when he used to supervise us as a part-time demonstrator in the Physical Chemistry practical. He was a person I had come to admire as an assiduous worker and for his high integrity and astute intelligence. He was also one of the members of staff at the Department of Chemistry students

loved to hate for his difficult examination questions which were not the recall type, but which required logical thinking. Students used to fail these exams, and they loathed him for it. Sam was always there whenever you needed him and judiciously did whatever he was asked to do. Therefore, when time came for me to make a choice for a successor who would take over the headship of the department, in an acting capacity until a substantive Head was elected, I did not have to look far. Dr Mukasa was my obvious choice. I communicated my preferred choice for a successor to the Vice Chancellor and asked him to appoint Sam as Acting Head.

The Vice Chancellor did not doubt my judgement; he simply endorsed it and did what was needed. This made my handing-over easy and straightforward. However, as I handed over to Dr Mukasa, I could not help thinking about the many things I had started but were still unfinished. For instance, I had thought that the European Union-sponsored renovations in the Faculty of Science would begin with the Department of Chemistry, but the University Secretary decided otherwise; Chemistry was to come last. This was a project on which I had spent a lot of my time and energy planning, but could not see through to the end. The time had come for me to leave my comfort zone at Makerere for the uncertainties of Kyambogo.

It is often said that certain things are easier said than done. My move to Kyambogo bears ample testimony to this old adage. The appointment was relatively easy to accept but it was proving a lot harder for me to pluck up courage and go. I did not know where to start. I hardly knew anybody at Kyambogo beyond some casual acquaintances. I had no idea what skeletons were lurking in ITEK's cupboards, awaiting my arrival before starting to wreak havoc all over again. To complicate matters further, I guessed the ITEK community had not been prepared for me. Frankly, very few people at ITEK knew me. It was like I was taking a leap in the dark. I was frightened. I also feared for my children. They were still young; the youngest was only three years old. They were about to leave all their playmates behind. The prospect had saddened them. For that reason, I was holding back until I convinced myself that it was pointless to continue procrastinating. I had accepted the responsibility and that was it – *fait accompli*. At the time, I did not even have a personal car. I could not afford one. Worse still, I had only a few worn-out suits which were possibly out of fashion; yet as Principal, I was expected to be formally dressed all the time, something I was not used to. This inevitably meant buying new shirts and new suits. Makerere had spoilt many of us with its casual wear culture.

Since I left Belfast in July 1979, I had never bought a new suit. Besides, the years of hard work without a break had begun to take their toll on me. I was constantly feeling fatigued. I wondered whether I was really up to the task! Instead of arriving at ITEK with a bang, I chose to make it a low-key affair. I wore

my usual casuals and took a *matatu* taxi from Kampala to Banda. I then walked on foot all the way to the reception in the Administration Building. I asked for the Principal and the young woman at the reception directed me. I think she wanted to ask me why I wanted to see the Principal, but changed her mind and instead asked me to proceed.

I remember arriving at the acting Principal's office a few minutes after 10 o'clock on August 18 1990. The acting Principal, Mr Epeju, was not in the substantive office of the Principal but in the Dean of Students' office. That was where he had decided to work from. When I arrived, he was busy attending to a few people, so I decided to take my place in the short queue. When he finally beckoned to me, I pulled out my letter of appointment and handed it to him. I am sure it must have come as a big surprise to him. The Ministry of Education and Sports had not officially communicated my appointment to him or made it public. Poor Epeju quickly pulled himself together and apologised for keeping me waiting. I assured him that he had nothing to apologise for, because I had not made an appointment with him and that it was not my habit to jump queues. He called in Innocent Byuma and showed him my letter of appointment. Both welcomed me but wanted a bit of time to wind up whatever they were doing. I also thanked them for maintaining the institution at such a difficult time, and told them to take their time, as I was also not yet ready to take over from them, and with that, I left. I felt a sigh of relief, because finally the ice was broken.

It is another common saying that "first impressions matter". I must admit that my impressions of ITEK on my first day quickly dispelled all the fears and prejudices I had about the institution. I found the place calm and buzzing with normal activity. It seemed to me that the ugly episodes of the past few months were almost behind them. Epeju and Byuma had pacified the place. However, I could not help thinking that sometimes appearances can be deceptive, neither was I naïve to believe that all the ITEK troubles had vanished overnight. I had to cautiously wait and see whether this apparent calm was real.

Earlier, the Permanent Secretary had handed me a copy of the ITEK Statute, 1990 and the Kiwanuka Committee report, which he urged me to study carefully, because it was now my responsibility to actualise the Statute and to implement most of the recommendations in the Kiwanuka Committee report. It dawned on me that I had taken on a mammoth task. Nevertheless, I was fortunate. I was not going to do the job alone. The Minister had appointed my undergraduate classmate, Avitas Mitoma Tibarimbasa, as Institute Secretary and had retained Innocent Byuma as Registrar in an acting capacity. Farouk Mukasa, recruited from the Bursar's Department at Makerere during Professor Kajubi's time was still there as Bursar. The only top position, which remained unfilled, was that of the Deputy Principal. Therefore, I had a team to start with in the arduous task of rejuvenating the institute. Soon, I was to discover that indeed ITEASA was still alive and

well, but a bit subdued. There had been some recent changes in the association's leadership. The new leadership appeared to be taking a less militant stance and was in a lull. I guess this was partly because Government was addressing their grievances. It was now a game of "wait and see". It was also possible they were just watching to see how another bunch of administrators from Makerere was going to mess up things before they acted. To be fair to ITEASA, they gave us the benefit of the doubt, which we badly needed at the beginning of our administration.

When Dr Bigala and Mr Rusoke abandoned the institute for their own safety, staff recommended Epeju and Byuma should act as Principal and Secretary/Registrar respectively until Government sorted out the problems which had led to staff strife. The Ministry of Education and Sports accepted the recommendation. Within that short time, Epeju and Byuma had actually done a commendable job. By and large, they had managed to bring back a semblance of normalcy to an institution reeling from the effects of a serious crisis. By the time we took over, the situation was no longer so tense, and teaching had resumed in earnest. What made life a bit easy for me was the fact that the new Institute Secretary, Mr Tibarimbasa was a person I had known from our undergraduate days, and over the years we had become friends. He had just returned from the University of Manchester with a Masters degree, specialising in higher education financing. I had had the privilege of attending his public lecture organised by MUASA at Makerere in late 1989 and I was impressed by what he had had to say. Armed with the Statute and the Kiwanuka Committee report, we were ready to work. It was not long before we settled down to the administrative routines. Sarah Wamala, a seasoned secretary, who later became Mrs Sarah Lubaale, was assigned to me as my Personal Secretary. She was the best secretary the institute had at the time. She was very well organised. Her shorthand was excellent, her transcription and typing were, more often than not, error free. I must admit that when it comes to perfection, I took a thing or two from my father: I can be irritatingly demanding; therefore, I was lucky to have a Personal Secretary of her caliber.

We spent most of our first year at Kyambogo trying to actualise the provisions of the 1990 Statute. The institute's Governing Council was one of most urgent provisions we had to implement without delay. As I have pointed out, ITEK's Council was a mirror image of Makerere University Council in structure and composition. With nine members, Government had the largest share of seats on the Council. Fortunately, ITEASA and the students were represented too. Unfortunately, the Statute did not make provision for the representation of the administrative staff and workers. I figured that the administrators were few; their representation on Council could be ignored for the time being, but the workers were many and unionised, a force that could not be ignored. Fortunately, the Statute provided for two seats for the Council to fill. I made a proposal to allocate one of them to the workers. My proposal was accepted.

I was fortunate to have had Mr Basil Kiwanuka as Chairman of Council, with Mr Albert Brewer Abaliwano as his deputy. The two were men of vast experience in the public and private sectors respectively. Mr Kiwanuka, a graduate of the University of Wales, had been a high school teacher and an inspector of schools for many years. He was the first and the last Secretary of the defunct East African Examination Council, the fore-runner of Uganda Examinations Board (UEB). Although he did not serve for long, Basil Kiwanuka was also UEB's first Secretary until the late Eriaku took over. Mr Abaliwano had distinguished managerial experience in industry to his credit. By the time he was appointed to the ITEK Council, he was the Managing Director of Nile Breweries at Jinja. In a rare gesture of goodwill, and as a way of cementing the relationship between staff, Administration and the Institute Council, he invited all academic staff and senior administrators and hosted them to a get-together party at the Nile Breweries.

Other renowned public figures who served on the first ITEK Council included the former Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Professor Salvia Wander, and the former Editor-in-Chief of the *Weekly Topic* newspaper, Wafula Ogutu. Ogutu later left the *Weekly Topic* and started his own newspaper, *The Monitor*, but continued to serve on the Council. The other important organ we had to put in place was the Appointments Board which, like that of Makerere University, ran parallel to the Institute Council, with nine members who were all appointed by the Minister of Education and Sports. This was the first time for ITEK, which had been in existence for four years, to have such an organ whose sole purpose was to recruit, appraise, promote and discipline all categories of the institute's staff. Professor Jacayo Ocit, former Dean of the School of Education at Makerere University, was appointed its first Chairman with Mrs Faisi Barlow as Deputy Chair. Other members whose names I could find included the former Headmaster of Kibuli Secondary School, Abbas Mukasa Kawase, a Makerere undergraduate year mate and friend, Professor Victoria Mwaka, Head of the Department of Geography at Makerere at that time; Chango-Macho and Angello Okello. Mr John Ntimba, the Minister of State for Higher Education, inaugurated both the Institute Council and Appointments Board on the same day, 2nd November 1990. The two bodies were soon at work as a considerable backlog of business had accumulated and had to be disposed of immediately.

Before long, we realised that the volume of work the Institute Secretary was handling was growing and growing fast. There was need for an assistant. All this time, he was almost alone save for his personal secretary, Ms Beatrice Anyango who, for lack of space worked from the Principal's office. This in a way made communication between the two rather awkward. There were also a few clerical officers who, for historical reasons, carried the old civil service titles of Higher Executive Officers. Elijah Lweterekedde, transferred from the former NTC Kyambogo, was one of them. To help Mr Tibarimbasa run the Council and its Committees, as well as

the business of the Appointments Board efficiently, we recruited a young man, Vincent Okoth Ogola as Assistant Secretary. As we have seen, when ITEK was created out of NTC Kyambogo and NIE, the majority of the academic staff of the old NTC Kyambogo did not qualify to teach degree programmes. They were either retired or redeployed to other National Teachers' Colleges. However, a sizeable number was retained at ITEK. This group included one of the long-serving Mill Hill Catholic missionaries of Scottish descent, late Father Kevin McKee, who was in charge of Religious Education and the Chaplain of the Catholic community of all the educational institutions at Kyambogo and Nabisunsa. One of the first tasks of the Institute Council was to formulate policies and new terms and conditions of service for staff, to guide the Appointments Board in its work of regularising old staff taken over from NTC Kyambogo and NIE, as well as for staff recruitment, promotion and discipline of staff. The Institute Council quickly passed the policies and guidelines, and the Board began its job of implementing them straight away. This was a time of extremely hard work for the Institute Secretary and I, but then I was much younger, I could take the enormous pressure of work quite easily.

The staff that were on the ground before the 1990 Statute came into effect were not considered employees of the Institute Council, but of the Teaching Service Commission, the Public Service Commission and other Government bodies that had recruited them.

Those who came with the National Institute of Education were recruited by Makerere University. According to the new Statute, ITEK was now a corporate body and was, therefore, fully responsible for all its employees. It meant that their appointments had to be formalised and staff issued with new letters of appointment and new terms and conditions of service enacted by the ITEK Council, their new employer.

The Institute Council asked the Appointments Board to regularise the appointments of the old staff into the ITEK service first, before going out to recruit new staff. This was the Board's first assignment and because of its sensitivity, its handling required considerable tact. The Board asked all old staff to re-apply for their posts and to submit their papers to the Board afresh. As I expected, some staff questioned the rationale of being asked to re-apply for jobs they had been legally recruited to in the first place. Was this another ploy to get rid of them? They had seen what happened to their colleagues, who had to leave the institute because of inadequate academic qualifications. They were not keen for a repeat. In fact, I was concerned tempers would flare again. After some careful explanation that the exercise had no hidden motive, they eventually complied with the directive. Before the Parliament of Uganda granted ITEK a legal status through the Statute, all staff were either employees of both the Ministry of Education and Sports or belonged to Makerere University. Now that the institute was no longer under the direct control of the Ministry of Education and Sports, it had to own its

employees, hence the need for appraisal. We further told them that, since we were now at university college status, we had to satisfy Makerere University to which the institute was affiliated that our teaching staff met its minimum qualification requirements. With this explanation, we were able to convince staff to comply with the Council's order.

The new terms, including the new salary scales, were similar to what was obtained at Makerere at that time and were considerably better than those of Public Service. The exercise, tedious as it might have been, was handled well and ended peacefully. We had passed the first test. From this exercise, I learnt the value of good communication. If we had not taken trouble to explain the exercise well, or if staff saw no additional value in what the Institute Council was asking them to do, I am sure the exercise would have been a failure.

The new salary scales, although pegged to the Makerere M scales, were given a different code – the IT coding. Like the M scales of Makerere, they run from IT-1 to IT-15. The Principal was on IT-1, the equivalent of the Vice Chancellor's M1 scale, the Deputy Principal was placed on IT-2, a Professor on IT-3 and so on. The old members of staff that the Appointments Board found deficient in some aspects were asked to make good the identified deficiencies through further training and upgrading of their qualifications. According to the new Council policy, promotion was dependent on externally vetted publications. It was no longer dependent on the number of years one served in a particular position. Staff had to engage in serious research that led to publishable results, preferably in peer-reviewed journals. Grey literature was no longer acceptable as publications for the purposes of promotion. At first, this looked like an unrealistic demand, as there was no culture of serious research at the former NTC Kyambogo. The college was primarily a teaching institution. Wasn't the Appointments Board attempting to squeeze blood out of stone? Apparently not, as staff slowly adopted the new publish- or-perish culture. Staff just wanted to be helped to identify journals where they could publish their academic works. At the end of the exercise, all old staff retained their jobs. This made everyone happy. Their struggle, which had led to the death of one of their colleagues, was beginning to bear fruit. For us in administration, it was the first real serious test and we had pulled it off without much ado. It was now time to move on to other things. A lot was waiting.

The institute had neither official seal nor logo. Some people had expressed the opinion that, like Makerere University, ITEK should have an anthem. We thought hard about who would design the seal and the logo and who would compose the anthem. One advantage of being in an academic institution is access to a wealth of talent. We had some of the best artists on the staff; it was just a matter of identifying them. Mr Norbert Kaggwa, a renowned Ugandan artist at the Art and Design Centre was identified and asked to design the seal and the logo. Mr. Kaggwa had to produce a write-up on his design, as well as an

appropriate institute motto. Mr. Kizza, a Kyambogo veteran and Head of the Department of Music, composed the anthem. They amazed us by the speed and the quality of their work. Both the Academic Board and the Institute Council had no difficulty approving their works. With a logo and a motto, we could start printing official letterheads. However, the seal was not yet ready. We wanted a professionally crafted seal. So, when Mr Kaggwa travelled to Canada, we asked him to have it cast there, to which he kindly obliged. On his return from Canada, he presented the seal to the Institute Secretary who, by law, was its custodian. We were now in a position to issue certificates with an embossed stamp. Mr Kizza and the students of Music staged the first public singing of the new anthem at the first ITEK Graduation Ceremony in 1992.

We hardly made any progress in resolving the mysterious death of George Kyamuhangire. The Criminal Investigation Department failed to come up with a water-tight conclusion as to the cause of his death. Literally, the case went cold in the files of Ugandan Police. It was one of those unfortunate episodes in the history of our country. There were a few other deaths which occurred during my time. Fortunately, they were all due to natural causes. We lost Faustine Jaunu (an energetic and resourceful Head of the Department of Technical Education), the Head of the French Department, and a Trade Union official and deputy branch chairman of the National Union of Educational Institutions by the name Zabose. At about this time, we were also beginning to see the devastating effect and havoc of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly amongst the lower cadres of workers.

Many ITEK staff of every rank and status socialised in Banda, a slum dwelling very much like Katanga Valley near Makerere. In the wee hours of the night and in such places where at such a late hour, logic and common sense take a back seat and *prima instincts* take over, especially after one too many beers, anything goes in that world of merry-go-round. We believed that many unsuspecting members of staff acquired the virus from such places by indulging in unprotected sex with high-risk groups; the most devastating and costliest epidemic African academic institutions ever faced was knocking at our doors.

By the time I took over as Principal, the institute's finances were in bad shape. It was, indeed my number one headache and remained so until I left the institute. Those who were there before me faced the same problem. Although the story, which appeared in *The Monitor* sometime in 1991, alleged that over two billion shillings had been embezzled, the truth was that from its inception in 1988 up to the time *Monitor* published the embezzlement story, ITEK had never received anything close to that figure. The problem was that for ITEK, like other public academic institutions, Government was not giving it enough money to cover all its operational costs. There was always a marked mismatch between the two. Perhaps, the journalists from *The Monitor* saw what was approved on paper but not what Treasury was actually releasing over the last three years.

The biggest expenditure item in the budget was students' food. The inability to access the little funds available was always a problem, and this was sometimes compounded by creditors who threatened to take you to court for defaulting on your payments. Worse still, the institute was not yet self-accounting and, therefore, did not have a vote of its own from the Ministry of Finance. This meant we could not access funds directly from the Treasury. Since we were a part of the Ministry of Education and Sports' vote, the Ministry of Finance channeled our funds through that ministry. In turn, we would account for the funds through the Permanent Secretary of our mother Ministry. It also meant that it was the Ministry of Education and Sports which decided what to allocate to ITEK. I found this arrangement very cumbersome. It also consumed a lot of my valuable time and energy. In effect, the system was almost unworkable. I remembered how Makerere University had fought hard to break away from the Ministry of Education's vote and eventually became a self-accounting centre in 1988. How I wished that ITEK could enjoy the same status! I literally spent many hours of my valuable working time in Crested Towers, chasing either the Permanent Secretary (or his Under-Secretary for Finance and Administration) for a signature on a cheque or simply to inquire how soon the next cheque would be ready. If I were not looking for one of the Ministry's senior officers, I would be moving from one office to another, moreover on different floors of the building, looking for accountants who were supposed to write the payment voucher for a promised release. If not, I would be in the cashier's office, waiting for the good news that our cheque was ready for collection or for the bad news that the cheque was not ready, and to be told to try again next day or the following week, or whatever waiting period they could think of.

Apparently, this was the surest way to get money out of the Ministry. If you did not chase it, you would be in for a rude shock because, as soon as Treasury released money to the Ministry of Education, there would be many people waiting for it. The risk was that in your absence, your allocation would go to someone else. Money was always in short supply and there were too many competing demands for it. I used to have pity on the Directors and Principals of upcountry institutions such as Ngetta, Waggoner and others, who had to spend many nights in Kampala, chasing their capitation grants. On most occasions, I used to take the Institute Bursar or his assistant with me to help me sort out some paperwork. The Assistant Bursar, Stephen Mulish, had accumulated a lot of experience working with the finance officers in the Ministry of Education and had learnt the intricate workings of the system, so it was advantageous to have him around.

Unlike the system operating at Makerere University, at ITEK the Principal was the accounting officer. At Makerere, the University Secretary was, and still is, the accounting officer. Therefore, whenever there was a financial crisis – and there were many such occasions in my time – it was the Principal they looked

up to for a solution. There were occasions when we would really get stuck and the only way would be to talk to the political leadership of the Ministry, the Minister, who in most cases would be equally helpless, because he had no direct control over the Ministry's financial management system. If we pulled a blank there, the alternative would be to persuade our Bank Manager to honour all the cheques we issued, even when the money on the institute's account was not enough to cover them. This was an indirect request for an overdraft. Under normal circumstances, we would need the Minister's approval to negotiate an overdraft, but these were not normal circumstances. I used to put my neck on the line to avert impending crises, especially when it came to students' food. It was always at the back of our minds that these crises had the potential to explode into full-blown chaos and a possible return to the problems of the past. Therefore, we had to avoid them, no matter what it took. Fortunately for us, this arrangement worked beautifully most of the time. I must also admit that most of our suppliers were understanding people, who had faith in us, and accepted our explanations for delayed payments.

Mr Faouruk Mukasa resigned as Institute Bursar in my second year as Principal and we had to find a replacement in a relatively short time. Among the candidates who responded to the advertisement, the Appointments Board identified George William Kakooza. He had been working as Chief Accountant with TUMPECO at Port Bell and held a Master of Commerce degree from Australia. We were not so lucky with the Internal Auditor. We were looking for a person qualified in Auditing at degree level, with a clean record of service. We failed to find such a person, so we had to do with John Namoma, a non-graduate accountant but with a lot of practical experience in Auditing. Initially, we had brought him in temporarily to help us put the institute's books of accounts in order. A few more young accountants were recruited to assist Mr Kakooza with the increasing volume of work in the Finance Department. We had initiated many reforms on how the institute's funds were managed and accounted for. For example, by the time I was posted to ITEK, students going on teaching practice and members of staff supervising them used to receive cash. The Bursar or his assistant used to collect the money from the bank and pass it on to the member of staff who was in charge of the exercise. In turn, the latter would act as the cashier, paying both the staff and students. In most cases, returns were never submitted to the Bursar to enable him account for the money in time. Besides, the sums of money involved were substantial; running into hundreds of millions of shillings. The fact that the Assistant Bursar used to carry the sacks of money in his own car without Police escort or security of any kind was very scary. The risk of being abducted and killed by highway robbers was extremely high. The Institute Bursar had also abdicated his responsibility as the Institute's paymaster and, as the institute's accounting officer, I saw no reason why somebody else who had nothing to do with money matters should take over the functions of the Bursar. This was one of the abuses of public funds at ITEK identified by the

Kiwanuka Committee, which we had to stop in order to bring some sanity in the Finance Department. I instructed the Bursar to stop the practice of paying cash to any member of staff going for teaching practice. My directive covered everyone who had anything to do with the exercise and that included the Teaching Practice Coordinator and students. Under the new procedures, the teaching practice cheque from the Ministry of Education had to be banked first and all payments had to be done by cheque, which the individual payees would then cash at the Kyambogo Branch of Uganda Commercial Bank. Payments to staff were to be in agreed instalments, upon verification by a teaching practice logbook, and not in one lump sum at the beginning of the exercise as had hitherto been the practice.

The new procedure did not go down well with some members of staff. Many perceived my actions as interference in their annual spoils. I had received information that some members of staff would collect their allowances at the beginning but would not supervise students. Even, members of staff who had nothing to do with teaching practice used to join in for the sake of receiving allowances. I was prepared for a possible rebellion over the new changes. Fortunately, instead of the confrontation I anticipated, the majority of staff saw nothing wrong with the new measures; after all, corruption and financial mismanagement were some of the accusations staff had levelled against the previous administration. According to the feedback I received, the members of staff who grumbled most were those who had made it a habit to abuse the exercise. Later, we decided to eliminate all cash payments, with the exception of petty cash which the Bursar had to keep for the unexpected emergency.

Another rampant abuse of the exercise was transportation for the supervisors. The institute had no vehicles of its own for Teaching Practice. Transportation for the exercise had to be outsourced. The practice was that any member of staff who had car could put it up for hire for the duration of the teaching practice at a negotiated fee. The trouble was that even those members of staff who had no vehicles of their own would put in a bid. I later learnt that the trick was to find a friend or some business person willing to lend out a car. Once secured, the car would be presented to the Teaching Practice Coordinators. Moreover, in all cases, the arrangement was accepted as normal. The member of staff would then split the rental payment with the car owner. In some extreme cases, there was no car presented at all but money would be paid out to the member of staff. This used to be easy, because the Coordinators did not insist on a physical examination of the vehicles. They just assumed that whoever claimed to have a car for hire actually had one. In order to stamp out such malpractices, we needed a competent Transport Officer. We found one – Jairus Bwanika. Among his technical qualification, he had a Higher Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from the old Uganda Technical College, now Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo, and he underwent further training in automotive engineering in Japan.

Besides taking charge of the institute's vehicles, the Transport Officer's other responsibility was to verify vehicles hired for Teaching Practice. First, the authenticity of ownership had to be established. Second, each vehicle had to undergo a thorough mechanical examination to ensure it was in sound condition for the exercise. Hire charges had to conform to the Institute Council approved transport payment rates, based on cost per kilometre. The driver had to log the kilometres travelled, which the Transport Officer had to verify before the Bursar effected payment. If one did not log or did not present a verifiable logbook or the logged mileage was found suspicious, the Bursar was under instruction not to pay. By implementing these measures, we began to realise substantial savings. As a result, we decided to buy two vans, both Toyota Townaces, popularly known as *Dudu*, to help with the transportation of staff during Teaching Practice. When they were not required for this purpose, the vans provided transport for the Principal and Institute Secretary, as the two senior officers had no official cars assigned to them. I suspect we were able to implement these rather difficult and seemingly unpopular measures and got away with them because the measures were seen as remedy to the abuse and excesses that had been going on for some time. The Council comprised a representative body of all sections of the institute, including the academic staff. It was tricky, and perhaps would have been outright dishonest, for staff representatives on Council to have participated in the approval of the policies and then disown them outside. This helped to reduce tensions between staff and management over such difficult decisions and, for me, the outcome was a good learning experience.

As I have pointed out before, the institute was chronically short of money and, if we had to succeed in running it with as few problems as possible, we had to be very frugal in the way we used the little we received from Government. At the time, there were no other significant sources of revenue for the institute. We were totally dependent on the Government Treasury. In fact, we were operating on a shoe-string budget most of the time. Under the 1990 Statute, the institute's Council was responsible for preparing its annual budget, which included income and expenditure estimates, for onward transmission to the Ministry of Education. Despite the meticulous budgeting, we hardly ever realised more than 50% of the budget of the three years I was there. Incidentally, the bulk of the recurrent budget went to salaries, wages, students' ration and teaching practice. This left very little for other things. The chronic shortage of money called for innovative ways of generating more revenue. One way was the cost-cutting measures through good financial management. We had to minimise waste but without stifling the institute's operations. One important thing that worked in our favour was the Bursar who was not only a qualified accountant, but also a man with wide experience in financial management. He knew how to prioritise expenditure.

The more I grappled with the problem of money to run the institute, the more I thought of sharing the burden with all senior colleagues in administration.

Hitherto, I had been working with the Institute Secretary, Mr Avitus Tibarimbasa, the Bursar and Assistant Bursar. There had been moments I could not agree with the Bursar on what we should, and should not, spend money on. By now, Innocent Byuma had been confirmed in his job as Institute Academic Registrar and a new Deputy Academic Registrar, Ms Goretti Katusabe, had been recruited from Trinity College, Nabbingo, where she had been a teacher for some years. We had also persuaded John Kasule, now deceased, who was the Warden of Northcote Hall at Makerere and one of the survivors of Dr Philemon Mateke's axe in the 1980s, to apply for the position of Dean of Students when it was advertised.

Except for the Internal Auditor, the administrative team was complete. It was beginning to look more and more like a dream team. All I needed now from them was team work, their technical expertise, experience in problem solving and results. To build the kind of management team I needed, I decided to establish an Executive Committee of which I was the chair. Like the Central Executive Committee of Professor Kirya at Makerere, its major role was to provide the Principal with advice on the administration of the institute, including financial management, and help him in times of crisis. The Executive Committee met weekly or as often as the situation warranted. We had to make sure that the Dean of Students was always given priority on funds, because we understood very well how volatile students could be if they missed a meal. However, our cost-cutting measures were not enough to enable us to balance the budget. Nevertheless, every time we received a release from the Ministry, I would call the Committee and it would allocate the little we had received for that period. The system worked beautifully and made our financial management much more transparent. In addition, the Executive Committee helped solve several difficult problems.

As I have pointed out, cost-cutting measures alone could not help us realise all the money we needed to run the institute efficiently. The funds provided by Government were simply not enough to go round. Alternatives had to be sought. Mr Tibarimbasa had studied alternative ways of financing higher education as part of his MA at the University of Manchester; it was now time for him to put theory to practice. We asked him to come up with some ideas. ITEK had a 100-hectare mixed farm inherited from the NTC Kyambogo. It was primarily a teaching farm under the Faculty of Agriculture and Vocational Education. Nevertheless, Tibarimbasa soon saw its income-generating potential without compromising its primary core function. Indirectly, he was advancing the idea that students ought to know that there was money in farming, that Agriculture makes money. Students should be taught not only the science of Agriculture but also the business side of it. The farm had a herd of five pure ex-Germany Fresians cows and a variety of food crops and vegetables. There was a qualified Farm Manger, Mr Sam Muhereza, and a Deputy Farm Manager, Ms Sheila Namusoke Giibwa. It had just acquired a new Massey Ferguson tractor with all accessories. Since its primary role was not commercial,

members of staff of the Faculty of Agriculture and Vocational Education consumed most of the milk, gratis. Very little of it was sold and as a result, nearly all the farm's operating cost had to be met from the institute's budget. In spite of the fact that qualified people were running the farm, I found it in a neglected state. The Farm Manager's explanation was that the previous administration had not allocated sufficient funds to run it properly. He wanted to do a better job but was frustrated. To complicate matters further, some top administrators at the institute, including those who had transferred their services from ITEK, were keeping their personal cows on the farm at the expense of the institute. This was a problem which required an immediate solution. By the time I took over as Principal, the farm had received assistance in terms of implements, acaricide and other inputs from the World Food Programme. As far as we were concerned, this was a good starting point.

Some of the first things we did on the farm was to rehabilitate its structures that included the cattle dip, the perimeter fence, the access roads and the water reticulation, to ensure a constant supply of water to the cows' watering points. There was no crush for treating cows; we constructed one. We had also to construct a calf pen. The aim of all this was to reduce the calf mortality, which was abnormally high, causing a lot of money to be spent on veterinary services. Sadly too, the herd was not growing. The Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Vocational Education had always wanted a piggery on the farm, despite the fact he was a Muslim. I also knew that there was money in a well-managed piggery with popular thoroughbreds. The idea behind a piggery was to sell weaners to interested farmers. I looked for the money and we built one. We had a few large-whites and land-races kept at the periphery of the farm. This was our starting parent stock.

A poultry farm was another idea that had been on the shelves for some time. It had to be a mixture of broilers and layers. Again, I looked around for money and we put up the poultry structures next to the calf pen with a capacity of 1,000 birds. However, we insisted on good record keeping. We had to know if the farm was making profit. To improve on its management further, we split the managerial work into two. We had noted that Mr Muhereza's interest was in livestock, so we asked him to concentrate on the animals. Ms Giibwa took over crop husbandry. The division of labour worked. However, Mr Muhereza remained in charge. By now, our farm was beginning to look modern. Even Makerere University final year Agriculture students specialising in Farm Management and Agricultural Economics had started using it for their project work. I have been a passionate gardener all my life, so I could not help feeling proud of our achievements on the farm. I visited it regularly and often, to exercise, I would walk its entire perimeter in the evenings when I had less work to do in the office.

To make the farm fully self-sustaining, the Dean of Students had to pay for the food, mainly green maize cobs, sweet potatoes and vegetables like cabbages,

carrots, tomatoes and onions supplied to the students' kitchen at full market prices. The farm was slowly paying its way, including the wages of its workers. The cows stopped dying and the herd multiplied. In 1992, the population had exceeded the carrying capacity of the farm. We asked the Institute Council to sell off some cows by auction, but giving priority to staff who wanted to buy. Several members of staff took advantage of the auction and bought themselves good breeds of cows from the farm. It had never happened before. Milk production shot up from less than 50 litres to over 200 litres per day and, by the time I left ITEK in 1993, it was still rising. At the beginning, it was difficult to sell all the day's milk production, but slowly the marketing improved. Initially, we were selling around Kyambogo and Banda, but later we went beyond ITEK's neighbourhood to far off places like Kireka and Kampala. In 1993, the revenue from the farm was over one hundred million shillings. The milk sales alone were bringing in some seventy million a year. Not a great deal of money, but still better than nothing. One important thing we were attempting to demonstrate was that, given good management and some seed money, the farm had the potential to make a significant contribution to the institute's income.

There was still unused farmland below the Kabaka's Banda Palace, amounting to almost three hectares. It had been left under fallow for years, so we decided to put it to good use. We instructed the Farm Manager to open it and plant more pasture grass. We had conceived an idea that we could provide beef for both staff and students' consumption on a regular basis by bringing in young cows from Mbarara to fatten them up on the farm. We wanted to try out the experiment and assess its feasibility. The institute's truck which was still new and in good condition transported the animals from Mbarara. The first batch of about twenty animals came in during the Christmas period in 1992. We supplied beef to both staff and students and made a good profit. The venture had potential to succeed. The poultry and piggery were making progress too. One day, I was pleasantly surprised to receive Mr Ojambo Were, a school and housemate at Namilyango College in the 1960s. He told me he was developing a piggery at Seeta-Mukono, and had received information that we had good breeds of pigs for sale, and wanted to buy as many as were on offer. I asked him to see our Farm Manager who sealed the deal there and then. He took virtually every weaner there was in our piggery at the time.

We continued to explore other non-conventional ways of generating extra income. Mr Tibarimbasa suggested we open a café in one of the students' halls of residence. The idea sounded far-fetched but he was undeterred, as he was convinced his idea would work. Everybody was skeptical, except him. I recall Mr Abaliwano teasing him for mispronouncing the word café, which he kept pronouncing "kefu" when he first introduced the idea to Council. I am a strong believer in experiments and I did not like to see my colleague's idea killed before it was tested, especially when it made sense to me. So we convinced Council to allow

him to try it. However, this project was not going to be an easy one to implement. For a start, it required a manager experienced in the catering business. The Home Economics Department did not have much experience in catering, so it could not be of much help; but Abaliwano persisted and eventually found a retired caterer, one Mr Katto who had worked with Uganda Hotels, as well as the White Horse Inn, Kabala. Next, he had to find suitable premises, properly furnished in a way befitting a café. Republic Hall for men had an under-utilised canteen which we thought was good enough for a start, but it was in need of a coat of paint and some repairs. Eventually, the café idea became a reality, albeit with a slow start. Members of Council were pleasantly surprised when, at one of the meetings, they were served tea and delicious snacks made from the café. The café thus became another non-traditional revenue source for the institute. I did not stay long enough at ITEK to assess its success and contribution to the institute's coffers; but by the time I left, it was flourishing and attracting a reasonable crowd of clients, thanks to Mr Tibarimbasa's perseverance and foresight.

We also, discovered that ITEK and UPK staff residing in the upper estate and some in the Kyambogo lower estate had no quick access to good grocery stores nearby. The nearest trading centre with reasonably stocked grocery stores was Banda, nearly a kilometre and a half away. We mooted the idea of erecting well-designed stalls, popularly referred to as kiosks, along the main access from the south end to the institute's main administrative building, which we could rent out at a fee. We wanted to be sure that, before we invested any money in the project, it was viable and there were people out there willing to rent the stalls we were about to build. The response was poor. We then modified the idea a little bit. Instead of the institute building the stalls, we would rent out space in the form of plots. People could then put up their own stalls according to our design and specifications.

The Estates Engineer was assigned the task of demarcating the plots. That did not work either. We attracted only one member of staff who was running the Child-to-Child Project at the institute. What we had not taken into account was that the salaries of staff were too low to enable them accumulate enough savings to invest in such projects. Unlike the academic staff at Makerere, ITEK staff had very limited moonlighting avenues. They were literally living from hand to mouth. That, in my view, was one of the reasons this project failed. The other reason I could think of was that we did not give the project enough publicity. Whatever the case was, we abandoned the project altogether.

I had heard from my old friend from the Makerere days, Mr William Rwambulla, who was then the Principal of National College of Business Studies at Nakawa that his institution was running a fee-paying parallel programme outside the Government quotas. It was an evening programme. Lectures used to begin at five o'clock and end as late as nine in the evening. The fees paid by the students were

used to supplement the lecturers' salaries and the meagre Government's subvention grant. In fact, I had the privilege of travelling to Canada with Mr Rwambulla in 1992 for an official visit to the Grant McEwen Community College at Edmonton, Alberta. While there, we shared a room in the hotel. This gave me ample time to share my thoughts with him. Upon returning to ITEK, I introduced the idea to some of my colleagues and the Institute Council. The response was very positive, which encouraged me to go ahead. Mr Rwambulla had advised me that it was better to start with courses that have a general appeal to the students. Business Education and Computer Science were two of such courses. Having talked to Francis Onyango who was then Head of the Department of Business Education at ITEK and Ben Enjiku, in charge of the Computer Centre, we were ready to start our own version of evening certificate and diploma programmes. To give our students more confidence, we decided that some of the courses should be examined by the Uganda National Examinations Board. We recognised that members of staff asked to teach in the evenings were doing so in their spare time, and we had to compensate them for their time. We worked out a formula for sharing the income accruing from these programmes. In most instances, the revenue generating units kept up to 70 per cent of the income and only 30 per cent was remitted to the Centre. After a slow start, the programmes became popular and the demand grew. The initial success prompted the units offering them to broaden the scope of courses on offer. For me, this was another shot in the arm. We were slowly bolstering the institute's income and reducing our total dependence on Government subvention. We tried other initiatives in our quest to raise more money such as renting out the halls of residence and catering facilities for conferences. The income from these initiatives was not that significant, but "half a loaf was better than no bread". In later years, I was told that people at Makerere claimed credit for pioneering evening programmes in public higher education institutions in Uganda. In all fairness, that credit belongs to the defunct NCBS. In fact, the Principal was once castigated by the Minister of Education for failing to declare the income from the evening programmes in the college's budget. That was long before Makerere had started offering evening programmes.

As the income-generating activities picked up, the institute's Secretary came up with a suggestion that the Council should have direct control over all the institute's revenue-generating units, and should regularly monitor how much money each unit was generating and how the revenue was used. Although there was now a flurry of activities involving moneymaking, the whole enterprise lacked proper coordination. We also wanted to enforce proper accountability on the part of staff running the income-generating units, because we needed every coin of the money they were able to generate. Therefore, we had to guard against any possible abuse or mismanagement of the funds generated by the units. He suggested that the best way to do it would be through a standing Council committee. This way, the units would be fully integrated into the institute's legal framework. He

even coined a name for the committee – the Commercial Units Committee – which was a new language in an institution accustomed to regarding anything commercial as alien to good academics.

Many people used to argue that “business had no business in the academia, and academia had no business in business”. However, at the ITEK of my time, that kind of stereotypical thinking had become part of a past, a past that was disappearing fast into oblivion. The reality was that, in order to survive, academic institutions had to reduce their dependence on national governments, which were broke and dependent on donors. I remember attending a UNESCO conference in Accra, Ghana in 1992, where such issues were seriously debated. Everyone recognised that higher education institutions in Africa were in a financial quagmire, with no easy way of getting out. I shared my experiences at ITEK with the conference participants from all over Africa. Some were sceptical that such initiatives actually worked, while others strongly believed in the old school that business and academics were incompatible. But many thought my ideas made some sense. Finally, the Institute Council accepted Timbaribasa’ proposal and created a Commercial Units Committee as one of its standing committees, with Wafula Ogutu as its first chairperson.

I have devoted a considerable amount of time to explaining at some length how we tried so hard to raise funds in order to keep the institute afloat. This was the only way we could turn a few things around for the better. It was not easy and much of it was by trial and error. None of us had ever had the experience in raising funds, however, we were confident and determined to succeed. We used to hear such over-used clichés like, “it can’t work”, but we were undeterred. With more revenue coming in, we embarked on the rehabilitation of the physical plant and its infrastructure. Apart from the Administration Building, the Art Design Centre, the Library and Main Hall, some male hostels and a few staff houses built in the 1970s with USAID grant; Africa Hall for girls built with funds donated by the British Government, most of the buildings and other infrastructure ITEK inherited from NTC, Kyambogo were old, small, and in varying states of dilapidation. Many of these buildings were in dire need of serious and urgent facelift. One way we raised more money for the renovations involved reworking the budget to realise more savings.

The Estates Department did most of this work and, where they needed some extra hands, we were allowed to outsource labour and expertise. One of the people who worked closely with our Estates Department was Haj Yusuf Musisi. He was an excellent painter and a good supervisor. Before long, the old ugly looking buildings were shining again. The Main Hall that had been vandalised, with the main stage curtain ripped off, was put into tip-top shape. Soon, it was attracting wedding parties, which provided income for the institute. The lack of water was another big problem I inherited.

The reticulation system had literally broken down due to years of neglect and lack of proper maintenance. Members of staff collected water for their domestic use from a spring well known in the valley below as UPK. This was the first time my children had to collect water from a spring well. As one would expect, the well was always overcrowded. People were spending hours waiting for their turn. Something had to be done, and pretty soon too. Pit latrines were everywhere and the stench in some places was unbearable. The cows on the farm also needed a constant supply of water. To ease the situation a little, we purchased a tractor-drawn 2000-litre water bowser. This was a tremendous relief but to satisfy the big demand for water, the tractor had to make several daily trips to Lugogo. In fact, we were diverting it from its core job at the farm which was also expanding. It was not long before the bowser developed mechanical problems. When the Estates Engineer, Edward Turyomurugyendo examined it, he discovered that although the bowser was made of new steel, the wheel axle was a cannibalised part from an old Land Rover. The constant wear and tear was too much for it. We attempted to find a new axle without luck. Since it had become our life-line, we had no choice but to keep on repairing it.

There was an elderly handyman in the Estates Department called Clospus Nyamungu, of Kenyan origin, recruited way back in the 1950s when the Government Teachers' College opened at Kyambogo. He was an all-round handyman who used to handle virtually everything, from electrical to plumbing problems, he was good at whatever he did. He had also seen the good and bad days at Kyambogo. We had also recruited a bright young engineer, Edward Turyomurugyendo, as the Institute Engineer. Frustrated by the never ending water problem and the huge sums of money we were spending on water, one day I called Nyamungu to my office and asked him whether he was in any way able to help me solve the water problem. He said that he was indeed able and that he wished the past Directors and Principals had had the wisdom to ask him to fix the problem before it had deteriorated to the point it was now. At first, I thought the old man was showing off his technical prowess as a super technician. Nevertheless, I was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. I was desperate for a solution. I told him that I was going to discuss the matter further with the Institute Engineer and that I would get back to him in due course. I called the Engineer and, after discussing the technical pros and cons, we agreed that we should look for money and facilitate Nyamungu to do the job, under the supervision of the Institute Engineer. We got permission from the Institute Council to proceed and we started mobilising the necessary funds. It turned out that Nyamungu was rather resourceful, in spite of his age. He did most of the hard work such as trenching alone, and in three months, our water was flowing again.

Nyamungu had done it. The little problem was that the two old lines from Nabisunsa and Kyambogo were not pumping enough water into our reticulation all the time to meet the institute's daily requirements, which included the farm.

The institute's reticulation was connected to two main lines, one at Nabisunsa and the other at Kyambogo, along the Kampala-Jinja Highway. Unfortunately, the pressure at the two connection points was insufficient to pump the water to our storage tanks located on top of Banda Hill, a distance of almost two kilometres from the highway. Another high pressure point had to be found.

The Institute Engineer carried out a survey with the National Water and Sewerage Corporation, and the Martyrs' Way at Ntinda was identified as a good point for the new connection. Pipes were purchased to lay the mains from there to Kyambogo, a distance of over a kilometre from UPK. When the engineers tested the line, they discovered that it carried very little water. They linked the problem to the absence of a non-return valve at its junction with the old Kyambogo line. By this time, we had almost exhausted all the funds. Our consolation was that, at last, there was some water flowing constantly. While we waited to boost the volume by installing a non-return valve in the new Ntinda line, we had to use the little that was coming in sparingly. The project was completed with funds provided by DANIDA as part of the assistance to the Government of Uganda towards the establishment of the Institute of Special Education at Kyambogo. Staff and students at ITEK and UPK had something to celebrate. Because of the importance we attached to this achievement, I invited the Minister of Education and Sports, Mr Amanywa Mushega, to inaugurate the renovated water reticulation. He too was equally amazed by what we had accomplished and thanked us for a job well done. It was a moment of pride for me. We had done all this difficult work at a fraction of the cost, by utilising our own in-house technical expertise. It was no small achievement by any means, given the fact that most of the taps had been dry for almost fifteen years.

When Adonia Tiberondwa went into exile, following a tip-off that he was about to be killed by Amin, Mr Michael Brua was appointed the new Director of NTC Kyambogo. Very little is known about Mr Brua. He vanished without a trace during the liberation war of 1978-79, which toppled Idi Amin's Government. Those who worked with him give him credit for his hard work and development-oriented mind. As a way of recognising his contribution and as a living memory to his exemplary leadership, one of the men's halls of residence was named after him. In spite of the economic hardship, Mr Brua was able to mobilise funds for new buildings. There were several buildings started during his time. By the time war broke out, the buildings were at various stages of completion. After his abrupt departure, construction stopped. All building projects were left unfinished, and remained so for over ten years.

Over time, some of them developed severe structural defects which rendered their completion too expensive. Others were still in sound structural condition and could be completed without much difficulty. We soon realised that the academic programmes as well as staff and student numbers were expanding rapidly but

space was not. In fact, in some departments, we could not provide staff with office space. When the Government of Uganda created ITEK through a merger of NTC Kyambogo and NIE from Makerere, it did not provide new buildings. The new institute had to do with what I had inherited from the NTC, which was totally inadequate to meet its entire space requirements. I was constantly under pressure to provide additional teaching and office space. I could neither find the space in the old small buildings nor the money to construct new buildings; ITEK had no Government budget for capital development. After discussing the problem with my colleagues in the Executive Committee, we decided to look for money to complete one of Brua's unfinished buildings; a two-storey structure on the west side of the Administration Building. By the time construction was abandoned in 1979, it was at due for roofing and was therefore the cheapest and easiest to complete. We requested the Bursar to find some money for timber and Grade 1 corrugated iron sheets. Fortunately, there was some money in the internally-generated revenue account. It was not long before a roof went up on the structure that had been standing there unfinished for over a decade. I didn't however see it completed because of my new appointment at Makerere. Again, this was another unfinished business I had to leave for my successor to complete. The new Principal successfully completed it, and it now houses the Faculty of Arts. Our original plan was to use the upper floor as general-purpose lecture rooms, serving all departments, and the ground floor for offices for the academic staff who had nowhere to sit.

As we tackled the management and infrastructural problems, we were also making good progress on the academic front. The Academic Board, comprising the Principal, Deans and Heads of Departments was in place and functioning. Departments were re-organised and the semester system revised to allow students who were already qualified teachers to spend their two years at ITEK more profitably by giving more time for the content subjects. First-year BEd students used to spend the whole of the first semester of the academic year on professional subjects like Education Psychology and Foundations of Education. We reduced the time the students spent on these courses to one-third of the semester. We had to make this adjustment, following reports coming from the schools where the ITEK graduates were employed as teachers. The concerned headteachers were complaining that our graduates knew how to teach and had good classroom control but their subject content was weak. A repeatedly cited example was that of Mathematics. School heads were saying that ITEK BEd graduates were incapable of teaching Advanced Level Mathematics. We had to think of a prompt and appropriate response to the employers' concerns. There was a real danger that, in future, our graduates would find it very difficult to get jobs in schools. For a while, I taught Molecular Spectroscopy at the final year BEd level to help alleviate staff shortage in the Chemistry Department but that was not enough, as I did not have time to teach on a regular basis. I was too busy with administration and

fundraising. The Appointments Board was also busy recruiting new staff and, for the first time, ITEK was attracting PhD holders. Dr Kasasa was a Ugandan with a PhD in Education. He had spent many years in Liberia, and decided to come back home when the civil war broke out there. We were very pleased to have him on the staff of the Faculty of Education.

I was extremely happy to have recruited a female PhD holder in Fine Art. In our part of the world, PhDs in this discipline are quite rare, even at Makerere. This qualification is even rarer amongst women, but here we were with Dr Catherine Gombya, who came to ITEK from Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya. A few years later, Dr Lawrence Kanyike, with a PhD in Education, who had also taught at Kenyatta University for many years, followed her. My old friend from the Makerere days, Jesudas Mwanje, a PhD holder in Solid State Physics was next to join the newly established Department of Physics. We were further fortunate to have a Jesuit priest, also with a PhD in Physics. Even Mr Kinyera whom we had asked to act as Head of Department had also acquired a second MSc degree in Physics from the U.K. When ITEK was created, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics were lumped together in the Department of Physical Sciences. Much as I wish to believe that I am a progressive thinker, there are things that I believe must be properly demarcated, and scientific disciplines are some of them. For starters, if you lump such disciplines together under one department, chances are that they miss out on the establishment of academic leadership among other things. Science is general but it is also one of the most highly specialised disciplines. If it has to be taught as it should, you must allow for the recruitment of staff of varied specialisations. This was one of the reasons in favour of going back to the old traditional approach.

In time, we began to receive inquiries about job opportunities at ITEK from well-qualified Ugandan academics abroad, as well as non-Ugandans. This was further testimony that the institute was beginning to have a positive impact around the world. Some of the older members of staff who were teaching in the content departments such as English Language, Geography and others but with only a Master of Education degree which, by design, was low on content had decided to go back to Makerere to register for Masters degrees in content disciplines. The intention was to get either a Master of Science or a Master of Arts degree to beef up their teaching subjects. Those going back to study were sponsored by the institute out of the internally-generated income. However, as ITEK was slowly stabilising, Government decided to implement the Sam Turyamuhika Public Service Review Commission Report, which had recommended the retrenchment of some civil servants.

The retrenchment exercise was across the board. One morning in 1992, I received several sealed letters from the then Head of Civil Service and Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Public Service, Mr Martin Orech, with instructions

to deliver them to the addressees in person. There was also a separate letter for me. Its contents were explicit; it was a list of retrenched members of ITEK staff. I could only imagine the impact the retrenchment exercise would have on the affected staff when they received the letters! I remembered the meeting I had attended in the Ministry of Education, chaired by one of the Assistant Commissioners. The Minister of Education was expected to address us, but he was delayed. As we waited for him, the Assistant Commissioner decided to get started. Soon after he had declared the meeting open, his Secretary came in and asked him to see her for a moment, because she had an urgent letter for him. He left the meeting and after some minutes, came back and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sorry I cannot continue chairing the meeting, I have been retrenched. Good bye!" And he left. This sad episode was still fresh in my mind when I received the letters from the Ministry of Public Service. Since I had no choice in the matter, I called the affected members of staff and gave the letters to them individually. As I expected when some of them read their letters, they broke down in tears. Some had spent all their working life at Kyambogo, and now they were being asked to leave under what, in the military jargon, was called a "dishonourable discharge", with no explanation given. It was painful. The only consolation, however, was that they were not leaving empty-handed. They were to be paid reasonable severance packages, which could keep them going for some time after retrenchment.

Before Professor Kajubi became Vice Chancellor of Makerere in early 1990, the British Government, through its Overseas Development Agency (ODA) had given a grant to Uganda Government to improve the quality of Science, English Language and Mathematics education at ITEK and at the National Teachers' colleges. The assistance was executed under a five-year Secondary Teacher Training Project (STTP). Besides forwarding five technical experts for Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and English, the British Government constructed five new houses in what came to be known as Spring Gardens Village for the experts, because ITEK did not have suitable accommodation for them.

This was an exception to ODA's policy of not supporting infrastructure development. Ms Maggie Quinn, who had worked in Uganda before as School Mathematics teacher for many years in places like Kigezi College, Butobere and Gayaza High School, was the Project's Team Leader and Mathematics specialist. The project also provided a lot of scholastic material to ITEK and the National Teachers' Colleges. In addition to other project activities, the specialists also carried out full-time teaching. It was quite tough for them but they managed very well.

One aspect of this Project that fascinated me most was the new approach to science teaching, which made extensive use of materials readily available in the local environment. For example, the Chemistry specialist had identified the blue flowers of the morning glory plant, a common creeping weed, as a source of universal indicator. One of the experts extracted the pigment from the flower and

used it to measure the acidity and alkalinity of acids and bases. This is referred to as the pH scale. The morning glory flower had a reasonably long pH range and could be substituted for the imported universal indicator in the acid-base titrations. This approach was reminiscent of the School Science Project the Government of Uganda had initiated in the late 1960s but which stalled when Idi Amin came to power.

When the Project ended in 1993, most of specialists, including the Team Leader, Ms Quinn, decided to stay on local contracts; except for the Physics specialist, Dr Underwood, who chose to return to Britain. To me, their decision to stay on was a blessing. I had a serious shortage of lecturers in the Science and Mathematics disciplines, and fortunately, there was accommodation for them. At the end of the Project, the British Government, through its High Commissioner to Uganda, turned over the entire estate and the project Land Rovers to ITEK. The Biology specialist, Ms Anand Nair, who had accepted a local contract, resigned soon afterwards and left for South Africa. An avid flower grower, she had become a good friend of my wife.

There were also other international members of staff who were working on local contracts. The Biology Department, under the headship of Ms Robinah Ddumba, had Sister Calder Dennis, a Catholic nun from Ireland who was living in a Convent at Gaba because the institute could not provide her with accommodation. In spite of the distance, she commuted to Kyambogo daily in her car at her own expense. Her presence somewhat relieved the Biology Department of the acute staff shortage. Biology was one of the most popular subjects, so it had a relatively higher enrolment than the other science disciplines.

Sports Science also benefited from international volunteers. Ms Paula Turpenin was a Finnish volunteer sent to Uganda by a religious organisation based in Finland. When she joined the department, she soon realised how inadequately equipped it was. She made contacts in Finland and mobilised funds, which she used to purchase equipment to improve the institute's playing fields located below the Sports Science Department, at the south end of the institute's Administration Building. Working together with the Head of Department, Mr Semakula, a US-trained sports scientist who had become somehow disabled as a result of a road accident, they came up with a suitable design for the new sports field. It involved merging the two old and smaller fields and closing off the access road from the main ITEK campus to the Design Centre to the east. Even the power line had to be shifted to make room for an enlarged field. The tennis courts on the west side of the main field had been worked on earlier with funds Professor Kajubi had solicited. The original clay courts were given an all-weather asphalt surface, which made them available for play even in the wet season. With the project completed, we were ready to host the All Universities Games in Uganda for the first time in 1992.

The idea of all universities games was the brainchild of Mr Ssana and Mr Kadodoba who were both lecturers in the Sports Science Department at ITEK. Mr Ssana introduced the idea to me and asked me, in my capacity as Principal, to sell it to other institutions. I thought it was a brilliant idea, so I decided to discuss it with the Dean of Students, John Kasule, now deceased. He too thought it was a good idea worth trying. I wasted no time introducing it to my colleagues at Makerere, Mbarara and Mbale. They all concurred with us and pledged to participate in the first competition at ITEK. The games were a huge success and this was the genesis of what is now an annual event.

In 1992, four institutions participated in the games. In the same year, the STTP project ended, I received an unexpected inquiry for a lecturer position in Agricultural Education from a young Dutch man who had completed a Masters degree in Agriculture at the University of Wageningen. Initially, I ignored his application, because I did not think he would accept our small salary, but when he kept sending me reminders about his application, I realised he was serious and decided to act. He was interested in coming to ITEK to teach Agriculture, in particular Farm Management. He did not mind a local contract; his only concern was suitable housing on the campus. After some exchange of correspondence, and assuring him of accommodation, he quickly informed me that the small salary did not bother him, because he had found a way of supplementing it and that he was ready to come to Uganda any time with his wife and two little children at his own expense. We were still weak in Farm Management, so I did not want to lose his expertise in this field. After consulting with the Dean of Vocational Education, I decided to present his application before the Appointments Board. The Board appointed him lecturer in Agriculture on local terms. As soon as he received his letter of appointment, he made his way to Uganda. All I had to do was to send a vehicle to Entebbe to pick him up. He came on an early morning flight with his family. Before I showed him their accommodation in Spring Gardens, I invited him for breakfast at my residence. That was their first meal in Uganda. Spring Gardens was still in excellent condition and he quickly settled down to work and the ITEK routine.

The British assistance had come in handy to help revitalise science education at ITEK and in the National Teachers' Colleges. However, besides the STTP, there was a lot more that was happening at the institute. ITEK initiated the specialised training of teachers for children with various forms of disabilities, ranging from mental impairment, impaired sight, hearing and speech difficulties to severe physical disability. In fact, it was the only teacher training institution in the country with a Department of Special Education that offered a Grade Five Diploma in Special Education. The Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), which had re-opened its offices in Uganda after the fall of Idi Amin, was very helpful in providing the specialist lecturers in such fields as Speech Therapy. The presence of these experts made the institute renowned for speech therapy services. The

young VSO speech specialist was very much sought after by people with speech difficulties. The most common speech defect she used to handle was stammering. She had become so much part of ITEK that when, one day, she came to inform me she was leaving Uganda for good, I almost told her I would offer her Ugandan citizenship. Although she had trained a few people, they had not yet accumulated the wealth of experience she had. I pleaded with her to stay on for at least one more year. Her reply was that she had done enough voluntary work, and she wanted to settle down to a family and a career in the UK. I could say no more, I had to let go. Indeed, her departure was a setback, but we quickly recovered because of the new support the Department of Special Education received from Denmark, in which special education was identified as one of the priority areas.

Shortly before I took up the job of Principal at ITEK, the Head of the Department of Special Education, Mr Ivan Matovu, had initiated exploratory talks with a representative of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) on the possibility of some assistance to the department. The caretaker administration of Mr Epeju had even identified a site below the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) for the construction of the new buildings for the department. The responsibility of concluding the negotiations fell on me. DANIDA fielded a full-time technical expert in Special Education, Dr Kurt Kristensen, who had an office at the Ministry of Education and Sports headquarters. One of the first things he wanted to solve was the site for the buildings. He told me that the plot below NCDC was too small for all the buildings he had in mind. Secondly, the Ministry wanted a full-fledged Institute for Special Education. But that meant that, if it remained within the ITEK structure, it would be an institute within an institute. Frankly, I did not know how we would go around this issue until I was informed that Government was creating a new institution which, for academic awards, would be affiliated to ITEK but, administratively, would independent of ITEK. My proposal, which was accepted and worked well for a while, was to upgrade the Department of Special Education to a faculty status. When the department eventually moved into the new premises, it acquired a status of the Faculty of Special Education, with Ivan Matovu as its first Dean.

Dr Kristensen asked for more land but there was no more land exceeding two hectares available at ITEK, short of clipping some land off the farm. Then I remembered that the Ministry of Education had a lot of land on top of the Kyambogo hill. Much of this land had been earmarked for the future expansion of Uganda Technical College (UTC), which was no more. I sought legal opinion on the possibility of using this land for building the Institute of Special Education. I was informed that since UTC had wound up and its replacement, Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK), had not yet acquired legal status, all assets of the defunct UTC belonged to the Government of Uganda.

Dr Kristensen was also satisfied that the land was adequate for the purpose. We approached the UPK administration before talking to Mr John Ntimba who was the Minister of State for Higher Education. I was fully aware that my request to use part of the land in question would be unpalatable to UPK administration. Nevertheless, I was counting on the fact that the new UPK Principal, Dr Abel Rwendeire, was an old friend and colleague in the Faculty of Science at Makerere. I had known Dr Rwendeire as a progressive man, so I expected him to receive our proposal positively. The Vice Principal, Dr Basiima Mpande, was another colleague from Makerere in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. He used to help me teach Engineering Drawing to the Industrial Chemistry students before he left Makerere for Kyambogo. My other trump card was the Institute Secretary, Mr Avitus Tibarimbasa, who was a member of the UPK Board of Governors. He assured me he would defend our request at the UPK Board meeting. I later discovered that I had been naïve and overly optimistic because, when we introduced the idea to the UPK administration, Dr Rwendeire would not hear of it. In fact, he was furious with us. As far as he was concerned, the land we wanted to take over belonged to UPK, period! And he was prepared to fight tooth and nail to keep it that way. UPK was also expanding and needed all the land available, and he was not prepared to see ITEK encroach on it.

At the Board meeting, things were not easy for Avitus Tibarimbasa either. The negotiations with UPK were deadlocked. I needed a way out or risk losing the DANIDA grant. We then turned to our parent Ministry, leaving Avitus Tibarimbasa to conclude the discussion with the Ministry's officials. In the end, the Ministry prevailed and Dr Rwendeire was convinced that it was indeed a good project for the country. We were given all the land we needed. We later learnt that the Government of Uganda purchased the land at Kyambogo for educational purposes and were not restricted to the development of UTC only. In fact, before we made a bid for it, the Kampala City Council, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Sports, had already built a modern Primary School there. This weakened any further arguments from UPK.

The Danish grant was quite substantial, covering, among others, the rehabilitation of the students' kitchen, some halls of residence and water supply. At the time the DANIDA grant came on stream, we had already connected the institute's water reticulation to the mains at Ntinda, only a non-return valve was missing to make the system fully functional. The DANIDA grant made it possible to install the missing valve. Ivan Matovu and I spent many hours with architects and other technical experts from Denmark, planning the best way to implement the Project. We had to think through and agree on the design of the new buildings for the proposed Institute of Special Education. We would argue with the Danish architects about the location of some buildings. Their idea was to design all buildings along what they called "a single spine". In the end, we settled for what we thought was the best design, which incorporated a bit

of Danish architecture. Finally, the drawings were submitted to DANIDA, the Institute Council, Ministry of Education and Sports, and Kampala City Council for approval.

Besides the new building for the new Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE) and general renovations, DANIDA also agreed to construct two new water storage tanks at the top of Kyambogo hill, with bigger storage capacity, to improve the water supply to the three institutions at Kyambogo – a free gift to my friends at UPK. However, as we prepared to launch the Project, I left ITEK for Makerere on a new assignment; and the new Principal, Professor Lutalo-Bosa completed the project.

With the completion of the buildings at its present location, what was a small Department of Special Education became the Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE), the first of its kind in the country. After it was inaugurated as an autonomous institute the Minister of Education and Sports, Amana Mushega, appointed Edward Kasolo Kimuli, who was then Commissioner for the Inspectorate, as its first Director. Ivan Matovu became Dean. UNISE, now part of Kyambogo University was certainly one of the big success stories during my time at Kyambogo. I am extremely proud to have participated in conceptualising and planning it. Indeed, I owe a big debt of gratitude to the Government and people of Denmark for this special gift to our country.

After almost seven years of existence of ITEK, we were upbeat. So in 1992, we began thinking of holding the graduation ceremony for our BEd students on our own turf instead of letting them trot to Makerere every year. Besides, we had a big backlog of Diploma students who had not yet graduated. To our disappointment, Makerere University had a statute written way back in the mid-1970s that stipulated where the graduation ceremony would be held. The statute was specific about the venue – the ceremony could only be held on Makerere University main campus. This in effect meant that students who had studied at the affiliated institutions had to attend the ceremony at Makerere. The idea looked a non-starter. In spite of what appeared to be a setback, we decided to press on; after all, the statute was not cast in stone, so we reasoned. Sometimes, it is better to tempt fate than not to try at all. We also knew we had an ally we could count on, in the person of Professor Kajubi, who was the Chairman of Senate – the university organ responsible for the graduation ceremony. We decided to request Makerere to grant us permission to conduct the ceremony at ITEK. However, we were unaware of the hurdles we had to surmount before the university would allow us to host a Makerere convocation at Kyambogo. It would not be easy.

Some members of the Senate were not convinced it was a good idea to let ITEK hold such an important and cherished academic tradition at Kyambogo. That amounted to watering down the ceremony. But after some hard bargaining

in both the Senate and the University Council, Makerere conceded. ITEK could hold the ceremony at Kyambogo.

Although it was the news we had been waiting for, it was not yet time to celebrate. There were more hurdles to jump. The next big task was to convince the President to come to ITEK to preside over the ceremony. In fact, we badly needed to host the President at ITEK to install him as the first Institute Visitor. The President agreed to come to Kyambogo for the ceremony whenever we were ready for him. Once a dream, it was now a reality. We had every reason to celebrate the moment. Makerere was not known for open-ended generosity. No doubt, the Vice Chancellor must have put in a strong word for the institute he founded.

As soon as permission was granted, we set about organising the first graduation at the institute's campus. We wanted it to be a grand and flawless affair. The Academic Board and the Institute Council worked flat out to ensure a successful ceremony. We were ambitious and bold. At this ceremony, we would tell the President that ITEK was now academically and administratively mature and ready for full university status. We would ask His Excellency, the President and his Minister of Education to expeditiously grant us this request. We asked the Chairman of the Institute Council, Mr Basil Kiwanuka, to include our humble, but serious request in his speech. He obliged. Looking back, I suppose this was, in a way, the beginning of the preparatory phase on the road to establishing a full-fledged university. The university status did not come in my time, but much later. Since we had never hosted a graduation ceremony, there was no ready-made site for it. We traversed the entire campus until we found what we thought was an ideal location. However, our ideal site for the venue had to meet tough security requirements demanded by the then Presidential Protection Unit (PPU). Finally, we settled on the space between the lower and upper science laboratories. The PPU inspected the site we had identified and gave it a stamp of approval. We were in high spirits, because the President had agreed to honour our invitation. However, in the midst of the jubilation, serious work was waiting for me and the clock was ticking away. I had never written a graduation speech before, let alone drafting one for the President. Although we had recruited a Public Relations Officer, she too had never written one. Many years of scientific writing had left me with a non-flowery style of writing. Writing a speech looked simple but took me time to get started. Since I had to do it anyway, I settled down to work with my personal secretary, Sarah Wamala.

I had acquired a modern IBM golf head typewriter for the office from the Central Purchasing Corporation. It had a limited memory but was more than enough for the purpose. Sooner than I expected, the first draft was ready. To make sure the language flowed right, I turned to Father Kevin McKee, a native English speaker to "panel-beat" the draft into a fair copy. To my amazement, he came back saying that he thought my draft was fine, requiring minor editing which he had done. I

was relieved. My speech was ready but that of the Visitor had not yet been drafted. It had never occurred to me that the President's speeches had to be written for him. We worked on that one too and soon it was on its way to State House. While I worked on the speeches, the Academic Registrar was busy getting the academic gowns ready. ITEK did not have official colours, so the gowns, the Visitor's mace and other academic regalia had to be designed from scratch. In addition, he had to compile the graduation booklet, which contained the list of names of all ITEK Diploma students who had not graduated since 1988, as well as the 1991/92 BED graduands. He had to send out invitation cards. Unknown to us, some students did not like the idea of attending the graduation ceremony at Kyambogo, they preferred going to Makerere which, according to them, was more glamorous than ITEK. Unfortunately for them, the complaint came too late.

Since the President was coming to the institute in a dual role of Chancellor of Makerere University and the ITEK Visitor, Makerere had to provide the Chancellor's gown and mace. Up to this point, we had seemed to be on top of things. In fact, everything seemed to be going well, with minimal hitches. But as we were putting the final additions to the preparations, I received a call from the President's office. The caller was alerting me that the President might not be able to honour our invitation, because he had to travel to Gulu at short notice to attend to urgent security matters. He was telling me something I was least prepared for. Although I was fully aware that, with the President, nothing was certain until he was with you, I had not given much thought or even contemplated that he would not be able to honour our invitation. Worse still, the message was coming less than a week to the ceremony. However, the caller assured me that, should the President come back from Gulu in time, he would certainly attend the ceremony. I knew he was just softening the blow for me. There would be no Museveni at our first graduation ceremony, period: Murphy's Law was at work! I did not know how to relay the news to my colleagues who were working so hard to complete the arrangements on time.

Certainly, the news was bound to throw everyone into confusion. Morale would simply vanish there and then. I had no choice than to alert my staff to start thinking of a "Plan B". A lot was at stake. We knew from our Makerere days that, in the absence of the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor acts. We also knew that in the absence of the President, the Vice President acts in his stead. Moreover, the President's Office had informed me that they had alerted the Vice President, Dr Samson Kisekka, and that he was ready to step in if the President failed to make it. So, Professor Kajubi was the man to convince to confer the degrees on behalf of the Chancellor and, although he was taken unawares, he willingly agreed to step in to save the day. Dr Kisekka would award the ITEK diplomas but the law did not allow him to confer Makerere degrees. To go around this rather clumsy technicality, we decided to split the congregation into two. The ITEK congregation would be constituted first, by the Vice President who

would also award the ITEK diplomas and, after a short musical interlude, the Vice Chancellor would constitute the Makerere congregation and proceed to confer the BED degrees of Makerere University. We had averted the crisis and the nightmare of failing on the first attempt at organising a graduation ceremony.

This was a good exercise in crisis management but we still hoped that the President would come. The day before the ceremony, his Office dispatched the PPU and other security agents to ITEK. They carried out the usual security checks and inspections towards securing the graduation venue and the Administration Building. These were areas the President was expected to spend time during his stay at the institute. To me, these were sure signs that the President was indeed coming. Shortly before nine o'clock on the day of graduation, the PPU left without any explanation. The obvious reason for their sudden departure was not hard to figure out – the President was not coming. We were now on our “Plan B”. Later after the ceremony, we were officially told that the President was still holed up in Gulu. Dr Kisekka was an incredibly punctual man. Even at his advanced age, he was still good at keeping time. He arrived at the institute at exactly ten o'clock. After robing, the academic procession began. The rest was history. However, I had to interrupt my speech because, without realising it, I was reading from the draft. I had mistakingly left the fair copy behind in the seat and picked the draft. Since the draft was full of errors, I could not continue; so I had to stop, go back to my seat and pick up the correct text. This was the only thing that went wrong for me that day! Unfortunately for me, the ceremony was being broadcast live on Radio Uganda. However, I had no choice but to put up with the small embarrassment. After that little hitch, the rest of the ceremony went as planned. For the first time, our Deans had the pleasure of presenting their candidates for the awards and they enjoyed it. When the ceremony was over, we all agreed it had been a successful and colourful ceremony worth every bit of the effort and energy we had invested into it. Thenceforth, students did not have to go to Makerere to graduate.

There is an old Luganda saying that “bad deeds sound louder than the drumbeat, good deeds are not supposed to sound as loud”. Although I was too immersed in my work to notice it, there was some good coming out of our efforts. According to the grape vine, everyone was saying that we were succeeding in turning things around for the better at ITEK. Whether this was true or not about our modest achievements, if any at all, I guess we were indeed beginning to “sound louder than the African drum beat”. I used to be embarrassed whenever people complimented me for a job well done; and I believe that what people did not realise was that, although much appeared to have been done, there was still a lot to be done. I used to think that anything said about ITEK being turned around was premature, but that did not stop people from talking. Compliments were coming from unexpected corners. Soon, I was being asked how I had managed to do it. Interestingly, Minister Amanywa Mushega had become a frequent visitor to

the institute and kept thanking us for helping him sort out the mess there. I did not know what to make of all this. The only one thing I was sure of was that I was not a magician. I suppose whatever we had achieved was the result of team work, imagination, good planning, hard work and a supportive Council – nothing out of the ordinary.

Right from the beginning of our administration, we had decided that ours would be result-oriented management and all we did was to put into practice what we had committed ourselves to do. The compliments were not only embarrassing me, but also making me nervous. I did not know how to respond to such compliments. Many people who know me may not believe this, but the truth is that deep down, I am a shy person and that is why I sometimes talk a lot. Being talkative helps me to hide my shyness. The more I wished people would stop thanking me for what I saw as virtually nothing, the more they did.

As a result of the progress we had made at ITEK, I was given additional responsibilities in spite of my heavy and busy daily schedules I had to carry on as Principal. For instance, I was appointed Government representative on the first Governing Council of the new Mbarara University of Science and Technology. I served on this Council from 1991 to 2001. This was the Council that oversaw the designing of the University's logo and motto, as well as the construction of most of the new buildings, including the new University Library for which we had to fundraise, and many other developments there. I also served on the National Curriculum Development Centre Council, Kyambogo College School Board of Governors (as its chairperson) and St Joseph Secondary School Naggalama Board of Governors. It was increasingly becoming a little too hectic for me.

My colleagues who were more flamboyant than me were beginning to enjoy the nice things being said about ITEK and its administration. Some of them were so carried away by what they heard that they became unguarded and careless in their remarks. Others were often heard bragging, and making such provocative comments like "ITEASA was dead" within the earshot of some prominent ITEASA members. I had never under-rated the power of academic staff associations. During President Moi's rule, academic staff associations almost paralysed the entire public university system in Kenya. Its membership was too radicalised and excessively aggressive in its demands and dealings with Kenyan Government officials. Some of its members had actually turned themselves into the unofficial opposition to Moi's Government. I had also seen Makerere's MUASA transform from a docile organisation into a fire-spitting association which sent chills down the spines of the university administration and government officials alike any time its name – MUASA – was mentioned. At the back of my mind, I knew that ITEASA was far from being a dead organisation. It was alive and well. It had only become a simmering volcano because members of staff were slowly realising the demands they had been making on Government. However, the volcano could erupt any time and, like a Gabon viper, would strike

with a deadly blow. Occasionally, I had to warn some of my over-zealous colleagues that “to proclaim ITEASA dead was self- deception”.

Somehow, we had managed to maintain some semblance of peace and quiet, because we had opened up good communication channels that kept us in constant touch with all sections of the ITEK community, mainly through what we used to call *barazas*. These were essentially regular general staff and students’ meetings. They were intended to be fora for frank exchange of ideas, and for bringing current problems to the attention of the Institute Administration. Possible solutions would be vigorously debated at the *baraza* and later implemented. Sometimes, the Principal would be taken to task to explain certain decisions made by the Council, Appointments’ Board or Management, or why certain problems took so long to solve. The exchanges were candid, and I never felt threatened or in danger of being harmed whenever I was at a *baraza*. Once most people got used to this kind of communication, the initial mutual suspicions died away. In fact, we had succeeded in bridging the communication gap which usually exists between staff and administration.

Another factor which worked well in our favour was the fact that most of the students were mature. Some had families, so their approach to students’ problems reflected this level of maturity. For example, if there was a burning issue which they believed required an immediate response from the Principal, they would not resort to demonstrations, abusive language or stone-throwing. Instead, the Guild President or the Guild Minister concerned would present the problem or grievance to us and a solution would be mutually found. Using this approach and the regular *barazas* helped us solve many problems and we were able to avert students’ strikes. In fact, some of the Guild Presidents, like Ms Lagada and Etuk (now deceased) went on to build very successful political careers based on their experience at ITEK. They were really well-seasoned leaders who were not after cheap popularity. There was a degree of sincerity about them. They were the kind of leaders who would not say one thing to the institute authorities and then tell the students a different story, just to win their favour, as was usually the case with most student leaders I have seen over the years.

We were able to mobilise staff and students this way because ITEK had a small staff and student population. In a very large institution, it is difficult to communicate using this approach. The institution was also reeling from a bad crisis, so most people were open and receptive to new ideas, even if the ideas were untested. It seemed to me that most people wanted to put that dark chapter behind them as quickly as possible. It worked well and, for nearly three years, there was no staff strike until September 1993. In my own personal assessment, what triggered that second staff strike was a combination of external factors and leadership change in ITEASA itself. It was also quite plausible that some sections of the academic staff were not happy with our way of doing things,

but the most important factor was the resurgence of the more militant members of staff in the leadership of the association. In 1992-93, the Ministry of Public Service decided to computerise the public service payroll. This required every Government employee to have a unique identification number code which the computer would recognise. Unlike Makerere, ITEK salary scales were still part of the Government U scales. The IT scales were not yet gazetted, therefore they were not official. When the ITEK payroll came out, it did not reflect the changes in scales from U to IT. The Government's computer was programmed to recognise only the U and M scales and no other. As it turned out, many members of staff found themselves assigned wrong salary scales. Some names were missing or misspelt while some appeared more than once under different unique numbers. In short, the payroll had been dis-organised.

At that time, the computerisation of the Government payroll was the responsibility of a UNDP expert, a woman who had been hired from The Philippines. What followed was uproar. I had to make it a personal crusade to have the institute's payroll cleaned up as quickly as possible. Without an error-free payroll, most members of staff would not get their salaries and I knew very well that was a perfect recipe for a staff strike. Those of us who came from Makerere were more fortunate than our colleagues who were employees of the defunct NTC Kyambogo. The payroll pegged their scale to those of the Teaching Service Commission. When I raised the complaint about our dis-organised payroll with the Ministry of Public Service, I was referred to the UNDP Technical Advisor, who then referred me to the Uganda Computer Services. There, I was told that I should present my problem to the Commissioner for Data Processing in the Ministry of Finance. To my delight, when I reported to the Ministry of Finance Computer Centre, I met people I knew or whom I had taught at Makerere. Mrs Annakabbong, the wife of Professor William Annakabbong (the pharmacologist), was in charge of the Centre which was part of the Uganda Computer Services. She had with her in the Centre Mr Blasio Kigozi, Mr Sempijja and Arthur Kawooya, a former student whom I had taught at Makerere. I thought I had the right people to sort out the mess for me. This was the first time I was in the Government Computer Centre – quite a busy place. The huge ICL mainframe was clattering away non-stop. I explained my problem to the Uganda Computer Services programmers. After listening and perhaps feeling sorry for the mess that had been caused, they promised to do everything possible to clean up the payroll. As it turned out, the problem was more serious than we thought. It took weeks to fix the problem; sometimes, I needed to be around all day with the technical staff at the Computer Centre so they could sort out the information on my payroll.

The computer had to be re-programmed to generate a new payroll, but it still kept rejecting some unique numbers. The whole exercise was frustratingly slow. The technical staff too had to put aside some of their work in order to fix the

problem. After a lot of effort, they were able to clean up most of the payroll, so I thought I had some good news to report to staff. Unfortunately, the system was still rejecting a few names for reasons nobody could explain. When I reported the progress so far made at one of the *barazas*, most staff appreciated my efforts, but the ITEASA Chairperson insisted that everybody had to be on the payroll. I took time to explain the nature of the problem, which required going back to the Ministry of Public Service to cross-check the data. The Chairperson would not change his stance. He wanted to prove a point that even, as a recycled leader, he was not yet a “spent force”; that he had a lot of fire power left in him and therefore had what it took to be a leader capable of delivering a lethal punch. I was disappointed. I thought he would understand the pain I had gone through to get the payroll cleaned up. In fact, it was almost 99 per cent perfect. Since I did not compile it, I could not understand why the system could not accept the identification numbers of some members of staff. The Government computer programmers had informed me that we were dealing with a mis-coding error which had not been detected at the data entry stage in the Ministry of Public Service. To solve it, I needed to go back to the Ministry to have the data checked again, which I was in the process of doing. I thought it was an explanation everyone would understand but I was wrong. The new Chairperson of ITEASA wanted to prove to his constituency that the association had not been written off, that it was still a force to reckon with, and that he was the man who could provide the kind of leadership that could effectively fight for their rights in the old style.

Sadly for me, the problem of the few members of staff remained unsolved for several more days. ITEASA's patience ran out, so they went on strike and vowed not to go back to work until everybody's name was on the payroll and in the right salary scale. Characteristic of all strikes, those who do not agree with the reasons for calling for a strike found themselves having to go along with the majority decision or risk being branded blacklegs. Some members of staff who were not in favour of the strike told me that they thought that the decision of the ITEASA Chairperson to call for strike action was unreasonable and that they would have wanted to defy it, but feared for reprisals. I also told them that it would be unwise of them to be seen opposing the decision of their organization, adding that to go on a peaceful strike was perfectly legal. It was their right to protest injustice. However, I had to remind them that it was the students and taxpayers their action was hurting.

Deep down in my heart, I hated what was going on. We had worked hard together to overcome the problems of the past and here we were, trying to undermine those very gains we had worked so hard for through no fault of ours. Even members of the Institute Council, except the staff representatives, were taken aback. They too found it difficult to understand why the new ITEASA Chairperson was so vicious. It was as if, when he was away in the UK studying, he had been harbouring something nasty things about us and, as soon as he

came back, he badly needed to vent his anger. For him, this was the opportunity he had been waiting for. No amount of explanation by either the Chairman of Council or me would make him change his mind. What made this strike particularly uncomfortable for me was the fact that I was already leaving ITEK before I could solve it. Even with the strike on, I was not making any headway in sorting out the problem of wrong codes at the Ministry of Public Service. I was sorry I was passing the unsolved problem to the new Principal, somehow spoiling what should have been his honeymoon at ITEK. However, what was gratifying was that this strike was a low-key affair. There were no acrimonious statements made against the Institute Administration. All ITEASA was demanding was that, before its members resumed work, all members of staff had to be on the payroll.

Managing an academic institution in a poor country is not easy. Sometimes, challenges come in the most unexpected ways. I may not be practising them all the time, but I am a believer in values such as integrity and uprightness and I think they still have a place in today's society. Nevertheless, I cannot help getting surprised when I see people I expect to have a lot of self-respect indulging in indecent acts, such as cheating at examinations. I thought I had left the ugly vice of cheating at examinations at Makerere. With the exception of the Grade Five Diploma in Secondary Education, ITEK students were by and large mature upgrading teachers. Some of them had been head teachers. These were the role models, at least for their pupils. How wrong I was! In 1992, I saw worse things than I had seen at Makerere. Apparently, the decadence which had its beginnings in the 1970s had gone very far and was now completely eating away at whatever remained of the society's moral fabric. What started as a simple complaint from the Academic Registrar that some Diploma in Teacher Education (DTE) final year examination papers had leaked ended up as the worst and most extensive examination malpractice I had ever unearthed in my entire teaching and administrative career.

One day during the annual examination period, the Academic Registrar came to my office to inform me that he had received information from very reliable sources that some members of staff had leaked DTE II examination papers to some students. I asked him to conduct an investigation immediately. He was able to ascertain which examination leaked, including the actual examination papers, but he had no idea who had leaked them, so he continued interviewing as many students as possible. Soon, accusations started flying. Some students claimed that they knew the names of the members of staff who had leaked the examination papers to their female friends and that the females who were beneficiaries of the scam were well-known. Other angry students were willing to give names, but on condition of anonymity.

The Academic Registrar managed to get a few names. Some of the lecturers named were much older people, others were young men with a reputation of enjoying the company of beautiful girls. When the Registrar handed me the

names of the staff suspected to be responsible for leaking the examination, I could not believe what I saw. On the list were names of some of the respected people with many years of teaching experience. How could they have stooped so low as to indulge in something as damning as that at the risk of jeopardising their careers and reputation? I had no way of knowing, but I remained unconvinced that they were really the culprits. I had to investigate further. Nevertheless, when their names kept turning up repeatedly with tell-tale signs of how they had done it, I thought it was time to act. However, I also realised that the allegations against the members of staff had very serious legal implications for the institute; they had to be proved guilty beyond reasonable doubt, and we had to make sure that, in case of litigation against the institute, the evidence we had adduced could stand in a court of law. This was where my scientific training paid off.

As a science student many years ago, I had learnt not to draw conclusions based on insufficient data or on untested assumptions. A Physical Chemistry professor once told me never to draw a straight-line graph through two points. There must always be a third point to ascertain that, indeed, the graph is a straight line. To me, the situation at hand was a typical example of a straight-line graph being drawn through two points when there was no third point to confirm the evidence. Intuitively, I knew that although names had been given, we did not have the whole picture. I also knew a thing or two about *prima facie* statements and their dangers. I needed more evidence and the only way to get it was to continue probing. Meanwhile, the newspaper reporters had got wind of the massive examination cheating at ITEK and were having a field day. They were constantly at the institute, looking for what they considered newsworthy stories. In fact, an article that appeared in *The New Vision* newspaper during that time that almost got me into serious legal trouble with one member of staff. He wanted to sue the institute for defamation because he was named in the article. I was at pains to explain to him that no institute official had given anybody's name to the press. Fortunately, we were able to settle the matter amicably. The most sensible thing to do in the circumstances was to set up a Committee of Inquiry to probe the examination leakage.

Given the fact that some members of the teaching staff were implicated in the malpractice, we decided that the committee of inquiry should comprise only senior members of the administration, with the Principal as its chair. We asked the Academic Registrar to compile all the information and evidence in his possession. After looking at he had presented, we decided to invite everyone who was implicated in the examination malpractice. It was a tricky affair. I actually felt uneasy interrogating the senior staff, but it had to be done to get to the bottom of the truth. As chairperson, I had to devise a way of easing tension because, as we found out later, all those whose names were on Academic Registrar's list had been falsely accused. I told members of the committee, particularly the Academic

Registrar who was up in arms, not to ask intimidating questions or to appear to be biased in any way. We were after the truth. After interrogating members of staff, we turned our attention to the students, mostly the females suspected of having love affairs with some of the lecturers. The interrogations were long and laborious but disappointing. We were pulling blanks. We sat in the Board Room from eight o'clock in the morning up till ten in the night, but none of the hard work was giving us the breakthrough we were looking for. Every lead we investigated only took us to a dead end. No one was willing to admit complicity in the leakage.

The Academic Registrar and his deputy appeared to be convinced that the guilty members of staff were simply denying their roles in the leakage to buy time and save their necks. Frankly, after drawing so many blanks, I was inclined to draw the same conclusion, as the circumstantial evidence against some of them was indeed overwhelming, but not enough for me to institute disciplinary action against any named member of staff. I was not yet convinced. I had a hunch the case had not been made, despite the mounting evidence, which by all accounts looked water-tight. I needed more time, although I could sense that some of my colleagues were getting tired and looking forward to ending the probe. Worse still, the inquiry had brought most of the institute's business to a standstill. I was not about to quit.

As I was about to wind up the committee's work, we received the breakthrough we were looking for. An unexpected clue as to what had happened came from one of the female students we had been interviewing for some time. She was the first person to admit that she actually had access to the questions. She revealed that one evening when she was busy revising with her friends, a male student, who was also a primary school headmaster came to their room with some questions and told them that he had good news for them. What he had brought was the real examination paper and if they wanted to pass well, they should start revising those questions. He further assured them that he had more, which he would share with them later. The student said that at first they did not believe the man; nevertheless, they decided to look at the questions. She told the committee that she knew the man through a friend with whom she studied. She gave us the man's name and said she was ready to testify against him if called. When we asked her why she was giving all this information to the committee and why she had taken so long to do so? Her reply was that at the beginning, she was afraid but when she realised she was one of those being accused of having an affair with one of the lecturers implicated in the malpractice, she decided to come clean. In her opinion, some male students were falsely accusing members of staff because they were jealous and believed they were competing with them. The truth of the matter was that these members of staff had nothing to do with the leakage. We asked her whether she had any idea about the source of the leakage, but she said

their friend said that was his secret. We then decided to interrogate the named student.

The headmaster-cum-student was in his mid-30s, heading one of the army primary schools nearby. At first, he denied knowledge of the leakage. He claimed that he too just heard about it from his fellow students and that it was corridor talk everywhere on the campus. He told us that there was no way he could have been involved in such a terrible act because, as a headmaster, he knew fully well the implications and, secondly, he was a non-resident student. When we told him that we had a witness he had given the leaked examination papers to, who was ready to testify against him, he quickly responded by calling her a liar and that he hardly knew her. As one of his diversionary tactics, he bragged that if he had access to the real examination beforehand, he would be a fool to share such a secret with anybody. We pressed him further by giving him more details about the female student. This did the trick. He broke down in tears and confessed the examination questions had been given to him by a friend, who was also a headmaster at the Seventh Day Adventist Primary School nearby. We called his friend in and pitted them against each other. After denials and claims of malice, the second headmaster admitted that he was the brain behind the leakage. He told us that he was finding it difficult to study and to take care of his office at the same time, so he shared his problem with his friend from the Army school who was in a similar situation. Both realised that there was no way they could pass the final examination, because they had had no time to revise; so they had to think of a face-saving plan. Their scheme was elaborate. As headmasters, they were familiar with the wax stencils on which the examination questions were typed for cyclostyling. They knew about the carbon paper between the stencil and its back cover. Anything typed on the stencil was automatically imprinted on the carbon paper and was legible. What they decided to do was to approach the cyclostyling machine operator in the Academic Registrar's office with money. After getting the man's cooperation, they asked him to collect all the carbon paper from the examination stencils for them for a handsome fee. The cyclostyling machine operator found the handsome cash offer irresistible.

The scheme had gone well without a hitch and it almost succeeded, but they gave away their secret too soon. However, as any crime detective will tell you, every crime leaves a signature and a trail behind, however tiny the signature may be and however careful the criminal tries to cover up his trail. It can be a single strand of hair or very minute drops of blood invisible to the naked eye. These minute details help the eagle eyes of a well-trained and experienced detective to catch the criminal. What prompted those two young men who had scooped gold to share their secret with other people remains a mystery to me. Apparently, they were unaware of the old English saying: "Be careful what you say, walls have ears". We listened to the students' confession in total disbelief. I could see a visibly

shaken Academic Registrar. All along, he had been on a wild goose chase. I was sure he could hardly believe what he heard. How could such a dreadful thing happen in his own backyard and he did not have the slightest clue about it? And how could he be apportioning blame to the wrong people when the actual culprit was in his department.

It took us time to recover from the shock and, as I sat there listening attentively to what the student had to say, I recalled an incident in the early 1980s when Obote became President of Uganda for the second time. Obote was addressing Parliament and attacking the Opposition Leader, Dr Kawanga Semwogerere, for some remarks he had made, criticising the Government for its failings. Obote said, that he had pity on his brother, Semwogerere, who thought that two plus two always equals four, forgetting that the answer depended on the base used. Had I not insisted on continuing with the inquiry would I not have committed the same mistake of drawing conclusions based on wrong assumptions? I thanked my lucky stars for insisting on stronger evidence.

After we had heard the students' testimony, we needed to corroborate it with the cyclostyling machine operator's account. We decided to talk to him too and invited him to appear before the committee. He was an elderly man who had long passed the mandatory retirement age of sixty but, because he had long working experience and was considered trustworthy, the institute had decided to keep him on the job. Like Nyamungu, he too had been transferred from the defunct NTC Kyambogo. He hailed from what used to be East Acholi district, which was now Kitigum and Pader districts. Although he understood English, he was not fluent enough to give his testimony, so we had to find an interpreter for him. I soon learnt that he spoke a Luo dialect few Acholis understood. Although we had several people from Gulu and Kitigum, not everyone from there could comprehend his dialect. We were fortunate to have a member of staff who understood the dialect, and agreed to be the interpreter. The old man narrated how the headmaster from Kireka had approached him and promised a lot of money, and that he was even ready to pay him an advance. The old man had protested, adding that all his working life at Kyambogo, he had never done such a thing. Everyone trusted him that he was worried he would betray the confidence the Registrar had in him and that if he was caught, he would lose his job. The student had assured him that there was no way the Academic Registrar or anybody would get to know of it. The old man proved very cooperative, and did not deny anything. All he was asking for was clemency, because of his previous clean record.

After gathering all the evidence, we had to take our findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Institute Council, the Academic and Appointments' Board for appropriate action. The two students were immediately expelled; the cyclostyling machine operator was also dismissed. The Academic Registrar and the Deputy Registrar were given a serious reprimand for the laxity in handling the

processing of the examinations. From then on, the carbon paper had to be removed from all examination stencils and destroyed before sending for cyclostyling. The Academic Registrar was advised to use only trustworthy secretaries for examination typing and cyclostyling machine operators had to be strictly supervised. We all learnt very valuable but painful lessons from this experience. The hard work and time spent on the probe were, after all, worth the while.

While I kept busy with the management and academic affairs of the institute, my wife Alice was also making modest contributions to the Kyambogo community. She was elected a member of the Kyambogo Resistance Council III executive committee as the Secretary for Women, with Mr Augustine Rugyema, the Head of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the UPK as Chairperson. As a member of the executive committee, she had to represent Kyambogo Division on the Kampala City Council, KCC. The Institute Secretary, Mr Avitus Tibarimbasa, was also a member of the same executive as Education Secretary. He too was a *de facto* member of Kampala City Council. In fact, the two used to refer to each other as "Fellow Councillor". I could see my wife develop a serious interest in politics; all along, Alice had been apolitical. As we shall see later, I strongly suspect that, for Mr Tibarimbasa, this was his entry point into real politics. Besides representing the Division in the KCC, my wife mobilised the women for productive activities. One of such activities was a day care centre, where working mothers could leave their children under the care of an experienced nanny.

When the Primary School moved from the ITEK campus to the new buildings on top of Kyambogo hill, some of the vacated buildings remained unused. They required renovation to make them habitable again. At the time, the institute did not have money to repair them. The women spotted one of them and asked me to allocate them some space for their Day Care Centre project. They assured me that they would find the money to renovate it. As was my usual practice, I made a few consultations. We all agreed that it was a good idea and, on that basis, we allocated them a room for their project in one of the empty buildings. My wife took a very keen interest in the project and was actually successful in raising funds for it. Mrs Connie Hab'alyaleme of the Literature Department and Ms Anand Noir, the specialist on the ODA Project, volunteered to assist her with the day-to-day running of the centre and in the fundraising activities. With the money they had managed to raise, they recruited a nanny and started taking in babies and infants. To my surprise, the project was an instant success. When the centre was fully up-and-running, Alice invited Dr Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, then Minister for Women and Culture to Kyambogo to have a look at the women's projects, and the Day Care Centre in particular. Dr Kazibwe did come and toured the projects. They made a good impression on her so much that she promised the women support from her Ministry. Apparently, Alice was a good mobiliser and a result-oriented leader, but unfortunately for her, our time at Kyambogo was cut

short by my new appointment at Makerere. So, she did not stay long enough to see her project's progress, but her successors did not do a bad job either. The Day Care Centre continued to thrive and over time, evolved into a kindergarten.

That was our time at ITEK, a place, which had become our beloved home away from our matrimonial home. When I became ITEK Principal, I resigned my position at Makerere and I did not expect to ever go back there. How wrong I was! Apparently, Makerere and I had become an inseparable couple right up to my retirement in 2004. Once again, it was now time to pack our bags and go west. ITEK had proved to be a good training ground for my next job at Makerere. There, I learnt many valuable lessons in institutional management, transformation and development. In one of the courses on institutional management the Ministry of Education and Sports used to organise for us, in conjunction with the World Bank at the Crested Crane Hotel, Jinja, I learnt from practical experience how easily information could be distorted through verbal communication. I have never forgotten that experience. That experience stood me in good stead when I returned to Makerere. The only regret I could think of as I was leaving ITEK was the amount of unfinished business I had to leave behind. However, my successor, Professor Lutalo- Bosa, was a seasoned administrator. ITEK was losing a mare and gaining a stallion.



## My Experience: The Return to Makerere

### **My Long Years at Makerere as Vice Chancellor (1993 – 2004)**

“We have decided to send you back to Makerere as the next Vice-Chancellor”. These were the words of Minister Amanywa Mushega when I met him at a meeting at the International Conference Centre on September 20, 1993; and they are still fresh in my memory. Towards the end of August 1993, I was selected to accompany Mr Eriya Kategaya, who was then First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, on a study visit to Bangladesh. The other members of the delegation were Mr David Pulkol who was then the Deputy Minister of Education and Sports and Johnson Busingye (now deceased) who was at the time the District Education Officer of Bushenyi. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the Grameen Micro-finance and the educational programmes for rural poor communities, which Dr Muhammad Yunus had established in Bangladesh, and to assess the possibility of replicating them in Uganda.

On our way back from Dhaka, we had a stop-over at Addis Ababa Airport. The Ethiopian Government officials arranged for Mr David Pulkol and his delegation to wait for the Entebbe flight at the VIP lounge. Mr Kategaya had left us behind in Dhaka for a trip to Europe, so Mr Pulkol was now the leader of our delegation. For some reason, as we waited for our flight, the topic of dismissing senior Government officials over the radio came up. We thought that the practice of doing things in an uncivilised way had ended with Idi Amin, pointing out that the affected officers had a right to know their fate before the public did. Jokingly, we then referred to ourselves, saying that perhaps by the time we got home that afternoon our jobs might be long gone. Mr Pulkol looked at me and laughed loudly, which left me a bit worried. He then assured us that, as far as he knew, we were secure in our jobs. However, I could not help wondering why he had

looked at me in that peculiar way and then laughed so loudly. However, I did not dare probe further, as he was one of my bosses. Later, it happened that before he left for Bangladesh, Mr Amany Mushega had discussed with him the changes he intended to make at Makerere and my name had featured prominently among the possible successors to Professor Kajubi. He was just not ready to let the cat out of the bag in Addis Ababa, so he did not volunteer any clues as to what was in the offing for me. As it happened later, I now believe he was guarded, because he did not want to take responsibility for leaking the information prematurely, in case the Minister changed his mind while he was away. When we got back to ITEK, I did not sense anything unusual. I just went about my work as usual. Then one Thursday afternoon, Minister Amany Mushega invited me to a meeting he was going to address at the International Conference Centre. I had to see him first before the meeting.

I have had so many surprises in my life that it seemed there was nothing that could ever surprise me anymore. Even my very survival as a child was a small wonder. My mother conceived me at an advanced age of 35. She had been childless until she brought me into the world. Unfortunately for her, I came out of the womb early, a month and a half prematurely, so I had to be kept in an incubator at Nsambya Hospital. When I left hospital, my mother was given a rubber hot water bottle to keep me warm. I used such a hot water bottle again in Belfast in the 1970s as a graduate student. However, as if that was not enough trouble for my mother; when I was about a year old, I developed a mouth ulcer in the upper jaw, which almost failed to heal. Thanks to modern medicine and to my mother who strongly believed in it, the ulcer healed. Then, when I was in Grade Three at Gaba Primary School, I contracted whooping cough which almost killed me. In fact, some of the doctors had told my father that I had almost no chance of surviving. Thanks to my father's perseverance. I lived to tell the tale. That same year, the Headmaster was looking for a school time-keeper. I was tested for clock reading with other boys who were much older than me. Fortunately for me, I passed the test and become the youngest school time-keeper at the age of ten. I did this job for three years and, even when I battled with whooping cough, the school authorities still retained me as the official time-keeper.

There was even some talk about promoting me from Grade Three to Grade Five but the idea was later dropped. Perhaps I would have set a precedence in the school, which had never fast-tracked a student before. My guess was that some teachers were apprehensive that if I did not live up to expectations, it would set a bad precedent. When I was in Grade Five, my class teacher then was one of the two teachers in the school who could teach English (the rest were vernacular teachers). He used to ask me to help him mark the English homework of his Grade Four pupils. In 1961, my final year at Gaba, twenty-one of us sat for the Primary Leaving Examination, which was then the first public examination in

the education cycle. When the results were released, only three of us had passed – a girl and two boys. I happened to be the best of the three. The rest of the class failed. The girl and the second boy happened to have joined Gaba Primary School in Grade Five. Technically, it meant I was the only lucky one to have passed among the original eighteen pupils.

When I joined St Peter's Junior School at Nsambya in 1962, I had no money for school lunch. So, I used to go without lunch in spite of the fact I had to commute to school every day on foot from Kawuku-Gaba to Nsambya, a distance of almost seven miles. Then one day the Headmaster, Father Jones, called me to his office and asked me why I was not eating lunch at school. After explaining my problem, he told me to start eating lunch and that he would pay for it. I thought I had misheard him, so I ignored his offer. I did not believe he could allow me to have free lunch; after all there was no such a thing as free lunch, someone had to pay for it. Apparently for reasons best known to him, he had developed a keen interest in me.

When Father Jones discovered I was still not eating the school lunch, he called me again and inquired why I had disobeyed him. This sent a chill down my spine. I attempted an explanation in self-defense, only for him to tell me that he was aware of my financial problems – the very reason he allowed me have free lunch. I was puzzled how the headmaster had found out about my problems! Perhaps when he looked at my fees payment record, he must have discovered that I was not paying for lunch. I never knew who else benefited from Father Jones's generosity the same way I did.

In my second and final year at Nsambya, the Headmaster singled me out as the next school time-keeper. I complained that I lived far from the school and that it would be difficult for me to be on time every morning. He quipped back and said that he had never seen me come late and therefore saw no reason I should start coming in late when I was the timekeeper. Again, I was left speechless. I sat for the Junior Leaving/Senior Entrance Examination in 1963, at the end of what used to be called Junior Two. Namilyango College was the dream of every Nsambya boy, but it was a highly competitive school too. A first grade was not good enough; it had to be a good first grade. In my year, six students out of a class of forty-four at Nsambya made it to Namilyango. To my big surprise, I was one of them. At Namilyango, I ran into all sorts of personal problems; some of a psychological nature, others social I could not explain. I also developed constant dull headaches, which had an effect on my academic performance as I could hardly concentrate for long hours.

"Winter time", the jargon for the school examination period, was always the worst time for me. However, very few friends were aware of my agonising condition. Apart from this set back, there were two surprises waiting for me. At the end of Senior Two, some students were selected to take Physics and Chemistry

as separate subjects. Students used to call this combination the “Pures”. Selection for these subjects was based on exceptionally good performance in both subjects and Mathematics. I was one of the lucky students selected for this combination. Students weak in the two subjects and Mathematics were only allowed to take Physics with Chemistry combination. In Senior Three, I was once again appointed school time-keeper, together with my friend John Chrisestom Sentamu, for a period of two years. I could not help wondering why school time-keeping and I had become synonymous with each other for so many years! Although I passed my examinations, there was always room for improvement. Finally, I made it to Makerere, but with a lot of struggle. Interestingly, at Makerere, I regained much of my academic flare. Makerere years were my best years. All my social and psychological problems disappeared.

After one year at Queen’s University, Belfast, I was informed that my MSc work had been upgraded to a PhD thesis. I could not believe I was exempted from the MSc and I was proceeding straight to a PhD, even though I had gone to Belfast for an MSc. I was able to complete and defend my thesis within three years, which was the mandatory minimum time a student was allowed to spend on the PhD thesis. Some of the students I started the programme with and a few who were a year ahead of me were still struggling to complete their theses. Moreover, I was the only black student in my group. To make things even more surprising for me, I was offered a postdoctoral fellowship appointment in the same department before I had completed writing up my thesis and defended it. In fact, one could call me a predoctoral postdoctoral fellow. At the same time, my supervisor, Professor Frank Glockling, had secured an extension of my visiting studentship, which I had to turn down in lieu of the postdoctoral fellowship, which paid me more than the studentship.

I had managed to publish some of my work in the journal, *Nature*, which is one of the topmost premier scientific journals in the world. Several papers published in this journal have gone on to win the Nobel Prize. I was really proud of my paper in *Nature*, a highly coveted journal which also has a reputation for its high rejection rate. I also published another paper in the journal, *Inorganica Chimica Acta*, edited in Switzerland. This paper attracted worldwide attention and I received several requests for its reprints from all over the world. When I submitted it, I had no idea that it would have that kind of impact on the international scientific community. I published many more later, but they did not have the same impact as these two papers. I also succeeded in publishing papers in good and renowned journals which were not on the same level as *Nature* but which, nevertheless, were also journals of good international standing. One of such journals is the *Transactions of the Japan Institute of Metal*. At Makerere, I successfully supervised several MSc and PhD students while many of my senior colleagues had never supervised a single postgraduate student. In fact, some of

my students published papers out of their work in international peer-reviewed journals. I was also peer-reviewing papers submitted for publication for some journals. As a young upcoming academic, this was not a record I was really upbeat about. Therefore, I was no longer surprised by anything new happening to me. I had seen it all, so I thought; but I was in for another rude shock.

When Amanywa Mushega invited me to the International Conference Centre to break the news to me that Government had decided to send me back to Makerere as Vice Chancellor, it was a different story. I simply gaped and stood there motionless, not knowing how to handle the news. It was too much for me. Was this another big joke the Minister was playing on me? After all, April Fool's Day had long past; this was September. For sure, the Minister was not pulling my leg. It was real. What was really going on with me? I was sure the Minister did not mean what he said and if he did, he had simply mistaken me for someone else! As I have said before, I sincerely believed that by now, I was immune to surprises, but as a mother will tell you, "every child comes with its special labour pain" and no woman ever gets immune to labour pains. It does not matter how many children she has given birth to before; every labour is excruciatingly painful. Likewise, a human being is never immune to surprises and, indeed, life is full of them.

The one thing I was least prepared for was the top-level executive job at Makerere. As I have said, the job was too demanding, too risky and too insecure. After that short meeting at the International Conference Centre, the Minister told me the Chancellor was going to make an announcement the following day, so I should get ready to leave for Makerere immediately. How about Professor Kajubi? Was he informed of the changes or was he going to hear it over the radio? I asked. No, the Minister replied, the President had invited him to his upcountry home in Rwakitura and had briefed him on the changes. Then, I remembered why David Pulkol had laughed at me at Addis Ababa airport.

Some years back, I had read in an American publication about the Apollo 11 Astronauts. The writer of this story said that when Astronaut Dr Boldwin Buzz Aldrin learnt that NASA had selected him for the first Apollo 11 moon-landing mission, and that he would be the second man to set foot on the moon, he almost failed to inform his family. It was after his wife, Joan, sensed that something seemed to be terribly wrong with her husband who had lately began acting withdrawn, that Buzz revealed the big secret to his wife. I was almost in a similar situation. I nearly failed to tell Alice the news. It was as if I was on a mission to Mars without a rocket. I did not know whether I should be happy or sad! Like Buzz Aldrin, I went home that evening acting withdrawn.

As I anticipated, the announcement of my appointment as Makerere's new Vice Chancellor on Thursday, September 23, 1993 drew mixed responses from Makerere and the public at large. The People newspaper, then the mouthpiece of the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC) was quick to brand Professor Epelu Opio

and myself as Museveni's sycophants. My appointment as Vice Chancellor had taken many people by total surprise. I later learnt that, at Makerere, a change in the top leadership of the university had been expected, but not in the way it happened. I had been barely away from Makerere for three years and not much was known about my work at Kyambogo. It was therefore understandable why my appointment took many by surprise, including my old time friends. In the midst of it all, the critics were busy at work. Many were heard calling into question why such a junior person like me had been elevated to such a position, and asking questions like, for instance like, "How had he become a Professor? What managerial experience if any, was he bringing to the job? Was he not being rewarded for denouncing MUASA's action a few years earlier?" The questions were endless but legitimate. Frankly, I too was inclined to think along the lines as the critics. I had never applied for the job or for the promotion. I felt a little inadequate for my new job. Makerere was not comparable to ITEK. In reality, ITEK was a dwarf compared with Makerere University. Some who knew how to gaze in the crystal ball had predicted that I would not last more than three months at the job.

Apparently, the appointing authority knew better and, secondly, I was not the first person to be promoted in this way. I recalled that in 1989, when I was Head of the Department of Chemistry, Bernard Onyango had written a letter to the Vice Chancellor, Professor George Kirya about me. I was not supposed to have seen this letter, but a kind secretary who was excited by its content, took me in confidence and showed it to me. She insisted it was for my eyes only. What Mr Onyango had written about me was too good to be believed. In essence, he was telling Professor Kirya about what he thought were exceptional leadership qualities he saw in me and was urging him to speed up my promotion to full professorship. I have never figured out what prompted Mr Onyango to take this exceptional and unusual decision to write such a letter to the Vice Chancellor. As we have seen, Mr Onyango was always careful and well-guarded in what he had to say; therefore, for him to have written a letter of this kind to the Vice Chancellor about me was untypical of the man. Perhaps, as an experienced administrator, he had noticed something exceptional in me I was unaware of. What was the fate of that letter? Again, I do not have the slightest clue, because I was not supposed to have known. At the age of 46, I was probably one of the youngest people to occupy this position at Makerere. In fact, I later realised that, for this job, being young was an advantage. In real life, some things happen to individuals which are simply impossible to understand and to explain, and perhaps best left unexplained. It is little wonder that people believe in some form of supernatural force. Some call it "fate". They believe that life is a journey with pre-determined milestones. There are milestones in everyone's life and no individual can change them. As my new appointment continued to perplex me, I wondered whether, after all, the fatalists had a point. Was this supposed to be my fate? However, I was to learn later from

my old friend, class and roommate at Namilyango and the Prime Minister of Uganda at the time, Cosmas Adyebo (now deceased) that my appointment and promotion were neither accidental nor based on any peripheral considerations as some people thought. He told me further that before Government considered me suitable for the job of Vice Chancellor at Makerere, they had done some serious detective work on me.

My record at Makerere and ITEK had been scrutinised. So also were my public relations and ability to solve problems, including doing more with less, as well as the record of my scientific published works. He therefore, assured me that I was not a blind choice, that there were qualities they were looking for in the new Vice Chancellor and they were convinced I possessed most of them. In short, they were looking for a good manager for the university; therefore, there was nothing for me to worry too much about. In the end, I took my friend's advice and accepted the challenge. However, I knew that what I was taking on was no mean challenge. ITEK had been hard to sort out, but the challenge of running Makerere was likely to be much harder.

As soon as my appointment as the new Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, with Professor Justin Epelu Opio as Deputy Vice Chancellor was announced, the Editor-in- Chief of the New Vision dispatched a team of young journalists to my residence at Kyambogo. Some of the questions they asked were about the plans I had for Makerere, I could hardly provide them with intelligent answers, because I was still dumbfounded and not prepared for the new job yet. I murmured a few things, which they jotted down and left. I was not ready for journalists yet, and needed plenty of time to recover from the shock and think straight. At that time, my new job looked like mission impossible. Moreover, I was still lamenting the unfinished work and the friends I would be leaving at Kyambogo. On the other hand, I was happy to learn that Professor James A. Lutalo Bosa had been named my successor at ITEK. I had worked with him when he was Dean in the Faculty of Science at Makerere before he was appointed Deputy Vice Chancellor. So, I knew him very well. The man was a workaholic, a performer, an honest and totally dependable person. I was therefore leaving ITEK in safe hands. It was time to prepare for the hand-over. Nevertheless, it took me time to pluck up the courage to leave for Makerere. When my wife realised I was procrastinating, she asked me if I was waiting for the Minister's *kasuzekaty*. In the Kiganda culture, *kasuzekaty* is the gift that the bridegroom must present to the bride's parents early in the morning of the wedding day for them to release the bride. When I started receiving telephone calls from the university asking me to attend to important matters, I realised it was time to go. In any case, Professor Lutalo Bosa was also waiting for the hand-over. I promptly organised a handing-over ceremony with an incomplete handing-over report. On October 12, 1993, I bade farewell to my colleagues and left Kyambogo for Makerere. I left with plenty of fond memories.

The Makerere I left in 1990 had in many ways changed for the better, thanks in part to the findings and recommendations of the Sendaula Visitation of 1990, but I was also acutely aware of the challenges that lay ahead of us. Some of the old problems, like the quest for a living wage and students' indiscipline and lack of respect for the university administration were still very much alive and waiting for us. In fact, we did not have to wait long before we had a taste of the things to come. Therefore, I had no qualms about my new job. I was replacing a Vice Chancellor forced to leave office simply because staff, students and Ministry of Education and Sports officials attributed many of Makerere's ills to him. Ostensibly, he left Makerere a bitter man, but also as a poor administrator.

As the Sendaula Visitation Committee of 1990 observed in its report to the Chancellor, both staff and students held the view that the Vice Chancellor and his administration were their enemies. The allegation was that the university administration under Professor Kajubi had failed to take care of their welfare and was perceived to be indifferent to the plight and grievances of both staff and students. The university was split right down the middle. On the one hand were the academic staff and students and on the other were the Vice Chancellor and the university administration. As we have seen, on top of all this turmoil, there was a very strong undercurrent of the multiplicity of power centres which had sprung up all over the university, first during Professor Kirya's time, and had continued even in Kajubi's time. This under-current was responsible for much of the turmoil the university had experienced in the last four years. Sendaula's Visitation Committee identified the power centres as the Students' Guild; the Academic Staff Association (MUASA), the Workers' Union; the Administrative Staff Association and the Resistance Councils.

Before the NRM came to power in 1986, some of these power centres existed but only in name. However, in the new environment of free speech, they had become powerful, vocal and assertive. When I arrived at Makerere, my first impression was that the university was deceptively peaceful; so one had to tread cautiously, as the volcano could erupt again at any time. Of course, much of my fear proved to be unfounded. The majority of the Makerere community genuinely welcomed our appointments. I think they too were somehow tired of unending chaos and confusion and the frequent but unproductive confrontations with Government.

Professor Kajubi was kind enough to prepare a comprehensive hand-over report that served as my guide as I tried to settle in the office and to get to grips with the nitty gritty of the university's administration. The secretaries I had left behind three years earlier, Dorcas Muherya and Mary Seremba, were still there and were to remain with me for almost 11 years of my time as Vice Chancellor. Professor Justin Epelu Opio, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, was an old friend whom I had known when he was Head of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy, and when

he was working on a project funded by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Under this project, he had acquired a Russian-made car and I used to tease him about the funny look of his car. When the President appointed him to head the Teso Presidential Commission, which helped Government to pacify Teso, he was a frequent visitor at ITEK. He used to come to address students from the Teso region on the peace initiatives his Commission was spearheading. Through those interactions, I came to know him a lot better. He is a highly intelligent man, thorough in his work with an acute eye for fine detail as any good anatomist would be. He also had a lively personality, and was an avid tennis player. As things turned out, over time he became my right-hand man. Reverend David Sentongo, the University Secretary; Mr George Kihuguru (or “Uncle George” as generations of students used to call him), the Dean of Students; Mr Garshom Eyok, the Senior Deputy Academic Registrar and Mr Ben Byambazi, the University Bursar were all there. I had worked with all of them before I left for Kyambogo. Having them around as part of the team made my settling in a lot easier, although as I have said before, I was somehow under pressure to replace them, because most of them had reached the mandatory age of retirement.

Dr Mukwanason Huhya who had taken up the position of Academic Registrar a few months prior to our appointment was the only new person on the team. Dr Huhya and I joined Makerere in the same year as undergraduate students in 1970. We were also in the same faculty. He read Statistics and Economics. After graduation in 1973, he won a Commonwealth scholarship tenable in Canada and proceeded to Simon Fraser University in British Columbia for a Master of Arts degree in Economics, after which his scholarship was extended. He then moved to the University of Alberta at Edmonton for a PhD in the same discipline. When he completed his PhD, Uganda was still in political turmoil, so he decided to join the University of Dar es Salaam (UDS), as a lecturer in Economics. He remained at UDS, rising to the rank of Associate Professor and Deputy Dean of his faculty. He was one of the Ugandan economists who, in the late 1980s, was fielded by the World Bank as consultants to advise the Uganda Government on its macro-economic policies, prior to the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme, (SAP). By the time the World Bank consultancy ended, the position of Academic Registrar at Makerere had fallen vacant, after the retirement of Mr Bernard Onyango. When it was advertised, Dr Huhya was one of the applicants. He beat all the other applicants at the interview and got the job. As a World Bank consultant, he was earning a handsome salary, paid in hard currency. The salary attached to the job he had applied for at Makerere was far less; almost a tenth of what he was earning on the World Bank job. This had made the then Vice Chancellor and his colleagues at the university doubt whether the man was really serious. But he was. Dr Mukwanason Huhya was in fact the first PhD holder and the first Muslim to occupy this position. In my opinion, I had a good management team I could rely on for good decision-making and from whom I could draw

inspiration. As far as I was concerned, the old colleagues represented continuity and the new, a fresh start. Contrary to my fears, the warm reception extended to us by the university community took much of the sting out of my initial fears.

Besides a good management team, the old Council chaired by Mr Mathias Ngobi with Mrs (now Lady Justice) Mary Maitum as vice chairperson, had had its term renewed. As we have seen, Mr Ngobi was one of Uganda's pioneer politicians and had served briefly as a Minister in the first Government of Milton Obote. After a serious disagreement over issues of principle, Obote threw him into jail together with four other Ministers. Idi Amin freed him after the 1971 coup. After that long ordeal in detention, he had picked up the pieces and settled down to a private life in his home village of Namutumba in Kamuli District in Busoga. President Museveni, in his capacity as Makerere's Chancellor had identified him to chair the university's Governing Council. It was a vibrant Council and it helped us to a good start. Although up till then I did not know much about him, we quickly established an excellent rapport, which made work easy for both of us. However, I heard that my predecessor had had some difficulties working with Ngobi. To the contrary, I had no difficulty working with Mathias Ngobi. I guess going to the same church made a difference.

As Vice Chancellor, I was not only supposed to be the chief administrative officer of the university, but also its chief academic officer. In fulfilling that role, the Vice Chancellor acts as chairman of the University Senate by law. Senate is the supreme academic organ of the university. Few of its decisions on academic matters are referred to the University Council for approval. Most of the Senate decisions, such as approval of examination results, admission of students, appointment of external examiners, staff development, the graduation ceremony, to mention a few, are final. It is also Senate's responsibility to recommend to the University Council new programmes, changes in the curriculum, new departments, institutes and faculties, dismissal of students found engaging in examination malpractices, as well as the university calendar. The Academic Registrar serves as the Senate's secretary. Senate is one of the most important of the Vice Chancellor's responsibilities. At the time I took over as Vice Chancellor, the Makerere University Senate was a huge body with a membership in excess of one hundred people. It was that big because, according to the 1970 Act, all Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments were members. Besides these, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the University Librarian, a representative of the Hall Wardens, two academic staff representatives and five representatives of the Minister responsible for Education were all members. There was also provision for the connected schools or institutions to have representation in Senate. Much as it was a big Senate, I knew the majority of the members by their first names. Apparently, little had changed in the three years I was away. Before age began to take its toll, I had the knack to remember people by their names.

Although there were myriads of burning issues, we chose not to rush into major administrative decisions. We decided to do first things first. One of the first things we had to do was to fathom the magnitude of the problems confronting the university, identify priorities and plan for appropriate interventions. Although many of the problems had been highlighted in the reports of the two Visitation Committees of Justice Manyindo in 1987 and of Gerald Sendaula in 1990, we wanted to have a personal experience. Therefore, besides reading the files and attending to routine administrative matters, we decided to visit all units of the university and discuss with members of staff the kind of problems they were facing and what needed to be done to solve them. These tours were a real eye opener. They provided us with a lot of information about the state of the university that could not have been adequately captured by reading reports and files alone.

In fact, what we discovered was startling and, in a very important way, provided us with a lot of food for thought as we began the administration of the university. For instance, we soon discovered that most departments had no working telephones and communication was either verbal or by letters and circulars. We also found out that a big part of the university's water borne sewage system had broken down, forcing people to use pit latrines and other unconventional ways of disposing solid waste. The situation was worst in most of the students' halls of residence. Pit latrines littered the university and were producing a terribly offensive smell all over the place. The latrines got full quickly, requiring constant emptying, but sometimes the university could not afford to pay for the service, so the filth would spill over.

We also discovered that most of the university buildings without flat roofs leaked profusely whenever it rained. In addition to this, the roads on campus were in a sorry state. As the two Visitation Committees had pointed out in their reports, the university's infrastructure had deteriorated to this extent due to neglect, as successive Governments, particularly during Idi Amin's rule, had chronically starved the university of funds. Chronic under-financing of the university meant that no serious maintenance could be undertaken and the university's physical plant was left to decay to an alarming state. The NRM Government had started providing some funds for capital development, but it was too little to make any impact.

After the Sendaula Visitation Committee, the Government of Uganda commissioned Mr Henry Sentoogo's Firm of Architects in 1991 to estimate how much it would cost to rehabilitate the university. Sentoongo had put the estimates at over 50 billion shillings which, at the time, the Ministry of Finance could not raise. To put it more concisely, Makerere's major problem was lack of money. The university was totally dependent on the Government Treasury for all its funding. Hence, one of our top priorities was to find a solution to the money problem. Our predecessors had done their best to improve upon the bad situation

but could not do much due to lack of money. The increasing student numbers, at the time all Government-sponsored, without a corresponding increase in the university budget did not help matters either. The extra numbers were putting more pressure on the already severely strained facilities – we shall return to this later. We did not confine our visits to meeting staff in their places of work, we also included tours of the students' halls of residence. On many occasions, I would drive with Professor Epelu Opio to a hall of residence for lunch after giving the Dean of Students and the Warden of the hall where we intended to have lunch very short notice. The idea was for us to find out at first-hand how the students were eating. Bad food was potentially a flash point. The first strike at Makerere in 1952 was over food, so we had to make sure students were eating reasonably well. We were aware of the monotonous diet of posho (maize meal) and beans. We wanted to make some improvements where we could. I was well aware that if we did not act fast on the menu, there was a real possibility that students would take me hostage and force me to eat weevil-riddled and badly cooked beans as it had happened to some of my predecessors. There was already talk in the halls of residence that the students were fed up with "rice in stones", which meant that the rice they were being served was of very poor quality with a lot of grit in it. These, as well as the inevitable routine activities, occupied us for the most part of our first year in office. In fact, most of our first year was spent on studying the university's problems and strategising on how best we could use the meagre financial resources to tackle them.

The other problem we had had to tackle much earlier on was transport for the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor. As a sitting Vice Chancellor, Professor Kajubi used his personal vehicles for official work but I had never owned a personal vehicle in my life. The old Vice Chancellor's official Mercedes Benz, UXZ 007, bought during Professor Kirya's time, was in poor mechanical condition and it was the only available car. Professor Epelu Opio had to do with an old Land Rover he came with from the Teso Presidential Commission, which was later withdrawn from him. In 1994, we made our first visit to Makerere University Biological Field Station located in Kibale National Park near Fort Portal. To get there and back, we had to cram in Professor Epelu Opio's Land Rover on a round trip of over 400 kilometres. We had no other reliable vehicle that could safely do that journey. Worse still, there was hardly money for new vehicles and, for a while, I had to manage with the old and limping Mercedes Benz. I did not immediately move into the Vice Chancellor's Lodge at 1 The Edge, because the house had been rented out to the UNDP to accommodate a Nigerian expert who was teaching an MA Economic Policy and Planning course, and he needed time to move out. I was therefore, commuting from Kyambogo. When Professor Lutalo Bosa left for Kyambogo, he left behind a short chassis Land Cruiser, UPK 092, and on the advice of the University Transport Officer, I swapped it for the Benz, as it was in a better shape than the Benz.

Reverend David Sentongo, the University Secretary, was very concerned about my plight. I was equally concerned about driving around in old vehicles in bad mechanical condition. It constantly reminded me of an embarrassing incident I was once involved in at the Kampala-Entebbe Road junction traffic lights in 1991. As we have seen, at ITEK, there was no official car for the Principal. When I went to ITEK, the only vehicle I could use for my official work was an old white Land Rover Station Wagon, UE 056, purchased for NTC Kyambogo during Obote's second Government in the early 1980s. Makerere University had also received a similar one. Prior to the NRM takeover of 1986, Okello Lutwa's soldiers had commandeered it together with that of Makerere University. By sheer luck, it was recovered, but in a badly damaged state. The mechanics had somehow managed to repair it and put it back on the road. On that fateful day, I was on my way to Makerere for some official work. We had stopped for the red light at the Kampala Road-Entebbe Road junction. When the lights flashed green, the engine cut and could not start. My driver, Sam Kadama, was quite experienced and knew the rudiments of motor vehicle mechanics. He tried to fix the problem but in vain. Being an extremely busy junction, we had already caused a big traffic jam on both roads. Everywhere, everyone was hooting for us to get out of the way, the traffic police officers were also growing impatient with us. Because we were blocking the smooth flow of traffic at the junction, I had to get out and, with a few helping hands, we pushed the heavy Land Rover out of the way. It took us a while to fix the problem.

Now that my transport problem required urgent action, Reverend Sentongo remembered that before Professor Kajubi left office, the Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Tumusiime Mutebile, had hinted that he was looking into the possibility of buying a new official vehicle for the Vice Chancellor and that he had decided to bring my problem to his attention.

Fortunately, the Government had already placed an order for new off-road vehicles and one of them, a white Land Cruiser Station Wagon, was for the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University. I took delivery of the new Land Cruiser in March 1994 and kept it up to February 2004. Nevertheless, the problem was only partially solved; the Deputy Vice Chancellor had no car and for a while, we had to share the vehicle, which was not only inconvenient but also clumsy. We had to find money to buy him a vehicle, because, like the Vice Chancellor, he too was entitled to an official car. His vehicle arrived a few months later, and was used up till his retirement at the beginning of July 2004. This problem was not unique to senior university administrators, most faculties and departments had an aging fleet of vehicles acquired from donors or had none at all, including the departments where fieldwork was mandatory. The problem called for urgent attention.

## **Makerere Students – Managing the Unmanageable**

By 1993, the students' disturbances that had characterised much of the early 1990s were more or less over. There was now a new crop of student leaders. David Kazungu, son of Dr David Kazungu, an old Makerere member of staff in the Department of Agricultural Economics, was now the new Guild President. He was voted into office a few months before our arrival. In his quiet and soft-spoken way, this young man managed to restore order and sobriety to the Makerere student leadership. However, most of the wrongs that the Sendaula Visitation Committee had identified, such as indiscipline and use of vulgar language, continued unabated and Charles Rwomushana's case was still pending. Fortunately, the University Council had already made the decision about what to do with him before I arrived. All I had to do was to implement the Council's decision, which I did to the letter. We refused to release Rwomushana's final year results until he accounted for the money advanced to him for needy students. In fact, while the majority of students had long given up the struggle to have their various allowances restored, the so-called needy students were still a nuisance. I have labelled them "so-called" because there was a lot of confusion as to who was really a needy student. Many students were simply taking advantage of this confusion and the fact that there was no reliable way of determining who was needy. Some students saw the scheme as a source of free money. It was their association, MUNSA, which determined who was needy and who was not.

The frequent spate of fires in the students' halls of residence had also become a serious hazard. They were very frequent and, although there were no casualties, the fires destroyed a lot of property. The poor quality of food had forced the students to seek alternatives, like re-cooking the food from the hall cafeterias; and those who found the university food unpalatable resorted to cooking for themselves in their rooms, leading to disastrous consequences. Local electricians had found a way of mounting radiant coils on perforated steel frames, but the workmanship was primitive. The coils were dangerously bare and lacked a temperature regulator. For the students, these coils were cheap and did the job; so they became standard equipment for every student joining the university. Unfortunately, these electric coils were the cause of the frequent fires in the halls. Carelessness and power failure had made the coils extremely dangerous. Every now and then, students had something to cook or boil and, when power went off, some of them forgot to switch off their radiant coils. In some instances, they would inadvertently drop dry clothes on the coils. More often than not, when the power was restored and the students were out of the rooms, the coils would overheat and set the clothes and other nearby flammable materials ablaze. The fire would soon spread to the rest of the room and to other parts of the hall. This life-threatening situation called for a quick solution before it became a catastrophe with loss of lives.

The critical question we had to answer was how best to solve the problem. We decided that we should avoid any unnecessary confrontation with the students, as it was evident that they would not give up their coils, which had become part of their “rights” without a fight. So, any solution we devised to solve the problem had to take this fact into account. The solution had to be acceptable to the students, and also had to meet the urgent need to prevent future fires in the halls of residence. This was not going to be easy. We had taken indepth analysis of the problem of fires and radiant coils. The analysis showed that we had to solve two basic problems: the quality of food and table manners.

The rationale behind the cafeteria system introduced in the 1970s was to serve meals to as many students as possible in a relatively short time, unlike in the old system of fixed meal times. Besides, the student population was growing, therefore more flexible meal hours were necessary to serve all of them. The cafeteria also made it easy to use meal cards, which were necessary to weed out impostors (or “flukers” as the students called them). The system’s downside was that most students stopped using the dining halls altogether. Instead, they took their food to their rooms where they could re-cook it or “standardise” it to suit their taste, or to keep it and eat later. Some students chose to eat at all sorts of odd places, such as under the shades of the tree. Students provided their own cutlery and crockery. After the meals, they dumped the leftovers and washed their utensils in the washing basins, leading to constant blockage.

After analysing the problem, we agreed that the best approach was to involve the students’ leadership in solving the problem. We invited the Students’ Guild and Hall Chairpersons to a consultative meeting in the Council Room. After explaining the problem, we asked the students for their views. As we expected, the issues we had raised drew mixed reactions. While many regretted the several fire incidents that had occurred on the university campus in the recent past, they refused to admit that their crude radiant coils were responsible. Some blamed the fires on a few careless students; others blamed the University Administration for the old and faulty electrical system in most halls of residence and the poorly prepared meals. The meeting was a bit rowdy, so I had to remind the students that the matter we were discussing was of grave concern to the University Administration, and if we failed to address it, their own lives and those of their fellow students were at risk. I further explained that if hundreds of students died in an inferno, the Vice Chancellor would take all the blame and parents, the Government and the public would demand answers and explanations from him and not from the student leadership. In such a situation, the Vice Chancellor would have no option but to resign because he would have failed in his duty to protect the students. It was not a question of trading accusations or scoring debating points, it was a matter of life and death, period. It was therefore imperative that we solved the frequent fire problem in the halls of residence as quickly as possible.

After this passionate appeal, we agreed to find a lasting solution together. The ideas were many but it all came down to one option: the crudely manufactured radiant coils had to be replaced with professionally manufactured ones which did not overheat and had a reliable temperature regulator, used only in designated places. The Wardens had to monitor all rooms to ensure that students were not using the banned coils. The second solution was to improve on the quality of food and to train all cooks who did not have training in catering. We suggested to the students that, since every hall had a Mess Minister, the ministers should be more proactive and, together with the Hall Wardens and domestic bursars, should get involved in the inspection and vetting of food items the vendors supplied to their kitchens. They were at liberty to reject any food item which they believed was sub-standard. If they accepted sub-standard food, then they shouldn't blame the University Administration for it. In return, we promised to organise a training programme for the cooks and waiters. A few days later, I was surprised to read a lead story in one of the dailies with a banner headline "Ssebuwufu threatens to resign". Peter Mwesigwa, who at the time was a Mass Communication student and a student leader in Northcote Hall had filed the story. That is when I learnt that, at Makerere, walls have ears, and that one had to be careful with one's words.

A sizeable cross section of students, particularly the females found the decisions to ban the use of radiant coils for cooking in the rooms unpalatable. Some were so upset with the collective decision that they described me as a "low class Vice Chancellor". These remarks did not deter our commitment towards solving a potentially fatal problem. We were determined to stamp out the fire scourge from the halls of residence once and for all to avert a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. However, we had to ensure that the right type of heaters we had agreed on with the student leaders were readily available in the country at prices students could afford. For this, we enlisted the expertise of an experienced electrical engineer, Dr Moses Musaaazi, who was then the Head of the Department of Electrical Engineering in the Faculty of Technology. We requested him to shop around for what, in his technical assessment, were the most suitable heaters on the market that met our specifications. It did not take him long to find them. After a few demonstrations, we were ready to recommend them to the students. From then on, the Wardens were under instruction not to allow any student to use the old unsafe radiant coils. Wherever they found them, they were supposed to confiscate them from the offenders. They were also to identify suitable places in the halls of residence where students could cook. There would be no more cooking in the rooms. The Dean of Students had to ensure full compliance with the ban on the use of the unsafe coils. After some initial resistance, students responded positively and accepted the change. For a long time, there were no fires reported in the halls of residence. Obviously, our simple solution worked. We could have resorted to the usual conventional method of issuing orders banning the coils and cooking in the rooms. However,

we were certain students would simply ignore such orders. In all probability, that approach could have provoked an unnecessary riot. We were slowly, but surely, learning how to manage the unmanageable.

As we grappled with the fire problem in the halls, we decided to restore the long lost table manners. We had to convince students to eat their food from the dining halls. George Kihuguru who was still Dean of Students suggested that the best approach was to buy sufficient cutlery and crockery for all the dining halls. A splendid idea it was! We considered buying ordinary china, but it was too expensive and susceptible to loss, breakage, and even being used by riotous students as missiles against the security forces. Kihuguru came up with another brilliant idea, instead of china, we decided to buy multi-purpose stainless-steel trays, which had compartments for food, soup, dessert and cutlery. I do not recall how the students reacted when they first saw them, but they must have embraced the change without difficulty and must have liked the look of their trays. From then on, no student carried food to the room. They all ate in the dining halls. I must admit the square trays were a novelty. I later learnt that some students called them the, "Ssebuwufu Trays". However, we still had a few more problems to solve. The quality and quantity of food were still a problem. How do you provide quality mass-produced food? Soon, we found we had the answer. We invited experts in institutional catering and mobilised the university cooks and domestic bursars for refresher courses. When the cooks returned to the kitchen after the training, their cooking skills had tremendously improved, so much so that even the female students, known to shun the cafeteria ostensibly because the food was of poor quality, were now eating from the university cafeteria; as the food tasted better. The pig farmers who used to collect the leftovers were now going away empty-handed.

However, in addition to these efforts to improve the students' welfare, the budget for the students' ration remained a big constraint. For the Government-sponsored students, the budget allocation per student per day was only Sh1,070. This was supposed to cover the four meals every student was entitled to per day: breakfast, lunch, high tea and dinner. It was too little for us to provide four decent meals. We kept urging the Government to improve on the budget but to no avail. Unfortunately, these discussions coincided with the departure of George Kihuguru, the Dean of Students. It was a sad moment for me to see him go. I had learnt a lot about student management from him and, for a while, I was worried that we would fail to find a good replacement. Luckily, Uncle George had groomed a good crop of wardens who could succeed him. Out of all the applicants the Appointments' Board interviewed for the job, John Ekudu-Adoku emerged the best candidate for the job. He had accumulated a wealth of experience in student management. He had been the Warden of the students' hostel at Kabanyolo and had risen to the rank of Senior Warden in charge of University Hall. Being a good administrator, he was liked by students. Among the male students' halls of residence at Makerere,

University Hall and Livingstone Hall were the best maintained. Besides being a Hall Warden at Makerere, he was also a practising Pastor at the Baptist Church. His colleague, Cosmas Omara, also a Senior Warden in charge of Livingstone Hall, took up the post of Deputy Dean of Students. It was the first time the Appointments' Board substantively filled the position of Deputy Dean. George Kihuguru did not have a full-time deputy all the years he was Dean of Students. When Mr Ekudu assumed office, he took no time to settle in and, before long, he had become truly part of the management team. His first task was to look for further improvements in the students' welfare. The hot water system had long broken down in all halls of residence, so students had only cold showers where showers existed. With the little money that was generated internally, the hot water systems in most of the halls were fixed. Once again, the students could enjoy a hot shower or bath. Where the flush toilets had collapsed, Ekudu got them fixed too. Gradually, the filthy and stinking pit latrines that had become a prominent feature around every hall of residence started disappearing from the university's landscape.

Beef was a food item that had become difficult to keep because the cold rooms in the halls had also broken down. Once again, Ekudu was able to find money to repair most of them and soon halls could afford to buy perishable food in bulk to keep in the cold rooms until they were ready to be used. No doubt, we had reason to be excited about these developments. I think our biggest achievement, as far as students' welfare was concerned, was the improved menu. The university had its own bakery and maize mill. These started functioning during George Kihuguru's time. The two facilities supplied the students' kitchens with bread and maize meal. However, bread supply was intermittent because sometimes the bakery would run out of flour. John Ekudu made sure that bread supply to the dining halls was constant. This meant that students could have bread almost every day. The next step was to work on a new menu. He re-introduced the long-forgotten items such as eggs, milk, chicken, fish and matooke (boiled banana). He achieved all this by supplementing the Government ration budget with money from the privately-generated income, and by cutting out waste.

To ensure that students were fully in charge of what they ate, he formed a Menu Committee in each hall of residence. It was not yet time to rest on his laurels; he had another problem to solve. Most hall kitchens used firewood for cooking. This was no longer acceptable at a university that was supposed to lead the campaign for environmental protection by example. Secondly, firewood vendors were in the habit of cheating the university. They would deliver lorries full of what appeared to be real firewood but, in reality, much of it was figs and shrubs. John Ekudu quickly found a way around the problem. All kitchens switched to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) which, although a little more expensive, was far cleaner and more efficient. By and large, we had delivered on most of the promises we made to the student leaders the first time we sat down with them early in 1994.

Although the dust had settled, student politics was still shaky. The Students' Guild had lost most of its credibility because of corruption and abuse of office by successive generations of student leaders. In the academic year 1994/95, Isa Bantalib Taligoola, a medical student, succeeded David Kazungu as Guild President. In contrast to his predecessor, Taligoola came across as an abrasive and aggressive character and, for a while, we were concerned that he would revive the confrontational students' politics of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The inaugural speech he delivered after he was sworn in was full of hints of things to come. His speech was a litany of the many problems afflicting students at the university. He kept repeating the pledges made during the campaign and stressed that he had come to make sure the University Administration paid serious attention to the students' grievances and fixed their problems. Naturally, the tough talking drew thunderous cheers from his attentive audience. He was the first Guild President I was swearing in and I could not help wondering whether he was the kind of student leader we could work with. I also remembered that in politics, usually the campaign rhetoric and the reality were miles apart, so we could only wait and see. I also re-discovered something I already knew. Student politics at Makerere was of a lot of interest to the national body politic. Political parties were sponsoring candidates of their choice and providing them with money and other logistics to run their campaigns. In addition, political party stalwarts canvassed for votes for the candidates of their choice all over the university campus, sometimes at odd hours in the night. If an aspiring candidate had no resources or sponsorship, it was hard to win a Guild presidential election. Interestingly, students had come to expect a lot of goodies from the candidates for their votes. In fact, students had coined the slogan, "no logistics, no vote". The "logistics" took several forms, but the most popular was a local liquor known as nguli and cigarettes. These were more or less standard campaign items. Campaign time was a time for pomp and showing off who was best facilitated in terms of fleets of vehicles accompanying him or her at every campaign rally. It was actually fun, if not an inconvenience to watch Guild presidential candidates campaign.

However, when all was said and done, the majority of students voted for the candidate they perceived to have articulated best the issues affecting their wellbeing at the university. Many well-facilitated candidates lost, because they failed to impress the voters at the rallies. It seemed oratory was a key factor in persuading voters. The elections tended to be free and fair. Although, as one would expect, some losing candidates would allege foul play and challenge the validity of the outcome; such incidents were rare and quickly resolved. It was the duty of the Electoral Commission, which was supposed to be an impartial and independent body, to ensure a free and fair election and sort out any irregularities. Only cases which the Commission considered too serious to warrant the intervention of the university administration would be referred to us to sort out; otherwise we always stayed clear from their electioneering campaigns and voting. We allowed them to

exercise their democratic rights without undue influence from us, and accepted and worked with whoever the students elected to be their leader.

Incidentally, this was not always the case. Some senior university administrators acting on the instructions of the national Government of the day have been known to influence the outcome of the Guild presidential elections. As the Sendaula Visitation Committee of 1990 observed, in 1984 the national Government of the day imposed a losing candidate on the students as Guild President. It so happened that the winning candidate that year belonged to the wrong political camp, the Democratic Party of Paulo Kawanga Semwogerere. That was anathema to the ruling Party. In the process, the election results were overturned in favour of the runner-up, and the winner had to flee the country for his safety before completing his degree. I was made to understand that he is now a citizen of Canada and writes regularly for the *New Vision* newspaper from Toronto. Although the students protested, they helplessly could not do anything about it; they had to accept the leader imposed on them. Inadvertently, this action made a mockery of the whole essence of students' democracy and dealt a severe blow to the integrity and reputation of the Students' Guild as an institution. Regrettably, from then on most students lost interest in the Guild elections. Many of them wondered whether it made sense to participate in what they saw as sham elections. In my view, the legacy of this act has continued to affect such elections to this day. There is now a lot of apathy and, on many occasions, voter turnout has been as low as 30 per cent of the eligible voters. The scandals of the recent years, in which Guild Presidents have been involved have not helped matters either. If anything, they have dampened the voters' interest further. During the campaigns, many aspiring Guild presidential candidates made too many promises, only to deliver next to nothing when voted into office. This too has contributed to the low morale and low voter turn-up at Guild elections.

I guess we had plenty of good luck. For all the time I was at Makerere as Vice Chancellor, we experienced neither any serious Guild electoral dispute that required settlement in the courts of law nor cancellation of the entire election results. In my opinion, we achieved such a feat because we allowed the process to take its natural course without interference. Even when some disgruntled students wanted us to take sides, we resisted. Instead, we advised them to stick to the Guild Constitution and, if they thought it had weaknesses or was flawed, seek to amend it as they saw fit. The amendment of the Guild Constitution took some time and several successive Guild governments before it was amended. In so doing, we were giving them practical training in the art of democracy as some would be the future leaders of our country. We wanted them to learn from first-hand experience and from their own mistakes how true democracy works and how to resolve political disputes in an amicable way. I think we succeeded, somehow. Secondly, we gave the Dean of Students and the Guild Legal Advisor a free hand to handle most of the election-related complaints in an impartial way.

Ekudu always did his best to maintain order during electioneering. However, there were a few instances when his impartiality in these matters was tested. What we actually witnessed and had to contend with were the numerous scandals, revolving around finances. Sadly, Isa Taligoola was involved in two of them. The first scandal was an international conference the Guild organised in 1995. Isa Taligoola, as Guild President, together with some of his Ministers mooted the idea of holding a big conference at Makerere, involving student participants from several universities around the world. They drew up a budget amounting to 56 million shillings and went about fundraising. They approached the Ministry of Education and Sports for assistance. The sympathetic Permanent Secretary pledged to meet part of their conference budget from the Ministry's coffers. Out of the 56 million shillings, 10 million was budgeted for meals. As soon as the Ministry of Education released the money, the 10 million was passed on directly to the Dean of Students who was responsible for the meals. The rest of the money remained in the hands of the Guild President and his various Ministers. At the end of the poorly attended conference, we started receiving claims for unpaid bills from people who had supplied goods and services for the conference on credit. We wondered why the Guild could not pay these bills when indeed they had the money! It only came to our attention later that some of the Ministers who received advances to pay for the various conference items had actually swindled the money. We requested accountability for all the money spent on the conference; none was forthcoming from the Guild. The money for which the accountability was readily available was food money over which the Dean of Students had direct control. When they failed to account for the money, we had no choice but to discipline the culprits. Although Taligoola was not directly involved in the fraud, we reprimanded him for seriously failing to control the excesses of his scheming Ministers.

Unfortunately, even after this embarrassing episode, Taligoola's regime had not run out of money-swindling schemes. In the same year, the Guild President and one of his Ministers received information that an international students' conference was due to take place in Portugal. I believe the theme of the conference had to do with environmental issues. At the time, we had made it a policy to encourage Guild leaders to have some international exposure. Therefore, when the Guild President approached me with a request for financial support amounting to some US\$7,000 to enable him and his Minister for International Affairs attend the Lisbon conference, I quickly asked the Dean of Students and the Bursar to look for the money. The Bursar gave them the air ticket and money for their upkeep. They left for Portugal through Nairobi because they needed a visa to enter Portugal and, in East Africa, the Embassy of Portugal was in Nairobi. A few days later, they were back. Isa Taligoola presented me with a written report on the conference and thanked me for facilitating their attendance at such an informative conference. He had compiled the report as part of the

accountability for the money advanced to them. As if to prove that he actually attended the conference, he told me that while at the conference, they had met several professors who were familiar with Makerere University and that they had sent me warm greetings. He even volunteered a few names. I had no reason to doubt his sincerity and the authenticity of his report. Perhaps I was too naïve, not to have recognised the sham. Instead, I had gone on to thank the young man for having been a good ambassador for Makerere at the conference and hoped he had found his first international exposure an exciting and rewarding experience.

The needy students were still a nuisance. Taligoola himself was one of them, but did not play a significant role in the association. At about the same time, a student going by the name of Opira had taken over as chairman of the Needy Students' Association (MUNSA) and was busy inciting students to disrupt lectures if we refused to release their money. We were determined to bring an end to what we saw as another way for a few students to continue receiving free money from Government. We told the MUNSA chairman that there would be no money for the so-called needy students until we had found a more accurate way of determining who was genuinely needy. Any student who needed money had to enrol in the needy work scheme, which most of them had rejected, citing that the kind of work they were being assigned to do was demeaning to a university student. Naturally, the MUNSA Chairman was not amused by our seemingly hard line stand. Apparently, he knew more about Taligoola's money making schemes than we did. As if to tell us that we had been hard on the genuinely needy students while giving away free money to the Guild President, perhaps in exchange for his loyalty, he was ready to spill the beans. He told his fellow students that the University Administration was denying them their rights, while turning a blind eye to the real swindlers. He alleged that we had given the Guild President money for a conference in Portugal which he never attended. The fact that he returned only after three days was enough evidence to prove that the President could not have attended the conference in Portugal. To my dismay, he was dead right; Taligoola had not gone to Portugal. However, before I could act on Opira's tip off, I needed more concrete evidence; so I invited Opira to my office. I wanted him to tell me his source of such damning information and whether what he was alleging was one of those ploys to de-campaign Isa Taligoola. He came to my office but refused to reveal the source of his information. Instead, he advised me to do my own homework which I thought was rude of him. However, we had come to know him as one of those crude characters in the university, so his rude remarks did not surprise me. I was about to dismiss the whole thing as petty jealousy, but the rumour persisted. Students had started talking of a "scandal of the year" and my colleagues were getting seriously concerned about the persistent rumour about the Guild President's financial impropriety.

Something had to be done to confirm or dispel the rumour. I decided to initiate an investigation. I was tempted to call Taligoola to clear the air. I soon realised that

this method would not give me the right answers. All he could do was to deny any of the allegations and possibly challenge anyone who had evidence against him to come forward; and it was unlikely any student, including Opira, would come forward. So, I decided to use a different approach. I wanted to confront him with evidence but I did not have any. I had to figure out a way of getting some. When Taligoola asked me to facilitate his attendance to the conference, he left me with a copy of the invitation letter from Portugal, signed by one of the conference organisers. We had kept the letter for record purposes. I decided to write to the author of the letter, asking him to confirm whether indeed Makerere University students had attended the conference. A few weeks later, a reply came back. The letter confirmed my worst fears. The MUNSA Chairman had been dead right! The brief reply from Portugal said that indeed an invitation letter had been sent to Makerere and Taligoola had acknowledged the invitation, confirming their attendance at the conference with a promise to send the conference registration fee in due course. That was the last time the conference organisers had heard from Makerere. Not a single student from Makerere had attended the conference. This was the smoking gun I had been looking for.

Armed with this letter, I decided to confront the Guild President. I invited him for a serious talk. First, I asked him whether he had heard about the rumour about his trip to Portugal. He said he had and that it was utterly false. He blamed the opponents he had defeated in the election, for waging a smear campaign against him in order to bring him and his government down. By precipitating a crisis, they hoped that a snap election would be called and they would win it, adding that he was not worried because all that they were alleging were not true. How could he have compiled a report for me if he had not attended the conference? The professors he met were his witnesses, and I was free to contact them if I so wished. He dismissed the allegation as malicious and sour grapes on the part of the opposition. I listened attentively in both amusement and anger. Here was a young man who sincerely believed he had outsmarted everybody, including the Vice Chancellor. In fact, he had succeeded in hoodwinking me. The young man was not repentant and showed no remorse for what he had done. Then, I decided to pull out the letter from my desk and asked him to read for himself. At that moment, he began to tremble and lose his composure. It was time for him to tell the truth. I asked him whether he ever corresponded with the author of the letter. He confirmed he had written to him, accepting the invitation to attend the conference. The rest was a confession and, for the first time, I felt like a Catholic priest in a confession box.

As I listened to the young man's confession, I was fervently taking notes, which I thought I would need later. After pulling himself together, he narrated how they had failed to secure visas for Portugal from the Portuguese Embassy in Nairobi; that they realised that it would take a long time and by the time they

were through with it, the conference would have almost ended. It was at that point they thought of cancelling the trip. After abandoning the trip, he knew he had to return the money to the University Bursar, but his Minister had other plans for the money. According to the Minister, “politics was about getting rich in the quickest way possible”, so it was no use coming back to Makerere and surrendering their dollars to the Bursar. Why should they leave office poor? He alleged that his Minister hatched a scheme, which involved forging the Portuguese immigration stamps and other stamps. The idea was to stamp their passports to make it look genuine, adding that in Nairobi you could get anything you wanted, as long as you had the money. They paid a fee to the forgers to stamp their passports with date of entry and exit from Lisbon. Although he was not quite sure, he believed that among the fake stamp makers, there were some Mozambicans and Angolans. With the passports properly stamped, they decided to share the money and return to Kampala. According to him, their early return must have raised suspicion. Students started asking questions whether they had really gone to Portugal in such a short time. I gathered from his version of events that he was blaming it all on his Minister just in order to present himself as an inactive accomplice. As it turned out, he had actually masterminded the whole scam. When I pressed him harder why he had written the fictitious report, his answer was that they decided to write the report when the students started talking. It was a ploy to pre-empt the rumours before they reached the University Administration. He had picked the names of the professors from conference brochures. He had now realised he should not have given in to his Minister’s absurd scheme, which had put him into trouble. As usual, he started pleading for mercy and forgiveness, adding that he was misled by his Minister and that they had used up all the money; so they had nothing to refund. I listened attentively to his long confession with disbelief. At the same time, I could not help feeling sorry for him. Either he was a weakling who couldn’t handle subordinates, or he was telling a white lie to save his skin. The thought that perhaps the university was grooming corrupt leaders for the future frightened me. I was left with no choice, but to take the case to the Central Executive, which in turn recommended that the case be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee. The two appeared before the Disciplinary Committee. At the end of the hearings, the verdict was unanimous. Both students were dismissed and asked to refund the money they had embezzled. When Isa Taigoola failed to refund the money, the case was referred to the Court of Law. The case dragged on for a long time. Eventually it was dismissed on technical grounds. Students had to elect a new Guild President. The young man tried to come back and resume his medical studies. However, as far as the university was concerned, he had a case to answer.

Before the students elected a new Guild President in place of Isa Taligoola, the University Council decided to implement the 50,000 shilling (the equivalent of US\$25) user fee per student per year. The fee was payable by both Government-

sponsored and private students. The decision to impose this fee had been taken long before I came into office but, for some reasons, it was not implemented. One of the reasons for delaying its implementation was that the students had resisted it. We took time explaining why it had become necessary for every student to contribute to the cost of running the university. Even the Ministry of Education and Sports was in agreement with the university on this issue, as the university's annual budgetary allocation from the Government Treasury was inadequate for it to continue providing decent services. The bulk of the user fee was for improving students' welfare and some critical university functions like the library and students' health services. Even with these explanations, the students were still not prepared to listen. As the Sendaula Visitation Committee of 1990 put it, Makerere students were generally insensitive to and unappreciative of the economic problems facing the country; so, they always interpreted any austerity measures taken by Government in the national interest as punishment to them as a group. We were therefore well aware of what the consequences would be when we started implementing the user fee. To minimise the anticipated chaos, we decided to adopt a phased approach. The user fee would start with the new students in 1995/96. All continuing students were exempted from paying it. The approach seemed to have worked well. We had not foreseen the user fee becoming a serious campaign issue during the forthcoming Guild presidential election. We were wrong. If anything, it was the issue. Most aspiring candidates vowed to fight tooth and nail to have it scrapped once elected. It became a campaign slogan which drew big applauses from the students at every rally. Galogitho, also a medical student, emerged the winner. He was a small man with a big voice and a convincing tongue.

As soon as the new Guild President was sworn in, he started sending out messages over some of the FM radio stations, instructing the new students not to pay the user fee. In an attempt to diffuse a potentially explosive situation, we held several meetings with him and some of his Ministers to try to convince them that the user fee was for their own good. It did not work. The young man was determined to deliver on his election promise and nothing would stop him. Some parents were angered and wondered who had given the young man authority to issue instructions to their children who were preparing to join the university in the next few weeks. When the new academic year started, most of the new students willingly paid the user fee. However, a few held back in the hope that, in time, the fee would be scrapped. The new Guild President had not given up the fight. As soon as the new students settled in, Galogitho started planning his next move. This time, it would be real action in the form of a strike. Either the University Administration withdrew the user fee or the students would boycott lectures. We did not go back on our decision. He too did not back off. In the end, he pulled out his last card. He called for a strike and as usual, his fellow students joined him. At some point, the Police had to be called in to control the rowdy students. During

the night, some students assembled in front of the then Northcote Hall, lit bon fires and started shouting all sorts of obscenities. The Guild President was with them, and the Police quickly moved in, rounded up some students and locked them up in the cells at Wandegaya. That marked the end of the strike which turned out to be a one-day affair. The matter went to the University Disciplinary Committee and after due deliberations, the Committee reached the conclusion that the strike was uncalled for since the students had been party to the Council's decision to introduce the user fee in the first place. Secondly, the majority of the new students had willingly paid the fee. The Committee recommended that the Guild President be discontinued from the university for leading an illegal and disruptive strike. Once again, the University Council unanimously upheld the Committee's decision. Galogitho, with several of his Ministers, including the Guild Vice President were dismissed. The University Council took this drastic action to curb the excessive indiscipline amongst Makerere University students that was threatening to spin out of control.

The students who were held in the Police cells were carefully screened and those who had played minor roles in the strike were exonerated and allowed to continue with their studies. However, the ones who had engaged in excesses were also dismissed from the university. As we expected, some of the students appealed to the Chancellor of the University. The Chancellor listened sympathetically to their plight and promised to take up their problem with his Minister of Education and Sports and the university authorities, which he did. Unfortunately, for the dismissed students, the university community had little sympathy for them. The university staff and the public at large were fed up to the brim with the rampant indiscipline and hooliganism which had escalated and caused severe damage to public, staff and university property, as well as cases of assault whenever students went on rampage. Most people at the university had concluded that the University Administration had become inept in dealing with misbehaving students. Our action to expel the Guild President, his Vice and a host of other students was hailed as a bold move in the right direction. I recall a colleague of mine in the Department of Chemistry coming to me soon after we had expelled the students to thank me for the bold action. He said that, before we took this action, people were wondering whether the Vice Chancellor was still in control of the university! Therefore, when some members of staff overheard that the Chancellor was asking us to reconsider our decision, they urged us to stand firm. They argued that going back on our decision would send the wrong signal to the students. They had seen this happen before and the consequences were there for all to see. Fortunately, neither the Chancellor nor his Minister exerted pressure on us to re-admit the students. Above all, the user fee remained in force until 2001 when the President in his election manifesto pledged to meet all the costs of Government-sponsored students at universities and other tertiary institutions.

By this action, we were now on the way to transform the way students behaved, hopefully, for the better. In fact, we learnt later that most students could not believe that the university administration could expel student leaders from the university. They hoped the Chancellor would reverse the University Council's decision and get the expelled students reinstated.; that what happened was just a temporary glitch. However, this time, the university stood firm by its decision. The decision was not a temporary glitch as some affected students thought; it was for real. Galogitho was the second Guild President to be sent down in a row. When a new Minister of Education and Sports, Professor Apollo Nsibambi was appointed, some of the expelled students resurrected the case. This compelled the Chancellor to write to the new Minister, urging him to prevail upon Makerere University authorities to re-admit the expelled students. The new Minister had been a senior member of the university community and had been at Makerere for over 30 years, so he had witnessed the lawlessness and excesses of the students.

Before, whenever the University Administration tried to discipline the misbehaving students, the higher authorities would thwart their effort. This had given the students the impression that they were untouchable; therefore, they could misbehave with impunity and get away with it. The new Minister convinced the Chancellor that it was not right to ask the university to revoke its decision. According to the Minister, such an action would undermine the authority of the University Administration and would fuel more indiscipline and acts of hooliganism among students. He however promised the Chancellor that he would seek admission for the students expelled from Makerere in other universities. The Chancellor accepted his Minister's advice and the university was spared the agony of going back on its decision.

Over the years, Northcote Hall had earned a reputation for being the most notorious and undisciplined male hall of residence on the university campus. The students there were "militarised" in the real sense of the word. During the orientation week, all new students resident in Northcote had to be inducted into the Hall's rituals and culture. Other halls had such cultural rituals too, but Northcote's surpassed them all. The Northcote Hall Chairman was known as His Imperial Majesty (HIM). Hall Ministers and some residents had military ranks and wore pips on their military fatigues like real soldiers. In appreciation of his services to the students, the hall's military high command had given George Kihuguru a rank as a commissioned officer in the Northcote army; but when he started clamping down on some of their excesses, the high command demoted him. In fact, the students referred to their hall as the Northcote State, and Uganda as the neighbouring state. Besides these practical jokes, Northcoters had no sense of decency whatsoever. They would not hesitate to use foul language on any passer-by, particularly females. As a result, the public was always wondering whether Northcote residents were real university students or a bunch of hooligans hand-

picked from one of Kampala's slums and dumped in this hall of residence. In short, Northcote Hall students had become a nuisance, not only to the university community, but also to the public at large.

Worst still, many objectionable things were going on in Northcote Hall. For example, there was the daily and loud singing of the Hall's anthem "Bachelor Boy"; the daily drumming, sometimes with the assistance of young children called "the bastards" from the neighbourhood; and the incessant disruption of football matches during the inter-hall competitions that forced the Uganda Association of Referees to stop sending referees to Makerere to officiate at football matches. Northcote had a slogan, "Either we win or they lose", which explains why whenever they sensed that their team was facing imminent defeat, they would stop the match in all sorts of violent ways. There was also the constant trading of insults with the residents of neighbouring Nkrumah Hall, which the Northcoters referred to as the colony of Kabinda. They borrowed the term from Angola when it had problems with its province of Kabinda in the 1970s (Kabinda attempted to secede from the rest of Angola because of its oil). Furthermore, there was always "stone throwing" between the Northcoters and Lumumba Hall students whenever the Northcoters walked on what students of Lumumba Hall call their red carpet, on their way to or from the sports grounds. Lumumba's so-called red carpet is a walkway between the main entrance to the hall and Mary Stuart Road, paved with red bricks. Then, there was resentment the Northcote boys had for Livingstone Hall, because the girls in the nearby Africa Hall had decided to align with the Livingstone boys instead of them and had formed the Afrystone solidarity. Nevertheless, in the name and spirit of freedom of belonging to the university, the University Administration chose to tolerate these acts of indecency for some time. Besides, any attempt to get rid of their so-called Northcote culture, proudly referred to by them as the Northcote Spirit, was ferociously resisted not only by the incumbent students, but also by the former residents, appropriately called the Ancestors. The source of their military uniforms, which were passed from one generation of student leaders to another, was a well-guarded secret; and among their many obnoxious practical nuances was the habit of spreading finely ground spicy pepper on the dance floor during one of the balls the halls used to hold.

Although the University Administration took much of the blame for their failure to curb the excesses in Northcote Hall and in a few other halls of residence for a long time, some of these acts were seen as good humour until they began to take on a more sinister character. Obviously, some Northcote Hall students had started taking their peculiar mannerisms too far. For example, in one of those worrisome incidents, some students carried fresh human excreta and spread it all over the main entrance of Livingstone Hall. The story was too bizarre to be true. Even in our wildest imagination, we could not believe that a sane university

student could indulge in such an abominable act. Whoever had done it must have been a sick student. As usual, when we tried to investigate to find out who had done it, we were met with dead silence. No student was willing to come forward and give us useful leads beyond pointing an accusing finger at Northcote Hall. Like the Mafioso, apparently the students had perfected the omerta, the art of remaining silent even when one is under extreme pressure to divulge information. This time, we were determined to catch the culprits, but we failed miserably.

Sensing that the administration had failed to discover who had done it, Northcote's HIM became more confident and daring. In 1997, Livingstone Hall and Africa Hall organised a joint farewell dinner for their final year students. A number of prominent past Afrostonians were invited, namely Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, the Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese, Brigadier Jim Muhweezi, and Captain Francis Babu as Guests of Honour. Traditionally, a hall celebrating an important occasion would hire a brass band and staged a parade around the main university campus. As Livingstone and Africa Hall were preparing for their day, the Northcoters were also busy hatching a deadly plot that would have led to several deaths. Instead of the usual hot red pepper, this time they wanted to use something more potent. Northcote wanted to teach Livingstone and Africa Hall residents a lesson that would not be easily forgotten. As the Afrostonians went about marching, the Northcote students led by their chairman organised a counter-march to the kitchen of Livingstone Hall, where the food for the dinner was being cooked. After successfully scaring away the cooks, they took over the kitchen and began implementing their deadly plot. They had come with finely ground glass and lots of red pepper which they emptied into the food and sauce. By sheer luck, some of the cooks who had taken cover nearby saw what they were doing. After the mob had left the kitchen, the cooks checked and found pieces of ground glass in the food and sauce. The Africa Hall Warden was immediately informed, and he took the matter up with the University Administration without delay. Because we did not know what else they had done to the food, we advised the cooks to throw away everything they were cooking – food, meat and sauce, leaving some as evidence as we continued with the investigations. This drastic and costly action was taken to avert a bigger catastrophe.

This heartless act, averted in the nick of time because some of the cooks were vigilant, was a rude reminder to us as to how close we had been to a disaster of unimaginable proportions. The time had come to put an end to these barbaric and potentially dangerous acts. This time, Northcote Hall had overstepped the lines and had to pay the price. There would be no more kid-glove treatment of offenders. It would also mean the end of Northcote and its culture. All culprits had to face the wrath of the University Administration. Fortunately, this time, our investigations yielded a lot of useful information. It seemed that most students in Northcote had realised they had gone too far this time around. For the first

time, they revealed the name of their HIM. Although within the hall, it was known that the chairman doubled as HIM, outsiders, including the university administration, were not supposed to know. HIM was a faceless leader of the Northcote military high command and students kept the name of their HIM as a highly guarded secret. By so doing, they incredibly succeeded in keeping everybody guessing. But this time, they were ready to give the secret away for fear of what would happen to them. The majority of the residents were not ready to suffer collective punishment.

As we probed deep into this criminal act, we discovered that HIM was personally responsible for engineering the sinister plot. We also learnt who had ground the glass and purchased the pepper, got the names of the students who smeared the Livingstone gate with human faeces, and found out where the military uniforms and weapons were kept – in the ceiling of the top floor and other places in the hall that were well hidden from the eye. Some of the objects confiscated in the cache, such as daggers, well-sharpened pangas and a lot more were extremely dangerous weapons. To our surprise, a student gave us a tip-off that even the residents of Lumumba Hall had started acquiring military uniforms and weapons, perhaps to fend off the Northcoters' constant provocations. Those too were confiscated. We also searched all halls of residence to ensure that no other hall had such dangerous objects. Fortunately, besides Northcote, only Lumumba Hall had them. Through the many tip-offs received, we were able to identify all the students who had participated in the sinister plot in the Livingstone Hall kitchen and those who had committed other serious atrocities like spreading pepper on the floor during a ball. We compiled the evidence, prepared a charge sheet and presented it to the university's Disciplinary Committee for action. The Committee, chaired by a Judge of the High Court of Uganda who was also a member of the University Council, tried the Hall Chairman and all the students who had participated in the plot to poison the residents of Livingstone Hall and Africa Hall. The Committee found them guilty as charged and recommended their dismissal from the university. When the University Council convened in a special session, nearly every member was boiling with anger at what had happened. They could hardly believe that university students could turn themselves into potential mass killers. The Disciplinary Committee's recommendations were unanimously upheld. Over ten students were dismissed for their involvement in the acts. The Police also showed some interest in the case.

Most Council members thought that the Disciplinary Committee's recommendations did not go far enough. Dismissing some students without doing something about the overall discipline in the hall was only half the solution. We had to rid the hall of all acts of indiscipline and hooliganism in a way that would serve as a warning to students in other halls. One radical solution proposed and accepted was to close down the Northcote Hall for a year. The second was to

change the name of the hall. Most people believed that the name Northcote was closely associated with some kind of evil and wrong-doing, that there were a lot of negative things in the name Northcote, such as indiscipline and hooliganism. The hall needed to have a new name. The public would be asked to suggest a new name, based on the University Council's guidelines. The Council decided that we send all the Northcoters out, close the hall and then re-name it; and we had to implement the Council decisions immediately. It was not easy kicking all students out of the hall, but we did and surprisingly the mass protest we had anticipated did not materialise. It seems few students had sympathy for the Northcoters. While we waited for a new name to emerge, Northcote Hall became Hall X. Council's third resolution was the abolition of a system of permanent residence in one hall. The practice had been that once a student was assigned to a hall of residence, he or she remained there for the entire duration of the course. Council was convinced that this system had contributed in some way to the wave of indiscipline at the university. The new system required a student to re-apply for residence every new academic year. No student was to stay in one hall for more than two consecutive academic years. Again, we expected the students to put up some stiff resistance to what appeared to be very radical and unprecedented Council decisions, but none did. Just a few students on the professional courses like Medicine and Engineering complained because, by tradition, they were always residents. They could only become non-residents by choice. Nevertheless, Council thought this was a weak argument; many prominent doctors and engineers studied at Makerere but never stayed in the university's halls of residence throughout their years of study. There were also many non-resident private students pursuing the same courses staying outside the university campus. Therefore, staying in a hall of residence was a privilege and not a right. Without much ado, all Northcote students vacated their beloved hall and started looking for accommodation in the neighbourhood of the university. We later learnt that most of them had a tough time finding accommodation, as property owners were not eager to house former Northcote students, for fear that the same students would import the Northcote culture into their premises. We put Hall X under lock and key and deployed the university's security guards to keep watch over it day and night. This was a bold move which marked the beginning of the restoration of some discipline at the university.

As the University Council had instructed us to do, we placed an advertisement in the local newspapers, calling on the public to propose a suitable new name for Hall X. In 1950 when it was inaugurated, the hall had been named after Sir Geoffrey Northcote, who was the Chairman of Makerere College Council from 1945 to 1948 and who died rather abruptly, while on holiday in Britain. Time had come to give a new name to Sir Geoffrey Northcote Hall. Until then, there were only two, out of eleven or so halls of residence, which had African names: namely Lumumba for the boys and Africa for the girls. The rest bore colonial names. After a year, Hall X opened with a new crop of students. Soon after

reopening, the university – through a thorough screening exercise – chose a suitable name, picked out of the many names we had solicited from the public. To my amusement and amazement, my name was among those suggested. Fortunately for me, Council had long decided that such an honour should only go to the deceased. I was spared the embarrassment. Council chose the name Nsibirwa, because it received the highest number of votes. The justification for the choice of Nsibirwa was the fact that Martin Luther Munyagwa Nsibirwa, as Katikkiro of Buganda in the 1930s, signed the agreement transferring the land on Makerere and Mulago hills to the Protectorate Government to expand the young college and for the Medical School and Teaching Hospital at Mulago. He did so amidst serious protests and this act is cited as one of the reasons he was assassinated on the steps of Namirembe Cathedral in 1945. We all agreed that he merited the honour. Northcote became Nsibirwa Hall. Many applauded our decision; others lamented the demise of the name Northcote, as it held a lot of memory for them. Some wondered whether it was proper for Makerere University to honour a controversial figure like Nsibirwa. The answer was simple: universities are about controversial issues – the University was extending the honour to him in recognition of his timely contribution. As we have seen, if the Buganda Kingdom Government had not made more land available for its expansion, the British Government had threatened to transfer the college to Kitale, Kenya. The name change seemed to have worked the trick. Nsibirwa Hall had become exemplary as a disciplined hall up to the time I retired.

The Guild presidential elections which followed that turbulent period were more peaceful and the new Guild Presidents stopped being inflammatory. They also promised to cooperate with the university administration to improve the tarnished image of the Guild and Makerere students as a whole. Discipline continued to improve. In fact, there were occasions when the university was too quiet for our liking. Sarah Kagingo was the next Guild President to have run into trouble. She assumed office in 1998 and was one of the very few females to be elected as Guild President. She did not perform badly, but her opponents and detractors were busy at work, trying hard to undermine her. Through what appeared to be deliberate mis-information, some students had convinced her that the Dean of Students, John Adoku Ekudu, hated her and that he was party to the schemes her opponents were devising to topple her and her Government. I guess out of anger and frustration she burst out, making allegations to the press against Mr Ekudu. Among other things, she accused him of siding with her enemies to undermine her and for engaging in what she described as unethical activities. When she was put to task to substantiate the allegations against the Dean, she could not provide any proof. So, the Disciplinary Committee decided to suspend her for the rest of the semester. We thought that, as the second female to assume the office of Guild President in the history of Makerere, she would escape the problems that had bedevilled her predecessors; but unfortunately, she too succumbed to the old vices.

The most successful and scandal-free presidency was that of Lopez Mukuye, a Dental Surgery student. Mukuye became Guild President following the elections of 1999. Like David Kazungu before him, he brought back to the Students' Guild the long-lost dignity. Among his achievements was the revival of *The Makererian*, a students' newspaper which had ceased publication decades ago. Denis Okema, who succeeded Mukuye, was equally decent. He kept *The Makererian* going, after Lopez Mukuye had left office. A group of former Mass Communication students ran the newspaper as a private venture. The other trouble free presidency was that of Mukasa Mbidde who, although a confessed member of the Uganda's Young Democrats (UYD) – the youth wing of the Democratic Party – performed his job as Guild President with minimum hassle. Occasionally, there was the usual bickering around financial management within the Guild Representative Council (GRC) and the Students' Parliament. Some GRC members were in the habit of throwing up unsubstantiated accusation of financial impropriety against some Guild Ministers.

In spite of these occasional skirmishes, some order had returned to students' politics, until February 2001 when the calm was rudely interrupted by the murder of a first-year student and a resident of Lumumba Hall. On Friday, February 02, 2001, Alex Remo Adega, a first-year BA Education student who hailed from Arua District, was shot dead by a gunman in front of Mary Stuart Hall as he returned from a night out in town. The shooting took place a few minutes to six o'clock in the morning. When the news of his death broke out, all hell broke loose. Asuman Basalirwa, a Law student was then the Guild President. Curiously, Alex Adega was shot dead a day after one of the national presidential candidates who was opposing President Museveni in the 2001 general elections had addressed a campaign rally at the university's Freedom Square. The rally had attracted several people from town. After the rally, the Square had been left in a mess with litter everywhere. We strongly suspected that the murderers took advantage of the rally to sneak into the university campus to commit the grisly act. I heard the shots from the window of my residence; it seemed to have come from within the university campus, about which I was obviously concerned. However, on second thoughts, I felt it was the Police chasing some criminals. The possibility of a student being shot dead within the confines of the university premises did not cross my mind at that time.

Whenever there was commotion at odd hours in any hall, particularly Mary Stuart and Lumumba which were close to the Vice Chancellor's Lodge, I would immediately contact the Dean of Students, Mr John Ekudu. The purpose was to fill me in if he already knew what was going on or to alert him if he did not know what was going on. After the gun shots, Lumumba and Mary Stuart residents started shouting, but the shooting subsided as soon as it had begun. It subsided because the students were already on the march to mobilise other students to

join them in a demonstration. I sensed that something had gone terribly wrong. Whatever it was, we had to be prepared for the worst. I rang John Ekudu, who had not received news about the commotion, but had started hearing students shouting from a distance. He promised to get in touch with the Warden of Mary Stuart Hall. I also tried to contact her, but her line was busy every time I called. A few moments later, Ekudu called me back. It was the news I was least prepared for. A student had been shot dead and the gunmen had taken a few female students with them, possibly to rape and murder them too. John Ekudu assured me, as he always did, that he was handling the situation as best as he could and that he would let me know when it was appropriate for me to visit the scene of crime. That was the beginning of our mayhem that day. I immediately contacted the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Epelu Opio, who was in charge of security, as well as the other members of the management team. We started working on some contingency plans to contain the situation as best as we could, while the Police investigated the circumstances under which the student was shot. This was the time I really appreciated the importance of the cellular phones, which enabled us to keep in touch constantly and to update one another on what was happening. What made this unfortunate incident worse was the fact that the country was in the midst of the presidential campaigns and everyone, including the students were politically charged. Most students at the university were opposition supporters. My big concern was the politicisation of this unfortunate incident. Before long, the students were at the Deputy Vice Chancellor's residence, demanding some explanation as to why the university had failed to protect their fallen comrade; why the university was so lax about security, and why the university had kept old and inept security guards whose only weapons were bows and arrows and batons? Fortunately, by the time the chanting students arrived at his residence, Professor Opio had left for the office. Nevertheless, they forced their way into his residence and started ransacking it. They assaulted his housekeeper, who later fled for his dear life. They also took away a bicycle, among other things. According to the eyewitness account we later received, the Guild President was leading his fellow students, which was quite understandable. As a leader, the students expected him to be with them at such a moment of bereavement. In all probability, if Professor Epelu Opio had been at home, the emotionally charged students would have killed him or inflicted serious injuries on him. He had to hide for some time until he was able to smuggle himself out of the university campus incognito. He had to stay away from the university campus for some time until the situation cooled down. The only communication link we had with him was by telephone.

From the Deputy Vice Chancellor's residence, students moved to all corners of the campus. A group of them proceeded to a place called Mailo Two on Bombo Road and grabbed an empty coffin. Then they marched with it all the way to the city centre, carrying what they called Alex Adeg's body and damaging public property in their wake. Shops in Wandegaya found open fell victim to the

looting of the students. They beat up some medical students they found attending lectures at Mulago, as well as students found reading in the Main Library. They injured some of them and forced them to join in the mourning demonstrations. By mid-morning, we had witnessed pandemonium on an unprecedented scale. The rowdy students smashed windows and doors in the Main Library and other buildings on the university campus. They damaged university and staff vehicles and disrupted all lectures. The Guild President seemed to have lost control of the situation, making it easy for the more radical students to take over.

The demonstration spread all over the campus and the neighbourhood. At Kasubi Trading Centre, traders quickly left their merchandise on the stands and ran for cover as the unruly mobs approached. The students ate all there was to eat and set the traders' stands ablaze. It was a sad day, not only for the university, but also for the poor people in the neighbourhood who were trying to eke a living out of their petty trade. They lost everything. For a long time, we had been warning successive generations of student leaders about the possibility of ill-intentioned impostors infiltrating through their ranks during demonstrations, and the danger such infiltrations posed, but many of them ignored our warning. This time around, the consequence fell on us. I believe that as most students began to demonstrate, which was perfectly understandable, they did not realise the extent to which their otherwise innocent demonstrations would be infiltrated by criminals and Kampala's vagabonds. The information that reached us in the aftermath of the demonstration indicated that most of the excesses committed during the demonstrations, like looting, were attributed to people outside the university campus who had posed as students. This is not to say that all the students were innocent of some of these unforgiveable criminal acts. Some students had behaved worse than the bayaye. So, the involvement of vagabonds and criminals in their demonstration did not absolve them from the guilt of crimes committed against the public that had nothing to do with what had happened at the university. When the situation seemed to be slipping out of control, the Police were forced to intervene. The Military Police joined them later. Makerere students feared the Military Police, the so-called "Valentine Boys", the most. The Police rounded up a few students for breach of public peace and for causing malicious damage to public property, but later released them.

Although the stampede was a one-day affair, it was a trying time for the university community and for me personally. I had intended to visit the scene of crime early in the day, but the Police advised me not to venture outside my residence until the situation had been brought under control. I kept monitoring whatever was going on outside on phone. Throughout the day, no student had attempted to enter my residence. As dusk approached and the situation appeared to be returning to normal, a small clique of students was part of the mob chased out of Kasubi Trading Centre on the west of the university. This small group,

led by a notorious BA student in the Faculty of Arts, seized John Ekudu and forced him to address them in the Freedom Square. The Police were now on their way out of the university campus. As Mr Ekudu started to address them, they demanded to know where the Vice Chancellor was. Mr Ekudu had no choice than to call me. After talking to me, he left his phone on so I could hear what the students were plotting to do. Some were unsure where the Vice Chancellor's residence was. Those who knew where my residence was led the mob. At about the same time, the Guild President had joined them. As they approached my residence, I decided to come out and talk to them in the courtyard. They did not like it; they wanted me to address them in the Freedom Square. I was reluctant to go to the Freedom Square, but the Guild President Basalirwa, persuaded me to go as a way of cooling the tempers. As we walked past the main gate to the Lodge, I saw a female from behind throw a stone at me, but it missed. Some of the students called me a Museveni supporter and that Museveni and I had murdered Alex Adegga. Sensing that they could harm me, my body guard, Jesse Bwayo, secretly called the Police to come to our rescue. He too followed us to the Freedom Square.

Meanwhile, as we walked with the students to the Freedom Square, some of the students remained behind at my residence. They forced their way into the kitchen and ate whatever they could lay their hands on there and in the fridge. Others went behind the house and mercilessly uprooted and ate all the sugar cane my wife had planted there for the children. My nephews, Frank Ssebuwufu and Sam Mutesasasira who were living with me at the time, struggled with the mob, stopping them from inflicting more damage to our property, but with very little success. The mob smashed the windscreen of a Fuso track belonging to a family friend, Sekimpi of Kiti (now deceased) and the Vice Chancellor's old Mercedes Benz, UXZ 007, which at the time had been grounded in the garage. They also overturned my small pick-up truck, located outside in the courtyard. The Police arrived quickly and dispersed the crowd that was ransacking my residence. My two sons, Michael (22) and Martin (20) decided to follow me to the Freedom Square. Later, the two young men told me that if the students attempted to harm me, they were prepared to die protecting me. I admired their courage. The students had erected a platform at the north end of the Square and had placed the coffin they had looted earlier in the day at the foot of the platform. I climbed it together with the Dean of Students. After the usual testing, Makerere oye! they asked me to address them. I had hardly begun to talk when the Police, clad in anti-riot gear, approached the Freedom Square and asked the students to disperse at once. Most of the students took off, but a few remained with me. I told the Police that I, together with my Dean of Students, was trying to calm the students but the Police insisted that we abandoned the assembly. Some of the students who were running away from the Freedom Square started hauling stones at the Policemen. This prompted the Police to fire rubber bullets and one hit my son

Michael on the his back. I believe the scar on his back will always be a reminder of his heroic attempt to save his father's life. Mr Ekudu learnt that the student who was leading that mob had a far more sinister plan for him and me. They had arranged to keep us talking until dark; then at some appropriate moment in the night, they would pounce on us and kill both of us, put my body in the coffin and leave it the Freedom Square. The Police had arrived just in time and saved our lives. I was further told that, at first, the Police were not aware of what the students' intentions of taking me to the Freedom Square were until a female Law student told the Police Commander that the mob intended to kill me and Mr Ekudu. It turned out later that the student who was leading that small but vocal group was mentally deranged. In fact, he eventually abandoned his degree course.

I had never been through such a terrifying experience with students before. In spite of a few who thought we were too hard on them, my relationship with most students was cordial and jovial. I always went out of my way to interact and share small jokes with them at the Main Building entrance, either as they waited to enter the lecture hall, or as they came out of the lecture hall. Besides, I was in constant contact with their leaders. A student leader was always free to enter my office. This incident changed my attitude altogether, as I began to see them as potential killers. I fully understood their anger and concern; however, what I believe the students failed to appreciate was the simple fact that the University Administration had not invited the gunmen into the university and therefore, had no hand in the murder of their fellow student. We were as concerned about what had happened as much as they were. Besides, for a long time, we had been pleading with the Ministry of Finance to provide us with funds to repair the perimeter fence that had been vandalised over the years of neglect. Some parts of it had also fallen into disrepair due to age. In fact, when the Chancellor visited the university a few years earlier to fundraise for the renovation of Lumumba and Mary Stuart Halls, he had pledged to find money for the fence repairs. However, for reasons of scarcity of resources, the Treasury had not released the money. What perturbed us even more were the political overtures the students were attaching to the killing of Alex Adegga. Some people were making political capital out of a terrible tragedy that had befallen the university. Also, the students were well aware of the university's rule that required them to be indoors by midnight. Students, who came back to their halls of residence well after midnight were doing so in breach of this regulation. However, on a positive note, the two females who had been kidnapped by the thugs had come back. Those who had the chance to talk to them said that the girls were a bit guarded when narrating their ordeal. I remember receiving information that after the gunmen had raped them; they dumped them on the university's main sports field below Mary Stuart Hall. I failed to meet them, and they were reluctant to come forward. The Police too promised to hunt down the alleged killers.

When the dust settled, the Deputy Vice Chancellor returned from his hideout and we started counting the cost. As usual, it was difficult to pin-point the real culprits for prosecution. Secondly, we tried to avoid taking any disciplinary action against any student, as such an act would inflame further the already tense situation; so we had to think and act proactively. We received numerous suggestions as to how we could handle a similar situation in the future. There was a suggestion that we should lay off the old security guards and recruit new ones. Fortunately, we were fully aware of the weaknesses in the Security Department. In fact, we had started doing something about it, and had begun with the recruitment of new and younger guards, educated up to the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education level or its equivalent. The new guards were being trained by the Uganda Police. We had also successfully secured the services of a senior Police Officer, on secondment from the Uganda Police Force, to head the department and help with the recruitment, training and retraining of the guards.

Secondly, we considered the possibility of equipping our security guards with firearms, but after serious consideration, we dropped the idea because of its inherent dangers. We believed that guns in the hands of the security guards could create more problems than we were trying to solve. Students by nature were provocative and were in the habit of insulting the security guards, calling them “academic dwarfs”. We reasoned that a security guard provoked into anger would not hesitate to use the gun to get even with the students, which would be a disaster. We were also not sure how our armed guards would react when confronted by a mob of angry students; or what might happen if a mob of students on rampage broke into the armoury or overpowered the armed guards and ran away with the loaded guns. We had no ready answers to these questions. In the absence of good answers, we thought it was wiser to keep the campus gun-free. That way, we were playing it safe. Furthermore, to keep and use guns, the university was required to register the Security Department as a security organisation. All these were good proposals, but they required in-depth study before we could implement them. We therefore opted for simpler alternatives.

We requested the Police to stay on for a while to reassure the students that, in the aftermath of the shooting of Alex Atega, they were providing the university with sufficient security cover. This was a backstop measure, as we worked out the more detailed security measures. In fact, soon after that shooting incident, the Uganda Police and the Military Police kept their full presence on the campus and everyone was beginning to feel secure once again. However, the murderers were still at large and plotting new attacks on the university. As the Police and the Military were reducing their numbers, another student, this time a female residing in the CCE Complex was shot dead outside her room, on March 31, 2001. Apparently, the gunman had sneaked into the university unnoticed. The female, Barbara Mwesigye, a second year Bachelor of Library and Information

Science (BLIS) student who hailed from Mbarara District, had been out and someone had brought her back and dropped her near her hall at about 4 o'clock in the morning. I was in Entebbe, attending a meeting of the HYPERLINK "<mailto:I@mak.com>" \h I@mak.com when I was informed of the incident, which occurred in the early hours of a Saturday. Professor Elly Sabiiti who was then Dean of Agriculture conveyed the news, which someone at Makerere had called and given him, to me. My first reaction was "Surely, not again". I was devastated. I failed to comprehend how, in a space of a month, a gunman would once again dare enter the university campus and shoot dead another student, moreover in the presence of the Police. I could not help wondering whether this was not part of a grand conspiracy to sabotage us! But the trouble was that I had no way of figuring out who the conspirators were. Before I received communication from Professor Epelu Opio and Mr John Ekudu, I was at a loss as to what to do. Fortunately, Professor Epelu Opio called soon after. After a rundown on the information gathered so far about the circumstances under which the student had met her death, he assured me that he was working closely with the Dean of Students and the Police to diffuse the tension. He was trying to avoid a repeat of what happened when Alex Adega was shot dead. He further assured me that although, and as would be expected, the students had started demonstrating, the demonstrations were so far peaceful and confined to the university campus. The Police were determined to keep it that way so there was no need for me to rush back to the university. If the situation warranted my presence, he would let me know. I tried to concentrate on the work I was supposed to be doing at Entebbe with a lot of difficulty. All the morale I had at the beginning of the meeting had evaporated at the news of another fatal shooting incident at the university. Throughout the day, I kept in touch with my colleagues at Makerere by phone. Fortunately, with the timely intervention of some Ministers and other senior Government and security officials like Captain Francis and Colonel Mayombo, the crisis ended without damage.

By the time I returned from Entebbe in the evening, all was quiet, but I would have expected most students were in a sombre mood and grief-stricken. They too appeared to be confused. They were not sure who was next on the killers' list. After the burial of Barbara Mwesigye, we intensified our efforts to beef up security. Even President Museveni was concerned about the killing of students. He paid a personal visit to the university, first to convey his condolences to the bereaved families of the dead students and to the university community. Secondly, he wanted to familiarise himself with the kind of security arrangements that were in place at the university. He gave us many tips on how we could improve on our security and ensured that the Military Police that had left the university would be returned until the wave of insecurity the country was experiencing at that time was brought under control. Unfortunately, the killers were still at large, but the President assured us and the country of the Government's determination to

find the killers and bring them to book. I recall a programme Professor Nelson Sewankambo, Dr Nakanyike Musisi and I had to present on WBS Television to explain to the public the objectives of the Capacity Building Programme we had launched in some decentralised districts in Uganda under the HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com” \h I@mak.com. The Television programme was aired soon after the second shooting incident. During the phone-in session, the moderator had a tough time keeping the viewing audience focused on the topic under discussion. He kept reminding the callers that the programme was about new and innovative ways of building capacity for service delivery in decentralised districts and not about security at Makerere, but to no avail. I agreed with him that I would answer the questions on security at the campus as well, and most callers were asking why students were being killed and why the university administration was so lenient with students who broke the university regulations; and what we were doing to ensure there would be no repeat of such incidents. Others blamed us for failing to repair the perimeter fence, while others wanted to see a more serious enforcement of university regulations and strict policing of the students by the university authorities; something akin to what happens in boarding secondary schools. I laboured to answer all the questions as best as I could, emphasising that the university was different from a secondary school. Whereas in the secondary school, the headteacher polices the students; in the university, students police themselves. This included not engaging in reckless actions that would compromise one’s personal security. The university exercised minimum control over its students, because it is preparing them for their future roles and responsibilities in society.

While waiting for the Government to improve the security country-wide, and with the approval of the University Council which was also equally concerned about the rising insecurity on the university campus, we moved fast to implement some measures that would minimise the level of insecurity at the main campus and at its annexes at Mulago and Kabanyolo. We had long realised that communication was a big problem, so we decided to install a campus-wide radio network with the control centre in the Security Department building. After obtaining permission from the Uganda Police to operate the system, a frequency from the Uganda Communications Commission and shopping around for the most reliable equipment, we settled on a Motorola system. Wilkins Telecommunication Company, based in Kampala, supplied the equipment which included transmitters, repeaters and handsets, popular known as “walkie-talkies”. The company also agreed to train some members of staff and the security personnel on the use of the radio sets and the communication terminology. For the first time, the security guards deployed at the university’s main gate, other gates and strategic locations throughout the university could communicate with among themselves, the university’s Chief Security Officer, the Dean of Students, the Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor day and night by radio. Initially, funds had limited the number of handsets we could

buy and places like Kabanyolo were not covered. Later, we were able to raise more money to purchase more handsets. Hearing a security guard at the main gate calling Mike 1 or Mike 6 or any other Mikes, which were the code names for the various users of the radio, via the control room or “I copy” or the final “roger” was, to me, nothing but a happy feeling. I was happy because we did not have to wait for the Government to provide the money. We had put up the system with internally-generated funds. The signal was coming strongly and clearly. The system had one other interesting feature, an in-built multiple channel that made private communication possible. In short, the system met our specifications and requirements. In due course, we had bought and installed a booster at Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute at Kabanyolo. Once the booster was installed, we could monitor the security situation there as well for 24 hours, seven days a week. In addition to the wireless communication system, we purchased a pick-up truck fitted with the necessary seats at the back to carry security personnel, a radio and other security equipment for patrolling the main campus and the annexes. Our job then, was to monitor the goings-on within the university campus and beyond, and when we encountered a problem, we would immediately alert the Police. When the problem did not warrant Police intervention, we would take corrective measures immediately. Given the recent tragic incidents, security was now our topmost priority. Unfortunately, the perimeter fence repairs remained a non-starter; no money was forthcoming from the Government Treasury to undertake the repair work, and the university did not have sufficient funds of its own to do it alone. Besides these measures, we advised the incoming Guild President to create a Ministry of Security, which he gladly accepted and implemented. We also sensitised the students about the need to be security conscious all the time and to avoid situations likely to endanger their personal safety. With these measures in place, we witnessed a dramatic improvement in the overall security situation in the university. For the Deputy Vice Chancellor, it was a big sigh of relief. The Government too lived up to the President’s promise. Operation Wembley, headed by Colonel Elly Kayanja, did so much to rid Kampala and the country of several hard-core criminals. We later learnt that Colonel Kayanja’s men had killed the gunmen suspected to have shot Alex Adega and Barbara Mwesigye dead. He was one of the most notorious gang leaders in Kampala, and was killed in one of the Wembley operations. By the time Yusuf Kiranda took over as the Guild President in 2002, security at the university was firmly under control, at least until I left in June 2004. Kiranda, a BA Education student, was the last Guild President I worked with to the end of his term. The next President, Ronald Senkubuge Mukasa, assumed office in April 2004, barely two months before my retirement and was the only President I was unable to swear in. Professor Epelu Opio performed the function on my behalf. By the time I left, we were once again enjoying the kind of peace and quiet that we had begun to enjoy in the mid- and late-1990s. Because of our tireless effort to instil discipline in our young and sometimes over-zealous students, the

number of disciplinary cases reported to the Disciplinary Committee of Council declined sharply. Besides constantly reminding that students of the negative impact excessive acts of indiscipline had on them and the university in general, we also instituted new measures that required the students' hall governments to constitute disciplinary committees to handle some cases of discipline at the hall level and refer only the difficult ones to the University Council's Disciplinary Committee. We were interested in empowering the students to police themselves or, as one of my colleagues would say, "we were giving them the rope to hang themselves".

### **University Staff – Unclogging Hiring, Promoting and Firing**

I have devoted a considerable amount of time and space to students, precisely because they are central to the University. As one of my colleagues used to say, "students are the university's principal clients". We have seen how they explode their youthful energies in worthwhile and sometimes worthless causes. We have also seen how Guild Presidents disgraced themselves by engaging in unethical and outright acts of corruption; how close these Presidents, and the student body in general, brought the Students' Guild to the brink of collapse through their reckless acts, as well as how we tried to clean up their acts with some degree of success. It is also a fact that in most African universities, the undergraduates constitute more than 90% of the student population, which makes them one of the university's key stakeholders. Makerere University is no exception, although as we shall see later, it was slowly evolving from a predominantly undergraduate teaching institution into a research and graduate university.

Equally important to a university is the quality of its academic staff, collectively referred to as the faculty in some countries. Prestigious universities are so precisely because they have extremely high-quality faculties, made up of professors who are leaders or leading experts in their academic fields. Without this calibre of staff, a university is unlikely to engage in first-rated research capable of commanding international recognition, and be able provide high quality teaching. It is therefore critical that a university keeps its staff well motivated and resourced. No doubt, a good salary is a key motivator. We now know that low pay and unattractive terms of service have been, and will continue to be, the main push factors in the exodus of Africa's best brains and the constant staff strikes which have become a common feature on the campuses of many African universities in recent years. However, it would be naïve to assume that a good salary alone is enough to keep staff highly motivated. There are other factors university dons consider as important as competitive salaries. These are sometimes referred to as the invisible benefits, one of which is promotion.

At the time we took over the administration in 1993, Makerere University was renowned for its notoriously long promotion and appointment delays. I was surprised to discover that several members of staff had applied for promotion to

various ranks for which they were qualified, but no action had been taken on their applications for over five years. Upon investigations, we discovered some serious flaws in the system. One problem was that, despite the presence of the Appointment and Promotions Committees in every faculty and department, most of these committees were not processing applications on time, because meetings were not taking place. This was one of the causes of the inefficiencies in the system. For some reason, the committees were not meeting as regularly as they should, which in turn bogged down the work of the Appointments' Board which, of course, had its own problems too. There were also many occasions when the Board failed to meet due to the lack of a quorum, because some board members were consistently absent. When Professor Apollo Nsibambi became Minister of Education and Sports in 1998, he appointed me a full member of the Appointments' Board. Before, I was simply attending the Board meetings in an unofficial advisory role. Professor Nsibambi argued that it had been a big oversight to keep the Vice Chancellor, who was the chief executive officer of the university, at the periphery of such an important organ as the Appointments Board. My appointment to the Board somehow eased the quorum problem.

One consequence of the Appointments Board's failure to meet regularly was the inevitable accumulation of a huge backlog of business. The external vetters, who failed to file their reports to the Board, even after several reminders had been written to them, also contributed significantly to the paralysis and near breakdown of the system. As we have seen elsewhere, under the 1970 Act, amended in 1975 by decree, the Minister of Education was the ultimate appointing authority for the Academic Registrar, the University Secretary, Deans, Directors and Professors for the university. In this case, the Appointments Board's responsibility was to identify suitable candidates for the Minister to appoint or promote. It was the prerogative of the Minister to issue both the instrument of appointment and promotion. However, given the nature of their job and office, Ministers are always busy. Even if the Appointments Board was able to do its job efficiently, the process would still be incomplete until the Minister had acted. This was another bottleneck in the system. In most cases, the Minister would not be able to act promptly. Occasionally, he needed time to consult about an appointment or a promotion before giving his approval. It was not always a foregone conclusion that once the Appointments Board at Makerere had done its work and forwarded its recommendations to him, all the Minister had to do was to endorse the Board's decisions. There were occasions when a Minister of Education disagreed with the Board, so the Minister too had an active input in the process. However, when Professor Nsibambi took over as Minister of Education and Sports, he found a way of working on Makerere documents expeditiously. In fact, when he was not too busy, it would take him less than a day to approve an appointment or a promotion. Makerere had been waiting for this big breakthrough and this was it. As they say, sometimes it pays dividends to have one of your own in an important position.

Naturally, the excessively long delays frustrated and angered staff. I remember a colleague from the Faculty of Agriculture, who had applied for promotion three years earlier, but had just received his promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. This came to me in total surprise and disbelief. He confessed that since he had not received any response from the Appointments Board, he had long given up. He had come to the inevitable conclusion that Makerere University had stopped promoting its staff, no matter how hard they worked. His promotion came after we had cleaned up the system. In fact, there were many members of staff who were prepared to work for a low salary, as long as the university recognised and appreciated their hard work. Promoting staff who deserved it was one of the important ways they expected the university to show its gratitude. Certainly, staff hoped that with our being there now, the Appointments Board would change for the better. That was our challenge. Therefore, we had to work hard and fast to solve the problems of the excessive delays in processing both appointments and promotions. Another reason staff could not be promoted had to do with the establishment. Under the old structure inherited from the colonial era, each department had a fixed number of positions. In most departments, there was one position for a professor, and once there was a sitting professor, that was it. No one else could become a professor in that department, however qualified they were until the incumbent retired, resigned or died. Reforming the process was therefore an important step towards restoring confidence in the system. The University Secretary was key to the reforms we attempted to implement. Unfortunately, time had run out for Reverend David Sentongo. He retired before this crucial exercise began.

As luck would have it, when the job was advertised in 1994, Avitus Tibarimbasa, whom I had left behind at ITEK as Institute Secretary was one of the applicants. Avitus Tibarimbasa was a man of vision, with lots of new ideas. The other advantage he had for the job was the wealth of administrative experience he had accumulated over the years, and in particular as ITEK's Secretary. He was shortlisted for the interview and emerged the best candidate. The Board Chairman forwarded his name to the Minister for appointment. The Minister found him fit for the job and appointed him straight away as the new University Secretary. The handover from David Sentongo to him was a smooth one. In fact, Reverend Sentongo offered him many useful tips about the job, including the dos and don'ts and the important role the University Secretary had to play as the university's accounting officer. Avitus quickly settled in and was soon at work. Like me, for him, the return to Makerere was an exciting home-coming. Unfortunately, the press did not spare him the wrath of negative reporting, a lot of which was based on totally wrong information. He quickly got used to it and started ignoring the speculative stories about him and the university in general that appeared in the local press from time to time. Occasionally, the reports about the university were so bad that we were compelled to rebut them to correct the

false impressions the stories conveyed to the general public. Many years later when he was leaving Makerere for a career in politics, he showed me a heap of newspaper cuttings of the horrific articles written about him and his coming back to Makerere as University Secretary. I had not seen some of the articles. However, the press aside, streamlining the procedures in the Appointments Board and clearing the backlog, which had clogged the system, were some of the immediate challenges he had to handle.

Working closely with the Board's Secretary, the Deans and the Heads of Departments, he was soon on top of things. In an attempt to streamline the procedures and processes, we decided that external vetters would submit their reports within three months of receipt of documents for vetting. An external vetter who failed to file a report within three months was required to return all publications and other documents sent to him or her. The Academic Registrar was under instruction to identify a new vetter and to blacklist those who had failed to comply. The university's internal Appointments and Promotions Committees too were reminded of their obligation to expedite decisions about candidates who had applied for either promotion or appointment. The Academic Registrar, Dr Mukwanason Hyuha, assured us that he was determined to clean up the vetting process that was responsible for much of the backlog in the Appointments Board. Mr Tibarimbasa too decided to increase the frequency of the Board meetings with fixed dates. When Professor Josephine Namboozie left in 1995, the Appointments Board operated without a substantive chairperson for a while. Dr Stephen Kagoda, who was one of the long-serving members, was requested to act as chair of the Board. We kept reminding the Minister to quickly appoint a new Board Chairperson, because we thought it was irregular for the Board to operate without a substantive chairperson. Our efforts paid off.

The news of the appointment of Associate Professor George Mondo Kagonyera as the new Board Chairman was a welcome relief. Before the President of Uganda appointed him as a Cabinet Minister, Dr Mondo Kagonyera, was a member of staff of Makerere University and had served as Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine for a number of years. He had also weathered the storm of Idi Amin's rule and the subsequent difficult times of the Obote II administration. A Veterinary Medicine PhD graduate of the University of California, Dr Kongoyera was an accomplished academic with a very pleasant personality and a good sense of humour. His appointment helped to ease the work of the Board and its secretariat. Despite structural problems at the time, the Board had several distinguished members who had served for a long time. The list included Dr Joseph Byamugisha, one of Kampala's prominent lawyers and one of the pioneer lecturers in the Faculty of Law at Makerere. He was the Board's legal mind. Other members were Professor Lutalo Bosa, the former Deputy Vice Chancellor; Dr Charles Wana Etyem, former Head of the Department of Civil Engineering in the Faculty of Technology and

Deputy Managing Director of National Water and Sewerage Corporation and Mrs Florence Nekyon, the only woman on the Board. Mr Azarius Baryaruha, an Economist and former Minister in the Lule Government was one of the new members. By all accounts, it was an efficient Board. All we had to do was to work very hard to ensure staff stopped blaming it for the inefficiencies in the university which it was not responsible for.

To ease communication and mobility for the Appointments Board Secretariat, I surrendered one of the cars attached to the Vice Chancellor's Office for its use. Unfortunately, it was an old car and so frequently broke down, requiring costly repairs, but it helped for a while. In spite of the massive documents they had to reproduce – most of them confidential – the Board Secretariat had no photocopier of its own; so we provided one. We also made sure the Secretariat had a working telephone line and computers. The facilitation we provided went a long way to improve the efficiency of the Secretariat.

In less than a year, the Board had finished with the heavy backlog and was now handling new cases. Staff began to see rapid appointments and promotions. In the same vain, we were able to solve the perennial problem of lack of openings for promotions. We came up with the idea of a super-numerary scheme. This innovation converted a fixed establishment into a semi-floating one. It eliminated what had been a serious bottleneck for the Appointments Board for a long time, as it allowed the Board to promote qualified candidates without too much restriction imposed by the establishment. Under the new scheme, promotions would not be held back for lack of openings. It was a totally new concept at Makerere and many members of staff took time to understand it. Because some thought it was not possible to promote when there was no vacancy, the old system persisted for some time. The University Secretary had to give a lot of explanation to get the message across. Some departments were able to respond quickly, and these included the Department of Crop Science in the Faculty of Agriculture which eventually became a fine example of how the new scheme worked. Ordinarily, most departments had one or two professorial positions in their establishment, but under the super-numerary arrangement, this department ended up with four full Professors: Elly Sabiiti, David Osiru, Adipala Ekwamu and Patrick Rubaihayo. The Department of Physics in the Faculty of Science too had, at one time, three Professors instead of one: John Ilukor (now deceased), Eldad Banda and Yusito Kaahwa.

In theory, it was now possible for a department to have all its members of staff at the rank of full Professor. Some people I talked to at the time said that it was not possible. They could not see that happen at Makerere, but the truth was that the probability did exist. In fact, I was happy to see many well-qualified colleagues rising fast through the ranks, partly because of the new policy. As I saw more and more promotions, I started taking count of new Professors, Associate

Professors and Senior Lecturers and made the inevitable comparison with what I found in place in 1993. I only stopped when they became too many to count. The statistics were impressive, and I had reason to be happy. We even coined the phrase, “one promoted oneself”, meaning that all one had to do was to keep publishing good papers in good journals. As we have seen elsewhere, promotion at Makerere, like in many universities around the world, was and still is dependent on publications. The dictum, “publish or perish” has never been forgotten. However, the picture was not always rosy for some people. They were many who applied for promotion, only to be disappointed when the Appointments Board turned down their applications, either because the papers required were inadequate or they were of low quality, according to vetters’ reports. Whenever an application for promotion was turned down, the Appointments Board, through its Secretariat, always endeavoured to provide an explanation for the rejection. The areas of weakness, which required improvement before the candidate could resubmit the application, were also pointed out. Some members of staff took the advice in good faith and did what was asked of them, while others simply gave up. A minority of them became extremely resentful of the Board. The vetter’s report counted a lot and was always a key factor in determining whether one could be promoted or not. If the report was negative, the Board would not promote. Veters had to be explicit and not to submit non-committal or vague reports. They had to recommend for promotion or for no promotion and their decisions had to be backed up with clearly stated reasons.

By and large, we had succeeded in streamlining the Appointments Board, thanks in part to the hard working staff in the Board’s Secretariat. However, one of our disappointments was our inability to retain Deputy University Secretaries in charge of the Board for long. For some reason, we thought the turnover was a little above average. It was not uncommon for the academic staff to leave the university even before the ink on their appointment letters had dried. The administrative staff was more stable. For sure, the job was demanding and entailed a high degree of integrity and an above-average sense of responsibility. Journalists and some ill-intentioned people are always on the look-out for sensitive information and confidential documents. When there are leaks, the university is embarrassed and the Appointments Board takes full responsibility for it. So, whoever is in charge of the Secretariat has to be extremely careful with documents. In fact, whoever works there faces this challenge on almost a daily basis. On top of this important responsibility, the Appointments Board Secretariat is quite a busy place. It receives a daily constant stream of people, who come in to find out the fate of their applications for appointment or promotion.

The Secretary had to write the minutes that contained the record of the Board’s decisions promptly and accurately, and communicate this within a reasonable period of time. Also, the agenda for a meeting had to be prepared and circulated

to all members, together with the minutes of the previous meeting, at least a week before the meeting. In short, it is a stressful office. In the old system, management was not allowed to act on Board's decisions until the minutes were confirmed, unless the Board explicitly gave the University Management permission to do so. However, the procedure changed in 2001 when a new Board came into office. The new Board wanted quicker action on its decisions. Worse still, the Board had to meet monthly to avoid accumulation of unfinished business. This put more pressure on the Secretariat. It is also interesting to note that the Appointments Board is one of the university organs that consume a lot of stationery, hence, the University Bursar and the Purchasing Unit were also under constant pressure to provide the Board's Secretariat with all the required stationery and other inputs necessary for the smooth running of the Board's affairs. I was tempted to believe that in some way, the stressful nature of the job was a contributory factor to the high turnover of Board Secretaries. Some people could just not cope with this kind of work pressure. Shortly before my appointment as Vice Chancellor in 1993, the Board had lost Dr Mugerwa. Ms Evelyn Nyakoojo took over as Board Secretary, in acting capacity. She too did not last long in the job. She left for a new job with an international non-governmental organisation with operations in Uganda. Mrs Jamillah Kamulegeya took over, also in an acting capacity, until a substantive Deputy University Secretary was recruited in 1995.

As the new University Secretary was recruited, the Board decided that a Deputy Secretary be recruited at the same time to take charge of its Secretariat. Dr James Muliira from the University of Nairobi, who was one of the strong candidates for the post of University Secretary, accepted the appointment. However, he had also applied for the Associate Professor post in the Department of History, and the Board had gone ahead to process his application. The external vetter's report was positive, and Dr Muliira had a difficult choice to make; either to stay in administration or accept the Associate Professorship at the Department of History. He opted for the latter, which I thought was a wise choice. In academia, there were better opportunities to progress and to excel than in administration. He had to leave. In his farewell speech to the Board, he said that during the short time he had worked as head of the Secretariat, he had learnt how the Appointments Board discharged its duties and responsibilities; with impartiality, honesty, professionalism and integrity. Mrs Jamillah Kamulegeya, who had worked alongside Evelyn Nyakoojo, stepped in while the Board was arranging to recruit a new head for its Secretariat. Unfortunately for us, no sooner had Mrs Kamulegeya settled in than President Yoweri Museveni appointed her a full-time Commissioner with the Public Service Commission. For a while after Jamillah Kamulegeya had left, Mrs Dora Zaake acted as head of the Secretariat until Mrs Sarah Serufusa's appointment as Deputy Secretary in charge of the Appointments Board in 2000. Sarah Serufusa was no stranger to Makerere. She had studied and worked there for many years, and had left the university service when her

husband took up an international assignment. Soft spoken, but very efficient and capable of taking care of highly confidential and sensitive documents, she was one person who had been on the job for the longest time in recent years.

After the Presidential and Parliamentary elections of 2001, President Museveni decided to appoint the incumbent Board Chairperson, Professor Mondo Kagonyera, as the full Cabinet Minister for General Duties in the Office of the Prime Minister. At the same time, he was also the Member of Parliament for Rubaabo County in new Kanungu District. Because of his new roles as Minister in the Uganda Government, the Constitution of Uganda barred him from holding other positions of responsibility in a public institution, so he had to relinquish his position as Chairperson of the Appointments Board. Once again, the Board found itself without a substantive Chairperson, and again the remaining Board members unanimously chose Dr Stephen Kagoda to act as Chairperson. The Board did not have a substantive Chairperson until the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act came into effect in April 2001. The new Act marked the end of the old University Council and Appointments Board. Under the new Act of 2001, the Appointments Board ceased to be a parallel body to the University Council; instead, it became a special Committee of the Council.

The super-numerary idea was excellent, but did not solve all the university's staffing problems. As we shall see later, the increasing student numbers were beginning to exert a lot of pressure on the existing establishment. The super-numerary scheme made promotions possible, but left the overall establishment unchanged. Time had come to start thinking seriously about expanding the university establishment as a coping mechanism for large student numbers and new programmes. However, we had to go about it in a systematic way. It was no longer possible to apportion new posts to the departments in an ad hoc way. The first step in the process was to work out the cost implication of every new post. We decided that, before a department applied for new posts, it had to work out the financial implications of expanding the establishment as accurately as possible. We made this a requirement because the university's financial resources were very limited indeed. We had to take into serious consideration the question of the wage bill and its affordability. The Establishment and Administration Committee was a standing committee of the University Council responsible for creating new positions and abolishing those that had become redundant. The Vice Chancellor chaired this committee. In the past, the committee rarely met and when it did, it approved very few new posts. I was one of the lucky Heads of Departments when, in the 1980s, our request to expand the establishment of the Chemistry Department was partially granted. The committee raised it from fifteen positions to twenty-one, with provision for a second Professor. However, as the pressure for more positions mounted, we decided to look for a scientific method of arriving at an optimal number of positions for each teaching department.

Kibirige Mayanja and his team in the Planning and Development Department were tasked to come up with the solution in the form of a scientific formula. Mayanja and his team worked out an elegant formula that allowed any teaching department requesting more positions to know whether there was a need for the positions. The formula worked on either staff/student ratio or staff/workload ratio. Without going into the nitty gritty of the mathematics behind the formula, it was possible to tell whether the positions asked for were justified. Mayanja's formula simplified the committee's work. Whenever we received a request for new positions, we referred the request to Mayanja to do the computations. In majority of cases, the committee went by the Planning and Development Department's recommendation. Mayanja's numbers were usually lower than what the departments wanted. The departments were asking for more positions, but Mayanja told them that according to his computation, the department was actually over-established and if anything, the existing positions had to be reduced. Therefore, on several occasions, Heads of Departments did not agree with Mayanja's computations and many left the committee's meetings disappointed, but the formula was the best tool we could use to arrive at a scientifically worked-out establishment instead of depending on guess work.

When we realised that we could not accommodate all new positions on the Government payroll without stretching the university budget beyond breaking point, we encouraged the departments with sufficient funds of their own to recruit part-time staff to take some pressure off the few permanent staff. These were over and above the part-timers on the university payroll. Many departments, particularly in the Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Technology, the Business School and School of Education took advantage of this arrangement. This was the first time departments were using their own resources to hire and pay staff outside the official university establishment and budget. However, we had to be mindful of the obligation to maintain the requisite standards. Therefore, we subjected every part-time and temporary staff employed under this arrangement to the same academic and professional requirements as the regular staff. However, it was the department's responsibility to go out and identify people with the right expertise and willingness to offer their services to the university on a part-time basis. This scheme came in handy when the University Council halted staff recruitment, because the university budget was not enough to pay for new staff and at the same time cover the annual salary increments and promotions. The University Council wanted to go even beyond part-time staff recruitment. It wanted the departments to hire full-time staff and meet their costs in full. Under this arrangement, which we referred to as the parallel establishment, the Appointments Board would recruit the staff and the departments would take over their emoluments and other financial obligations.

In essence, the parallel establishment meant that a department could have four categories of staff. The regular full-time staff on the university payroll; full-

time staff paid for by the faculty or the department; part-time staff paid for by the university; and part-time staff paid for by the faculty or department. Much as, at first glance, this arrangement looked confusing, the intention was to reduce the constraint of Government funding on the university establishment. The university could not expand beyond the approved wage bill. For a long time, the Ministry of Finance paid whatever wage bill the university submitted. This had created a wrong impression that the university's wage bill was open-ended, and could accommodate every new staff the university recruited. In 1996, the Ministry of Finance decided to cap the university's wage bill. As a result, the university had to go slow on recruitment. With more faculties, departments and new programmes coming on board and student numbers going up, there was no way the university would freeze staff recruitment any longer. Moreover, the university was facing mounting criticism for admitting too many students with insufficient staff to teach them. It was being blamed for compromising standards. We had to think of alternative ways of coping with these pressures. The novel parallel establishment was part of the answer. Unfortunately, at the time of my departure, the University Council had not finalised how the policy that would govern the parallel or alternative establishment would work. On a positive note, many Faculties, in particular the ones which believed they had the capacity to pay, strongly supported the idea. The part-time staff (or adjunct staff as some universities prefer to call them) played and continued to play a vital relief role. They taught both day and evening programmes.

### ***Tour d'ivoire* Revisited – the Gown Gears for the Town**

Some people hold the view that a vibrant university is one that changes with changing times. It takes into account its relevance to societal needs. Perhaps not at the scale as in past, nevertheless society continues to view universities as ivory towers full of scruffy people with long beards and unkempt hair very detached from the realities of the real world where the real people live. Admittedly, this is an unrealistic and stereotype view but for some reason, this age-old stereotype image of a university has persisted to this day. The old "town and gown" mentality still governs the university-society relationship. One only needs to study the history of Oxford University in the UK to taste the bitter experience that the university went through as it tried to co-exist alongside the residents of the town of Oxford. The feuds between the two communities became so bad that some disgusted students and a few of their teachers decided to flee Oxford. They pitched camp at Cambridge. In essence, the now famous Cambridge University was born out of the co-existence problem between Oxford University and the community, which had gone sour. Scholars of the origins, evolution and history of universities are well aware of the reasons why society tends to see universities in a negative light. Perhaps the origins of the university as we know it today has a lot to do with these

perceptions. We do know that, in the beginning, universities were not founded to serve the interests of society *per se*; that role came much later. Universities were exclusively communities of scholars, much like monks, whose preoccupation was to pursue knowledge and the truth for their own sake. Indeed, they were ivory towers of some sort. The pursuit of knowledge was for the aesthetic of the intellect, and not for the immediate application to the problems of society. If society derived benefits from these intellectual pursuits, it was usually coincidental to the real mission of the university.

In 1953, James Watson, an American and Francis Crick, discovered the three dimensional structure of Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid (DNA) molecule, dubbed “the secret of life”. Through this fundamental discovery, scientists had cracked the code of life, nature’s secret blueprint. The two young scientists toiled away in their laboratories at Cambridge University forgoing visits to the pub and Saturday cricket matches, both passionate pastimes of the English, just because of one intellectual aim – to unravel the structure of DNA. I doubt whether they had any inkling of the enormous benefits their fundamental discovery would bring to mankind. I am sure theirs was simply an intellectual pursuit for the sake of expanding the frontiers of knowledge.

Like all outstanding scientists, what the two young men could best hope for after publishing their groundbreaking discovery in the prestigious journal *Nature* in 1953, was a Nobel Prize, which they deserved and received. I do not even think it ever crossed their minds that what they had discovered would earn them a Nobel Prize. I am almost certain that they did not know that sooner than later; their discovery would be helping forensic experts all over the world to convict criminals who had committed some of the most hideous crimes of murder and rape, through DNA finger printing. In the pre-DNA finger printing days, some lucky criminals used to get off the hook for lack of sufficient evidence to secure a conviction. Now DNA has helped to solve difficult cases which would have ended up as closed case files, as well as provided proof of the paternity of children with disputed claims to fatherhood. Although many of the DNA spin-offs were not anticipated at the time the discovery was made, they have been of enormous benefits to mankind. In short, society has been the greatest beneficiary of much of the intellectual thinking that goes on behind closed doors at universities and this has been so for as long as universities have been in existence. However, the relationship between universities and the immediate communities in which they are situated has been and continues to be a contradictory co-existence. On the one hand, society regards people who have attended university as its intelligentsia; on the other hand, society continues to castigate universities as good for nothing institutions, as society expects universities to constantly justify their existence. In response, universities have been making a deliberate effort to be seen as institutions of relevance to society. Makerere has been one of such universities

which has come under constant attack for being irrelevant and unresponsive to the needs of society. It had to respond in some demonstrable way.

I am inclined to believe that it was the industrial revolution in the 19th Century Europe, and in particular in Victorian Britain, that catalysed the new kind of thinking which inspired the creation of what we can call community-oriented universities, a mission deeply rooted in service to society. What the upper class citizenry and the medieval universities of Europe regarded as trades, such as engineering, which could only be learnt from a master through apprenticeship, suddenly became respectable university disciplines in the new generation universities. The American land grant universities exemplify this concept very well. The idea was to make the university truly relevant to the community. From then on, the community would have a big voice in what the universities ought to teach and the expected standards of the graduates who come out of them. Suddenly, society realised it had a stake in what was going on inside the universities, because it was now bankrolling them. Public universities were drawing their income from taxpayers, so naturally, they had to behave like any public corporation. This in turn called for not only a change of mindset, but also change of curriculum orientation and a new relationship between the university and the community. In some countries, the political leadership had assumed a lot of say in who taught at a state-owned university, and also approved of what was taught there. State control had tightened the noose around public universities and phrases like “academic freedom” became mere rhetoric. Where state control was less pronounced, universities while maintaining much of their traditional mandate of generating and transmitting new knowledge, had to respond to the realities on the ground. They had to design new courses they believed suited the needs of society. Soon, we began to hear jargons, such as demand-driven courses, market-driven courses, tailor-made courses and a lot more. The universities were taking on a new dimension which, inevitably, led to a lot of soul searching among university academics. The third mandate of “service to community” was now sounding louder than ever before. The new thinking sometimes meant a painful break with the old and long cherished academic traditions. The writing was on the wall that, if universities did not embrace change but rather stuck to their old ways, they risked being totally irrelevant and producing graduates that nobody had use for or graduates who were obsolete before they graduated. In fact, this became more apparent in the late 1970s through to the 1980s as universities in Africa grappled with the kind of problems we encountered earlier on in this book. Certainly, Makerere was not ready to be written off as an irrelevant institution. The gown was ready to go to town.

As we know, Makerere had started as a simple Technical School but, over time, it evolved into a typical classical university. Much as it enjoyed an enviable reputation among other African universities, the public was increasingly

questioning the incidental benefits it offered to society. The ivory tower label was getting a lot harder to shake off. It had one of the best Medical Schools in sub-Saharan Africa, but rightly or wrongly, the fine doctors it was passing out were increasingly accused of being hospital-based. Its engineers too were described as excellent in theory, but mediocre in practice. What all this meant was that Makerere was an elitist institution and, like all classical universities, it was training graduates who kept a safe distance away from blue-collar jobs. A degree from Makerere had come to symbolise an escape from drudgery. The voices calling into question the relevance of Makerere as a public-funded university were growing louder.

For example, in January 1970, the then President Milton Obote set up a Visitation Committee chaired by Justice K.T. Faud, who at the time was head of the Law Development Centre, to inquire into the Makerere University College in view of the recommendation that on July 1, 1970 the college, like its sister colleges in Kenya and Tanzania, should become a separate national university. Number one on the list of terms of reference for the committee was a probe into the courses of study the college was offering and their applicability to the development and needs of Uganda and East Africa (at that time, the first East African Community was still in existence). Among the memoranda the Faud Committee received, the one from the college's students was very explicit on the issue of the college's usefulness to the country. The students expressed the view that all research undertaken at Makerere was irrelevant to Uganda's development. They blamed it partly on the expatriate staff that they believed had no stake in Uganda, but were dominating all the academic positions at the college. They concluded by advising that the national university that was coming into being should take immediate steps to redress this problem, lest it would be another ivory tower like the college it was replacing; the teaching and research had to reflect the aspirations of the people. This was not a picture to be proud of. It just set Makerere on a long and arduous transformation process that has continued up till today. However, the question was how should it be done?

The Faud Visitation Committee recommended that the new Makerere should be a different institution in academic character, outlook and role from Makerere University College, which was born out of the colonial era amidst capitalism and foreign domination. In other words, Makerere University, Kampala was to be a people-centred institution, with Ugandans constituting the bulk of its academic and administrative staff. Ugandans knew their problems and needs better, and were therefore best placed to solve them. That was how the argument went, back in 1970. Besides putting in place an independent Appointments Board to take care of the recruitment and to ensure that there was no slamming of doors on Ugandans qualified to teach at Makerere, as was the case when the management of the college was firmly in the hands of expatriates, the Government started

setting priorities for the university. The Faculty of Technology is a good illustration of the intentions of the Government in 1970. The name itself was a sign that, at Makerere, the faculty's role would not be limited to the narrow Engineering disciplines alone, but would be much broader. The duration of the Engineering courses in the new faculty would be a year longer than the course offered at Nairobi. A Nairobi BSc in Engineering was three years; the equivalent at Makerere was four years. The Government of Uganda wanted to train an all-round Engineer whose technical expertise went beyond the narrow confines of his or her specialist discipline. For instance, it was Government's desire that an Electrical Engineer should also have sufficient working knowledge of other similar disciplines like Civil and Mechanical Engineering and vice versa. Therefore, the first year was common to all. Specialisation was deferred to the second year of study. The first year was also meant to give the students hands-on experience of what the discipline entailed. Students spent much of the year on industrial training and on common courses like technical drawing. This is different from Nairobi, where specialisation began in the first year of study.

The consultants commissioned to advise the Government of Uganda on Engineering education at Makerere had proposed that Makerere should offer only two engineering qualifications instead of the traditional three offered at Nairobi. They recommended combining Electrical and Mechanical Engineering into a single Electromechanical degree course, while keeping Civil Engineering as a separate discipline. Although the Government had accepted the recommendation, it later dropped it, preferring the Nairobi mode. However, Government upheld the four-year degree period. This arrangement produced an interesting scenario. In 1970, Makerere University admitted the first batch of Engineering students to a four-year course. At the same time, under the Inter-University Committee of East Africa, several Ugandan students went to the University of Nairobi to study Engineering. After three years, the students who went to Nairobi graduated, while those who went to Makerere had a year to go. I recall people like Paul Sagala, James Higenyi and James Bukulu Sempa, among others from the University of Nairobi, joining the Faculty of Technology in 1973 as Special Assistants, while people like Stephen Kagoda were still students. Stephen Kagoda and his fellow Makerere pioneer Engineering students had to wait for a year before they joined their Nairobi-trained counterparts in the employment market. Incidentally, Stephen Kagoda holds a record of being the first student in the Faculty of Technology at Makerere, and the only one in the pioneer Engineering class of 1970 to have graduated with a First Class Honours BSc Engineering degree, specialising in Mechanical Engineering.

In a further bid to make Makerere University relevant to the needs of Uganda, the Government selected the priority areas it wanted the university to focus its attention on.

As an illustration, the Electrical Engineering degree course offered in the Faculty of Technology emphasised Power Engineering, because the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) needed such engineers. The other option was Telecommunications, because the Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Corporation required Telecommunications engineers and Makerere had to provide them. The two organisations were major Government parastatals. Civil Engineering put emphasis on highways purposely to provide the Ministry of Works with highway engineers. The other major option in Civil Engineering was Water Engineering for the Water Corporation. The Department of Political Science and Public Administration put emphasis on Public Administration to provide the Government with District Commissioners and, to some extent, Permanent Secretaries. It also provided some training for future Ugandan diplomats through its Diplomacy and International Relations programme. Most of the Law graduates from the Faculty of Law at Makerere joined the Attorney General's Chambers and could not be called to the bar of Uganda, until taking and passing a compulsory one-year postgraduate course offered at the Law Development Centre. The Centre is a stone throw away from the south of the university campus. It took over what used to be the Labour College, which Government set up specifically for this function. When Government realised the importance and economic potential of its forests, it set up a Department of Forestry to train foresters with expertise in the science and management of tropical rather than temperate forests. The department was set up in 1969/70, with funds and technical expertise provided by the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD). One of the criticisms the Government had not yet addressed before the coup of 1971 was the university's inability to train practising farmers and graduates with expertise in value addition and agro-processing. The majority of the graduates of the Faculty of Agriculture ended up as agricultural officers or research scientists in the various government-owned Agricultural Research Stations dotted all over the country.

Another Government initiative to make Makerere more useful to the nation and the region involved the setting up of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics in the Faculty of Science. Realising that statisticians were in short supply, not only in Uganda but throughout Africa, Uganda and other Anglophone countries in Africa requested the UNDP to set up an institute to train personnel for them in the disciplines of Statistics, National Accounting and Demography. The UNDP agreed to set up the institute at Makerere as a regional programme. It started with a BSc course that combined Statistics with Economics, offered in the Faculty of Science. However, in the mid-1970s, the institute initiated its own programmes; starting with the Bachelor of Statistics. At the same time, it became an autonomous academic unit with its own Faculty Board. Uganda's political turmoil had reduced the participation of other English-speaking African countries in the institute's programmes until recently. Although few countries sent students to the institute, its Advisory Council, which represents all member-countries

that signed the original charter of cooperation and which the Vice Chancellor of Makerere chairs, continued to hold its annual general meetings on the originally agreed rotational basis. After its liberation and independence in 1994, South Africa also signed the charter and became a member of the Advisory Council. South African students have been studying at the institute ever since. The annual Advisory Council meeting held in Cape Town in April 2002 was the last one I chaired as Vice Chancellor. In fact, these meetings went a long way to restore confidence in the university and institute and to reassure the Chief Statistical Officers in the member states that Uganda was once again safe for their students and the institute's academic standards were as good if not better than as before.

Besides these national and regional initiatives undertaken by the university and the Ugandan Government, there were other combined efforts at Makerere involving the three states that made up the East African Community – Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. There was the East African Institute for Social Research, a research-only unit in the college, mandated to research into transboundary social issues and problems. When the first East African Community collapsed in 1977, it became Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR). The three states also took stock of the public and institutional libraries throughout the region and how they were managed. Their findings indicated that East Africa had too few professionally-trained librarians and the few that were there had trained either on the job or abroad at a substantial cost. To rectify the situation, they decided to start the East African School of Librarianship at Makerere. Originally, the school offered a certificate, undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas in Librarianship and admission was open to all East Africans. In the late 1980s, the school had sufficiently matured and started a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) degree, followed by a Master of Science degree in Information Science. The University Council later changed the school's name to the East African School of Library and Information Science. In fact, the school is one of the surviving institutions set up during the first East African Community.

The transformation of the Department of Preventive Medicine into the Institute of Public Health was another attempt to make the university truly relevant to the needs of Uganda. One might be tempted to believe that the Government of the day was having too much say in the university's academic affairs, almost bordering on stifling academic freedom. To understand why the Government of Uganda took such a keen interest in what Makerere taught, one needs to understand Uganda's political landscape at that time. 1970 was the year of the "Nakivubo Pronouncement" and the "Move to the Left", which literally meant that Uganda had become a socialist state with a planned economy. The Government planned for the people and controlled the means of production. In this regard, the Government was the chief employer of Makerere's graduates. Therefore, it had to have a big say in the kind of graduate the university produced

and the curriculum the graduate had to follow. This was further emphasised by the Faud Visitation Committee report submitted to the Chancellor, Dr Apollo Milton Obote on June 23, 1970. The Committee recommended, among other things, that the new Makerere must be a Ugandan institution and the State must participate fully in its affairs. It had to be fully committed to the political, social and economic path Uganda had chosen to take. Academic freedom should not mean freedom from the Uganda Government control. It should not mean a creation of opportunity for foreign control of the staff, syllabus and research at Makerere.

When the dark days of the 1970s which lasted for almost a decade, dawned on the university, much of the development path Obote's Government had mapped out for the university was forgotten or abandoned altogether. Only the programmes that the university had already implemented survived. The only control Amin's Government relinquished was the top administration. Otherwise, there was hardly any significant new programme that came on stream during this period. However, Idi Amin kept urging the university to provide the nation with solutions to its problems, even when the conditions did not favour creative thinking. It was a point delivered home in the state of the nation speech which Amin delivered during the Independence Day celebrations of October 9, 1975 which was also the graduation day at Makerere. He told the staff, graduands and students of Makerere University that it was their duty as educated people to seek solutions to the nation's problems and implement Government policies. He even reminded the graduands that they had benefited from an expensive education that had prepared them to conduct original and relevant research as a way of helping the nation solve its problems. The period immediately following the overthrow of Idi Amin also saw very few new and innovative programmes. The university ran very much along the old traditional lines. Nevertheless, as the nation rid itself of the shackles of bad governance, the creative spirit returned to Makerere in leaps and bounds. One of the earliest innovative programmes of this period was the Master of Arts in Economic Policy and Planning in the former Department of Economics in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The Government had identified the need for economists with expertise and hands-on experience in planning and economic policy analysis. Makerere had not taught postgraduate courses and so could not be of much help to the Government. The Government had few options, and that was to hire expatriates to fill the gaps or send some of the few economists it had for specialised training abroad. For a while, it did both. Government economists went to the University of Bradford in the UK for training in these specialised fields. However, it was expensive and only few economists could go for the specialised training. Secondly, the training offered did not reflect the real Ugandan economic situation. President Museveni was strongly in favour of home-based training and, after

some discussions between the university and Government, the Department of Economics launched the MA programme. To kick-start and keep the programme running, the Uganda Government sought and obtained financial assistance and technical expertise in the form of professors from some development partners, namely the World Bank, the European Union and the UNDP. The university provided an old residential house on Pool Road for the programme. Besides the local university staff, other teaching staff came from Nigeria and the UK (University of East Anglia). Unfortunately, the Ministry of Public Service decided to stop the en masse sponsorship of graduate students at the university. The new Government policy required each Government department to identify skill gaps that required training at graduate level and decide how it would meet the cost of training from its own resources. At about the same time, donor funding also came to an end. Being the only taught graduate programme in the Department of Economics, there was fear that without new funding, it would be difficult to keep it running. To our pleasant surprise, this did not happen. Apparently, our fears were premature and unfounded. Many graduate students found a way of sponsoring themselves and the programme continued. Kibirige Mayanja, the university's long-serving Director of Planning and Development was one of the programme's pioneer graduates. This programme was the nucleus of the many good things that would happen later in the Department of Economics.



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## The Experience and Recollections from the Faculties, Schools, Institutes and Centres

### **Makerere's Institute of Economics: New Programmes and a Contested Divorce**

The Harare-based African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), had been sponsoring a Masters degree in Economics, which taught African Economics at postgraduate level to assist African governments improve economic policy management for a number of years. McGill University in Montreal, Canada was running the programme for the English speaking African countries on behalf of the ACBF. However, after training a number of African economists at the university for some time, the ACBF was convinced that it made sense to transfer the training to Africa. McGill was not only expensive, it had another disadvantage: students studied in an alien environment, divorced from the realities of African economic problems. This necessitated a search for suitable universities in Anglophone Africa which had the capacity to host the programme. Acting on behalf of the ACBF, McGill University undertook a survey of universities in Anglophone Africa and identified two promising ones which met most of the conditions on ACBF's checklist for hosting and servicing a regional programme of that kind. Earlier in 1996, Dr Apollinaire Ndurukwigira of the ACBF had visited Makerere to explore the possibility of Makerere participating in the new Economic Policy Management programme. On this particular visit, he said he was not making any commitments because McGill University was yet to undertake a detailed survey of a number of universities in Africa and, based on the findings, McGill University would advise the ACBF on the two most suitable universities which would host the programme. His was just an exploratory visit. His visit was followed with

that of Dr Jacques Katuala in 1997. At the time, ACBF had begun to support the Economic Policy Research Centre which was Jacques Katuala's main interest. Then in 1998, a delegation from McGill University, led by Professor Jan Jorgensen of McGill Business School, visited Makerere. After explaining the purpose of their visit and without promising anything, Professor Jorgensen requested to see the Head of the Department of Economics and the Dean of the Faculty of Commerce. The McGill delegation was interested in gathering as much data as possible on Makerere to be used in the evaluation of the university's strength and weakness during the selection process. Besides Makerere, they were due to visit several other universities in Africa, because as Professor Jorgensen pointed out, the selection of the two universities that would eventually host the programme on behalf of the ACBF was through a competitive process. At that time, they were just conducting the evaluation, and had no idea which universities would be selected. We had to wait until they had visited all the universities on their list. After the preliminaries, I decided to invite Dr John Ddumba Sentamu who was then the Head of the Department of Economics and Waswa Balunywa, Dean of Commerce, to meet the delegation from Canada for more technical discussions. A few days later, the delegation left.

Although I wished Makerere would be one of the two universities McGill would select to host the programme in Africa, I was not sure we were ready to run a continental programme. At the time, the Department of Economics and the Faculty of Commerce were housed on cramped premises. The Faculty of Commerce just had about one member of staff, who had a PhD from Eastern Europe. Frankly, I did not think Makerere stood a chance at all. Having visited it a few years before, I was aware that McGill was an extremely well-endowed university in Canada and, by comparison, I saw Makerere as one of the poorly resourced African universities in terms of human resources and infrastructure and therefore, in my opinion, a bit further down the McGill scale. Certainly, the evaluators would be looking for an African university with standards comparable to those at McGill University. I was convinced that such endowed universities in sub-Saharan Africa could only be found in South Africa. However, I decided to leave it at that and wait for the outcome. It was now a question of "wait and see". McGill and the ACBF took time to announce the outcome of the evaluation exercise and the final two universities were selected. Surprisingly, after a tough selection process, Makerere University and the University of Ghana at Legon were the two which the evaluators had selected to host the MAEPM for English-speaking Africa. The University of Yaoundé in Cameroon and the University of Abidjan, Cocody in Ivory Coast had been chosen to host the programme for Francophone Africa, as was previously offered at CERDI, University of Clermont Faurand in France.

Although the news was worth celebrating, I was still curious to know how we had managed to beat off the competition in spite of the problems. Then I

remembered the old African adage: “the gods help those who help themselves”. Since the fall of Idi Amin, Makerere had been busy bootstrapping itself out of its problems and with a reasonable degree of success. Indeed, we learnt that Makerere won the selection bid, because the Canadian team had discovered that it was one of the few universities in Africa outside South Africa which was implementing serious internal reforms. That had impressed the evaluators and helped to tip the balance in Makerere’s favour. I was told that many universities the Canadian delegation had visited were talking about reforms, but with nothing concrete translated into action. Dr Apollinaire Ndurukwigira of the ACBF, who had also visited a few years earlier and was in charge of institutional evaluation, told me that Makerere was selected not because it had superb facilities, but because of its innovativeness and clear vision.

After going through all the procedures as laid down by Senate and Council, the Department of Economics launched the programme in 1998. Besides the traditional MA by thesis, the MAEPM was the second taught Masters degree in the department and had to be run as a joint programme with the Faculty of Commerce, which later became Makerere University Business School. The Department of Economics would teach all the Economics courses, while the Faculty of Commerce would handle the Management modules. A few months later, I was invited to Harare to sign the necessary protocols with the Executive Secretary of the ACBF after which we would formally launch the new programme. The first time I was invited, I could not go. So, I asked Professor Luboobi and Dr John Ddumba Sentamu to stand in for me. On that occasion, the ceremony was cancelled at the last moment. The next time when the ACBF was ready to sign the protocols, I flew to Harare with John Ddumba Sentamu. The Executive Secretary, Dr Soumana Sako, signed on behalf of the ACBF and I signed on behalf of Makerere University.

As these developments were taking place, the Department of Economics, then one of the largest departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences, requested Senate and University Council to upgrade it to an autonomous Institute of Economics. As expected, there was uproar in the faculty; but after protracted discussions and several meetings, the faculty Board of Social Sciences agreed to grant the department the autonomy and let go. This in effect meant that the Department of Economics was breaking away from Social Sciences. The University Senate had no difficulty endorsing the proposal from the Social Sciences Department. The University Council approved the transformation of the department into an autonomous Institute of Economics in the 2000/2001 academic year, starting with three departments: Economic Theory and Analysis; Development Economics; Applied Economics (and an Economic Research Bureau). Dr John Ddumba Ssentamu had the honour of being the institute’s pioneer Director. Unfortunately, the new institute had no home of its own. As a department, it

occupied a lot of space in the old Social Sciences building and had a few offices in the new Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) building. Now that it was an autonomous unit, the Faculty of Social Science wanted the institute to vacate all the space of the defunct Department of Economics in the Social Sciences buildings. The institute counter-argued that all assets in the faculty were the property of all departments and if the new Institute of Economics had to vacate the buildings, the Faculty of Social Sciences was under obligation to compensate it for the lost space. The Dean of Social Sciences, Dr Joy Kwesiga felt the issue had gone beyond her and decided to refer it to me.

Right from the beginning, I knew I was handling a hot potato I was least prepared for. In an attempt to douse the tempers and find an amicable solution, or at least a reasonable compromise, I held several meetings with all parties involved and at one point, I had reason to believe we had resolved the problem. I was disappointed when I continued to receive complaints of non-compliance with the agreed position. The compromise we had struck required the Institute of Economics to surrender some offices that belonged to the defunct Department of Economics in exchange for others on the different floors of the two Social Sciences buildings. There was also a growing but understandable feeling amongst members of staff that their faculty was shrinking in size and being marginalised. Over the years, it had lost the Law Department – the forerunner to the present Faculty of Law; the Department of Commerce, which became the Faculty of Commerce and later the Business School; and now one of its largest departments was also breaking away. The consolation we offered them was that what was happening was not unique to their faculty. Other faculties too, such as the Faculty of Science, were in the same situation. They too had lost units which, in the course of time, became autonomous institutes or even new Faculties. Moreover, we were of the view that what was happening in the Faculty of Social Sciences was a healthy and normal development. It was an inevitable progression that existing Faculties would continue to nurture new departments and that even Faculties would later break away and become autonomous units.

The challenge the Faculty of Social Sciences was facing was to be able to come up with new programmes and units to beef up the remaining stock of departments. However, I soon realised that my efforts were not yielding results. I asked the University Secretary, Avitus Tibarimbasa, to take over. Unfortunately, he too was drawing blanks. His many visits to the Faculty of Social Sciences were not yielding results either. It began to appear that there was something we were missing. Another way of solving the problem had to be found. We set up a small committee, chaired by Professor Livingstone Luboobi, to probe further into the dispute that was threatening to degenerate into an intractable dispute between the faculty and the young Institute of Economics and recommend new approaches to solve the problem of asset sharing. Fortunately, the Luboobi Committee was able

to sort out all the problems. The Faculty of Social Sciences and MUIE went their separate ways, having agreed to a new formula of sharing assets.

Besides the revenue accruing to the institute and the university from the World Bank scholarships for the MAEPM students who came from all over Africa, the ACBF set aside funds for the renovation of the small old bungalow on Pool Road, next to the Economic Policy Research Centre, which had been home for the MA in Economic Policy and Planning. During the renovation, some rooms were expanded to create more space for a Resource Centre and study rooms. The old tin roof was replaced with red burnt clay tiles. This small old house, which was once a staff residence served as the first home for the young institute. When the ACBF evaluated the programme in 2002, the assessors noted good progress and recommended further funding, which ACBF accepted. To formalise the new phase agreement, Dr Ddumba Sentamu and I had to travel to Harare and to Abidjan. The Abidjan meeting, held in the premises of the African Development Bank, brought all four universities participating in the programme together for the first time. As it turned out, Makerere had edged ahead in a few aspects of the programme, in particular the implementation of the ICT component of the programme. I was happy for my young institute. Sadly, that was the last meeting I attended at the African Development Bank before it moved to Accra, Ghana and finally Tunis, a change prompted by the political turmoil and security risks in Cote d'Ivoire at the time. Indeed, the new institute made tremendous progress in its formative year, giving the impression that it had always been there. One of its earlier and enthusiastic supporters was the Academic Registrar, Dr Mukwanason Hyuha, who used to teach there on a part-time basis. No doubt, one can attribute the impressive progress the institute achieved so soon after its establishment to Dr Ddumba's good leadership and his team of well-seasoned economists, including the Ivy League trained, Dr Germina Semwogerere.

In addition to the two graduate programmes, the MAEPP and the MAEPM, the institute introduced its own undergraduate degree; the Bachelor of Arts in Economics, launched in 2003. Besides these developments, the Institute of Economics is one of the academic units at Makerere credited for pioneering a new PhD programme similar to the American system, which combined taught courses with a thesis. Up until then, a Makerere PhD was a research-only degree. A student carried out research under the guidance of the supervisor, wrote a thesis and submitted it for examination. The thesis was subjected to internal and external examination and a viva voce – the oral defence. Before the 1980s, the viva voce was not part of the examination. The external examiners' report was final. The new approach pioneered by the institute required a student to study a number courses in the first two years (the first four semesters), pass the written examinations and write a comprehensive examination before proceeding to the thesis stage. The thesis would take a minimum of two years to complete.

Therefore, the minimum duration for this type of PhD is four years instead of the usual three. A PhD combining taught courses and research was a break from the old tradition.

The Institute of Economics had made such an impressive progress in the first four years of its existence to the extent that, shortly before my departure in 2004, it applied for and was granted the status of the Faculty of Economics and Management. The change in status from an institute to a faculty came with another postgraduate degree: the Master of Arts in Economics, a new addition to the growing number of postgraduate degrees. One of the interesting and innovative features of this programme was the introduction of two options, A and B. Option A required students to write a full-blown dissertation in their second year of study. Students opting for Option B took more courses, followed by a short research paper. Traditionally a full-blown dissertation was always a must for all Masters degrees at Makerere. This meant that, after the taught courses, a student spent a whole year or longer working on the dissertation. Many students failed to complete their degrees within the stipulated two years, because they spent a lot of time writing the dissertation. Even after submitting the dissertation, the examination would take ages to complete. In fact, it was not uncommon for students to spend four years or longer on a two-year programme, simply because they failed to finish their dissertations on time; and many students became time barred and also lost their sponsorship. Under Option B, it was possible for a student to finish a Masters degree in less than two years. The University Senate embraced the change and recommended it to the University Council for approval. Council's approval came pretty fast. The Business School also adopted this approach for its Master of Business Administration and for a few other Masters degrees offered there. Besides its own programmes, the institute continued to service many faculties, other institutes and departments where the study of Economics was a requirement. As Faculty of Economics and Management, it had also taken on an additional responsibility of servicing the external Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) degree programme, in conjunction with the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (IACE). Initially, the Business School was servicing the degree programme. However, the persistent wrangling between the Business School and IACE necessitated a change. As expected, the Business School authorities were not happy to see the external BCom taken away from them. In fact, they put up a spirited fight but all was in vain. The confusion had gone on for too long and everyone was fed up.

At Makerere, Economics is one of the most popular disciplines amongst the social sciences. Therefore, the Institute of Economics never had shortage of good and eager students at both undergraduate and graduate level. This, coupled with frugal financial management, enabled the institute to save enough money to put up a modern building on the northern side of its original home on Pool Road,

next to the defunct Uganda Commercial Bank building left uncompleted since the 1978/79 liberation war. The new building which now houses the Faculty of Economics and Management was completed shortly after I had retired. As the construction of the new building progressed, I took nearly all Deans and Directors on a tour of eleven South African universities. Although we were criticised for undertaking what was considered an expensive tour; in my view, we gained a wealth of experience out of this study tour. Suffice it to mention here, we discovered that in most universities, Economics and Management were combined under one faculty. The University of Pretoria was the best example of this combination. Given the difficulties and ambiguities we were experiencing with the new Act in relation to the Business School, which under the new Law had become an independent entity, we wondered whether we could borrow from the South African experience. Dr Dsdumba Sentamu and his staff decided to have a go at it. By early 2004, they were ready to present their proposal for a Faculty of Economics and Management, in place of the Institute of Economics, to Senate and the University Council. At the time, Professor Epelu Opio chaired most of the Senate sessions that scrutinised and passed proposals for new programmes and new academic units, and made recommendations to the University Council.

Amazingly, in a space of slightly over four years, the Institute of Economics, now the Faculty of Economics and Management, had acquired its own modern and beautiful buildings and an impressive list of flourishing academic programmes, one of them servicing the Anglophone parts of Africa. It was little wonder that when time came for staff to choose a Dean for their new faculty, Dr Ddumba Sentamu, their busy bee Director, was the obvious choice. Hard work, wit on the part of the Institute Director and his staff, as well as the new measures we had introduced to reduce the red tape and boost efficiency, paid off handsomely. As a matter of fact, decision-making at Senate and Council was now very fast, so much so that the decision to transform the institute into a faculty was made in the wink of an eye. It also meant that the people responsible for preparing and producing the necessary documentation were doing a thorough professional job. Additionally, the management of the external BCom degree in conjunction with the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education became a lot easier, despite the protests from the Business School. My unreserved salutations to all who made it possible.

### **Faculty of Technology – Source of Uganda's Engineers and all Technical Professionals**

Innovation at Makerere was not the exclusive preserve of the old Department of Economics. The Faculty of Technology too was busy toying with new ideas. The major handicap the faculty faced was space. As we saw earlier, the faculty was one of the casualties of the misrule Uganda had to endure for many years. In

place of the three buildings planned for the faculty in 1969, only the Mechanical Engineering building had been constructed; moreover, it was poorly completed. All disciplines offered in the faculty were crammed under one small building. However, the handicap did not deter members of staff there to start thinking creatively. Since it opened its doors to a few pioneer students in 1970, the faculty had no graduate degree programmes in any of the three engineering disciplines. The only graduate programme in the faculty offered was the Master of Physical Panning, launched in 1992 with the assistance of the German Government through its technical cooperation agency – GTZ. In 1998 or thereabout, during one of those casual talks we used to engage in whenever we met, Dr James Higenyi, who was then Dean of the faculty hinted me that in spite of the limitations of space and equipment, he thought the faculty had come of age, therefore, the faculty had to start a few graduate programmes in Engineering. I remember telling him that it was a brilliant idea, which in my view was long overdue. James Higenyi was one of the colleagues whose company I enjoyed. He had an easy-going personality I really liked, so we used to share jokes quite often. Apparently, by the time he revealed his ideas to me, they had already gone far with the preparations to mount a two-year course work and dissertation in Master of Engineering (MEng) degree which all the three Engineering disciplines of Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering could offer. It was a professionally oriented degree and the target group was essentially engineers with working experience in the field. It was designed as a terminal degree, meaning that ordinarily, the holder of this degree would not be expected to go on to the PhD. In a way, it was similar to most MEng degrees offered by some universities in the USA. Its main thrust was upgrading and updating the technical and professional knowledge of practising engineers, with emphasis on areas relevant to the local industry. Alongside the MEng degree, the faculty also designed a Master of Science in Engineering for the more academically inclined and younger engineers. The Master of Science was also offered in all three Engineering disciplines. The aim was to prepare students who wished to pursue further studies to the doctoral degree level. The main target group was Engineering graduates, who might have no working experience, but with proven academic potential that would ordinarily qualify for the university's staff development programme, if they possessed a first or second-class upper division honours Bachelor's degree. In short, the MSc was more academically biased than the MEng. As luck would have it, the two degree programmes were approved before James Higenyi stepped down as Dean, or shortly thereafter. For the first time, the Faculty of Technology was offering graduate degrees in its core disciplines.

By the time I came back to Makerere in 1993, the Departments of Architecture and Surveying, which were launched during Professors Wandira and Kirya's administrations – both offshoots of the Department of Civil Engineering – were now well established departments in the faculty. Against all odds, the

young Department of Architecture achieved an incredible feat in 1999 when it was accredited by the Commonwealth Association of Architects, making its degrees in Architecture recognisable by the Royal Institute of British Architects, an achievement bestowed on very few schools of Architecture outside the UK. However, like the Engineering Departments, none of them was running a graduate programme. In 2001, the Department of Architecture took a bold step and introduced a Master of Architecture degree programme, initially offered in the evenings. The new programme was also a combination of course work and dissertation. In addition, the department was instrumental in the designing and teaching of an interesting joint Master of Architecture degree involving several universities in the East and Southern Africa region, appropriately dubbed the “bandwagon march”.

Besides Makerere University, the other universities participating in the programme were the Universities of Nairobi, Zimbabwe, Cape Town and Dar es Salaam. The novelty of the programme lay in the fact that, while students registered at their home universities where they also received their degrees at the end of the course, they were required to take modules offered by all universities participating in the programme and pass them. The modules offered at each university depended on the university’s assessed strength. In effect, students hopped from one university to another until the rotation was complete. At Makerere, the word “bandwagon” connoted the umbrella times of short-lived President Godfrey Binaisa. We were accustomed to the use of the word “bandwagon” in a colloquial and political sense. This was the first time I had heard it applied to an academic programme. The funding which came from NORAD guaranteed the success of the programme. Additionally, the fact that our young Department of Architecture was able to participate in a trans-regional programme of this nature so effectively was reason enough to celebrate. At last, Dr Banabas Nawangwe’s hard work was paying off. Dr Nawangwe was the founding head of the Department of Architecture at Makerere and, rightly so, his colleagues in the faculty recognised his excellent leadership qualities and elected him Dean of the Faculty of Technology in 2003, the first non-engineer to head the Faculty of Technology. He had taken over from Dr Badru Kiggundu, a USA trained civil engineer with a PhD. At last, the faculty was making good progress to the extent that even we in the university administration were equally impressed by the turnaround the faculty had registered in a relatively short time.

Dr Kiggundu had returned from America where he had spent many years as a student and joined the acutely under-staffed Department of Civil Engineering when I was still at Kyambogo in the early 1990s. Those were the days when civil engineers were in extremely high demand in Uganda. Then the country was going through an unprecedented construction boom and the construction companies needed every civil engineer they could find. The department had a hard time

recruiting and retaining staff. Even its longest serving head, Engineer Senfuma, had left to set up a consultancy company of his own. However, Dr Kiggundu's leadership ability was evident quite early. When the time came to elect a new head, his colleagues decided to entrust the leadership of their struggling department to him. In a relatively short time, Kiggundu had managed to recruit a few more members of staff. Those who had joined the department as teaching assistants started moving up. Other members of staff with the necessary requirements were gaining promotion to higher academic ranks within the department. In due course, Dr Kiggundu too was promoted to the deserved rank of Associate Professor of Civil Engineering. Interestingly, the Department of Civil Engineering was fortunate to have had the first female member of staff, Dr Maimuna Nalubega. She too had risen through the ranks during Kiggundu's time. She had gone on to do a PhD at the Institute for Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering based in Delft, The Netherlands. When she returned in 2003, a World Bank-funded project was looking for a well-qualified engineer. Fortunately for her and unfortunately for us, she was the World Bank's choice, although we regarded her as a role model for encouraging girls to choose Engineering careers, hitherto considered a male reserve. She however left on the understanding that in her spare time, she would continue helping the department with its graduate programmes and supervising PhD students.

Besides Kiggundu and Nalubega, the Department of Civil Engineering, which was on the brink of closure because of staff shortage, was now boasting of a strong staff force. Among the new faces were Dr Ngirane-Katashaya at the rank of Associate Professor; Dr Tony Kerali, an old student of the department who, after graduation in the late 1970s worked with the university's Estates and Works Department. He had been acting as University Engineer for some time and a beneficiary of the European Union's Human Resources Development Programme at Makerere, which began in the late 1980s. After taking an MSc in Construction Management, he had gone on to take a PhD at the University of Warwick in the UK and, on return to Makerere, he decided to return to his old department as a lecturer. Dr Apolo Musoke (now deceased), one of the pioneer students when the department opened in 1970 had also come back from the University of Nairobi where he had been before going to Italy for his PhD. Unfortunately, we lost him after a protracted illness. Other new colleagues I do recall joining or re-joining the department included Engineer Mujagumbya, a passionate Rotarian and one of the few members of staff hailing from the Ssesse Islands of Lake Victoria. Dr Kiggundu had also once identified a brilliant young man by the name of Tindiwensi, who had a first class. After his MSc at the University of Reading in the UK, Kiggundu was able to secure a PhD scholarship for him under the collaborative linkage between Makerere University and the Norwegian Institute of Technology, University of Trondheim, which later became the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. After his PhD at the University of Leeds

in the UK, the young man found the temptation of a lucrative lecturing job at one of the British universities hard to resist. Despite his good intentions and promises to keep coming back during his vacations to teach a few courses, we had to admit that he was one of the brains we had lost to the developed world. There was also the young Engineer Rugumayo, the son of Professor Edward Rugumayo who was chairman of the National Consultative Council during the UNLF days and later became Uganda's Ambassador to South Africa and a senior Minister in President Museveni's Government. The young Rugumayo was then in charge of the Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Education and Sports, but was able to teach part-time in the department and supervise students' projects. The department was once again ticking. Dr Ngirane-Katushaya went on to become one of the two Deputy Deans when Kiggundu was Dean.

The Department of Electrical Engineering too was celebrating the achievements of Dorothy Kabagaaju, the first female in the department to obtain a first class honours BSc degree in Electrical Engineering at Makerere, and who had also gone further to obtain a Masters degree in the USA and a PhD at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. There is an old saying, "like father like son"; but in the case of Dorothy, it was a case of "like father like daughter" and "like mother like daughter". Dorothy's father, Professor Patrick Rubaihayo of the Department of Crop Science, is a brilliant geneticist and a successful plant breeder. He had pioneered the introduction and application of the Science of Biotechnology at Makerere and in Uganda. He had done a lot of research on bananas. In fact, I have some of Professor Rubaihayo's improved banana cultivars in my banana garden. Her mother, Elizabeth Rubaihayo (now deceased) was also a successful plant breeder at Kawanda Research Institute, where she worked as a research scientist and Director of the institute for many years. Her greatest achievement as a crop breeder was the Kawanda Composite, an extremely high yielding maize variety. Most of the maize varieties introduced later were essentially improvements on her composite. I was privileged, though remotely, to have helped Dorothy polish her A-level Chemistry when she was at high school during my moonlighting days. The department had been fortunate to have had her among its rank and file.

When James Higenyi's term expired, the faculty once again faced the challenge of identifying a person with the kind of leadership qualities required of a Dean. There were several potential candidates, but Dr Kiggundu emerged the most popular choice. Understandably so, Kiggundu was reluctant to accept the deanship, arguing that he had a lot of unfinished business in the department where he was serving as head. He wanted to continue building up the department until his term expired. However, a bit of persuasion did the trick. In addition, the fact that Dr Jackson Mwakali, who was replacing him as Head of Department, was equally competent allayed his worst fears. So, he accepted the new challenge. Dr Badru Kiggundu took over from another US-trained mechanical engineer

with a PhD, James Higenyi, one of the longest serving Faculty of Technology Deans. Although Dr Kiggundu's deanship did not last long, cut short by his appointment as the Chairman of Uganda's Electoral Commission, he clearly demonstrated that he was indeed a capable leader, even within that short space of time.

Besides consolidating what his predecessor had started, Dr Kiggundu initiated new and interesting developments. The most notable was the Appropriate Technology Centre, appropriately built with low-cost interlocking bricks developed by Dr Moses Musaazi of the Department of Electrical Engineering, who also served as its first Director. The aim of building the Centre was to identify and develop innovative appropriate technologies applicable to the African situation. In fact, Dr Musaazi has been the brain behind most of the appropriate technology initiatives in the faculty. In essence, the idea behind those initiatives was to help improve the living standards of the rural communities, using low cost technology. Kiggundu had proved to be a good team builder and during his time, the faculty received funding from Sida/SAREC of Sweden to support research and PhD training. Badru Kiggundu was one of the Makerere people in the programme, who was also instrumental in the establishment of what turned out to be a very productive collaborative linkage between the Faculty of Technology and the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. It was sad to see him go, but like Dr Nalubega, he too promised to continue supervising his PhD students.

When Badru Kiggundu left for a new job as Chairman of the Electoral Commission, the immediate task was not only to find a suitable replacement, but also to ensure that the momentum for change and innovation, which had begun under him and earlier under James Higenyi, was sustained. For once since its inception in 1970, the faculty decided to choose a non-engineer as Kiggundu's replacement. In 2003, Dr Barnabas Nawangwe, an architect, was unanimously elected as the new Dean of Technology. Although a lot had been done by his predecessors in an effort to revitalise the faculty, a lot still remained to be done. The new Dean was, therefore, starting the term with a plate full of problems to fix – the most nagging among which was space and equipment.

Africa suffers from a serious shortage of skilled professionals in the key technical fields like Engineering. To aggravate the bad situation further, the capacity to train these professionals at local universities faces severe limitations. Technical disciplines like Engineering are naturally expensive, mainly on the account of the costly inputs they require. Moreover, given the level of funding most African public universities get from their national governments, few universities in sub-Saharan Africa, perhaps with the exception of South Africa, are able to train technical professionals like engineers to the highest standards possible – standards that many employers and professional bodies demand – simply because the necessary inputs are missing. Most of the equipment in the majority of African

universities is either broken down or obsolete. As an example, imagine a student of Electrical Engineering working with an old analogue cathode ray oscilloscope in the age of digital circuitry. Borrowing a leaf from one of my professors during my undergraduate days at Makerere used the expression “as every school boy knows” quite frequently. I want to borrow a leaf from him and say the same thing here; that as “every school boy knows, a university can have the brightest and best qualified Engineering professors, but without the right supporting infrastructure, at best they can only teach excellent theory”.

Technical disciplines, being practical oriented, requires a good balance of both theory and practice for the benefit of the students. As Vice Chancellor, I learnt from first-hand experience how frustrating it was to find money to buy new equipment and consumables for the Faculty of Technology. Looking for money in a situation where Government did not provide for a meaningful capital budget made the task much harder. However, some relief came with the introduction of the Private Student Scheme. From time to time, we could make some savings with which it was possible to buy a few pieces of equipment. But the money from this source was so small that most of the costly equipment was out of reach. Donors used to chip in too, but it was never enough. Still, we could not afford all the expensive equipment needed for good research and teaching. Certainly, Barnabas Nawangwe was quite familiar with the problems of a poorly resourced faculty. He also knew that the problem of poorly equipped laboratories and inadequate space for teaching and offices had no quick solutions. However, the big asset the new Dean inherited was the high quality of staff. Through vigorous staff development over the years, the Faculty of Technology was able to build up a superb staff in most of the disciplines. Later, we shall see how the new Dean tried to address the problem of space and equipment.

As we grappled with the problem of equipment and space, it was sad to see some of the best trained staff leave the faculty. The Department of Electrical Engineering came off worst, as both young and old members of staff started leaving for better paying jobs. The new telecommunication companies were relentlessly recruiting good electrical engineers. Since these companies offered better and far more competitive salaries than Makerere, they had no problem luring away our staff. While the younger staff members were leaving the department, some senior ones too were edging out. Dr Vincent Kasangaki, an old timer who had weathered the storms of the bad times, save for a stint at Boston, USA for his PhD and who had risen to the rank of Associate Professor was among the senior staff I was so sad to see leave. The Uganda Communication Commission appointed him Principal of its institute at Nakawa. I was helpless to stop him, for the simple fact that in terms of competitive salaries, the university fared badly. I guess he was one of the people getting tired of voluntarism. However, to be fair to him, he had made his contribution and perhaps it was the right time for him to move

on. As the staff numbers nose-dived, Dr Eriab Lugujjo, another veteran who had returned to Makerere in the 1970s with a PhD from the California Institute of Technology, and was now Head of Department, was constantly reminding me about the deteriorating staffing situation in his department. The department was on the verge of closing. I could only console him by assuring him that I was aware of the problem and I was doing everything possible to find a solution. In the interim, I kept asking him to look for part-time lecturers. I remember making a report to the Appointments Board about the poor staffing situation in Electrical Engineering. One member of the Board who was once a Head of Department in the same faculty assured me that what was happening in the Department of Electrical Engineering was a passing phase, and that there was no cause for alarm. Sooner than later, the market would be saturated and the exodus would come to an end. He had seen the same thing happen in Civil Engineering some years before. It turned out that in the interim, the solution was to recruit more part-time staff, if he could find the suitable people. As luck would have it, when Ing Kaluuba was Head of Department, we had recruited a Brazilian Electrical Engineer, Dr De Silva, a specialist in Power Engineering. He was a badly needed relief. In addition, there were still some strong pillars left: Eriab Lugujjo, Moses Musaaazi, Ing Kaluuba, Dan Nsubuga-Mubiru, P. Mugisha and T. Wanyama, to mention a few. The department limped on with younger members of staff under training.

Shortly before I left Makerere, the faculty launched a series of new undergraduate programmes in Quantity Surveying, Telecommunications Engineering, Land Economics and Construction Management. Since the collapse of the University of East Africa in 1970, Uganda had no local institution training professionals in these specialised technical fields, yet the demand for them was steadily growing. The university had to respond to this demand. With the coming of the cellular phone companies and Internet service providers in the country in the mid-1990s, telecommunication was a rapidly growing industry in Uganda, which required well-trained telecommunication engineers. The first admission to the new programmes commenced in the 2004/05 academic year.

### **Faculty of Agriculture – Championing Uganda’s Green Revolution**

What was the link between the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Technology at Makerere? The answer is the Department of Agricultural Engineering. Although the department had been in existence long before the Faculty of Technology, the two had never run a joint programme. The first attempt to connect the Department of Agricultural Engineering and the Faculty of Technology was in the late 1970s. Professor John Mugerwa (now deceased), then Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, took an unusual step. He decided to recruit a few young and brilliant engineers, mainly mechanical

engineers who had just graduated from the Faculty of Technology, to beef up the staff of the Department of Agricultural Engineering. It was unusual at the time, but it was a brilliant innovation. Agricultural Engineering had advanced to a level that required specialists in machinery and Water Engineering, among others. After the departure of legends such as Professor Boschhoff and other expatriates in the staff exodus of 1972-73, the Department of Agricultural Engineering lost almost all its senior academic staff. It was left to Dr Ouma, Dr Hudson Rugumayo (now deceased), Ing Kayima, who had trained at the Technion in Israel, Zachary Olum and one or two others, all still in junior positions to hold the fort. Later, Levi Kasisira joined them. These young men kept the department afloat.

Unfortunately, Kayima left to start his own business, Ouma died and Zachary Olum joined politics. Once again, members of staff in the Department of Agricultural Engineering were on their way down. Professor Mugerwa had to come up with innovative ways of rescuing the department from imminent closure. Dr Josephat Sentongo Kibalama, (now deceased) was one of the young engineers who crossed over from Technology to Agriculture. He joined the Department of Agricultural Engineering as a Special Assistant and, true to Professor Mugerwa's promise, a scholarship was found for him to pursue a Masters degree in Australia. In a way, the Masters degree was also a conversion course for him from mainstream Mechanical Engineering to Agricultural Engineering. Unlike some of his colleagues who went abroad to study on scholarships the university had solicited for them and never came back, Sentongo Kibalama returned to Makerere and served as a lecturer. A few years later, he was on his way again, this time to the Ohio State University in the USA for a PhD in Farm Power. He had no difficulty completing his degree on time. Like the first time, as soon as he completed his PhD, he was home bound and back to his adopted department. That was extraordinary patriotism in extraordinary circumstances! After the PhD, he had every conceivable opportunity to stay there and live a comfortable life as many had done. Instead, he chose home and home is where he died a few years later in the prime of his life. It was a big loss to his department and to the university as a whole. In his relatively short life, he had proved himself an asset to the university.

While Sentongo Kibalama was studying in the USA, his former colleague and Head of Department, Dr Hudson Rugumayo, died. After Rugumayo's death, Levi Kasisira took over as Head of Department, but only in an acting capacity, because at the time he was not yet a Senior Lecturer. Fortunately, by the time Sentongo Kibalama returned from the USA, he had accumulated enough publications to qualify for promotion to Senior Lecturer. Following his promotion, and to allow Levi Kasisira to go for his PhD at University of Pretoria in South Africa, he took over the headship of the department, first in an acting capacity until he was later confirmed by the Appointments Board as substantive Head of the Department. As if he was remembering his roots in the Faculty of Technology, he introduced

new reforms in the undergraduate curriculum which, among other things, required students of Agricultural Engineering to spend part of the first two years in the Faculty of Technology. At the same time, the department introduced a full-blown four-year BSc degree programme in Agricultural Engineering, one of the new degree programmes in the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry for many years. Until then, Agricultural Engineering had been studied as one of the components of the BSc degree in Agriculture. Besides re-organising the curriculum and course structure, Dr Kibalama spent a great deal of his time on staff recruitment and development. He recruited most of the young staff now running the department.

Besides devoting most of his time on his academic and administrative responsibilities, Dr Kibalama had a rare sense of concern for his colleagues and their welfare. As a representative of the academic staff on the University Council, he introduced several imaginative schemes to help staff make a meaningful career in an institution which lacked resources to pay its staff decent wages. One such scheme was an overdraft facility arranged with the defunct Uganda Commercial Bank, where Makerere University staff could access funds on easy terms. He negotiated the facility together with the university administration. It was open to all university employees, regardless of rank and position, but the size of the overdraft depended on one's salary. For example, whereas the Vice Chancellor was eligible for an overdraft facility of up to six million shillings (the equivalent of some three thousand dollars at a time), a tea girl could only overdraw her account up to a maximum of three hundred thousand shillings (the equivalent of about two hundred dollars). The collateral was a university's guarantee that it would continue to credit the borrower's salary into his or her account in the Bank. In other words, only those university employees with accounts at the Uganda Commercial Bank, Makerere University Branch, qualified for the overdraft facility. Soon, other banks in town were emulating this innovative scheme.

The scheme came in handy and helped many members of staff, including me, weather some severe financial storms. In fact, several members of staff used the facility to build their own houses and pay their children's school fees on time. The scheme had no limit on the number of times one could borrow. As soon as you cleared the last overdraft, you were free to take another. The bank had no difficulty recovering its money, because the university underwrote the facility. Sadly, as I later learnt, Dr Kibalama never made much use of the scheme he brokered. Perhaps, he was too busy helping others and forgot about himself! Besides serving as Head of Department, his colleagues elected him the second Deputy Dean of the faculty, a position he held until his untimely death from cardio complications in November 2003.

The Agricultural Science Department was initially small and shoved into the Faculty of Science until visionary and energetic Professor Fergus Brunswick

Wilson turned it into a full-fledged and respectable Faculty of Agriculture in 1952 and in the process, became its first Dean. The new faculty started teaching courses leading to a BSc degree in Agriculture of the University of London. In the same year, the faculty acquired a 330 acre run down farm at Kabanyolo, next to Gayaza High School, some 13 kilometres north of Kampala, from a retired Russian tin miner who had bought it from a company called Mengo Planters. As a young man, my father worked for this company in the 1920s before he left for Nairobi to join the East African Railways. Professor Wilson personally negotiated the purchase of the farm and turned it into a modern university teaching farm. Besides teaching Agriculture, Professor Wilson indulged in many pastime pursuits, one of which was tree planting. He planted the famous Pitanga Cherry hedge that graces the front of the university's Main Building, the seat of the university administration. He also planted many trees and some of them can still be seen all over the university campus at Makerere today. He is also credited for having successfully lobbied the three respective Governors of the East African countries of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda to provide funds for a modern building for the Faculty of Agriculture, which was opened by the Queen Mother in 1958. That building is the current Faculty of Agriculture housing the offices of the Dean. The extension at the back came later. Initially, Agricultural Science was offered as a certificate course and later upgraded to a diploma, until it became one of the few professional courses at Makerere that was offered as a degree programme of the University of London, under Professor Wilson.

As I have pointed out before, Makerere has over the years produced several generations of excellent agriculturists, who have gone on to serve as research scientists and agricultural officers, while others branched out into other fields where they equally made successful careers. However, the persistent criticism that the faculty had failed to produce professional farmers, or people with the technical and managerial expertise to start up agro-processing industries, remained a serious concern which had to be addressed. The critics were always quick to point out that, despite the scores of agriculturalists coming out of the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere every year, Uganda continued to export unprocessed agricultural commodities, such as coffee, with no value addition. Country-wide, the majority of farmers were still practising subsistence farming. President Museveni too expressed similar sentiments. His concern was that he saw very few, if any at all, full-time farmers with degrees in Agriculture, while there were numerous subsistence farmers working on disorganised little farms. That criticism notwithstanding, many people were happy with the faculty's research in new breeds of crops and livestock. Farmers had come to recognise the value of the research done at Makerere and in the national agricultural research institutes, which provided them with high yielding, disease resistant varieties of crops and breeds of animal, as well as good crop and animal husbandry practices. Therefore, the challenge the faculty faced was how to strike a good balance between the

practice of Agriculture as a science on one hand, and as a profitable business on the other. As a science, the faculty had by all standards excelled, but as a profitable business from which people could derive not only livelihoods, but also wealth, a lot of hard work still lay ahead.

President Museveni personally took up the issue of value-added agriculture when he advised the university to initiate a new degree programme in Food Science and Agricultural Processing in the late 1980s. In fact, the idea of setting up an institute that would train food scientists and technologists was first mooted in the 1960s, but when the country fell on hard times, the idea died a natural death. However, it was resurrected in the 1980s. So, in 1989, the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry opened a Department of Food Science and Technology, thus becoming the seventh department in the faculty. Dr David Mudduuli, a trained nutritionist with a Canadian PhD was its founding head. When he left for a new assignment as Director-General of the Djibouti-based Inter-Government Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), Dr Joyce Kikafunda took over the reins as the next Head of Department. Joyce was another nutritionist who had obtained a PhD from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom after a brilliant undergraduate study at Makerere crowned with a first class honours BSc degree in Agriculture. The new department had a big mandate, which included the training of professionals with the capacity to develop and manage a modern value-added food industry in Uganda and conduct research in Food Science, Technology and Human Nutrition. The other part of its mandate was product development and technology transfer, as part of the Ugandan Government's efforts to modernise agriculture. As would be expected, the department had a rough start. It had neither office space nor laboratories of its own. Well-trained staff in the disciplines of Food Science and Technology was also scarce. In fact, the new department depended a lot on the goodwill of the faculty dean and other departments within the faculty in its formative years for office space, laboratories and lecture rooms. However, as we shall see later, a determined and visionary leadership and a dose of perseverance on the part of the staff and successive generations of students eventually paid off. Since the shaky early beginnings, the department continued to grow in leaps and bounds. It has made some giant strides.

Thanks to the generosity of NORAD, in 2005, almost a year after I had retired, the young department finally moved into its long awaited brand new, modern and beautiful building on Observatory Hill, overlooking the Faculty of Technology. The new building has well-equipped laboratories for proximate analysis and food microbiology. In fact, I remember during the planning phase, Dr Serunjogi who coordinated the planning and construction of the new building on behalf of the department always reminded us that it was important for it to have at least one laboratory in the new building that met the requirement of ISO 920 certification. Because initially the funds in the NORAD grant for the department were insufficient for constructing and equipping the new building, the architects

– NOPLAN – had a tough time coming up with a design commensurate with the money available. Dr Joyce Kikafunda and her colleagues did a lot of juggling to ensure the money would cover both the building and the pilot plants. At some point, we almost dropped the conference hall. Fortunately, when NORAD released the NOK10 million unallocated funds, the Department of Food Science and Technology was one of the biggest beneficiaries of that money. With the additional money, the building could go ahead as planned. We were also fortunate to have hired a good but relatively inexpensive contractor, Eastern Builders. It was all smiles when Ambassador Gjos Tore broke the ground in 2004 and construction began. Since the building was located on a slope, I was worried that most of the money would go into levelling. Luckily my worst fears were allayed by what happened later. I feel proud every time I look at this beautiful building gracing the western side of the Observatory Hill, thanks to my colleague Professor Epelu Opio who, as chair of the Space Allocation Committee, identified the location for the building. But even before it moved into its new home, which is a little farther away from the Faculty of Agriculture, the department had sufficiently matured. Its research output had become something to be proud of, most of it focusing on local agro-processing and food industry, with emphasis on value addition. I recall, on several occasions, being invited to open short courses in dairy technology and dairy products, which the department and faculty used to conduct from time to time in conjunction with experts from Israel and other countries. Farmers and food processors used to patronise these extensive courses at their own cost. In fact, in its relatively short existence, the department had attracted an array of national and international benefactors, including the Nestle Foundation, one of Makerere's new development partners. After a competitive selection process in 1996, it qualified for a UNESCO chair in Post-harvest Technology. During my time, the chair was occupied consecutively by two professors: Paul Hansen from Ohio State University in the USA and Peter Flowers from the UK. I also remember going out of my way to find some money from the university's endowment fund in London, which at the time was managed by Crown Agent, to assist the department to purchase some modern equipment.

Whether by commission or coincidence, it is an interesting fact that, like Makerere College, the predecessor of Makerere University, which opened with fourteen students and five instructors, the Department of Food Science and Technology also opened its doors in 1989 with fourteen undergraduate students and five academic staff. At the end of their four-year course, four of the pioneer graduates joined the teaching staff of the department. By the time I left the university in 2004, it had on its nominal roll over 100 students and the teaching staff had grown from five to fifteen, eight of them PhD holders. When I was still at the Chemistry Department as Head, I remember losing one of my good technicians, Ben Sentoongo, to the new department. It was all in good faith, because we were all trying to lend a hand to the young department. When all is said and

done, the pleasure one derives from this tremendous effort is the important fact that most of the department's graduates have readily found employment as food scientists, food technologists and nutritionists, among others who are in food-related industries. Some have opened up their own agro-processing industries and in turn have provided employment for their fellow graduates.

When President Museveni was still Makerere's sitting Chancellor, he had made employment and job creation a personal crusade at every graduation ceremony. He spent a lot of time driving the point home that students should always choose courses that were marketable or courses that would lead to self-employment. Food Science and Technology was, at least in a small but significant way, providing a solution to the growing problem of graduate unemployment. Unlike some of the new departments that pre-dated it but which unfortunately remained stunted, Food Science and Technology kept growing in leaps and bounds. In 1998, it launched its first graduate degree, a two-year Master of Science in Food Science and Technology, followed by a Master of Science in Applied Human Nutrition which was launched in 2003.

The department was not only preoccupied with teaching and research, it was also actively engaged in product development. However, the absence of pilot plants slowed progress. We had made attempts to secure access to the facilities based at the Uganda Industrial Research Institute at Nakawa, which at the time were lying redundant, but ended in failure as the responsible Ministry would not let go. However, through some arrangements with the Director of the Institute, Dr Charles Kwesiga, the department could use some of the institute's facilities like the meat processing technology unit. In spite of this setback, the department was able to continue developing several food products, using whatever equipment they had. For example, Dr William Kyamuhangire, with a first degree in Industrial Chemistry and a PhD in Food Engineering from the Norwegian University of Agriculture, received a patent for a local root liquor he developed. At the time, Makerere University did not have many patent holders in its academic ranks, so Kyamuhangire's patent was an achievement worth celebrating. In 2003, the Social Services Committee of the Parliament of Uganda conducted an on-the-spot tour of the University and one of highlights I recall about the tour in the Faculty of Agriculture was the excitement Dr Kyamuhangire's invention stirred up when some of the honourable members of the august body – the Parliament of Uganda – decided to taste the dark black liquor. I guess they did so to prove for themselves that the stuff was really worth the patent. The verdict? Well, after a few sips, several of them wanted to know if Dr Kyamuhangire had anything for sale. William Kyamuhangire pulled a few bottles out of his lockers and made some instant cash from the MPs. It was a happy ending to a tour that had begun on a rough note, as many MPs went away with bottles of the made-in-Makerere stuff.

My intelligence sources told me that the MPs' Makerere Tour was prompted by the mis- information and negative reports some ill-intentioned people had been filing to Parliament about the university. One of the serious allegations was that Makerere academic staff, and the Faculty of Agriculture in particular, hardly conducted research evidenced by the absence of publications. I guess the Committee wanted to verify first-hand if there was any truth in the allegations. As the MPs discovered for themselves, it turned out that, contrary to the reports, they found a vibrant university, busy with research, teaching and publishing, with most of the publications in some of the top international journals. Some members of staff were also trying to patent their inventions and discoveries. William Kyamuhangire's patent was one of the smoking guns that research was alive and well at Makerere, despite poor funding. To crown it all, the rapid development of the Department of Food Science and Technology was a delight, not only to the Faculty of Agriculture and university, but also to Makerere's former Chancellor, President Yoweri Museveni who initiated the idea of setting it up in the first place. However, most of the credit goes to Professor Elly Sabiiti who was Dean of the faculty for eight productive years. During his tenure, he gave the young department the encouragement it so badly needed at the time. Also credit worthy is his predecessor, the late Professor John Mugerwa, from whom Elly Sabiiti took over the faculty in its formative years. Dr David Muduuli, as the founding Head of Department, cut the sod and laid a solid foundation for it. He was the spark that ignited the unstoppable fire. In addition, credit also goes to its longest serving head, Dr Joyce Kikafunda, and staff.

By opening a Department of Food Science and Technology, the Faculty of Agriculture, in an indirect way, was answering some of the constant criticisms that it had failed to make a significant impact on Uganda's farming community. Unfortunately, this act alone was not enough to address all criticisms; it had to do more. For example, there were many who believed that the curriculum needed further reforms if the critics were ever to be silenced. A significant development in that direction, which incidentally arose out of the collaboration between the faculty and the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), was the establishment of the Continuing Agricultural Education Centre (CAEC) at Kabanyolo, opened in 2002. The facility was built with funds provided by the Government of Uganda from a loan borrowed from the World Bank for the Agricultural Research and Training Programme (ARTP as it was popularly known). It was a sort of follow-up to the Manpower for Agricultural Development (MFAD) funded by the USAID for over ten years. The new centre was set up to provide in-service training through short courses, for practising farmers, extension workers and farm managers, among others. The participants were expected to go away after the training, equipped with new farming techniques, farm management skills and marketing strategies. In effect, CAEC started as a unique experiment aimed at bringing the faculty and the farming community closer. Professor Elly

Sabiiti, who was Dean of the faculty at the time spearheaded its implementation but, along the way, he experienced some setbacks which almost derailed the entire project. In an attempt to get the project to start on time, he overlooked some university procedural requirements, an act which did not augur well with some of my senior colleagues in the university administration who were ever mindful of university rules and procedures. However, the temporary setback did not dampen his enthusiasm for the project and, with a little help and encouragement from some of us, the project was soon back on track. Professor Joseph Mukiibi, then Director General of NARO, ensured the project was not starved of funds. The product was a beautiful complex of modern buildings on the Gayaza High School side of Kabanyolo Agricultural Research Institute. The Sasakawa project with similar objectives also moved into the new centre. Unfortunately, during one of the violent seasonal storms that hit Kabanyolo, wind blew off the roofs of some of the new buildings, which necessitated replacing at an extra cost.

Even with the CAEC and other innovative interventions in place, there was still a missing link. Agreed that some farmers could pay and attend a course or two at the CAEC, but the bulk of Uganda's farmers were still in a peasantry state and their farms, if you could call them so, with very smallholdings – a hectare or much less. They cannot afford the fees CAEC charges per course, let alone follow the language of instruction. However, these are the very farmers on whom the country relies to produce food for all Ugandans and also produce the cash crops that earn Uganda hard currency. These are the farmers who need help the most, because of the teething problems they have to deal with daily. Given its wealth of professional expertise, the university was well placed to solve most of their problems. The question was how do you reach such farmers who are scattered all over the place and how do you help them maximise crop yields on their small holdings and, in the process, ameliorate their abject poverty through improved farming techniques? Fortunately, the faculty did not have to look far. The answer was: train more extension workers who would act as change agents in the communities. Also, ensure that the training of the extension students took into account the rural setting where the majority of them were due to work after completing their degrees. It was a recognised fact that the weakest link between the research and training institutions on the one hand and the farmers on the other was extension service. If you could strengthen this link, then you would have succeeded in transforming agriculture for the better; at least that was the theory which had to be put to the test.

The CAEC came much later after the faculty had opened its eighth department – the Department of Agricultural Extension Education – in 1991. Later, the CAEC became its continuing education arm. The new department and CAEC was the faculty's answer to the question of its relevance to the farming community. Dr Arsen Semaana, who started the department as its founding head, came to the university

from Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture, with a wealth of experience in agricultural extension work. As would be expected, it took a lot of hard work and outright old-fashioned luck to start a department and a new degree programme from scratch and succeed. Dr Semana and a few colleagues had worked very hard to get the new department off the ground. In time, their hard work paid off. The university approved a three-year Bachelor of Agricultural Extension Education in 1992/93. The main objective of the new degree was to update and equip practising non-graduate extension workers with Diplomas in Agriculture, with recent advances in agricultural extension methods, including soft skills like communication and mobilisation skills, as well as practical problem-solving skills.

The new department's other role was as an avenue through which the Faculty of Agriculture would reach out to farmers and, in so doing, contribute to grassroot development through responsive and farmer-centred extension education programmes. Besides recruiting staff, Dr Semaana's other job as Head of Department was to look for students with Diplomas and relevant field experience who needed to update and scale up their skills. To find them, he went at great length to convince the District officials of the importance of the new degree programme and why they should not only send their non-degree holder extension workers to Makerere, but also sponsor them for the retraining. By and large, he succeeded. Most Districts he approached seized the opportunity and sent their extension workers for degree training. I believe that one aspect of the new degree that was key in persuading the District authorities to sponsor their staff was the fact that a large proportion of the training was field-based. Students had to work closely with the farmers and provide them with solutions to their problems. The idea seemed to be working as was planned. The ivory tower was slowly reaching out to the communities.

A logical follow up to the successful undergraduate programme, coupled with improved staffing, prompted Dr Semaana's department to mount the Master of Science in Agricultural Extension and Education. Besides the theory-based lectures, students on the Masters programme had to undertake rural-based projects in a rural setting. I recall Dr Semaana inviting me to visit Namavundu village near Kabanyolo which was one of the sites for the MSc Extension Education students' rural community projects. When I arrived there, I was pleasantly surprised to meet a mesmerised community. Several village residents I talked to confessed to me that they had found it hard to believe that Makerere University students could come and work with lowly educated people in a rural setting without difficulty and even provide them with practical solutions to their problems. Until our students went there, the Namavundu residents – like most Ugandans – had been under the impression that university students and graduates had nothing to do with village life or tilling the land with a hand hoe. As far as they were concerned, going to university meant an escape from undignified rural life, drudgery and a good-

bye kiss to the hoe. However, contrary to their perceptions, our MSc students had demonstrated that university students had no difficulty working with their hands. In fact, the village residents were impressed with the students' farming knowledge and skills. For one, this was a village where the revered staple food crop, the banana (matooke) had long stopped doing well. Most farmers believed that the low productivity of their banana groves was due to soil infertility (or lunnyo as most people in Buganda referred to it). What our students did have was to demonstrate to the farmers that, although soil fertility was critically important, there were also other problems which the farmers needed to take care of and, in majority of cases, simple interventions were all that it required to solve them. The students were able to show the Namavundu farmers those simple interventions they had to implement to make their banana grow productively once again.

By applying the simple and cheap farming techniques learnt from our students, the farmers in this village began to see their favourite staple increase in yield. They had learnt the lesson that good crop husbandry practices, soil fertility management and a few other inexpensive interventions like disease control, boosted the yield of their favourite crop and other crops. They had also learnt better techniques of intercropping the bananas with other crops, a farming system widely practised in this region of the country. In the short time the students had been working in Namavundu village, farmers participating in the project had started harvesting reasonably big bunches of banana. Some hard working farmers were reporting harvest of banana bunches weighing between ten and fifteen kilogrammes from their farms, something they had long forgotten about. So, they were visibly proud of the achievement. Before our presence there, the best a farmer hoped for was a bunch weighing no more than seven kilogrammes. Many were openly grateful to me, Dr Semaana and Makerere University for making a difference in their lives and for the attitude change in general. I was equally impressed and wished we had worked a lot more with the community in such a fashion earlier. The Namavundu experiment and experience left a lasting impression on me. On my way back to the university that evening, my mind remained focused on what I had seen and heard. I kept thinking that we owed Dr Semaana and his colleagues a debt of gratitude for initiating this innovative approach to outreach programmes and community engagement. My concern however, was whether the university had the capacity to sustain these initiatives and whether it was possible to persuade more departments to emulate Semaana's example? At the time of my retirement in 2004, the spirit of university-community engagement was still very much alive. Although Dr Semaana had stepped down as Head of Department, he had passed the mantle to Dr Margaret Najjingo Mangheni who was younger and more energetic. Through this experience, a point was once more driven home that, given a little bit of facilitation, political goodwill, visionary and imaginative leadership, African universities have enormous potential to help transform the poverty-stricken rural communities of Africa into productive and

prosperous societies, through simple but imaginative interventions. This was the surest way universities could justify the heavy investments from the state and other stakeholders. But for them to be able to play this role effectively, what universities in Africa need is a change in their mindset and social re-engineering.

Although it had not yet started churning out droves of graduate farmers, the faculty was surely making a difference in the way agriculture was practised in Uganda. For instance, as part of their course requirements, every year students of Agricultural Engineering produced working prototypes of new and appropriate farm machinery. If the prototypes could be developed further, they would go a long way in helping the peasant farmers modernise their farming practices and realise higher crop yields, thereby having more income from their small holdings. Unfortunately, these prototypes were just rusting away in the Department of Agricultural Engineering workshop and in the yard at Kabanyolo. The major drawback, as I saw it, was not lack of innovative ideas but rather the university's inability to commercialise the students' prototypes or to identify entrepreneurs willing to take them up, develop and mass-produce them under licence. My hope then was that when the Government of Uganda sets up a Technology Development Centre, the centre would take up these prototypes and develop them further to commercial level. By the time I left the university, the centre was still on paper. Perhaps it is important to remember that a country like Uganda has very few commercial farmers and even fewer are full-time farmers. Farming as an occupation is unattractive, because it calls for hard work with minimal returns, partly due to the high cost of mechanisation. A tractor is still out of the reach of the majority of farmers, so much of the farm work is back-breaking. The solution is "technology" which, unfortunately, farmers cannot afford. The Department of Agricultural Engineering had started leading the way. My regret was that we had little contact with NARO's Appropriate Technology Centre, Namalere. Perhaps that would be one way of pooling resources for research and development in the critical area of low-cost farm mechanisation.

We have seen that in spite of the importance of agriculture to the nation's economy and food security, very few people in Uganda have made farming a full-time occupation. Many practise farming as a secondary source of livelihood and peasant farming is first and foremost for subsistence; it is the little surplus, if any, that is sold as contribution to the household income. Perhaps with the exception of the sugar mill and tea estate owners, few people in Uganda think that farming can be a highly profitable business. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the students' attitude to a degree in Agriculture is influenced by such considerations. Students tend to look at a degree in Agriculture as simply a license to a white-collar job in some air-conditioned and cosy office in town. The Agricultural Secretariat in the Bank of Uganda used to be such an avenue to a white-collar job for graduates of Agriculture. For many students,

life on the farm was the last thing to cross their mind. As a way of changing this mindset, Professor Elly Sabiiti, as Dean of the faculty, conceived the idea that the university should acquire more land at Kabanyolo, which the faculty could use to demonstrate to the students that farming could be a serious profitable business if practised according to modern scientific and management methods. It would also be another source of revenue for the faculty and the university as a whole. Sabiiti's argument was that by using the additional land, the faculty would be able to demonstrate what it took to profit from modern scientific farming. Fortunately, the university bought into Elly Sabiiti's idea and, with NORAD funding, the faculty acquired about 60 acres of land at Naalyamagonja, a village on a nearby hill northeast of Kabanyolo. However, we were unable to implement Sabiiti's ideas of turning this land into a commercial farm quickly, because the university had a severely constrained budget. So, we could not provide the faculty with start-up capital. Professor Sabiiti left office in 2003 before realising his dream, and so, the idea of a commercially run farm at Naalyamagonja remained an unfinished business, which Professor Sabiiti left for the new dean, Professor Matete Bekunda, to implement.

In a lay person's interpretation, Agricultural Economics is a marketing tool. The discipline helps a farmer to analyse how commodity prices fluctuate at home and international markets, and the economic factors and market forces at play, which are responsible for the price variations. It helps a farmer to make sense of farming as an economic activity, to know what sells and what does not and why. From that stand-point, Agricultural Economics is an important discipline. It was also one of the disciplines in the Faculty of Agriculture that most students found attractive and appealing because, for a long time, graduates of Agricultural Economics had no difficulty securing employment. Many ended up at banks and the Agricultural Secretariat of the Bank of Uganda. For the same reasons, the department had one of the highest staff turnovers in the university. It found itself competing in the same human resources market with high-paying organisations like banks, as there was a constant high demand for well-qualified Agricultural Economists outside the university that no one seemed able to satisfy. Some senior members of staff like Dr David Kazungu left the department in December 1980 to join politics. Its long serving Head of Department, Josh Bibangamba and his colleague, Musemakweri, left to join Charles Kabugo's Uganda Cooperative Alliance. Opio Odong, who had kept the department afloat as staff came and went, also left for a job with the UNDP. As the department grappled with the staffing instability, it had to cope with the increasing number of students who were opting to specialise in Agricultural Economics. It was a difficult balancing act, but slowly the staffing situation started to witness some improvement, which came with the change of the name of the department. I believe right from the inception of the faculty in 1952, Agricultural Economics at Makerere was taught as Rural Economy. Back then, the department was also known as the Department of Rural Economy. It

was one of the few departments in the Faculty of Agriculture that used to accept non-agricultural students from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences who wanted to combine Economics with Rural Economy in the 3:2:2 combinations. Over time however, the term Rural Economy was found too restrictive and an inappropriate name for the department. Some thought it was over-masking the rapidly growing discipline of Agricultural Economics. In the 1990s, the faculty decided to change the name of the department to Agricultural Economics to reflect the modern trends. Staff stability too started improving, particularly under Mrs Theodora Hyuha as Head of Department. When Mrs Hyuha decided to go for her PhD, we asked Dr Barnard Bashasha, fresh from South Korea where he had obtained his PhD, to take over the reins. Under Dr Bashasha's leadership, more PhD holders joined the teaching staff of the department and the turnover slowed down considerably.

In spite of all these developments, the faculty still needed a few more innovations to respond more effectively to the nagging criticism of absence of a cadre of professional farmers in the country that could turn agriculture in its various forms into successful agribusinesses. In response, the faculty launched a new degree programme in Agribusiness, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The Bachelor of Agribusiness Management, launched in 2002, had as its main objective: to develop professionals with both theoretical and practical skills in agribusiness management and the ability to link the agricultural sector and the world of business for the purposes of commercialising Uganda's agriculture. It was also to serve as a means of equipping students with entrepreneurial skills in agribusiness. In a duration of three years, the programme was supposed to expose students to courses in Production Economics, Farm Business Management, Agribusiness Marketing, International Agricultural Trade, Business Strategy, Small Agribusiness Management and Agribusiness Finance, among others. Before the undergraduate programme was launched, the Senate and University Council had earlier approved the Master of Agribusiness Management. Its primary objective was to impart essential management competencies required to support profitable agribusinesses in a global and highly competitive business environment. The intention was to produce graduates equipped with sound commercial orientation and high-level knowledge of the structure and technologies of agribusiness. With the introduction of these two programmes, the Department of Agricultural Economics had to think of a new name that reflected its new and expanded mandate. It therefore evolved into the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

No doubt, Professor Elly Sabiiti's deanship was a very productive period for the faculty, which later became a hive of innovative ideas. Besides the new programmes in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, the faculty soon realised that there was the urgent need to address the issue of

sustainable agricultural land use that would ensure food security for the country in the future. The emphasis was laid on soil degradation and its management. As we have learnt from the Namavundu experience, soil fertility, which many Ugandan farmers had taken for granted for many years, had declined considerably, mainly through poor land use and mismanagement. After consulting with the relevant stakeholders, the faculty was to introduce a new three-year undergraduate degree in Agricultural Land Use and Management, for the sole purpose of training experts in this field. The rationale for the new degree was based on the fact that productive agriculture can thrive only if the soils are fertile and well managed. In fact, soil scientists at Makerere had long coined a slogan, "Soil is wealth, protect it". The new programme was also a break with the faculty's tradition. It was to be taught as a day and evening programme. Up until then, the Faculty of Agriculture did not offer any evening programme.

President Museveni was on record for having championed a crusade that saw several non-traditional and high value crops introduced in the country to boost and diversify its agricultural exports. The flower industry stands out as a prominent example of this effort. Under the same drive, many fruits like pineapples, mangoes and pepper, previously confined to the home market, were now being exported to the European and North American markets. The market prospects for the non-traditional crops were very promising, the more reason to increase investment in the agricultural sector. The majority of the crops in this category fell in the domain of Horticulture. The large-scale export of horticultural produce like fresh cut-flowers, vegetables, fruits and spices was a phenomenon relatively new to Uganda. Kenya had been in this business for a much longer time and far ahead of Uganda. At Makerere, aspects of Horticulture were offered within the BSc Agriculture degree programme, but not as a stand-alone specialist degree. Prior to the chaos of the 70s and 80s, Professor John Ddungu of the Department of Crop Science played a key role in promoting this discipline at Makerere. As the country went through the turbulent times, Professor Ddungu's flower gardens at Kabanyolo were vandalised and the irrigation infrastructure destroyed. In a way, that was the end of serious flower growing at the Kabanyolo university farm. The small local flower market at that time did not provide sufficient encouragement to the faculty to consider mounting a full-fledged degree programme in Horticulture. However, as the country recovered from the chaos of military rule and the Horticulture industry started picking up, the shortage of local personnel with sufficient knowledge and skills in the field of Horticulture became evident. The problem was that Makerere University was not producing that cadre of professionals.

In response to the call to supply the emerging horticulture industry with well qualified human resources, the Faculty of Agriculture started a three-year specialist BSc degree in Horticulture in the 2000/2001 academic year. At

the time, the young industry was relying on experts from Kenya, Europe and elsewhere. The new programme's main objective was to impart knowledge and to develop management competences required by people working, intending to work or desiring to gain expertise in the horticultural industry. In addition, the faculty wanted to help the industry expand flower, fruit and vegetable production in the country which stood at only about 2 per cent of the total cultivated land countrywide. Flower cultivation in Uganda was then just 0.0005 per cent of the total land under cultivation. In terms of exports, Horticulture contributed 5 per cent of the foreign earnings in the 1999/2000 financial year. The faculty believed that through well-trained human resources, research planning and good management, the horticultural sector could contribute as much as 20 per cent of the total export earnings. By the time the students were ready to graduate, they would have gained sufficient hands-on experience in all aspects production, management, quality control and marketing.

The fish export industry too has become a significant contributor to Uganda's economy but, like the horticultural sector, it too required well-trained local experts in fish production, processing, handling, quality assurance, management and marketing. At the time, the bulk of the fish exported abroad was caught in the wild Lake Victoria, the second largest fresh-water lake in the world after Lake Superior in Canada. Lake Victoria was Uganda's most important source of fish for the export market. On the other end of the scale, it was a well-documented fact that indiscriminate large-scale fishing was depleting fish stocks in the country's lakes. To ensure that the country had sufficient fish stocks to meet its export obligations, it was not only imperative to manage the dwindling stocks efficiently, but also important to encouraging fish farming. Over the years, many Ugandans had taken to fish farming with varying degrees of success. The near-marginal performance the fish-farming industry has experienced over the years could be attributed, at least in part, to the absence of well-trained personnel in aquaculture and related disciplines. The National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) had a small core of experts in aquaculture, most of them based at Kajjansi along the Kampala-Entebbe Highway and at the Fisheries Research Institute at Jinja. Many aquaculturists working for NARO had started out as zoologists or agriculturalists specialising in Animal Science or some other biological disciplines, but later switched to Fishery. The aquaculture extension workers the country had were too few to make an impact. This was enough reason for the Faculty of Agriculture to launch a degree programme in Aquaculture, to train experts in order to improve fish production in fishponds and to assist the Fisheries Department to better manage the wild fish stocks in the country's numerous lakes.

The new degree programme in Fisheries and Aquaculture presented some unprecedented but interesting challenges. As it turned out, teaching Aquaculture in the most efficient way called for a multidisciplinary approach. There were

disease, health and hygiene aspects, which fell under the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The Faculty of Science best handled the biological aspects, like genetics of fish breeding and fish ecology. Fish husbandry and economics were within the mandate of the Faculty of Agriculture and were best handled there. Therefore, the new BSc degree in Aquaculture required the three faculties to come together and work out the modalities of running and managing a complex inter-faculty degree programme. As far as I could recall, faculties at Makerere had never been called upon to collaborate to this extent or to run a joint degree programme in this fashion before. The closest they ever got to doing so was with programmes one faculty serviced on behalf of another faculty. For example, the Faculty of Economics and Management Services ran several programmes in other faculties, such as Science, Education, Arts and Social Sciences. Students attending the service courses are not registered as students of the Faculty of Economics and Management. In the case of the new degree in Aquaculture, the students were supposed to belong to all the three faculties participating in the entire programme. This was a novelty. However, the unforeseen logistical problems presented us with a formidable challenge, which made the previously agreed arrangements unworkable.

To overcome the impasse posed by the unanswered question of the programme's home, the compromise was to let the Faculty of Science host it. As soon as we sorted out the problem, we moved on to other things of substance rather than form. I was happy to see serious research already done on the breeding of the Ningu, one of the most delicious fish species in Lake Victoria but which was considered long extinct; apparently eaten to extinction by the ferocious Nile Perch. That was the explanation given for what appeared to be their sudden disappearance from Lake Victoria at the time. The results of this research effort by our staff were first made public as part of a large science exhibition hosted in the JICA building during the observance of the UNESCO International Science Day held at the Faculty of Science in 2004. Thanks to this research, it was possible to breed this rare fish in captivity, moreover on a commercial scale. Once again, Makerere was leading the way and I was happy to be the captain behind the wheel of change and innovation. The BSc in Fisheries and Aquaculture was launched at the faculty of Science in 2001/2002.

The change from a three- to a four-year BSc in Agriculture programme, with students spending most of the time in the extra year on field work and practical aspects of agriculture, was another way the faculty was reinforcing its commitment to the modernisation of agriculture and farming practices in the country. One of the challenges the faculty had to address was how to arouse the interest of the students who in already unmotivated. For the majority of them, a BSc in Agriculture was not their first choice – probably their third. Human Medicine had been their first and preferred course, followed by its close cousin – Veterinary Medicine – but some students did not make the necessary “A” Level

grades to enter the Medical or Vet School. Secondly, most students came from an urban and middle class background with almost no exposure to practical farming. In fact, this reminded me of a European country I visited some years ago. The authorities in one of the cities there were shocked to hear children say that milk came from the refrigerator. Apparently, this was so because the children there lived far away from the farms and had never seen a cow milked. The children had no idea that milk came from cows. All they knew was that when you wanted to drink some milk, you only had to open the refrigerator at home and there it was. The authorities had to set up a demonstration farm on the outskirts of the city, where children could go and learn about practical farming, to see how cows were milked and possibly touch the cow's udder.

I still strongly believe that when the Uganda National Examinations Board phased out the Biology, Chemistry and Geography (BCG) combination from the Uganda Advanced Level Certificate of Education, it was done to the disadvantage of the Faculty of Agriculture. In my time, students who wished to study Agriculture at Makerere opted for the BCG combination and more often than not, put Agriculture as their course of first choice. The Physics, Chemistry and Biology (PCB) combination led to Human or Veterinary Medicine. Given such a situation, the Faculty of Agriculture had to work very hard to find a way of motivating the students, so that at the end of their degree programme, they would find Agriculture as enjoyable and rewarding as both Human and Veterinary Medicine, and able to contribute to their profession effectively.

To some extent, this called for constant curriculum enrichment. Curriculum enrichment was not only important for the effective teaching of Agriculture as a discipline, it had a direct bearing on some of the national programmes, such as the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) and the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), in which the faculty was a key player. The faculty trained the bulk of the staff that runs these programmes. In fact, the first NAADS Executive Director was once a member of staff of the faculty. It was therefore, imperative that before the students left university, they were equipped with the most up-to-date knowledge and skills in the right quantity and quality to enable them perform their tasks and roles satisfactorily. The faculty was very responsive in this aspect. All its departments took a hard look at what they taught and, in many instances, used the DACUM (Develop a Curriculum) approach to their curriculum review and development. The approach, widely used in Canada and the USA involves sitting down with practising farmers, referred to as the practitioners, to draw up new programmes or revise existing ones so that they can meet and satisfy the farmers and other stakeholders' needs and expectations.

Someone once said something to the effect that if a university does not engage in serious research, it is essentially a glamourised high school. What such a university teaches are simply reflections of what happened yesterday. Whether

you believe it or not, what this statement implies is that universities, by their very nature, are duty bound to engage in some form of research or the other. The reasons are simple. First, research advances the frontiers of knowledge through discoveries and inventions. Second, research helps humanity to improve the living standards, through problem solving, new technologies ideas, services and new products. Universities have, among their regular members, some of the world's best minds capable of undertaking groundbreaking and complex research in any field of human endeavour. Ever since it opened its doors to its first undergraduate students in 1952, the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere has taken research very seriously. The research done within its laboratories at the main university campus and at Kabanyolo, or in collaboration with the NARO research institutes has benefited not only its staff to gain promotions and international recognition, but also the farming community in general. For example, Professor Kitungulu-Zaake of the Soil Science Department had been actively involved in the rejuvenation of banana growing in the central region of Uganda and was behind the efforts to make rock phosphate a cheap and environmentally friendly alternative to the chemically processed super phosphate fertilisers. Professor Kitungulu-Zake's research was important and relevant not only to our wellbeing, but equally for the protection of the earth's fragile environment. The world has been steadily moving away from the excessive use of artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides in agriculture to organic farming and organically-grown food.

Natural nitrogen fixing, using the rhizobium bacteria, was another equally important research in the Department of Soil Science. In a complex symbiotic relationship, this group of bacteria takes nitrogen from the atmosphere and converts it into a form that legumes like beans, groundnuts and peas can use for their growth. Therefore, rhizobium is one of the micro-organisms that play an important role in soil fertility and help to boost crop yield, even on marginal soils. Dr Mary Silver Rwakaikara and her colleagues perfected the technology of multiplying these micro-organisms, which occurs naturally in the root nodes of most leguminous plants, and harvested them on a suitable substrate. The farmers can then apply the rhizobium rich substrate on their fields. They can also mix the seeds with the rhizobium-impregnated substrate prior to planting. The results of this work led to the commercial production of rhizobium. The department was selling the bacteria to farmers as far as Rwanda. I was happy to have found some money which the department, under the headship of Dr Moses Tenywa – a soil physicist – used to purchase vital equipment, including a modern Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer, most of which was intended for research and teaching.

Research undertaken by both staff and students in the faculty over the years has produced several high yielding, pest and disease resistant crop varieties, which the faculty releases to farmers from time to time. The cowpea is one of such crops. It is an important vegetable in many parts of Uganda and, in particular, in the eastern

and northern parts of the country. Unfortunately, the crop is highly susceptible to pests and diseases. Professor Adipala Ekwamu of the Department of Crop Science had, for a long time, been running a cowpea research programme which, among other things, examined all aspects of cowpea breeding and husbandry. His efforts paid off a few years ago when, for the first time since the 1960s, his research group released a new cowpea variety. Professor Adipala Ekwamu has been a prolific researcher. In 2004, he left the faculty and took up the job of Coordinator of the newly-created Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), based on the university's main campus.

While he was spending long hours in the field and laboratory, his colleague – Dr Sam Kyamanywa – was equally busy figuring out how farmers could fight crop pests without applying chemical pesticides. His answer was a programme on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The programme takes advantage of naturally occurring organisms harmless to crops, but enemies of harmful insects, as one of the strategies that can help reduce pest infestations. In implementing this programme, Dr Kyamanywa was able to attract scientists from Ohio State University in the USA to collaborate with him. His research held a lot of promise for the small-scale farmers, who could not afford the artificial pesticides and who suffer from chronic crop losses due to pests and diseases.

Uganda has a sizable community of traditional cattle keepers. These cattle keepers pose a challenge to both the central and local governments where they are located. One of their problems is pastoralism or, more precisely, nomadism. As they roam the countryside, particularly in the so-called cattle corridor, which runs all the way from Burundi in the south to Somalia in the north-east, the destructive effect of their animals takes its toll on the environment, destroying the vegetation and compacting the soil in their wake. There had been several attempts to settle these pastoralists but, from time to time, the seasonal dry spells force them to migrate to places where they can find fresh grass and water. In Nyabushozi, in Mbarara District located in Western Uganda, most of the traditional cattle keepers have more or less settled down. However, in order to stop them from resorting to their old nomadic ways again in this semi-arid and fragile ecosystem, one of the key problems – the quality of the pastures in their rangeland – had to be solved. Much of the area's vegetation is typically savannah type; grasslands dotted with shrubs, mostly of the acacia family. Most of the grass growing in these rangelands is unsuitable for high quality cattle. New and better grasses had to be found and introduced in the area. Professor Elly Sabiiti, a specialist in pastures, embarked on a research project that would provide solutions to this problem. Indeed, his research led to improved pastures in Nyabusozo and a publication in the form of a book on how to improve the quality of rangelands in the semi-arid areas. This was one of the several examples of the faculty's involvement in community engagement and solving societal problems.

Professor Gabriel Kiwuwa's Elite Cow and Mubende Goat Breeding Project was another interesting research project in the Department of Crop Science which had enormous potential benefits for the small scale mixed farmers. Professor Kiwuwa, an accomplished animal geneticist and breeder, had realised that in the last 30 or so years of animal breeding research in Uganda, there had been an over-focus on cross-breeding exotic animals, mainly European Friesian, Jersey and Ganzy cattle, with the local breeds. These research efforts had succeeded in producing a crossbreed cow for Uganda, which combined the high milk-producing characteristics of its European parentage and the disease and heat-resistance traits of its African ancestry. Makerere University, the Animal Breeding Centre at Entebbe and Nakyesanja Stock Farm near Namulonge – the institutions that were most active in this programme – had achieved the objectives of the breeding programme which the Government inaugurated it in the 1960s, as one now finds beautiful black and white crossbreed cows on most modern farms in Uganda. Although these are not pure Friesian breeds, they look like them and are a common sight in some parts of Uganda, particularly in the old districts of Ankole and Masaka. Since the 1960s, there had not been much animal breeding research. According to Professor Kiwuwa, past animal breeding programmes in Uganda had made very little effort to improve the quality of the indigenous local cattle and small ruminants, particularly goats. His interest therefore was to breed elite local animal varieties and preserve the local animal gene pool. In his view, there was a real danger that the country could lose its important genetic resource.

With funding from NORAD, Professor Kiwuwa started a breeding research programme in 2002, which focused on the small ruminants and Ankole elite cattle. When he carried out a preliminary study on local goats, he discovered that the Mubende goat possessed some superior genetic qualities, like body weight that made it a good candidate for his research. He was sure that, through a sound breeding programme, he could multiply these animals and make them available to smallholder farmers as a way of helping them earn a reasonable income. Most rural communities in Uganda rear goats as a source of income. However, most of these goats are usually the low-grade type, with a live body weight of less than twenty-five kilograms. Professor Kiwuwa's elite goats were far much bigger; perhaps three to four times heavier than most local breeds. It was a pleasure seeing his big and beautiful-looking goats at Kabanyolo, where he was conducting his breeding experiments.

In 2003, I took my friend Professor John Kaburesa, the former Vice Chancellor of the University for Development Studies in Tamale, Ghana and his colleagues who were visiting the university at the time, on a tour of Kabanyolo Agricultural Research Institute. One of the units we visited was Professor Kiwuwa's goat pens. It was an impressive site seeing the fat and healthy-looking goats feeding and

browsing in their enclosures. After the tour, I wished I could find funding to construct more modern pens for his experiments. His next task was to breed them on a large scale and to sensitise the farmers about the elite local goats that co-existed favourably with the boar goats from South Africa and were more tolerant to diseases and other difficult local conditions. Thanks to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine which spearheaded the scheme, many farmers started keeping boar goats imported from South Africa. The boar goats were superior to the local breeds in terms of body size, milk yield and tender meat texture but, unlike the local varieties, they were too susceptible and easily succumbed to local animal diseases. Kiwuwa's goats were a better alternative for those farmers who had no facilities to maintain the more delicate South African boar goats.

Alongside the Mubende goat-breeding programme, Professor Kiwuwa was also studying the long-horned Ankole cow to identify the elite varieties. The Ankole cows are generally small, with an average live weight of 110 kilograms and low milk output. On the other hand, they are extremely resistant to tick-borne diseases such as the East Coast Fever (ECF) and other common bovine diseases. Kiwuwa's idea was to study the genetic makeup of these cows through DNA sequencing, to identify those with desirable traits, such as body weight, and then undertake a selective breeding programme that would eventually produce an elite Ankole cow. Interestingly, we had heard of reports claiming that the yellow fat of the Tutsi cows, a group of cattle to which the Ankole cow belongs, was low in harmful cholesterol and a good source of a Vitamin A precursor. The reports further stated that these cows made good comparison with the long-horned Texas cattle. These claims had caught the attention of the President, a large Ankole cattle farmer in his own right. However, unlike plant breeding, animal breeding is a long time process. In this kind of work, time is the essence, but Professor Kiwuwa had opened up an interesting and important line of research which future animal breeders could take up as part of the poverty alleviation strategies.

The list of the beneficial outputs of the research projects undertaken in the Faculty of Agriculture is long. What I have highlighted here are simply examples of the faculty's effort to contribute to the development of Agriculture in Uganda.

In 1999, the farm at Kabanyolo, which became Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute (MUARIK), played a dual role of serving as a teaching farm and a research facility. The post of Farm Manager was upgraded to Director. Dr V. Kasenge, the long-serving Farm Manager, left Kabanyolo and joined the Department of Agricultural Economics as a full-time lecturer. Professor Matete Bekunda, who later succeeded Professor Elly Sabiiti as Dean of the faculty, was MUARIK's first Director. During my last years as Vice Chancellor, we had initiated discussions on the possibility of transferring the entire faculty to Kabanyolo as a way of decongesting the university's main campus. These discussions were later overtaken by other developments. As part of the Strategic

Plan (2000/2001 – 2006/2007) the university was poised to transform from a highly centralised institution into loose autonomous colleges with just a few functions retained at the centre. For a long time, the Faculty of Agriculture was one of the faculties that we had wanted to transform into a College of Agriculture, along the lines of some North American universities. Although, as we had made a lot of progress towards the college system, I was not able to see the changes before I retired. There were many formidable challenges and problems, which required sorting out before the college system became a reality. My time had run out before I could sort them out.

The University Council, under the leadership of Dr David Byatike Matovu, approved the “college” concept and allowed units that so wished to explore ways they could transform into colleges. The Faculty of Agriculture seized the opportunity, wrote and submitted a funding proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation which, fortunately, was approved. The Dean of Agriculture initiated discussions on the possibility of forming a college made up of the Faculties of Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, and Forestry, the Fisheries Unit in the Department of Zoology and the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (MUIENR). It was a simple idea that required the five units to come together under what would perhaps be a College of Agricultural, Forestry, Fisheries, Environment and Veterinary Sciences. The discussions, which had begun well, later became more heated and at times quite stormy. Fortunately, there were no walk-outs that I remember. At the heart of the disagreement was autonomy and professional identity. The vets resented being lumped together with Agriculture. They argued that the mandates of the two faculties were different, so the two had very little in common. Agriculture was food; Veterinary Medicine was animal health and medicine – period. They wondered how I could have written a letter inviting them to a meeting to discuss colleges, an idea I had not talked to them about before, adding that the approach I had adopted this time was not 22, my usual style of doing things. Perhaps by reminding me of my usual way of doing things, they were implying that I was either pressured into writing the letter or I was trying to arm-twist them into accepting to join what they believed was an unworkable alliance with Agriculture. The fact that most of the vets’ work had a lot to do with food had no impact on their mindset. The strong-willed Dean of Veterinary Medicine was not about to accept joining a college with the Faculty of Agriculture.

Even the Zoology Department’s representative, Dr Fred Bugenyi and the Director of MUIENR, Dr Panta Kasoma were having a rough time selling the idea to their colleagues. In fact, I learnt later that they were heavily criticised for having accepted to take part in such negotiations. This reminded me of the old age criticism about universities being the most conservative institutions on earth, so much so to make some believe that changing a university was like moving a cathedral or asking the residents of a cemetery whether their home should move to another location.

Despite these setbacks, we never relented or gave up trying to reach a compromise; after all we were under obligation to implement the university's Strategic Plan. Short of doing so meant that the Strategic Plan was as good as dead, mere dry ink on paper. The more we stayed at it, the more protracted the negotiations. However, Cole Dodge's skilful facilitation and Dr Nanyike Musisi's wit helped us find a middle ground – a compromise acceptable to all parties. By the time I left office, the blueprint was ready but, instead of one college, the merger document referred to two colleges: Agriculture and others, and Veterinary Medicine and others. I had to leave the rest to my successor to carry forward.

It would be unfair to end our discussion on the Faculty of Agriculture without mentioning the imaginative way in which Professor Sabiiti used the little money from the fee-paying private students at the faculty and other income-generating activities during his time as dean. For many years when the faculty enjoyed big donor funding, most of the vehicles in its fleet were donations. I recall the ageing fleet of all makes of vehicles left at Kabanyolo when the USAID funded Manpower for Agricultural Development project ended. The drawback was that vehicles which were handed over to us were already old. Keeping them on the road in good running condition was expensive and, for that reason, many of them remained grounded. The university budget could not support the high maintenance costs. This prompted the Director of the USAID mission in Uganda to raise a complaint that the university had failed to maintain the vehicles. We endeavoured to provide what we thought was a plausible explanation and the issue was not pursued further. Transport to and from Kabanyolo for staff and students was critical to the operations of the faculty, and time came when the faculty had no vehicle in sound mechanical condition to take students to Kabanyolo for their practical training. At the same time, the maintenance costs were skyrocketing, and the University Bursar had a tough time raising a budget to keep the few old vehicles on the road. Professor Sabiiti came up with a proposal that we should allow the faculty to negotiate hire purchase terms for a sixty-five seater bus with the Government Central Purchasing Corporation, a Government parastatal dealing in supplies for the Government departments. The faculty would make a cash down payment as negotiated and pay the rest in agreed instalments. He had to convince the Bursar and the university's Tender Board that his cash flow projections were adequate to cover the payment in the agreed period. The Tender Board was convinced and permission was given for him to negotiate hire purchase terms with the Central Purchasing Corporation.

Before seeking permission from the university's Tender Board, Professor Sabiiti had to do his homework well. He had to convince his Finance Committee that a bus, among all other faculty needs, was a priority to spend money on. It was a tough sale. Many members of staff wanted all the money to go towards improving staff welfare. They kept arguing that it was the responsibility of the Government and

the university to provide the faculty with teaching and research inputs, including vehicles. Their private income should not be used for things Government was supposed to provide. Others accused him of doing all these because he wanted to leave a legacy. After painstakingly explaining the merits of buying such important assets at the faculty's expense and hammering the point home that in spite of the squeezed budget, the university was actually meeting most of its obligations to the faculty, the Finance Committee approved the purchase. Despite investing in capital projects, the faculty did not overlook staff welfare; it was simply that it was not generating much money as the Faculty of Arts, Law or Social Sciences. Kabanyolo was not a commercial farm, but a research and teaching facility; so it generated very little income for the faculty. Secondly and more importantly, the faculty had no capacity to admit too many private students; and even if it had, very few self-sponsored students were applying for Agriculture.

The faculty took delivery of the new bus in 1999 and I was invited to commission it. It was a joyous moment for the dean, the faculty as a whole and for us in university administration. One should not forget that the last big bus and heavy-duty lorry the faculty had, a donation from the USAID, came in the 1980s when Professor Herbert Kanaabi Nsubuga (now deceased) was dean and had long served their time. The new Isuzu bus was in addition to a Toyota van and a Mersey Ferguson tractor the faculty had purchased earlier from its own private income. When you ask any graduate who studied Agriculture at Makerere in the good old days, the one thing they vividly remember was driving a tractor and coupling a plough to it during their practical training at Kabanyolo. I guess this was one of the attractions every student of Agriculture looked forward to. Sadly, the old tractor had long broken down. Occasionally, the Farm Manager would find some money and have it repaired so he could use it for his farm chores, but it would break down again in no time. The students had to do without this vital component of their training. Again, Professor Sabiti was able to raise money out of the faculty's private income to buy a brand new Mersey Ferguson tractor, which students could also use for their practical training. That was the first time the faculty had used its own money to buy an asset of this kind. Given the faculty's limited resources, this was by no means a small feat of imagination and achievement; and one could safely say that, by so doing, the faculty had ushered in a revolution of thinking outside the box.

When the Dean of Students, Mr John Ekudu, resumed feeding the students on chicken and eggs, the faculty, under the guidance of the Deputy Dean, Dr Marion Okot of the Department of Animal Science, picked a lot of interest in poultry rearing and, for a while, Kabanyolo supplied the university kitchens with fat and succulent broilers. Although, delayed payment of bills slowed down the supply, the opportunity to make some money was not lost on those running the university farm. Kabanyolo used to have its own animal feed mill but over the years, the mill had stopped producing feed and the silos had lain idle. One reason

was that the university did not have money to capitalise it. Originally, the feed mill was to assist the farm make its own feed for the cattle and other experimental animals kept on the farm. In the 1970s, the idea flopped and that was the end of the mill. In 2003, the faculty took interest in reviving the mill. This time, it would capitalise it with its own money. The mill would serve a dual role of providing the farm with feed and also as a commercial enterprise.

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Mr Lwasa, one of the Assistant Farm Managers, did some number crunching and ascertained that indeed, the mill was profitable as a commercial enterprise. It could pay all its overheads, including salaries and wages for the work and still remain with a reasonable surplus as profit. Of course, there were several technical problems to sort out before the mill could go into full production. For a start, it was an old mill that had been lying idle for many years. Inevitably, some parts had gone rusty and needed replacement. Fortunately, the technical people were able to fix most of the mechanical problems and before long, the mill was producing a variety of animal feed of very high quality and selling them at a good profit. Power outage and water were the constant and major problems at Kabanyolo. The new pump we purchased in 1994 failed to work until the USAID provided a more robust one. However, Mr Ndawula Kaweesi (who later became Honourable Ndawula Kaweesi when he was elected Member of Parliament), then an Assistant University Engineer (Electrical) with the Estates Department and the Uganda Electricity Board Engineers, had managed to fix most of the power problems at Kabanyolo, including frequent power blackouts. Now the farm had water and stable power and the feed mill could run normally for most of the time.

Fish farming was another activity that Professor Sabiiti tried to re-establish at Kabanyolo. His final act before he stepped down as dean was to negotiate the breakaway of the Department of Forestry from Agriculture to become the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, the most amicable spilt of one academic unit from another I was privileged to have witnessed as Vice Chancellor. It was an uncontested divorce. More often than not, bitter wrangling and bickering preceded the breakaway of an academic unit from another. With Forestry gone, the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry went back to its pre-1970 name of Faculty of Agriculture. Finally, as we shall see later, the Faculty of Agriculture was one of the academic units that participated most actively in the – [HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com”](mailto:I@mak.com) \h – I@mak.com programme, and for good reasons too, because the – [HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com”](mailto:I@mak.com) \h – I@mak.com programme was introduced to link the university more closely with the community, the focus of the programme being on decentralisation and local governments. Agriculture was one of the closest disciplines for a university-community partnership.

### **Faculty of Forest and Nature Conservation – The Uncontested Divorce**

We have seen how close the Department of Forestry came to a stillbirth as Idi Amin's military rule and political chaos, which followed his overthrow, engulfed the country.

When the Norwegians, who had helped the Government of Uganda and Makerere University set up a Department of Forestry in 1970, had had enough of Uganda's chaos, they simply packed their bags and left the country; but they were leaving behind a new department that was barely two years old. In my opinion, two extraordinary things happened that averted the demise of the young department in its formative years. I have briefly lauded both of them. The first was that the Norwegians did not completely abandon their pioneer students; instead they arranged for them to join the University of Nairobi where they taught them until they graduated. Secondly, the faculty's management showed a lot of magnanimity towards the new department. When the Norwegians left, it was Professor Joseph Mukiibi, then a senior member of staff in the Department of Crop Science, who gave the young but faltering department the bolstering support that averted its imminent closure. From that shaky beginning, the department grew rapidly. Most of the pioneer students who had performed well and those who followed them in the subsequent years came back to Makerere as staff development fellows. Many went abroad to places like the University of California, Berkley, for their advanced degrees. A few names among this pioneer group, which easily come to mind, are John Kaboggoza, Banana Arali, William Gombya and late John Aluma. They all came back from America and Europe with doctorates in the various fields of Forestry and Silviculture. Interestingly and despite the many opportunities outside the country, they stayed and braved Uganda's hard times, with the exception of John Aluma, now deceased, who later joined NARO as Head of the Forest Research Institute (FORI) at Nakawa. At the time of his death in 2005, he was NARO's Deputy Director-General for Research. I am sure Professor Mukiibi as NARO's Director-General was proud to have had one of his students deputising for him. Besides these young men, the department was fortunate to have had Dr David Ruyoka, a Norwegian PhD holder, who went on to become the first Ugandan Professor of Forestry at Makerere and Head of Department for many years. The one thing I admired most about Professor Ruyoka, besides his academic work and business acumen, was the way he kept his old white Peugeot 505 saloon car meticulously clean and in sound mechanical condition, that every time you saw it, it looked new. When his term expired, Dr John Aluma, also a PhD graduate of the Agricultural University of Norway, took over as Head of Department. The story goes that as a PhD student at As in Eastern Norway, John Aluma had picked an interest in snow skiing as most Norwegians. He probably did not realise that, as a person born in the tropics, his bones were not quite designed for winter pursuits like snow skiing. One day he

went skiing and before he knew it, he was a heap of broken bones lying below the ski resort. Fortunately, he fully recovered from his injuries and was able to complete his PhD before returning home. Ms T. Byaruhanga was another old timer in the department. She is a woman of incredible courage and determination who did not see her disability as a deterrent to a career in a physically demanding discipline like Forestry. Instead, she saw it as a challenge and faced it head-on. For a long time, she was the only female lecturer in the department. In those humble beginnings, one ought not to forget the contribution of the staff of the Uganda Forest Department, who were for many years part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Dr Kalani, the Chief Forest Conservator, taught in the department as a part-time lecturer for many years.

After David Ruyoka and John Aluma, John Kaboggoza took over the reins as head of a department he helped found as one of its pioneer students, way back in 1970. At the time he took over the headship, the department was already making extensive use of Budongo Forest Reserve in western Uganda, one of the few remaining enclaves of the country's indigenous tropical rain forests, for research and undergraduate fieldwork. In 1994, after President Yoweri Museveni had made an official visit to Norway, it became apparent that the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Norway was poised to resume development assistance to Uganda and the forest sector was one of the front-runners for the new Norwegian assistance. In the same year, I also made a visit to Norway, mainly to discuss two issues; the NUFU programme and NORAD's assistance to Makerere University.

Suffice it to say that one of the outcomes of my visit to Norway, which also took me to the Agricultural University of Norway where Agriculture and Forestry are taught, was the inclusion of more departments in the NUFU programme at Makerere. During the visit to As, I had occasion to hold discussions with the staff of the Forestry Department. The Head of Department told me that they too had started exploratory talks with John Kaboggoza, with a view to resuming collaboration with the Department of Forestry at Makerere a department in whose beginning the Agricultural University of Norway had played a significant role, and who had been waiting for official communication from NORAD. When I visited the Ministry of Foreign Cooperation in Oslo to discuss how Makerere could position itself to benefit from the new Norwegian assistance to Uganda, I received confirmation from a senior official that when NORAD resumed its assistance programmes in Uganda, Makerere University would be top on the list of Ugandan institutions earmarked for Norwegian support. That was reassuring news and I was pleasantly surprised when, a few months after my return from Norway, John Kaboggoza informed me that NORAD had provided a grant to the Department of Forestry for a building, equipment and vehicles. But NORAD, being a Norwegian Government agency, did not enter into agreements with individual institutions; it dealt directly with the Governments. In the case of

Uganda, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) was the Government ministry with authority to enter into agreement with donor agencies. Therefore, it was the MFPED that signed the frame agreement with NORAD on behalf of Makerere University in 1995. Dr Kaboggoza and I were in attendance to witness the signing ceremony.

In order to expedite the implementation of its assistance programme to Makerere University, NORAD mandated the Norwegian Embassy to handle all procedural matters related to this agreement. Then, Norway did not have an Embassy in Kampala; the nearest was at Dar es Salaam. However, about the time the agreement was signed, the Norwegian Government had begun normalising diplomatic relations with Uganda and had designated Dr Arid Oyen to act as its Charge d'Affair in Kampala. When the Norwegian Government opened a full-fledged Embassy in Kampala a couple of years later, Dr Oyen's status changed, as he became his country's first Ambassador in Uganda. As we shall see later, Ambassador Oyen was instrumental in the discussions which led to the extended NORAD support to Makerere through the Institutional Development Programme, negotiated shortly before the first phase of the NORAD support to the Department of Forestry ended. As one of the mandatory project implementation requirements, the university had to submit quarterly progress reports to Oslo through the MFPED and the Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam, and at the same time hold quarterly tripartite meetings, also chaired by the MFPED, to review the project's progress. Dr Oyen, before becoming an ambassador, used to attend these meetings together with Mr Karl Solberg, who used to fly from Dar es Salaam with a few colleagues from the Embassy. By then, Mr Solberg, a graduate of the Agricultural University of Norway, was serving as First Secretary at the Embassy in Dar es Salaam. In a way, he was also acting as the project's desk officer. When the Kampala Embassy opened, he relocated to Uganda until his retirement. As we shall see later, Karl Salberg's presence at the Embassy in Kampala was a big blessing for the university. Mr Patrick Ocailap of the Aid Liaison Office at the MFPED chaired the meetings on behalf of his Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury. Dr Kaboggoza and I represented the university.

It was during these meetings that John Kaboggaza's report writing skills and his ability to organise documents, including the financial reports, became evident and he always submitted them on time. Perhaps I should not have been so surprised, because I remembered that he had taken his PhD at one of the best schools in USA – the University of California at Berkley. In a way, Kaboggoza's project was a pilot project for NORAD at Makerere. Therefore, its success or failure would profoundly influence NORAD's future support to the university. The project had to succeed at all cost, and succeed it did. Save for the inevitable hitches and occasional glitches, the project was well executed and served as a catalyst and a prelude to the bigger support NORAD extended to the university later.

Besides the two buildings behind the Faculty of Agriculture, the department's relationship with Nyabyeya Forestry School in Masindi was also strengthened. The BSc Forestry students could now spend time there on field work in the nearby Budongo Forest. In fact, Kaboggoza's project made a significant contribution to the college's regeneration. The project also had funds for research in Budongo Forest Reserve.

It did not come as a surprise to me to see Dr Kaboggoza so excited about his project and the prospects of the department moving into a building of its own. However, before cutting of the soil, there was a problem to sort out. The site University Council had allocated for the construction of the new building was littered with old and vandalised green houses. There had been talk that the Faculty of Agriculture was interested in rehabilitating them for research purposes. Was it now ready to surrender the site in favour of a building for the Department of Forestry? Fortunately for John Kaboggoza and his colleagues, the answer was in the affirmative. The old and disused green houses had to go, but at a cost. Before sinking the foundation for the new building, all the concrete slabs on which the green houses stood had to be dug up, and broken glass and mangled metal frames removed. That cost money and time. Luckily, even with that additional expenditure, we managed to stay within the budget. With all problems sorted out, John Kaboggoza and his colleagues quickly sat down with the architects, Technology Consult, and started planning the design of their new building. It had to be an attractive and inspiring building that reflected the role of Forestry in the country's economic development and the role trees and forests play in the conservation of the environment. It also had to be beautiful and functional. During the design stage, Dr Kaboggoza came to me very often with the architectural drawings, for either my comment on the design or advice. By the time the drawings were submitted to the Estates and Works Committee of Council for approval, we were all satisfied that, given the budget NORAD had allocated for the building, the design was satisfactory. It combined both aesthetics and functionality, and in keeping with the university's architectural character, we insisted on roofing it with red burnt-clay tiles. The Forestry building set the standards for all the new buildings constructed during my time as Vice Chancellor. When Ambassador Oyen came to open it, he was impressed with the workmanship and its cost per square metre, which in his opinion was quite low compared with what it would have cost if it had been built in his country. He thought that NORAD and Makerere University got real value for money. For the contractor, Excel, this was the second job at Makerere. My colleagues in the university administration and I were just as happy about the new building as Dr Kaboggoza and his staff. It was an achievement well worth celebrating. To mark this important milestone, John Kaboggoza gave us tree seedlings, which we planted in the new building's landscaped compound.

The structural faults detected later notwithstanding, I am sure my colleague Aritu Tibarimbasa, the then University Secretary was even more relieved than the rest of us to see the job completed to the satisfaction of all concerned, and to receive the keys from the contractor and passed them on to Dr Kaboggoza after the Ambassador had cut the ribbon. When the Estates and Works Committee of Council awarded the tender to Excel, Ambassador Oyen was quick to raise some queries. He wanted to be assured that during the process of arriving at the winner, the university had followed all procedural requirements to the letter. The responsibility to provide the explanation rested with the University Secretary. He spent time at the Norwegian Embassy explaining the university tender system until the Ambassador was convinced that nothing was amiss. The main Forestry building and the smaller one behind it, meant to serve as a workshop, were the first of the five buildings at Makerere, built with NORAD funding, between 1996 and 2004. The department could at last boast of a home of its own away from the overcrowded Faculty of Agriculture building. For a while at least, there would be enough space for every member of staff to have an office. It was goodbye to crowded conditions and office sharing. In the same token, the department was slowly but surely moving out of the ambit of its mother faculty.

Shortly before and soon after moving into the new building, the talk of a Faculty of Forestry began filling the corridors. Sooner than later, rumours turned into fact and as we have seen, the then Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry seemed to be ready to spin off Forestry. I did not detect any serious opposition to the Department of Forestry going its separate ways. Since the department opened in 1970, the agriculturists had provided it with a home, nursed and nurtured it. If it now felt mature enough to break away, no one seemed prepared to stand in its way. However, before they put the plan of breaking up the faculty into two in action, the dean and his colleagues had decided to sound out my opinion – what I thought about the whole thing. My advice was simple. Before they submitted a proposal to the Academic Registrar for Senate to consider, they had to work hard on a rationale that would justify why the department should be allowed to break away from the Faculty of Agriculture to create a separate faculty, and whether the new faculty was financially sustainable and academically viable. Financial sustainability had to be taken into consideration, because what had been a single department was turning into a faculty, which was a much larger unit with several departments and an increased number of staff. This required a bigger budget than a single department. Senate and the University Council had grown weary of the excessive fragmentation of academic units and the University Bursar had already warned that new units were adding more burdens to an overstretched university budget. The two university policy-making bodies needed to be convinced that it was really the right way for the Department of Forestry to go. With that warning in mind, the faculty worked hard, crafting a document that neither Senate nor the University Council would throw back at them.

Senate debated the merits of creating a new faculty and convinced itself that the department merited upgrading to a faculty status. At the end of the deliberations, Senate was in position to recommend to the University Council that the Department of Forestry be allowed to transform into a Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, though suggesting a modification to the name Dr Kaboggoza and his colleagues had proposed for their new faculty. The addition of Nature Conservation to the name was a reflection of the new faculty's broader mandate and the new thinking that the science of forestry went hand in hand with responsible and sustainable use of natural resources, such as forests and woodlands, as well as the preservation of the environment. The University Council under Dr David Matovu accepted Senate's recommendation and in 1999, the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation with three departments, namely Community Forestry, Forest Management and Forest Products Engineering, was born with Dr John Kaboggoza as its first Dean and Dr Arali Banana as its first Associate Dean, who in 2001 became Deputy Dean when the new Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 came into force. Dr W. S. Gombya Sembajjiwe, who obtained a PhD degree from the University of Wales was one of the pioneer heads of the new Department of Forest Management.

The newly-acquired status came with changes and new developments. Instead of the single four-year BSc Forestry degree the old department had run since its inception in 1970, the faculty could now mount new programmes as and when it so wished. Indeed, that was what exactly happened. In 2001, the faculty introduced two new three-year undergraduate degrees: the Bachelor of Community Forestry with a rather unusual acronym (BCF) and the Bachelor of Science in Wood Science and Technology (BSc WST). For a long-time, evening programmes were still very much an alien concept to most science-based faculties. However, the new faculty decided to experiment. The two new degrees would be offered as both day and evening programmes. The experiment worked and before long, even the traditional BSc Forestry degree was being offered as a day and evening programme. This experiment demonstrated that even in the science-based departments, evening programmes were possible. About the same time, the faculty was running two graduate degrees: the Master of Science in Forestry, started when the faculty was a Department of Forestry and a new one – the Master of Science in Agro-forestry, which was started after the department had separated from Agriculture and became a faculty. Then, Agro-forestry was a relatively new discipline, involving the intercropping of trees and crops on the same farm with few specialists. Before the department transformed into a faculty, it had been collaborating with NorAgric, an organisation based at the Agricultural University of Norway (ANLH). With NorAgric support, the young faculty partnered with Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania on a regional Masters degree programme under a tripartite arrangement dubbed the North-South-South collaboration. We had been talking about North-South

collaboration for some time, but this was the first concrete example of such an arrangement in practice. Apparently, the new faculty was up to a good start.

Besides a well-stocked faculty library and a well-equipped computer laboratory, the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation boasts of a conference room in its new building, a facility I had come to patronise for my important meetings. This is where we conducted the negotiations with the NORAD officials in 2000 which, as we shall see later paved the way for the university-wide Institutional Development Programme. I guess when the history of Makerere University is eventually written by the experts, this room will have an honourable mention. The Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation has every reason to be grateful to NORAD in particular and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Norway.

### **East African School of Library and Information Science (EASLIS) – Keeping the East African Dream Alive**

A stone throw from the Faculty of Agriculture, across the north end of University Road and adjoining to the university's Main Library is the East African School of Library and Information Science, which was formerly the East African School of Librarianship. It was a remnant of the old East African Community institutions created in the 1960s as part of the common services. Like most academic units at Makerere that have outgrown their original purposes, the school had a humble beginning with a very limited mandate, which was to train librarians for the three East African countries at certificate and postgraduate diploma levels. When the old community collapsed in 1977, Makerere University and the Ugandan Government chose to keep the school as one of the surviving institutions. The East African Development Bank, the Inter-university Council for East Africa and Soroti Flying School were the other institutions that survived the collapse of the first East African Community. All were situated in Uganda. Although Kenya and Tanzania had long withdrawn their financial support for understandable reasons, the school nevertheless remained open to all East Africans who wanted to pursue a career in Librarianship. In spite of the fact that students from Kenya and Tanzania were no longer coming to Makerere in large numbers, a few of them continued to patronise the school. Additionally, the student exchange scheme between Uganda and Tanzania, coordinated by the Inter-university Council for East Africa helped to keep Tanzanian students coming to study at Makerere, even when conditions in Uganda were really appalling. In exchange, Ugandan students went to Tanzanian universities. The majority of them went to the University of Dar es Salaam. The scheme also made it possible for the school to attract several Tanzanian students interested in Librarianship.

When Idi Amin mass-expelled the Europeans and Asians at the beginning of the 1970s, the school was not spared the acute staff shortage the university experienced at the time. However, it was fortunate to have been one of the beneficiaries of the

big staff recruitment drive the university undertook in India and Pakistan in the mid-1970s. Dr Seyd Abidi and a few of his colleagues, mainly from Alighah and Poona Universities in India, were part of the contingent of academics from the Indian sub-continent who joined the teaching staff of the university in the mid-1970s, under the expatriate scheme Idi Amin had worked out with Makerere University as a way of ameliorating the appalling staff shortages. Besides teaching, Dr Abidi assumed the leadership of the school. He served as its Director for over 20 productive years until Dr Isaac Kigongo-Bukenya took over in 2001. His colleagues from India and Pakistan came and went, but Abidi chose to stay and keep his school afloat. Even after relinquishing the directorship, he stayed on as an Associate Professor. He had also long ceased to receive an expatriate salary; but his rare and long dedication and devotion to the school and Makerere University eventually paid off well in the end. When he first came to Makerere, there was hardly any Ugandan on the academic staff of the school which now boasts of over ten Ugandans, while some have even acquired PhD degrees under his leadership. Dr Isaac Kigongo-Bukenya, who obtained his PhD from the University of Wales on a Makerere University scholarship and Dr Robert Ikoja Odongo who obtained his from the University of Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, also on a Makerere University scholarship, are two cases in point.

Seyd Abidi had another attribute: he knew how to make friends. When Johnny Carson came as US Ambassador to Uganda, Seyd Abidi seized the opportunity. He had learnt that Mrs Carson had an advanced degree in Librarianship and therefore, qualified to teach at the school. He somehow convinced her to offer part-time teaching at the school for him. However, given the sensitivity of her position as the wife of the American Ambassador, as well as the security concerns and the risks involved, it looked a too far-fetched idea, a long shot at best. Would the American security agencies and her husband allow her trotting to Makerere to teach whenever she was time-tabled to lecture? Was the risk worth taking? What if she was kidnapped on the way or something dreadful happened to her at Makerere? Rowdy students on rampage could maul her! The litany of the worst possible things that could happen to her seemed endless. Even we in the university administration were equally uneasy and concerned for her safety. We imagined the security nightmare the university would be subjected to whenever she came to teach. However, and to my amazement, Mrs Carsons was a woman not easily put off by such odds. One of the things about her that helped me put some of my fears to rest was her marriage itself. She was white and her husband, Ambassador Carsons was a black man. Given the racial prejudices still very much prevalent in the American society at the time, a mixed marriage like hers must have been a tough sell. From the little I knew about the American society, most white parents are not always keen on black sons-in-law. I was not even sure whether the African-American parents were keen on white-in-laws either. If she could sell the idea of marrying a black boy to her parents, I guessed she was capable of handling any

obstacle or whatever situation that happened to stand in her way. For Makerere, it was some history in the making. There were not many wives of foreign diplomats accredited to Uganda teaching at the university. My guess was that no one had ever done it before her.

Just as my gut feel had told me, she easily convinced her husband and whoever else was concerned for her security at the Embassy that Makerere was a safe place and she was ready to teach there. Indeed, before long, she was giving lectures in Abidi's school every now and then. Occasionally, I would bump into her in front of the Main Building on those occasions when she had lectures. Apart from the students and a few people who every so often saw her whenever she came to teach, our worst fears never materialised. Her presence at the university had none of the usual paraphernalia and security inconveniences, which was the hallmark of such high profile figures whenever they visited the university. My hunch at the time was that the Embassy provided her with under-cover security arrangements, which we knew nothing about. She assisted the school whenever she could until her husband's duty in Uganda ended.

Among the many other friends Seyd Abidi wooed for the school was the Managing Director of Bank of Baroda. The bank is one of oldest foreign commercial banks in Uganda, but its role in Makerere's affairs beyond hiring graduates trained there was minimal. However, Dr Abidi managed to persuade the Managing Director at the time to donate computers and a few other educational materials to the school, which the kind man did gladly. This was in addition to what the school had already bought with its own resources. As the friendship grew, Abidi invited me to his little flat on Quarry House from time to time to meet and share a cup of tea with the Bank of Baroda's MD as a way of thanking him for the generous donations his bank was making to the school. I always enjoyed the meals served by his wife and his daughter who had graduated with a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from Makerere a few years earlier, and a chat with the banker.

### **EASLIS and Makerere University Press – Publish or Perish**

When we perceived the idea of establishing a Makerere University Press, it was to assist members of staff to publish their scholarly work. The press needed a good Editorial Board and, as we looked around for the right person who would chair it, for all intents and purposes, Dr Abidi was the obvious choice. He gladly accepted to take on the responsibility. This was the first time Makerere University would have its own publishing house. We also requested Professor Adipala Ekwamu to assist with the editing of the manuscripts. Professor Adipala had accumulated a wealth of quality editing and peer-review experience as Chief Editor of the *African Journal of Crop Science*, an initiative of the Department of Crop Science and the Faculty of Agriculture. This journal had gained international

recognition, because of its high quality papers and good editing. As we soon learnt, starting a publishing house from scratch entailed a lot of hard work and resources. Unfortunately for Abidi, Makerere University Press was starting with virtually no start-up capital. We had to borrow some 20 million shillings from the Local Donors' Account in the Uganda Commercial Bank to capitalise it. In essence, this was just seed money to get started. We needed a lot more to do bigger things. Fortunately, Dr Abidi and his Editorial Board used the seed money effectively and before long, the new press had started production. Some of the books the new press published in its first few years of existence included those written by both Makerere and non-Makerere authors. Professor Gingera Pinywa of Political Science; Professor David Osiru of Crop Science; Professor Eldad Banda of Physics; Dr Emillo Ovuga and the late John Buga of the Department of Psychiatry; Geoffrey Tukahibwa and Dr Foster Byarugaba of the Department of Political Science; E. Biryabarema; Dr A. Nuwagaba and D. Lumonya of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration; E. Beyaraza of the Department of Philosophy; Geoffrey Bekunda; Professor Livingstone Luboobi, now the Vice Chancellor; J. Y. T. Mugisha and J. Kasozi of the Department of Mathematics, and Mr Aaron Mukwaya of Political Science were some of first authors to have their books published by the new Makerere University Press.

Given the fact that the press started off with very little capital, the editing and print quality of its first publications were quite impressive. Nevertheless, the problem of inadequate capital continued to dog the young press. At some point, it almost went into limbo. Friends of Makerere in Canada (FOMAC), a non-governmental organisation took interest in the press but, for some reason, the deal fell through. One reason was the failure of the donors FOMAC was depending on to honour their funding pledges. FOMAC was the brainchild of Professor Charles Olweny, a Uganda oncologist and member of staff of the Department of Medicine, forced to flee Uganda to Australia during the Obote II regime. He was now living in Winnipeg in Canada. Professor Olweny was one of the few Ugandans in the Diaspora who remained committed to Makerere, his alma mater and former employer. FOMAC was kind enough to sponsor Professor Margaret MacPherson's trip to Makerere as a consultant to advise us on how best we could set up a financially self-sustaining university press. Professor MacPherson was no stranger to Makerere. She had been a member of staff of the then vibrant Department of Literature for many years and was one of the last British members of staff to leave Makerere in the latter part of Idi Amin's regime. She was also renowned for editing and single-handedly publishing the *Old Makererean*, a publication which used to provide a lot of useful information and titbits about the people who had studied or taught at Makerere, scattered all over the world, and she had been very successful at it. Unfortunately, Professor MacPherson's report failed to attract funding. Even the second report by a Canadian consultant, again funded by FOMAC, also drew a blank. Having pulled so many blanks, the

young press had to continue limping on. Nevertheless, it was a promising limp. During the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 1997, the then Chancellor, President Yoweri Museveni, used the occasion to launch the books which the press had published. He also promised to assist it if and when he could find some money to spare. However, given the many commitments the President had and the long red tape to get to him, it was impossible to go back to him and remind him to make good his promise. It all ended there. By the time I left the university, the press had come under the supervision of the Board of the Commercial Units, with some additional funding on the horizon. My cry was that the board would indeed give the young press the badly needed capitalisation.

As I have pointed out before, year-in-year-out, space for teaching, offices and staff accommodation is a constant headache a Vice Chancellor at Makerere has to cope with, more or less on a daily basis. The East African School of Librarianship was not an exception in putting pressure on the Vice Chancellor for additional space. It was equally hard pressed for teaching and office space, and with more computers coming in by the drove, the problem of additional space became acute.

After the 1987 Donors Conference, the newly created Planning and Development Department moved from the Main Building where it had been just a Planning Unit in the office of the University Secretary into the basement of the East African School of Librarianship building. The basement was originally a parking lot for the school and Main Library staff. However, with funding provided by the UNDP, it had been converted into offices for the new Planning and Development Department. Professor Matia Semakula Kiwanuka, Dr Eliab Lugujjo, Milly Aligawesa and Muhamad Kibirige Mayanja, all worked from there during their time as Directors of Planning. The school wanted this space back, because new programmes were coming on stream. Staff and student numbers were also on the rise, and there was demand for space for the computer laboratory too. All this required additional space, which the Vice Chancellor was supposed to find. Surprisingly, help came from the most unexpected quarters.

For the first time since Makerere College changed status to a University College, and finally to Makerere University, the Academic Registrar's offices had been housed in the Main Building. When the Senate House was completed, the entire Academic Registrar's offices moved out of the Main Building. In fact, before moving out, we realised that they had been occupying a lot of space on the second and third floors of the building. The examination strong-room was also located on the second floor. All this led to a lot of overcrowding in the building. These offices now freed, the Vice Chancellor had some spare space to play with. I must say it was a most welcome relief for me, but it was bad news for my friend, Kibirige Mayanja, who was then the university's Director of Planning. He had to vacate the East African School of Librarianship premises and shift his unit's

offices to the Main Building. Although our decision for him meant giving up much bigger space, he quickly obliged, moreover to Dr Abidi's delight. At least, that was one more problem amicably solved.

When talk of the resuscitation of East African cooperation started flying around in the mid- and late 1990s, once again, the school came into regional limelight and after the East African Treaty of Cooperation was finally signed in Arusha in 1999, the school was duly recognised as one of the surviving institutions. To reflect the new mood and the progress the school had made since its inception in the 1960s, it adopted a new and expanded mandate, as well as a new name. The name changed from the East African School of Librarianship to the East African School of Library and Information Science. One of the changes the new name tried to reflect was the fact that in modern times, the librarian's role was no longer confined to looking after libraries and being a custodian of books and other valuable documents. Librarians were increasingly becoming information specialists. Therefore, the new name was intended to reflect the librarian's changing role in society.

With the new name came new programmes. In addition to the traditional Postgraduate Diploma in Librarianship, the school initiated two undergraduate Diplomas, one in Archives and Records Management and the other in Library and Information Studies, both offered during the day and in the evenings. The Certificate in Librarianship was phased out and replaced by a Certificate in Library and Information Studies, as an evening only programme. In 2002, the school had its Master of Science in Information Science approved. This was a giant step forward for it, given the fact that it started out as a non-degree awarding institution, with just a skeletal staff. The school was now in position, in terms of staffing and other requisite resources, to offer a postgraduate graduate degree. To me, this was yet another example of Makerere's recovery from the brink. For a long time, Makerere University had stood still or was simply marking time. Now it was beginning to look like the fuse that had been lit early in the 1990s was now becoming unstoppable and inextinguishable. We have already seen how, during Professor Kajubi's tenure as Vice Chancellor, the school had introduced an undergraduate degree in Library and Information Science, popularly known as BLIS. By the time I retired, no one in the school was talking about another undergraduate degree, the school was moving into postgraduate programmes. I am more than certain that sooner than later, someone in the school will come up with a new idea that will translate into a new programme. On a happy note, it was a pleasure to see Dr Isaac Kigongo Bukenya and Robert Ikoja Odongo get their PhDs and quickly rising to the rank of Associate Professors. I recall with fond memory how Isaac Kigongo Bukenya's sense of humour made our tour of South Africa in 2003 an enjoyable and memorable experience. I particularly remember him on our long and tiresome journey by road from Bloemfontein to Durban.

## **Makerere University Library – The Digital Revolution and the Prospects for Bookless Shelves**

I was often reminded by those in the know that as the heart is to the human body, so is the library to a university. They argued, rightly or wrongly, that the academic life of a university revolved around the library. Now, I am not so sure it still does. I based this simple observation on the fact in the last few decades, the digital revolution and the information super highway dubbed the World Wide Web have ushered in incredible changes we could never have imagined some 30 or so years ago. Because of this, many things we used to take for granted have had to be re-engineered altogether to suit the changing times. Here is a simple example to illustrate the point: When I was an undergraduate and postgraduate student at the beginning of and in the mid-1970s, I never heard of journals online or used the Internet as an alternative to a library; not because I did not want to, but back then there was no Internet, e-books nor journals online. I guess even the word online had not been invented. The technology as we know it today was in its infancy and evolving. Today, even kindergarten kids are on the Internet, surfing for all sorts of things.

I once visited the Main Library (or the “lib” as students called it), and at the end of my tour, I made a remark which, I am afraid, was becoming a reality. I told the library staff that they had better prepare themselves for the days of a bookless library, adding as a joke, that sooner than later, hard copy books and other publications would be produced only for the museums and as collectors’ items. I said that “for now, books, newspapers and journals would continue to come in both electronic and hard copies”, but predicted that time was yonder when the electronic or soft copies will be the only versions available. Therefore, a visit to the library would cease to be an academic necessity, but a leisure activity like a walk in the park or to the woods. My listeners, as I expected, were skeptical, if not amused by such talk. Many in the audience must have thought I was daydreaming. That was about seven years ago. In fact, if some smart fellows asked me whether I was implying that libraries as we know them today were doomed to extinction, I think I would have given them an ambivalent answer, because then I was also not so sure I was right. It was just a gaze in the crystal ball.

As I put pen to paper, what at the time seemed to be a far-fetched idea and possibly the idle talk of a middle-aged man is slowly becoming today’s reality. On the other hand, I am sure there are many who would still insist that nothing beats a book in its hard copy version. They would argue that the beauty of a hard copy was in its convenience: you just walked to the shelf, pulled it out and read as and when you felt like. Unless lost or damaged, a book was always there any time you needed it. You did not need the complicated gadgetry of modern hi-tech to access a hard copy. To stretch the argument a little further, one would say that book stores had not yet closed shop, because books were no longer published as hard

copies. If anything, the book industry continued to boom, but cleverly combining old and new technology. Some would even liken it to what happened to the Post Office at the advent of the e-mail revolution. In spite of the rapid advances in communication, the Post Office was still alive and well. However, as the information and communication technology revolution continued to advance unabated, only time would tell what would happen in the future. My guess then was that books and other written materials would continue to be available in the hard copy, but also in the soft or electronic version. The rapid advances in technology notwithstanding, the traditional library still had a future and would continue to be the heart and soul of any reputable academic institution like Makerere University.

Makerere University Library has a long history, but I shall not delve into that. I will rather leave it to professional historians. My focus is on what happened there when I was Vice Chancellor. During my time, the university library system was made up of the Main Library opposite the Faculty of Agriculture and seven branch libraries located at Mulago, the Sir Albert Cook Medical Library; Kabanyolo; the School of Education; the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine; MISR; the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education and in the East African School of Library and Information Science. The Main Library was the seat of the head librarian, officially known as the University Librarian. I was reliably informed that the Main Library moved into the current building in 1959 after it was opened by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, during her visit to Uganda. It was extended in 1962 and again in 1972. Since then, there had been no further developments until 1997 when, hard pressed for space, James Mugasha, the long serving University Librarian, thought he could raise enough funds to add a new extension. His plan was quite ambitious. He wanted an eight-floor tower and a modification to the main entrance. Instead of facing west, he wanted to move the main entrance to the side where the small reading park is located, which is the south wing of the building. His idea was to finance the construction of the extension with the savings he was putting aside. He presented his proposal to me and as management, we advised him to conceptualise his ideas with costed architectural drawings. Determined to get things moving, he turned to Technology Consult (TECO), at the Faculty of Technology, to assist him with the architectural sketches. TECO promptly prepared the sketches and the provisional bills of quantity for him. The kind of extension he wanted was costed at more than three billion shillings. At the time, James Mugasha did not have that kind of money. He had hardly saved a billion shillings. All the same, he wanted to start straight away with the little he had in the account. The Senate Library Committee was solidly behind him too. Space in the main library had become an acute problem as the place was unacceptably over-crowded.

The existing library was designed with a sitting capacity of 1,100 readers. That was when Makerere had less than 3,000 students. Even during my undergraduate

days in the early 1970s, reading space in the Main Library was already a problem, especially during the examination season. Even then, to get a seat, we had to queue very early in the morning. Now, the student population was about ten times more. Besides, the library stock had reached 615,000 books, periodicals, monographs and other collections, and was still growing. The book bank over which the library had custody was also steadily expanding and, with the assistance of the World Bank and the African Virtual University, we established a digital library and more of the ICT was on the way. The scarcity of space was stretching the library resources beyond limit. Unfortunately for James Mugasha and the Library Committee, the University Council had passed a policy that no construction project would be approved unless at least a third of the funds required were available. The council passed the policy to avoid projects stalling and the attendant costly litigation filed by contractors for breach of contract. Mr Sam Byanagwa, the Deputy Secretary who was then in charge of the Project Implementation Office, was in no mood to listen to Mr Mugasha's pleas. He had seen projects stall due to lack of money and was not prepared to see more. The Institute of Statistics building besides the Faculty of Social sciences was a glaring example. The funds ran out when the building was still at the foundation stage. He stuck to the Council ruling and Mugasha had to look for the extra money. He was advised to put the project on hold until he had accumulated at least a billion shillings on the project's account. This was an unexpected setback, but it did not deter James Mugasha's enthusiasm.

During the celebrations to mark Makerere's Platinum Jubilee in 1997, President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, an old student and a classmate of the Senior Presidential Advisor on Media, Mr John Naggenda in the small single honours English class, was one of the prominent old Makerereans who attended the function held in the Freedom Square. He was in the company of the university's Chancellor, President Museveni. The library expansion was among the many needs the university presented to the two Heads of State. In his magnanimity and like a true old Makerere boy, President Mkapa made a personal pledge of US\$ 15,000 towards the library project and true to his promise, he sent the cheque. Besides auctioning a few items, like a beautiful exotic cow, President Museveni too made a personal pledge in the amount I do not recall. That pledge too was honoured. In spite of this hard fundraising drive, James Mugasha was still far short of the one billion shilling target, but he did not give up; he kept saving and, eventually, he had enough to start. In 2004, the contract was approved and awarded. However, on a rather sad note for Mr Mugasha, by the time work began, he had retired after a cool 23 years at the helm of the University Library Services. He was not there to see the project he had worked so hard for take off. The responsibility fell on the shoulders of his successor, Dr Maria Musoke.

Besides the usual services, the library has a little bindery housed in the basement of the Main Library building. Its main function is to repair and rebind

mutilated and old books and other documents in the library, damaged due to wear and tear. The unit employs a handful of skilled craftsmen and women and is headed by a head binder. Mr J. S. Musoke, a fine artist by training, had been the head binder for as long as I could remember and as far as the University Librarian was concerned, Musoke was quietly doing his job well. The one unintended spin-off that came out of our concerted efforts to revitalise the university was to stimulate staff to yearn for more training. I was overwhelmed by the number of staff members, both academic and non-academic, that were asking me for leave and money to go and study, either abroad or at Makerere. From academic staff, secretaries, custodians and even porters, all wanted to add value to their qualifications and skills. The evening programmes had opened up opportunities for many of them who would ordinarily not have qualified for study leave or funding from the university to study for a degree, a diploma or a certificate of one kind or another. Many were now using their spare time more profitably, by engaging in further studies. It was as if members of staff had realised that the days of magendo were long over and education had recaptured its rightful place in society. Good educational qualifications and skills were now being seen as the key to well-paying jobs and job security. Therefore, I was pleasantly surprised when one day Mr Musoke, the head binder, approached me with a request to allow him go and study for a Master of Arts degree in Fine Art. I was not really convinced that he needed a Masters degree for his current job, so I asked him why he thought that, for his kind of job and at his age, he needed a Masters degree. His answer was simple and honest. He thought that he needed new and modern knowledge and skills to enhance his job performance. I had nothing to add, but let him to go and try his luck. With all the determination he could marshal, he successfully completed the degree, graduated and returned to his job with new ideas.

There were many more members of staff in the library who also seized the opportunity offered by the evening programmes and registered not only for advanced degrees, but also for the undergraduate ones. Few names come to mind here. No doubt, Mr W.O. Okello was an excellent example of the new thinking that was sweeping across the campus. He had been a Library Assistant for ages and was advancing in years. He too did what, a few years ago, was unthinkable and registered for the BLIS degree. After the first degree, he went on to acquire a Masters degree. I suspect that at his age, very few would have wished to go back to school and subject themselves to the rigours of studying, perhaps alongside their sons and daughters. He defied the odds and before long he had acquired the degree and was soon rising through the ranks. There was also Ms E. Sendikaddiwa who graduated with a first class honours Bachelors of Library and Information Science and, by the time I retired, had completed the Masters degree and had registered for a PhD at Makerere. She had also collected a string of certificates and diplomas, including one she obtained from Ulm University in Germany. Others were Mrs

B. Sekabembe, a classmate of Sendikaddiwa; Margaret Namaganda; Constance Okello and Eva Kawalya. I know there were a lot more than space has allowed me to mention. Suffice it to say that although these old university employees, now budding with new qualifications, presented us with a new challenge of having to redesignate them within the university establishment; but I was happy to see so many of them take up the challenge to go back to school to improve their lot.

As an old educator, in them I saw a new breed of Ugandans who were once again putting a very high premium on their education. They were determined to go the extra mile to achieve their goals, regardless of age and other obstacles. I was again happy to have played a small part in facilitating the realisation of their dreams. I was not overly daunted by the fact that at one time we had a graduate sweeper in the East African School of Library and Information Science, a graduate custodian with a second class-upper division BA degree at the Postgraduate Hostel and another at the Faculty of Social Sciences. These were people who had decided to use their spare time to improve on their education and to make up for the opportunity they had lost in the past when the university could only admit a few students. However, before they went for study in the evenings, they had not sought permission or advice from the Vice Chancellor. By going to study for degrees, they had become over-qualified for their current positions and we had nowhere to put them. When Professor Apolo Nsibambi, as Minister of Education and Sports, came to address staff at the university in 1997, this was one of the issues the support staff raised. They accused the university administration for failing to recognise their achievements. Dr Mukwanason Hyuha had a good answer for them: employees did not determine the university's training needs, rather, the university determined its training needs. Those who had chosen to go for qualifications for which the university had sufficient capacity did so for their own pleasure and personal satisfaction. Therefore, the university was not duty bound to give them automatic promotion, especially when the positions they would be promoted to did not exist or were full. Although the answer seems to have satisfied the Minister, it was an embarrassing situation. It was a price we had to pay for opening up.

While in the past no librarian at Makerere would consider studying for a PhD as a worthwhile thing to do, I was happy to see it happen during my time. Bernard Bazirake paved the way by being the first to study for this degree and complete it successfully. Unfortunately, we could not keep him for long. After serving for a few years, he left Makerere and joined the African Institute for Capacity Development (ICAD) at Juja near Nairobi as an Information Specialist. Dr Maria Musoke who had been the deputy to Mr Mugasha, in charge of the Medical Library at Mulago, followed Dr Bazirake's example. She had been in the university library service for a long time. Over time, she took interest in gender issues as well. I guess that, in some way, this gave her the inspiration to go and study for the PhD. She took it

at the University of Sheffield in the UK and after completing it, she came back straight to her job. When time came for James Mugasha to throw in the towel and call it a day, she applied for his job and after satisfying the Appointments Board that she was the right person for the job, she was appointed University Librarian in 2005, thus making history by becoming the first Ugandan woman and the first PhD holder to be so appointed at Makerere. She took over from James who had served in that position for over two decades. He too had taken from another long-serving Tucker Lwanga who had been forced to flee the country when both Amin and Milton Obote's regimes were after his life. By the way, Tucker Lwanga later became a Minister in the Kabaka's Government at Mengo. I strongly believe that Dr Musoke's appointment set a precedent which was likely to remain the norm for future appointments to that position.

I recall the time when James Mugasha asked the University Council to regard the posts in the library. He presented the new nomenclature for the various grades of library staff, which at first was rather confusing. We seemed not to have understood the titles James Mugasha was asking the University Council to approve. In fact, the Council almost threw the whole thing out. It was after the University Librarian had provided a clear explanation that the University Council was able to approve the new titles. For example, in the new nomenclature, the post of Assistant Librarian became Librarian I. The real confusion was at the top position. What would the Chief Librarian become? Mugasha's answer was to change the title of the head librarian from Chief Librarian to University Librarian. When that was sorted out, the rest was easy. The rest became librarians of various grades. Some of us had proposed that, in keeping with modern trends, the Chief Librarian should be called Director of Library Services. Unfortunately, we did not have our way. The University Council went along with what the library had proposed. The nomenclature for all library staff was a tedious exercise with occasional complaints from staff who seemed unhappy with their new job grading. The exercise, however, went smoothly.

Personnel matters aside, when we took over the administration of the university, we found the Main Library building in bad state. It was originally a flat roofed building, a building style quite fashionable in the 50s and 60s but which had become a technical nightmare in the late 70s and 80s when the university ran out of money for general maintenance. The architects who designed the flat-roofed buildings did not take into account the hot, wet and humid tropical climate. I believe they assumed that money for maintenance was plentiful and would always be there. Unfortunately, those assumptions were wrong and the university had to pay a heavy price for their mistakes. Flat roofs require constant care, because as the top water-proofing material keeps ageing, they become more and more susceptible to leaking. Dry concrete suffers from two problems. It is a porous material and susceptible to leaking. Secondly, it has a tendency to retain water for

a long time. The retained water corrodes the reinforcement steel bars, which in turn weakens them. As a result, all university flat-roofed buildings started leaking profusely. In the 1980s, the previous University Administration decided to pitch all flat-roofed buildings with galvanized iron sheets. This was a stop-gap measure as they looked for better solutions. Unfortunately, most of the iron sheets were of a thin gauge and, in a relatively short time, they too started rusting and getting perforated.

Secondly, due to lack of financial resources at the time, there was no attempt to check the structural damage the concrete roof had suffered as a result of the leaks, which had gone on unchecked for many years. We had to face the consequences of the leaking roofs, especially when pieces of concrete detached from the ceiling in one of the staff flats on Luthuli House, belonging to the then Head of the Department of Community Practice, Dr F. W. Ndoboli. Big and heavy chunks of debris fell from the ceiling into his living room. Fortunately, no one was hurt as Dr Ndoboli and his family were out, but it was a gruesome experience. As expected, journalists picked up the story and published it. We were blamed for being negligent and not caring for staff welfare. To compound the situation, we had just bought an official car for the new University Secretary, Mr Avitus Tibarimbasa. That too became an issue. The journalists who wrote the story tried to drive it home that we were putting priority on the wrong things. But as I had been told years before, “when you take over leadership you inherit both its assets and liabilities”. I accepted the blame despite the fact that the problem of the leaking roofs was far more complex to solve than we had previously thought. Lincoln House was a case in point. What most people did not realise was that due to many years of neglect, we were now dealing with a gigantic problem that would cost the university billions of shillings to rectify. Unfortunately, the Government that was supposed to provide the money for maintenance had not heeded the old saying that “a stitch in time saves nine”, and money, and let me hasten to add saves life too.

Luthuli House was not a unique experience. Due to corrosion, most of the previously flat-roofed buildings had developed serious structural problems of one kind or another in the roofs. This became evident when we started renovating Lincoln House. At first the architects believed that despite the leaks, the roof was still structurally sound. When they started opening it up, they found a badly rotten roof slab, which had to be removed altogether if the integrity of the roof structure had to be maintained. This added more costs to the budget. Because the building was in such a state of disrepair, it cost almost a billion shillings to fix all the problems. Although the university's finances would not allow for the removal of the entire roof from the Main Library building, the water, which had been percolating through the concrete slab on top for years had damaged the sound-proofing cork on the ceiling. The cork tiles on the floor were also in

a sorry state and had to be replaced. Water from the leaking roof had damaged the cork tiles on the ceiling, but something else had damaged the sound-proof cork tiles on the floor. The stiletto heels of presumably female staff and students had done most of the damage. Apparently, the soft cork and the sharply pointed stiletto do not make good companions. Although it took the contractor a long time to find the original cork tiles, in the end we managed to replace all old floor and ceiling tiles with new ones. When the Government Treasury was still able to release some money to the university for capital development, we fixed most of the plumbing works and electrical installations in the library that had long broken down or decayed. The Main Library was given a further facelift during the Women's World Congress of July 2002.

You will recall that I had made a prediction that as the computer technology revolution continued to make the relentless progress, with new breakthroughs and advances never thought possible before, the library, as we know it today would probably be a thing of the past. I was happy to see some of my predictions come true when I was still the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University. Due to the chronic shortage of funds, the university had fallen behind on the subscriptions to the many journals that were once commonplace in the library. This had been a severe handicap to the researchers. Graduate students had no access to current journals and therefore, had difficulty updating literature for their theses. We had to do something drastic to reverse this appalling situation. It was totally unacceptable in a university of such repute as Makerere. When the Government of Uganda negotiated a loan from the African Development Fund in 1987 on behalf of the university, the library had been earmarked as one of the beneficiary units. As we shall see later, the idea back then was to automate the university's library system. For some reason, however, the negotiations with the bank seemed to have stalled for a while. Nevertheless, as we started thinking about an ICT master plan for the university in the late 1990s, automating the library became a priority once more. Again as we shall later, the Makerere Library Information System (MakLIBIS) was one of the four management information systems I presented to NORAD in 2000, under the Institutional Development Programme. Fortunately, the Swedish Agency for International Development and its research arm, Sida/SAREC, also took keen interest in the library automation project and agreed to co-fund the MakLIBIS. One of the objectives of the MakLIBIS project was to put the entire library stock catalogue in one database that would be available to all users online. This was a mammoth job that required specialised expertise and staff training. Among other donors we approached for support, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, agreed to provide additional funding for the project and pay some of the experts that trained staff. Unexpectedly, MakLIBIS turned out to be one of the biggest projects funded by Makerere's development partners and the first of the four information systems to come on stream. In addition, Sida/SAREC agreed to pay for the full text on-line journal or e-journal subscriptions, initially

for a period of three years. As a result, Makerere University had automatic access to over 8,000 journals, the entire stock of the British Library, the University of Bergen Library and the Cochran Virtual Library, among others.

Most academics do not seem to be divided on the definition of quality university education, but there seems to be discerning voices as to what constitutes quality and how it should be measured. One school of opinion strongly believes that in order to maintain quality, you must control enrolments and ensure that the available facilities match the student numbers. It goes as far as pointing to the numerous studies carried out over the years, which clearly indicate a strong negative correlation between quality education and large student numbers. On the other hand, some think that there is more to quality than facilities, low enrolments and sufficient professoriate. They point to the numerous examples of small universities scattered around the world that have the facilities, the right number of staff and students, and yet do not come anywhere near some mega universities in ranking. This school of thought argues that even with large enrolments, a good university can still offer quality education and that, given the big population growth rates, there is no way African public universities can avoid large numbers altogether. So, the best way forward is to confront the problem imaginatively rather than avoiding it or indulging in lamentations. The key word is innovation. Given the ever dwindling resources, African university leadership has to innovate ways of offering better education with less of the traditional resources. I am one of those who strongly believe that the solution lies in the new and emerging technologies. While making every effort to improve the traditional facilities like libraries, laboratories, classrooms and capacity to recruit and retain high quality staff, African universities have to invest more in ICT and new education technologies. Initially, the new technologies will be complementary to the traditional ways universities do things but, in time, they will become the dominant players in curriculum and service delivery. No doubt, ICT and other innovative technologies if applied wisely can ease the teaching of big classes, decongest over-crowded classrooms and campuses and in the same token help the institution address the issue of declining quality standards.

With well-developed ICT facilities, a professor does not even have to stand in front of a mob of students in an overcrowded and stuffy lecture to deliver a lecture. Interactive media takes care of that. A professor can sit in the comfort of his or her office and teach hundreds of students at the same time scattered in different locations. He or she can even post the lecture notes and assignment on the Intranet, if it exists. Technology also makes it possible to mark scripts. Many textbooks are increasingly becoming available on-line at much lower prices than the hard copies. The Internet too is now a rich source of information and a resource of teaching and learning materials. Africa is quickly learning to leap-frog technology and I see African universities doing the same by exploiting the

unprecedented opportunities ICT offers. As the automobile has replaced the horse drawn carriage, so will ICT replace much of the conventional university teaching and learning. Will it be at the cost of personal contact? My answer is probably “Yes” and “No”. Much as every student will not have direct contact with the professor, there will be sufficient personal support of all kinds for students to fall back on.

During my time at Makerere, we had begun to take small steps in that direction, the library being the starting point. Besides its relatively rich collection, the library embarked on a serious ICT programme which had as one of its objectives, to provide Internet and e-mail services to both staff and students. To this end, a local area network (LAN) of 171 points was installed in the Main Library and was constantly upgraded to meet the increasing demand. This was in addition to what in the trade is called the Virtua-ILS (virtual integrated library system), again for use by both staff and students. We had been fortunate to have attracted funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to support some of these initiatives. Besides supporting the MakLIBIS project, the USAID provided funds which facilitated the library's establishment of a digital repository for the Africa regional courses based in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. As we shall see later, these courses were being offered as part of a network of universities in Africa, Makerere being one of them, and Tufts University in the USA. Through this initiative, the Main Library was able to acquire a special server to host digital content of the courses, a high speed scanner, as well as video and digital cameras to digitise all the material. In addition, two members of the library staff went to Tufts University in Boston, USA to train in the creation and presentation of the digital contents of these courses. However, as the library acquired more and more of the new technology, it became evident that more power was needed. The existing line was no longer able to deliver enough power to meet the increasing demand. The Main Library needed an additional power line to supplement the existing one, but we did not have the money to pay for it. Sida/SAREC was kind enough to come to our aid again in this regard. Slowly but surely, the library was taking a giant leap from medieval times into the modern age.

As the library embraced ICT and other modern technologies, it became clear to us that the new technology had to be backed with well-trained staff in order to use the technology effectively and efficiently. James Mugasha had an ambitious plan. He wanted every professional librarian working in the University Library to be computer literate and skilled in all aspects of the ICT the library was acquiring. That, in some way, meant that the Librarians had to have a fair knowledge of the software behind the technology. How to do it was the issue. It would require a lot of money to train all professional librarians, especially as many of them did not even have the rudiments of ICT application, let alone ever having used a

computer. Fortunately for James Mugasha, NORAD and Sida/SAREC embraced the idea and promised to provide the necessary funding for staff training. With funding secured, it was now possible to mount end-user ICT training courses for librarians in and outside Uganda. The courses were both short- and long-term.

Outside Uganda, University of Bergen in Norway provided short-term training in information security and inter-library loan systems, while the University of Cape Town in South Africa ran the training on Library Automation, and another university in USA held programmes on Managing the Virtual-ILS. Since a PhD had become a useful degree for the librarian, some of them chose to specialise in various aspects of ICT and other library technologies at the PhD level as part of the long-term training. For instance, in 2003, two members of the professional library staff went to the Swedish Institute of Library and Information at Borås for their PhD in ICT Application in the Library. At the time of my departure in 2004, the two members of staff were still in Sweden completing their PhDs. NORAD, under the Institutional Development Programme, paid for most of the short-term training in and outside Uganda. It also provided the Main Library with funds to stabilise the erratic power supply that was adversely affecting the new equipment, and for the purchase of some 32 computers for the exclusive use of the library's professional and administrative staff. At the same time, the Carnegie Corporation of New York paid for the installation of some of the new equipment and the setting up of Local Area Networks in the Main Library and in the science-based sub-libraries at Mulago, Kabanyolo, the Vet School and the School of Education.

With the same Carnegie support, the library acquired a number of centralised CD-Rom servers which the staff and students could access any time of the day through the university's Wide Area Network, MakNet and an automated document delivery system known as the ARIEL, through which the Makerere University Main Library could access other university libraries worldwide. Closer home, the Uganda Telecommunication Limited (UTL as it is popularly known by the public) also donated 28 computers, which were used to set up a fully networked staff and graduate student-only computer laboratory.

I believe that every person who has studied at Makerere and has ever been in the Main Library must have seen the huge wooden chests of drawers in the reception area. Ever since I first set my foot in the Library as an undergraduate student in July 1970, the chests have changed positions a couple of times. These chests and their contents constitute the entire Main Library catalogue and for many years Mrs Ruth Kamya, the Chief Cataloguer, was in charge of them. Inside these imposing chests of drawers were thousands of printed cards, each representing a book in the library's collection, with detailed information about every book on the shelves printed on them. The chests were made from high quality attractive hard wood. They were also a showcase of high quality craftsmanship. However,

with the changing times, these once beautiful wooden chests had started looking antiquated and out of place. To say the least, these fit-for-museum pieces of wood and their contents were slowly becoming an eyesore to some of us. In my many journeys around the world, I had seen better things and I was determined to see the whole cataloguing system modernised. As part of the library modernisation process, which we had initiated with donor funding, the entire catalogue was fully automated and could be accessed from any part of the world via the World Wide Web. Although the wooden chests remained where they had always been, they were now more of monuments to the days gone by.

As I conclude what I had to say about the University Library, I was proud to see the library establish collaborative linkages with university libraries abroad much in the same way the academic departments did. At the time of my departure, the library had established links with the University of Bergen Library in Norway, the old Uppsala University in Sweden and the University of Tennessee in the USA. Through the automated system, it became possible for the library to exchange information data and other materials electronically. If all this had amounted to low or falling standards at Makerere, as some have continued to allege, then I must have been walking around with the wrong definition of quality university education in my head. I must admit though that initially not every member of staff, let alone the students, was familiar with the new system. That was the next challenge: to ensure that both staff and students made optimal use of all these modern services we had put in place for their benefit. What had happened in the library was to me nothing short of an outstanding achievement. It was value-addition to the academic wellbeing of the university at its best, and all that was achieved in a space of three years.

As the key fundraiser and ultimately the person responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of the projects in the library and the rest of the university, I could hardly hide my joy about this success story. Admittedly, it was hard work, but much of the credit goes to James Mugasha and his staff. If my colleagues and I have left any legacy behind, the introduction of ICT in the library was no doubt a part of that legacy. However, time will tell whether all that investment was well worth it. Having left behind such a modern ICT infrastructure, I want to believe that James Mugasha too retired a happy and satisfied man. I pray that those who will be coming after us in the years ahead will keep the drive for modernisation and innovation going. Makerere cannot afford to regress.

### **Faculty of Science – Where it all Started**

A short walking distance northwards from the Main Library stands the Faculty of Science, one of the oldest academic units at Makerere. In terms of student numbers and academic opportunities within its BSc programme, the Faculty of

Science is currently the largest among the science-based faculties. This is where I studied and where I started my teaching, research and long administrative career. The car park at the entrance marks the end of the almost one-kilometre-long University Road, which begins at the university's Main Gate at the south end of the institution. Standing majestically in the round-about island directly opposite the faculty's car park is a bronze statue of Uganda's crested crane sitting on her hatching eggs.

Started in 1970 to commemorate the inauguration of Makerere University as a national university, work on the sculpture stalled when money ran out during the difficult days of Idi Amin. The artist, George Kakooza of the Margaret Trowell School of Fine Art, who had been commissioned to craft it, died before completing it. However, by some remarkable coincidence, one of his sons who also studied Fine Art returned from Britain after completing his studies and was interested in completing the work his father left unfinished. When I met him for the first time, he told me that for a long time he had been concerned about his father's unfinished work. Now that he was a qualified artist in his own right, he believed he could complete the unfinished statute in memory of his late father but he was not sure whether, after more than twenty years, the University was still interested in completing it. If we were interested, he was ready to complete the work, but our problem was where to find the financial resources for the job. Since the statute had been such a glaring eyesore for so long, there was no way I could turn his offer down, although I was not sure we could find the money. Fortunately, the University Bursar who was equally eager to see the statue completed, though belatedly, was able to find money and the young Kakooza managed to finish what his father had started. We were happy to see the bronze statute which had stood unfinished for so long completed and now waiting for the elements to give it the malachite colour typical of old bronze statues.

As one of the old faculties, the Faculty of Science too had had its fair share of the university's ups and downs. During Makerere's hey days, the faculty had enjoyed some glorious moments, only to be cut short by the unfortunate events that befell the country in the 1971. However, as the university began to recover, those long lost glorious times were also slowly on their way back. Before the chaos that befell the country following the coup of 1971, all the departments in the faculty used to be a hive of serious and high quality research, with an impressive publication output; and although research output somehow declined in the difficult years of the '70s and part of the '80s, it never quite fizzled out altogether. In fact, by the time I left the university in 2004, the faculty was once again one of the prolific centres of research at Makerere. It also boasted of an array of buildings, some almost as old as the university itself and some quite new. The Department of Geology, located behind the Math-Science building and the Goodman Laboratory which now houses the Institute of Environment and Natural

Resources, were some of the oldest buildings in the faculty and the university as whole, some of them dating back to the 1920s and 1930s. The impressive and imposing JICA building located in what used to be the Faculty of Agriculture car park is one of the latest additions. However, despite the many graduates it had produced over the years, the faculty had never had a Ugandan (or an African for that matter) as Head of Department until 1969 when Professor William Banage was appointed Head of the Department of Zoology, followed by Professor John Ilukor as Head of Physics in 1971. It took another five or so years before John Ilukor was appointed its first Ugandan dean in 1974. By then, William Banage had fled into exile. John Ilukor was followed by the mathematical logician, Jakery Oker, who served for a short while before going into exile. By then, most of the expatriate professors had left the university. Professor Albert James Lutalo Bosa, a biochemist and now Vice Chancellor of Kyambogo University took over the reins from Dr Jekeri Okee. Professor Paul Mugambi, a mathematician, was the fourth Ugandan to head the faculty as dean. He was followed by another mathematician, Professor Livingstone Serwadda Luboobi, who later succeeded me as Makerere's ninth Vice Chancellor. When he completed his term after eight years, Professor Hannington Oryem Origa, a botanist took over.

The Faculty of Science also boasts of another first. It was the first faculty in the university to produce two Vice Chancellors in succession. In all, it has so far produced four Vice Chancellors; two for Makerere (Ssebuwufu and Luboobi), one for Kyambogo (Lutalo Bosa) and one for Busitema (Mary Nakandha Okwakol, the zoologist). To my recollection, Dr Mary Okwakol was the first Ugandan woman to be appointed full professor in the faculty. No doubt, that is a record to be proud of. The Faculty of Medicine and the School of Education come a close second. Each has produced two Vice Chancellors for Makerere. Medicine had Professors Joseph Lutwama and George Kirya, while the School of Education had Asavia Wandira and William Sentenza Kajubi. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine has also produced two, but for the outside – Professor Fred Kayanja, the founding Vice Chancellor of Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Dr Penmug Nyeko, the first Vice Chancellor of Gulu University. The rest of the faculties are yet to produce a Vice Chancellor for Makerere.

Metaphorically speaking, the faculties that have not yet had a share of the topmost executive position in the university could borrow a leaf from the Baganda and their kingdom. In the evolution of the Buganda Kingdom, the Baganda realised early that there was a danger inherent in the practice allowing one out of the 50 or so clans to monopolise the monarchy, because that would make the lucky clan believe it was the ruling clan and therefore the superior clan the rest would be subservient to it. The ruling clan, so they argued, would be too powerful and would dominate, and possibly terrorise, the rest of the clans with impunity. To overcome this problem, they chose to open up the throne

to all clans. However, for this to happen, the Baganda made an exception to their long-cherished patrilineal inheritance tradition, which dictated that all children belonged to their father's clan. However, the king's children, the princes and princesses belonged to their mother's clan, thus making the royal family matrilineal. This opened up the opportunity and possibility for every clan to produce a king. The catch was that for a clan to have one of their own on the throne, they had to ensure that the reigning king took one of their daughters for a wife. The other catch was that the girl had to be stunningly beautiful to attract the king's eye. It was then up to the girl to bear a son for the king. Since the prince inherited the mother's totem, when he became king the clan had every reason to celebrate for having produced a king. Likewise, for the faculties that have yet to produce a Vice Chancellor for Makerere, all they have to do is to nurture people with the kind of attributes required of a Vice Chancellor and hope that when the time comes to choose a new Vice Chancellor, their person makes the best impression on the Search Committee, the Senate, the University Council and, of course the Chancellor, who has the final say in the appointment of a Vice Chancellor. Under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001, which replaced the Makerere University Act of 1970, such a scenario is now possible.

The faculty's fortunes turned for the better when the university put it on the list of the faculties that were to benefit from the rehabilitation grant which the European Union had extended to the university in the early 1990s. The massive EU-funded rehabilitation programme saw many of the faculty's buildings, some in a near-dilapidated state, receive a facelift they had not had in decades. Although the faculty was in need of additional space, the EU grant was for rehabilitation only. As we have seen, the JICA building was the only new building in the Faculty of Science. As Vice Chancellor and an ex-member of staff of the faculty, I toyed with the idea of soliciting funds for my old faculty for years without success. I must admit that was one of my glaring failures. My good donors could not give me money to put up another building in the Faculty of Science when there were other far more needy faculties. The best I could do was to facelift a few buildings, particularly during the Women's Congress of 2002.

My failure notwithstanding, by the time I took over as Vice Chancellor in 1993, most of the buildings in the faculty were in reasonable shape, having received a facelift a few years earlier. All flat roofs had been properly pitched with thick gauge iron sheets and the structural damage to the ceiling slabs, caused by the leaking roofs, had been taken care of. Even the moss that had found a home on the red burnt clay tiles on the roof of the old Zoology building had been washed off. However, for some reason, the Physics building, the Goodman Laboratory, the Cow Shed and the old Department of Geology stores had been excluded from the EU-funded rehabilitation. I never quite understood why this was so. I suspect

that they had been left out either because they were considered too old to spend money on or because they already had pitched roofs and, unlike the flat-roofed buildings, were not at imminent risk of collapsing. It was also possibly true that budget over-run was the real reason for their exclusion though no one could tell. On his first official visit to the Faculty of Science in 1994 or thereabout, I recall Dr (now Professor) Yusuto Kaahwa, then Head of Physics Department, taking me around the building. I could clearly see that the building needed some urgent attention. The exterior had not received a single coat of paint in decades. Small cracks had developed in some parts of the building and the flat-topped eaves were leaking, in addition to many other minor problems that had to be fixed. I promised to do something as soon as I could but, frankly, I was not sure where the money would come from. The Goodman Laboratory, at that time, was shared between Geology and Zoology; the Cow Shed and the Geology stores had to wait for the new developments that came later. As luck would have it, the Ministry of Finance had not yet frozen the university's capital budget, and trickles of money were still coming in. With funds from the small capital development budget, we were able to make good on our promise to have these buildings also rehabilitated. The Physics building was in the worst state of disrepair and yet it was the only building the department had, so it came first on our priority list. In fact, it was saved in the nick of time because, in the 1996/97 financial year, the Ministry of Finance froze the university's capital budget, save for few minor items; and that marked the end of our efforts to rehabilitate the remaining buildings there until much later under new initiatives. For the Goodman Laboratory, the much needed repairs came when it changed hands from the Departments of Geology and Zoology respectively to the new Institute of Environment and Natural Resources.

Dr Eldad Tukahirwa, the first Director of the Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (MUIENR), had been busy cultivating new friends for his young institute. The institute had outgrown the small space which as a rookie Head of Department, I had given to them in the Department of Chemistry in 1987. The enrolment on the new MSc in Environmental Science programme was steadily growing. At the same time, the institute was recruiting more staff who needed offices, laboratories and lecture rooms. Back then, I had given them the two-in-one office, previously occupied by the UNDP/UNESCO Chief Technical Advisor in the main Chemistry building to kick-start the young institute. Now, the rapidly growing institute was in dire need of additional space and the former Director, Dr Eldad Tukahirwa, was constantly asking me to find him space for his institute. It was not easy to find free space within the Faculty of Science, as every building there was fully utilised. The only building I could think of was the Goodman Laboratory. The question was whether we would be able to persuade the Geology and Zoology Departments to surrender their old building to MUIENR; and supposing they did, where would the money to

repair it come from? Since I was not directly responsible for space allocation, I was about to offload the problem to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Justin Epelu Opiyo, the man in charge of space allocation, for an answer. But just before I did, Dr Tukahirwa came back to me with very good news. The USAID had promised him a grant, part of which he could use to renovate any old building I could find for him. As much as the news of the USAID grant was good news, I had to tell him that I could not find a free old building. As if we were of like mind, he suggested the Goodman Laboratory. I warned him that convincing both Geology and Zoology to give him the laboratory would be a hard drive, indeed a hard bargain. Understandably so, departments did not give up their space easily when they too were under pressure for additional space. I thought he was asking for the impossible.

Although Eldad Tukahirwa had come to MUIENR from Zoology, he was now seen as an outsider by the department. He hardly had any say or influence there anymore. There was no way he could convince his former colleagues to give up the Goodman Laboratory. Nevertheless, we decided to test the waters. I told him, without promising anything, that I would discuss his request with the heads of the two departments. Initially, when I floated the idea to the two heads, it looked like I was taking a leap in the dark; but as we continued talking, the impossible began to look possible. Geology was not much of a problem, after all the most of the department had shifted to the new JICA building. Zoology was the harder nut to crack. Although Dr Boniface Makanga, the Head of Zoology was not totally opposed to the idea of giving up the laboratory, he had to sell our request to his colleagues and that was not going to be easy. As Head of Department, he had to convince his colleagues that giving up the Goodman Laboratory was the right thing to do when they too needed it for teaching and students laboratory work. Makanga found himself in a real dilemma. I also realised that, by imposing Tukahirwa's request on him, I risked losing an old time good friend. Makanga and I had been buddies for a long time and we had weathered the hard times together. Now here I was, putting pressure on him to give up one of their assets in return for nothing. Was that a sensible thing to do? Some of his colleagues were least amused by what they saw as an encroachment on the few assets their department had. Fortunately, after some tough discussions in the department, we reached an amicable understanding. Zoology agreed to relinquish its wing in the Goodman Laboratory to Tukahirwa's young institute. Now that he had now found the perfect old building he was looking for and had the money to rehabilitate it, all we had to do was to put Tukahirwa's proposal before the University Council, which owns all university assets, for consideration and approval.

The University Council allocated the entire Goodman building to MUIENR. That freed the space the institute was occupying in the Chemistry Department. As much as the transfer of the Zoology part of the Goodman Laboratory to

MUIENR was an amicable decision within his department, Dr Makanga was still accused by some of selling out and failing to stand firm against my pressure. I also lost a friend or two in Zoology. In fact, I heard some bizarre and unfortunate stories told about me by some members of staff there, some of them quite senior, that I was the most corrupt Vice Chancellor they had ever known. True or false, that happened to be the impression this episode created in the minds of some members of staff there. I suppose it is the kind of risks associated with the job of Vice Chancellor, or any manager for that matter. As a manager, you cannot please everyone all the time. When you are a leader, you sometimes have to make unpopular but essential decisions. True to Dr Tukahirwa's word, the money for rehabilitation came and, before long, the Goodman building was looking as good as new with offices, a small chemical laboratory, computer rooms, GIS rooms, a library as well as student study rooms. The disused animal yard behind the Goodman building was turned into a parking lot and stores. The monkeys the Department of Zoology used to keep there for experimental purposes had escaped into the wild in the 1970s and had become a menace at the Vice Chancellor's residence. From the animal yard, the monkeys found a new home in the small forest below the Vice Chancellor's Lodge, the only remaining portion of an indigenous tropical forest at Makerere. There they settled and started fending for themselves, feeding mostly on the Vice Chancellor's food and fruits in the compound. Some of them had become so daring that they could enter the kitchen and grab whatever food they could find, including bread and rice. Even the loud barks of our dog could not scare them away.

The transfer of the Goodman Laboratory to MUIENR meant that the institute now had a home of its own while still being part of the Faculty of Science; autonomy came later. However, shortly after the institute had moved into the new premises came the bad news that Dr Tukahirwa, the man who had worked so hard to get the institute off the ground and had found money to rehabilitate the Goodman Laboratory, was leaving Makerere for a regional job with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), based in Nairobi. Tukahirwa's departure was most unexpected and so took us by surprise. Moreover, he was resigning shortly after putting in his papers for promotion to the rank of full professor and, by the look of things, the process was proceeding fast and in his favour. He had met all the requirements for the promotion. Unfortunately, he did not wait for this promotion and this was to his own undoing because the process had to be halted when he resigned. Given the fact that he got his PhD in Entomology from the University of Cambridge and that he had an excellent track record at Makerere, it was not surprising that an organisation like IUCN could spot him; and although we were losing him, we were happy to see one of our own appointed to such a high profile international position. We wished him the best of luck in his new position in Nairobi.

Naturally, the vacuum left by Dr Tukahirwa's departure had to be filled quickly. As could rightly be guessed, the replacement also came from Zoology. Dr. Pantaleo Kasoma (or PMB as we used to call him), also a Cambridge PhD graduate, was the kind of person we thought could equally steer the young institute and as it turned out, we did not make a bad choice. Most of the developments that took place in the institute after Tukahirwa's departure were all Kasoma's effort. A hard worker, PMB was as enthusiastic about the job as Eldad Tukahirwa was. For both Tukahirwa and Kasoma, Professor Derrick Pomeroy was there to assist as Deputy Director. With Kasoma now in control, Tukahirwa's sudden departure had no adverse effect on the progress of the young institute.

A few years later, the Makerere University Biological Field Station (MUBFS) based in Kibale Forest National Park in Kabarole District, also came under the management of the institute. Originally, it had been run by the Dean of Science in conjunction with the Zoological Society of New York, with most of the funding provided by the USAID. For many years, students from Harvard University in the USA had been visiting the Field Station to study primates in the wild. The Americans liked the facility so much that one of the first residents when the field opened was a Harvard scholar from the Harvard Museum of Natural History. Makerere University had two resident members of staff from the Faculty of Science, Dr Gilbert Isabirye Basuuta of the Zoology Department and Dr John Kasenene from the Botany Department. For a long time, Dr Gilbert Basuuta Isabirye acted as Director of the Station, while John Kasenene acted as Deputy Director. However, the time came when we thought the two men should change roles. This gave a chance to Dr Kasenene, a native of Kabarole District, to act as Director with Isabirye as his deputy. The Makerere University Biological Field Station had a Board of its own, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, which included representation from the then Department of Forestry, among others. Over the years, the facility had become a world-class centre of research on primates generally, and in particular the chimpanzees. In fact, the station had become very popular among students and researchers from Europe and the USA, as well as Makerere staff and students. Long before Dr Oryem Origa became full Professor of Botany and Dean of Science, he had spent most of his research time there as a PhD student on studying the physiology of the wild coffee bean germination.

Wild coffee is plentiful in the Kibale National Park forest and forms part of the diet of the resident primates. The station was a well-organised, totally self-sustaining facility, located at the fringes of Kibale Forest Reserve which later became the Kibale National Park away from civilisation. It was located next to the offices and residences of the Forest Department staff who later joined the Kibale National Park establishment. To our dismay, when Kibale forest was declared a national park, the Uganda National Parks Trust wanted to kick us out

of our station and take over the premises. We had to bargain hard to retain it as a Makerere University facility. As the volume of work kept piling, we decided to send in two more resident members of staff, an accountant and an administrative assistant, to assist Dr Isabirye Basuuta and Dr Kasenene with the administrative and financial duties. Initially, the station relied on solar panels for its electricity supply, but when we realised that the power output was inadequate for all its growing needs, we had to find a way of extending the power mains from Kabarole to the station. We were lucky to have found the money.

Like the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Science had incubated several academic units over the years and as soon as they reached sufficient academic maturity, they broke away from the faculty and became autonomous entities. We came across some examples earlier. During my time as Vice Chancellor, the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources also joined the growing list of the academic units the Faculty of Science had nurtured to maturity and which had gone their separate ways. However, this time the separation did not come easy. For MUIENR, the road to full autonomy was long and bumpy, involving hard and sometimes frustrating negotiations between the institute and the faculty; understandably so because the faculty had recently lost the Institute of Computer Science. In the 1970s, it had lost the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics and it seemed this time the faculty was in no mood to relinquish MUIENR and, with it, MUBFS. I guess some people there had had enough of the break-aways. It was as if they were saying that, this time, we are determined to hold on to our institute and our Field Station at Kibale at all costs.

As much as the resistance was real and understandable, the faculty had to comply with the University Council's policy which required all institutes operating under the faculties that wished to become autonomous to do so. After several meetings in the faculty, an agreement was reached and the necessary documentation done and presented to Senate for consideration. Senate wasted no time. It recommended to Council that MUIENR be granted full autonomy. The University Council agreed with the Senate recommendation and, in the academic year 2001/2002, MUIENR became an independent institute with its own Faculty Board and its Director took his seat as a full member of the University Senate. Panta Kasoma had done his legwork well. However, as a department under the Faculty of Science, the small establishment it had been allocated many years ago had become a serious sticking. The Director wanted more posts, but as a department which it was equivalent to before it became an autonomous institute, the Establishment and Administration Committee of Council had found it difficult to justify the extra posts, especially so when some positions had remained unfilled since they were established.

Autonomy meant that the institute was now free to create new and specialised units or departments, each with its own establishment. Before it was granted

autonomy, MUIENR had no undergraduate degree programmes. It was essentially a research and postgraduate training institute. Besides the PhD, the consultancy and advisory services and a few Postgraduate Diplomas it was running only one Masters degree programme in Environmental Science. Now autonomous, it was ready to roll out new programmes.

Although MUIENR had a slow start in 1987, by the late 1990s it had come close to being a household name in the environmental circles. It now had more staff and some had gone out for their PhDs in far places like the Institute of Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE) in Delft in the Netherlands. The current Director, Dr Frank Kansiime, is one of the graduates of the Delft-based UNESCO-IHE. I also recall a few members of staff in the institute who, for a long time, seemed to have lost appetite for the PhD, perhaps for lack of the opportunity, deciding to go for it. Dr Eliezar Kateyo is a case in point. After several years of teaching and doing research, he finally obtained his PhD in 1999.

Several organisations, both public and private, were constantly consulting the institute on the various aspects of environmental management and protection. When the Government of Uganda made the protection of the environment a top priority, all major development projects had to be subjected to an environmental impact assessment (or EIA as it is popularly called in the trade) before they were implemented. The institute had become a key player in this area and as the demand for the EIA services grew, it decided to introduce a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Impact Assessment to train specialists in this area. It also worked closely with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), of which I was the Board of Directors Chairman for six years. Perhaps less known to the public was the institute's contribution to the protection of the wetlands nationwide. Wetlands gained prominence in Uganda after the institute carried out research that demonstrated that wetlands were critical to the wellbeing of the environment and to the ecosystems they supported. Paul Mafabi was a pioneer student in this field and, after his MSc, he joined the former Department of the Environment, which was later elevated to a full ministry. When the Government restructured and streamlined the ministries, Environment went back to its original status as one of the units making up the new Ministry of Lands, Water and Environment. Mafabi stuck in. He saw to the enactment of the Wetlands Act by the Parliament of Uganda, which NEMA was mandated to implement, and the setting up of a Wetlands Division within the ministry. There are many other areas where MUIENR has played, and continues to play, a key role. Most of the District Environmental Officers dotted around the country have had their graduate training in the institute. The once two-man and two-office institute that begun its life in the Department of Chemistry in 1987 had succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. I was happy to have provided the cradle when I had just assumed the headship of the department.

Makerere University is an institution that never runs out of friends. As the institute expanded, some development partners noticed and began to take a keen interest in its activities. As seen before, USAID was one of them. The other was the Danish Agency for International Development (DANIDA). The Danes, through DANIDA, kicked in support for the study of the genetic mapping up of Uganda's wild life. In broad terms, the project aimed at establishing the diversity of the genetic pool of some key animals in Uganda's National Parks. As we now know, it is possible to identify animal and plant species, and determine how different species are from one another, using the relatively young science of Genetics and Molecular Biology. It was an ambitious research project that was likely to go on for many years.

DANIDA made it possible for MUIENR to acquire a state-of-the-art Molecular Biology laboratory for this and other projects. The Wild Life Genetics project relied heavily on the tools of Molecular Biology. Besides Professor Lubega's Molecular Biology laboratory in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, the university had no other Molecular Biology laboratory where this kind of work could be done. Lubega's laboratory was set up for a different type of research and therefore could not accommodate a project of this nature. We had to set up one for MUIENR. DANIDA had promised to provide the funds to renovate an old building, if we could identify one, and to equip the laboratory. However, as a policy, it could not provide funds for constructing a new building. Like Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* of the old, the Director and his staff came back to lobby for more space. Frankly, this time, I had nothing to offer. I had exhausted all options and the university did not have money for constructing a new laboratory. I almost told Director Kasoma that if DANIDA was not willing to give them money for a new building, they should forget the project, but I clearly understood the kind of repercussions such a decision would have had on our donor community. The university still needed their support. An incident one donor experienced with the university administration could have had a ripple effect on the rest, so I quickly backed off the idea of looking around for another old structure and braced myself for another war with my colleagues at the Faculty of Science.

After scouting around, we identified one small old building in the Faculty of Science complex. As could rightly be guessed again, it was the Department of Zoology's cow shed, so called because of its odd shape. It was located between Physics and the Goodman building, which was now home to MUIENR. The cow shed was roofed with asbestos in the years when asbestos was still a fashionable roofing material. After the bruises Dr Makanga and I had sustained over the Goodman building, I had reason to tread very carefully. I did not want to antagonise my colleagues in Zoology again any more than was necessary. We had to convince them that the new Molecular Biology laboratory would be open to them too. My colleagues proved me wrong. My sixth sense told me

that they gave in easily either because they did not want to fight the university administration any more or they saw real value in the new laboratory. Whatever was the case, I was grateful they spared me nasty words after all as, to some, I was a corrupt man. The University Council handed over the cow shed to MUIENR and renovation began almost immediately. When the equipment started arriving, we had another problem on our hands. We had to find money to pay the taxes the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) had levied on them. Mr Ben Byambazi, the University Bursar struggled hard to find the money. In fact, taxes had become a real problem for the university. Because we did not always have ready money to pay the taxes and the tax exemption the university used to enjoy had been withdrawn, it had become too difficult to clear goods through customs. The consequence was the unnecessarily long delays in getting vital project supplies out of the bonded warehouses. There were times we had no money at all and yet the URA was insisting that it could only release the goods after we had paid the taxes. Some of the supplies were sensitive reagents like enzymes or radio isotopes with very short half-life, which required quick clearance or being kept frozen to prevent them from denaturing. On many occasions, the URA had released them when they were already denatured or expired. It was always a frustrating struggle to get goods out of Entebbe Airport. Finally, and after a lot of hassle, every piece of equipment was delivered and installed. I was more than pleased when I was invited to commission the new Molecular Biology laboratory and to see some of the exciting research work done there by both staff and PhD students. I was equally happy to see the MUIENR staff working with professors and other researchers at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark on the project.

As seen earlier, there was a time when many departments in the Faculty of Science and the university as a whole did not have a single Masters degree by course work and thesis. For many years, staff shortages, equipment and other necessary logistics could not allow the science-based faculty to mount taught postgraduate programmes. In fact, the Faculty of Science was very slow to offer taught MSc degrees. Even the MSc degrees by thesis alone were being offered on a limited scale as most of the equipment in departments was old, obsolete or had long broken down and could not be repaired. Even under the old system when a Masters degree award was based on a research thesis alone, there were departments within the Faculty of Science that had never produced an MSc graduate even though they had been around for a while. However, all that was about to change in the 1990s and beyond. The university's changing fortunes were giving impetus to every department to mount a postgraduate degree programme. As we shall see later, the Faculty of Science was one of the major beneficiaries of the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) assistance to the university. NUFU provided a lot of new equipment for research and teaching. Additional new equipment came from the loan the Government of Uganda had secured from the African Development Bank. The university too found some

money and augmented the efforts of NUFU and the Government, but years of neglect made whatever new equipment coming in just a drop in the ocean. To modernise all laboratories in the faculty, the cost ran into millions of dollars. To compound the problem further, very few donors had interest in supporting pure sciences. Many donors could not link the pure sciences to national development. As much as I tried to convince my development partners to extend support to the Faculty of Science, I was just pulling blanks. Pure sciences were hard to sell, yet they are the foundation for all the applied sciences. Nevertheless, with the little new equipment and some of the old ones that were still in good working condition, the opportunity for research and graduate training was not lost on the faculty.

The numerous linkages the faculty had forged with some universities abroad in the recent years, particularly with the Norwegian universities made it possible for its staff to collaborate with colleagues abroad on joint research projects and to spend time doing part of their work which required sophisticated equipment in the laboratories of those universities. The university's policy to peg promotion on publications added more impetus to the faculty's research activities. Here, I shall mention a few examples to illustrate the point. The Solid State group in the Department of Physics, under Professor Yusto Kaahwa, built a strong research programme on thin films.

The Energy group in the same department had also developed a strong research programme on renewable energy and some members of this research group were collaborating with the old University of Uppsala in Sweden. Dr Tom Oriti's PhD was based on this collaborative research. Equally exciting work was coming out of the Nuclear Physics group. Dr Akisophel Kisolo's work led to the award of a Makerere University PhD in Physics in 2003.

Geophysics is not a discipline with a strong appeal amongst postgraduate students, but a very important one, especially in mineral exploration and seismology – the science associated with earthquakes. Dr Ezra Twesigomwe's research work was mainly in this field. He is one of the few geophysicists Uganda has and, for his PhD which he obtained in 1998, he made extensive use of the good facilities of the University of Bergen in Norway. Dr Eric Muchunguzi, now at Kyambogo University, was another one of those students who did outstanding work. His PhD research was on "The Application of Optical Activity and the Faraday Effect to the Analysis of the Quality of Vegetable and Mineral Oil". In fact, the oil industry took a keen interest in his work. By the time I left Makerere in 2004, he was trying to patent his discovery. Part of this work was done in the Physics Department at Makerere under the watchful eye of Professor Yusto Kaahwa and at the University of Bergen in Norway in Professor E. A. Hammer's laboratory. Professor Kaahwa had wanted to continue with this work, but lacked a vital piece of equipment – a tenable laser – and had asked me if I could help him

get one. I thought I had found him some money to buy one but unfortunately, for one reason or other, I was let down by my colleagues in the Purchasing Department. I left the university before the equipment was delivered to him.

Having been an active researcher at some point in my career and knowing its critical importance in an academic institution, research was something I took very seriously. In fact, whenever I could find the time, I tried to assist some graduate students with their research. Dr George Nyakairu, an Industrial Chemistry graduate, was one of Professor Kaahwa's graduate students I assisted. After his MSc at Makerere, he went to Austria for his doctorate. His research on clays had been my research interest for many years. He successfully completed his MSc in a relatively short time and together with his supervisor, published a couple of papers. It was indeed gratifying for me to see the Department of Physics which, for several years had almost given up active and serious research, bounce back in such a dramatic way. Interestingly, I could not recall the first time the Physics Department at Makerere graduated a PhD student since its establishment. I strongly suspect that the first PhD ever from that department was awarded in the late 1990s. It was equally gratifying to note that, in spite of the low pay, insufficient funding, inadequate laboratory space and limited equipment, the academic environment in this old department in the faculty and university, which had been host to several outstanding physicists in the past, had become conducive again for some serious research work. We had even managed to attract Dr Peter Kwizera, a year mate of mine when both of us were undergraduates at the beginning of the 1970s, from Nairobi and Dar es Salaam where he had spent most of his working life, back to his old department. Peter Kwizera was one of the very few Ugandans who took their PhDs at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA. In fact, he could well be the first and the only Ugandan so far to have obtained a PhD in Physics from MIT.

Unfortunately, he did not stay for long. However, his return was a good signal that the situation at Makerere was steadily changing for the better. By the academic year 2001/2002, the department was boasting of three full professors and eight PhDs while a few other staff members were furthering their studies for higher qualifications.

For a long time, I had known many colleagues in the Physics Department, some with first class honours BSc in Physics, obtained as far back as 1972, who had missed out on the scholarships to study abroad for their advanced degrees and had long shelved the idea of advancing on to the PhD. The hopeless state of affairs that had prevailed in the university for so long had pushed them too far into a state of despair that had made them lose hope. It was as if they had resigned to their fate. They had stopped looking beyond their MScs, obtained several decades back. Dr Odong Edimu (now deceased) was one of those frustrated brilliant minds. He had graduated from Makerere University in 1972 with a first class

honours BSc degree in Physics. After graduation, the university had recruited him as a Special Assistant. When Professor Ilukor returned from the University of Uppsala, he took him on as an MSc student together with his classmate, Okot Uma, who had also graduated with first class honours. I believe their research had to do with radiation Physics and radio isotopes. Immediately after completing their MSc, both were appointed full lecturers. However, in the mid-1980s, Okot Uma quit academic Physics, left Makerere and joined the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. Odong Edim chose to stay, but never advanced beyond the rank of lecturer, because he was not publishing anything. It seemed he had also given up all hope of registering for a PhD, either at Makerere or abroad. It was, therefore a pleasant surprise for me to see him register for a Makerere PhD. In spite of his fairly advanced age and family commitments, he never lost the academic flair he had exhibited as an undergraduate student. Before long, he had completed his thesis and defended it to the satisfaction of the examiners and was ready to graduate. Unfortunately, shortly before he was due to graduate in 2002, he fell ill and was admitted to Mulago. Sadly, he died a few days to his graduation. He was buried on the day he was supposed to graduate at his ancestral home in the Soroti District. His untimely death shook us all. I could not help thinking that at that rate, death was simply making a mockery of our human resources capacity building efforts. Odong Edim's death came as a rude shock to me, due in part to the fact that I had not known about his illness until he was admitted at Mulago. His death robbed Makerere University of a brilliant physicist and a man of incredibly pleasant personality with a booming laughter as his trademark.

Besides Odong Edim, the department had already lost two members of staff in a short span of time, including the long-serving John Ilukor, the first Ugandan Professor of Physics at Makerere and the first African to head the department. Professor Ilukor's main research interest had been in Microwave Radiation. For several years, he was Uganda's Radiation Safety Officer in charge of the National Radiation Safety Laboratory, which was also housed in the Department of Physics at Makerere. The death of Professor John Ilukor was another shocking blow which disrupted the work of the Microwave group. Fortunately, it did little to dampen the department's new found spirit for research.

Modern electronics was one of those disciplines any self-respecting Physics Department could ill afford to ignore. The ICT and most of modern technology is deeply rooted in electronics. Sadly, time came when the teaching of electronics at Makerere was more of theory and very much less in practice. The Physics Department no longer had modern equipment to teach the discipline effectively. For instance, in spite of the presence of two excellent Chief Technicians, John Mugerwa and the late Kabuuzza, capable of repairing them, the few oscilloscopes the department had had broken down beyond repair for lack of spares. With advances in integrated and digital circuits, even the few that were still in working

condition had become obsolete. Fortunately, with the Norwegian assistance, the department was able to re-equip its electronics laboratory. In 1988, Dr Andrea Lilethum, a Professor of Physics at the University of Bergen in Norway visited Makerere University on what could be best described as “a journey of discovery”. He was appalled to find the Department of Physics in such a sorry state. When he went back to Norway, he started soliciting equipment for the department. He wanted the teaching of electronics to be given the due prominence it deserved. Most of the new equipment he donated went to the electronics laboratory. With the new equipment, it was now possible for the department to teach practical electronics once again. Professor Lilethum was instrumental in making sure that Makerere University was among the African universities to benefit from the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) programme when it began in 1991.

The Department of Physics also scored another first. It was the first department in the Faculty of Science to have had three full professors at the same time: John Ilukor, Eldad Banda and Yusto Kaahwa. I remember having collaborated briefly with Professor Banda on his work on “The Electronic Spectroscopy of Transition Metal Compounds in the Solid State”, out of which he published a paper. He had carried out part of this work at the University of Bristol in the UK. I believe Professor Banda was the first member of staff from the Faculty of Science to have a book, *Electricity and Magnetism*, published by Makerere University Press in 1996.

To mark the UNESCO Science Day 2005, Ms Anastasia Nakkazi, the former Secretary General of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO requested Makerere University to organise a public science exhibition. The Faculty of Science agreed to organise one in the premises of the Chemistry Department. Although the notice was short, most departments responded positively. It was an excellent display of the ongoing research in the faculty, which included various exhibits, recent publications and well-designed posters. The Physics Department was one of the departments which participated actively in the exhibition and put on an impressive array of posters and reprints of their recent papers. Dr J. M. Ngaboyisonga, who had taken over from Dr Ezra Twesigomwe as Head of Department earlier, was at hand to explain all the Physics involved. For me, this impressive exhibition which the faculty was able to organise at very short notice, was a window on the Faculty of Science’s research efforts in recent years and offered the public a unique opportunity to see what the university was doing in the field of science research. On a purely selfish note, I was happy to see one of my PhD students, Isaak Tebandeke Mukasa, exhibit the preliminary results of our work on bleaching clays. Ms Nakkazi, who was the Guest of Honour at the day’s celebrations was equally impressed and commended the faculty’s efforts. The exhibition was a surprise to most people who had been under the impression that science research at Makerere was long dead. Indeed, research at

Makerere was once again very much alive. However, by the time I left Makerere, Theoretical Physics was the one group that was yet to come fully on board. After the death of Dr Bakesigaki in the late 1970s, Dr Ezra Mugambe was the only Theoretical Physics specialist the department had. A graduate of the California Institute of Technology (or Caltec as it is popularly known), where he studied for his undergraduate degree and Balliol College of Oxford University, where he took his DPhil, Dr Mugambe is one of the few Ugandans (if not the only one in the country) who were well grounded in Theoretical Physics. So, he was quite an asset to the department. My guess was that the university's improving computing facilities and easy access to the latest journals would make it possible for the Theoretical Physics group to advance its research work.

As a young student at Namityango College in the 1960s, I remember reading an interesting article written for the school magazine by Michael Nsereko, one of the brightest students to have studied at Namityango. In the article, Nsereko had referred to Mathematics as the Queen of the Sciences, and the foundation of Applied Mathematics. Nsereko's article helped open my eyes to the strong link that existed between Science and Mathematics. However, at the time, I could only see the link between Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. I could not see how Biology and Mathematics were interlinked. To me, Biology seemed to be the least mathematical of all the science disciplines. Beyond some statistical inferences one came across in some Biology textbooks, there appeared to be very little in common between the two disciplines. At Higher School Certificate (or "A" Level as we now know it), most science students, who were not very strong in Mathematics tended to opt for Biology; the exceptions being those who were good in Mathematics but wanted to pursue a career in Medicine or Veterinary Medicine. The link between Biology and Mathematics became obvious to me many years later, largely through the work of Professor Livingstone Luboobi in Biomathematics, which clearly demonstrated that even in the biological sciences, Mathematics and its sub-branch of Statistics had as much role to play as they did in the physical sciences. I then realised that Nsereko's assertion that Mathematics was the queen of the sciences was after all true for all sciences. Michael Nsereko who chose Mathematics, which he was very good at, went on to study Civil Engineering at the University of Nairobi and at the time of writing, was practicing as a consultant engineer in Kampala. The article correctly summed up the importance of Mathematics as a discipline of exciting academic pursuit in its own right and in its applied form, as the foundation for other scientific disciplines such as Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Engineering and Economics, to mention a few. It does not, therefore, come as surprise that the Department of Mathematics in the Faculty of Science at Makerere has and continues to play this double role of the subject as a serious intellectual discipline in its own right and as the Queen of the Sciences. Mathematics has been taught at Makerere for many years and has grown along with Makerere as an institution of higher learning.

Besides servicing other departments and faculties where students take courses that require good grounding in Mathematics, the Department of Mathematics has enjoyed a reputation for excellent teaching. Students who studied Mathematics as a single subject in the 3.1.1 honours combination (referred to as Mathematics Z) used to be looked at by their fellow students as of a rare breed. Many students believed that Mathematics was not a subject for the faint-hearted. Interestingly, Chemistry and Mathematics were the only disciplines in the Faculty of Science that used to be offered in the 3.1.1 or Z combination. A Mathematics Z student had to study Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and one other subject which could be Physics or another subject such as Economics in the first year, followed by two years devoted entirely to Mathematics. Traditionally, the Mathematics Z class used to be very small, sometimes as small as three students or less. A student who wanted to specialise in Mathematics as a single subject could only be allowed to enrol for Mathematics Z in the second year of study after demonstrating in the first year university examination that he or she had the intellectual capacity to continue with the specialist higher level Mathematics. Also given the fact that the study of Mathematics as single honours degree demanded very high intellectual rigour and a lot of talent, it was not surprising that the Z classes were always quite small. In addition, few schools in the country, besides Kings College Budo, Uganda Technical College, Kyambogo and Nyakasura in Fort Portal, offered Pure and Applied Mathematics as separate principals, which at the time was a requirement for any student who wanted to enroll for Mathematics Z. This requirement could only be waived in very few cases of exceptionally bright students. It is also interesting to note that the Faculty of Science was in competition with the Faculty of Engineering at Nairobi, and later the Faculty of Technology at Makerere, for good Mathematics students. Many students who could have otherwise studied Mathematics Z opted for Engineering. This made the pool of talented students very small.

The majority of students who wished to study Mathematics at Makerere opted for the less specialised 3.2.2 combination or X combination where, in the second and third years, Mathematics was combined with another subject such as Economics, Statistics, Chemistry or Computer Science. Incidentally, Geology, like Botany and Zoology, was not one of the subjects that could be studied with Mathematics in the X combination. Geologists required a strong dose of Chemistry to be able to handle Geochemistry and Chemical Analysis, so it could only be studied with Chemistry in the second and third years. This was the practice until I left the university. However, during the time of acute staff shortage, the Mathematics Z combination had to be dropped, because the department lacked staff to teach it effectively. As we have seen before, the same thing happened to Chemistry Z. The Department of Mathematics had an interesting relationship with the Physics Department for students who wanted to study Physics as a single subject in their third year. The arrangement was that

the students had to continue with Mathematics in the second year in the unique 3.2.1 combination of Y combination. Most students opting for this combination usually studied Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics in the first year. In second year, they dropped Chemistry and continued with Mathematics and Physics. They only dropped Mathematics at the end of the second year and continued with Physics or Physics Z. The reason students who wanted to study Physics Z in their final year had to continue with Mathematics in the second year was that Physics, being a highly mathematical discipline, students had to have a high mathematical proficiency beyond the first year Mathematics X course. Why the faculty chose to use the very last letters of the alphabet as codes for these subject combinations was something I never quite figured out. However, the introduction of the semester system in 1996 changed the old tradition of coding degree subject combinations and minimised the rigid subject demarcations which had existed in the faculty for so long. The preferred terminology in the new semester system was major and minor subjects and what constituted major and minor was the number of credit units a student registers for in a particular subject.

No doubt, the Mathematics Department was one of the departments that was hardest hit by the staff shortages during the Idi Amin era. The few members of staff who remained after the exodus of 1972-73, found themselves taking on far more courses and teaching loads. Some had to teach areas of Mathematics where they had very little or no specialist knowledge. During his inaugural speech as the new Vice Chancellor on June 1, 2004, Professor Livingstone Luboobi, a long-serving member of staff of the department, lamented how he missed the opportunity to study for a PhD at the University of Toronto in Canada, where he had earlier taken his MSc. He said that, in spite of the assured funding, he had to come back to Makerere to help save the situation on the request of his Head of Department. He had to wait for several years before he could go out again, this time to the University of Adelaide in Australia, for his PhD. Dr Jekeri Okee, a Germany-trained mathematician who specialised in Mathematical Logic, had joined the department shortly before Amin's coup and, like many of his contemporaries at that time, he was soon called upon to serve as Dean of the faculty after the substantive Dean, Professor John Ilukor, took ill. When the conditions in Uganda became extremely unbearable, he threw in the towel and left for the West Indies. This was another loss for the department. It looked like there was no stoppage to the staff hemorrhage.

Fortunately, as Uganda began to recover from the hard times, it was more than a pleasure to see brilliant mathematicians return to Makerere. Dr Patrick Mangheni was one of the young mathematicians who came back in the early 1980s. After a brilliant undergraduate career at Makerere that saw him graduate with a first class honours BSc degree in Mathematics in the mid-1970s, he proceeded to Oxford University in the UK where he earned a DPhil in Functional Analysis. His return

was a big welcome relief to the department. In the long years of turmoil, Pure Mathematics had become a fledgling discipline. It needed a person of Patrick Mangheni's calibre to put it back on track. At the same time, the department had recruited several Teaching Assistants' including two females. In fact, their presence helped to beef up the teaching staff. Eventually, many of them went out for their higher degrees. Others chose to do them at Makerere. When Professor Mugambi, who had been the Head of Department for several years became Dean of the faculty in the latter part of the 1980s, Dr Livingstone Luboobi took over the reins as the new Head of Department. Undoubtedly, Livingstone Luboobi is one of Makerere's outstanding mathematicians. Some of the documents I was privy to access indicated that he held (and still holds) the record of the best first class ever in Mathematics at Makerere, which he received in the 1969/70 academic year. He is one of the last batches of students at Makerere to graduate under the University of East Africa. As we have seen, during his undergraduate days, only the brightest enrolled for Mathematics Z. They were selected on the basis of their excellent "A" levels in Pure and Applied Mathematics. Luboobi, who had more than qualified for engineering at Nairobi, chose to study Mathematics at Makerere. He loved the mind-boggling subject more than anything else. Makerere of that era had a reputation for excellent Mathematics teaching. Students like him were taught by icons like Professor Cornelius P. Welter (now deceased), who had come to Makerere from South Africa before the apartheid era which cut off South Africa from the rest of Africa.

Livingstone Luboobi was not only a brilliant and versatile mathematician; he was also a renowned workaholic. His work in Biomathematics earned him international recognition: there is now a bio-mathematical model named after him – the Luboobi Model. So, when he took over the headship of the department, he quickly introduced important reforms. For many years, the Department of Mathematics was running only undergraduate programmes. He soon changed that. He introduced a Master of Science degree programme in 1986. He also established a strong research group in Mathematical Modelling, with emphasis on modelling biological systems. In fact, this marked the beginning of the teaching of Biomathematics – which he also introduced in the undergraduate curriculum – at Makerere. Under the NUFU programme, the department under his leadership, linked up with the Mathematics Department of the University of Bergen in Norway; and before long, he had attracted a group of enthusiastic young mathematicians who wanted to study under him for their advanced degrees. Much of his group's research effort was spent on modelling the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It remains his running research interest to date. Out of his work, he and his students published several important and high quality papers that earned him promotion to Associate Professor and full Professor of Mathematics in a relatively short time.

After the successful MSc launching, Professor Luboobi started enrolling and supervising PhD students in Mathematics, a novelty in the department at the time. Dr Margaret Nabasiye of the Faculty of Agriculture was one of his pioneer PhD students and the first woman to register for a PhD in Mathematics at Makerere. When she successfully completed it in 1997, she and Professor Luboobi made history. I also made it a point to highlight her achievement in my graduation speech at the ceremony at which the PhD was conferred on her by President Yoweri Museveni, then Chancellor of the University. When she started working on her PhD with Professor Luboobi, she was still a researcher at Kawanda. After graduating, she left the Kawanda Research Institute and joined the Faculty of Agriculture as a Senior Lecturer in Biometrics. She was later elected the second Deputy Dean of Agriculture in charge of research under Professor Elly Sabiiti. Unfortunately, one PhD student, Kirunda died shortly before he was about to submit his thesis for examination. J. Y. T. Mugisha (or JYT as his students and peers used to refer to him) was another one of Luboobi's notable students. Mugisha had been a high school Mathematics teacher at Makerere College School and in other schools for many years, and had built himself a reputation as a good Mathematics teacher, constantly sought after by students studying for their "A" Level Certificate. After several years of teaching, he decided to come back to the university and read for a Masters degree under Professor Luboobi and later joined the staff of the Mathematics Department. A few years after the MSc, Professor Luboobi took him on again for the PhD, which he successfully completed. Several publications came out of their work and, before long, Dr Mugisha was fast climbing the academic ladder. At senior lecturer level, he left the department of Mathematics and joined the Institute of Computer Science as Deputy Director. While there, he was promoted again to the rank of Associate Professor.

I have made reference to Dr Mugisha and the other students who received their PhDs in Mathematics at Makerere under Professor Luboobi for a good reason. In doing so, I have attempted to illustrate that, given the right environment and people of the right calibre, enthusiasm, with a clear vision and commitment, it is possible to turn a bad situation round; to transform a department like the Mathematics Department at Makerere from near collapse into a vibrant one. That was precisely what Professor Luboobi and his colleagues did. In fact, during his time, the interest and excitement for the PhD Degree became so intense that members of staff like Soul H. Nsubuga and his wife Rebecca decided to use their meagre salaries to sponsor themselves for their PhDs at the University of Edinburgh in the UK. This was unheard of at Makerere. I was so moved by their bold and heroic action and, as Chairman of the Staff Development Committee of Senate, I authorised the Academic Registrar, Mr Ngobi, to use some staff development funds to supplement their own contribution. Both completed the PhD and came back to the department. Others in the same department who registered for the Makerere PhD, completed and graduated in my time, include

Dr Gadi E. Besigye-Bafaki and Dr John Mango. Some students ventured into new areas of Mathematics like Insurance Mathematics and Finance Mathematics.

Dr Vincent Sembatya was another one of the budding young mathematicians the department had groomed in recent years and when the University of Florida admitted him with partial funding from Makerere, he chose to take his PhD in Topology, one of branches of modern Algebra. At the time, few students were registering for the PhD in Pure Mathematics. The last algebraist in the department, Dr Allan Babugura had left Makerere in the 1980s to join the University of Zimbabwe. However, in the latter part of the 1990s, the department benefited from the Fulbright Fellowship Programme when Dr Vance, an algebraist from the USA, applied for and got the Fulbright fellowship to come to Makerere and teach in the Department of Mathematics. Ordinarily, the Fulbright fellowships were strictly for one year, but when good reasons were given why the department wanted the Fulbright Commission to extend his fellowship for another year, Dr Vance ended up being one of the exceptions to the rule. He spent two years at Makerere and before he left, he confessed to me that he had enjoyed his stay and teaching at Makerere beyond his expectations. He would have stayed longer if the rules governing the fellowship had allowed. After the departure of Dr Vance, the department had no senior member of staff in the Algebra group, and Dr Mangheni was also on his way out. During my last year at Makerere, he decided to move over to the Christian University at Mukono to oversee the opening and development of an ICT park there. Like many before him from the Department of Mathematics who went for their advanced degrees abroad and came back, Dr Sembatya too came back to Makerere immediately after completing his PhD in the USA. When Dr Fabian Nabugomu who had been the Head of Department left for Edinburgh for his sabbatical leave in 2003, we decided to appoint Dr Sembatya to act as Head of Department until Nabugomu returned. Dr Nabugomu had joined the Department of Mathematics from the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics. Perhaps driven by the passion for Mathematical Statistics, he decided on his own accord to transfer to the Department of Mathematics. Also to see Professor Paul Mugambi who, due to staff shortages had spent most of his career at Makerere teaching more than his fair share of undergraduate courses, go back to research and supervision of postgraduate students was like adding some more spices to an already delicious meal. It was as if he was reminding us of the old adage, "it is better to try, however late, than not to try at all". On a few occasions, I used to be amused to hear him utter exotic words like "non-linear dynamics" to describe his recent research interests.

As we have seen, Mathematics Z at Makerere was a preserve of a few exceptionally bright and gifted students, and its teaching required a highly experienced staff. However, as staff shortages became serious in the mid-1970s and the few high schools that used to offer the PMM (Physics, Mathematics

[Pure], Mathematics [Applied]) combination at “A” Level stopped offering it, the department was forced to drop the specialist Mathematics Z option and, for many years, Mathematics X remained the only option the department was able to offer. Apparently, Professor Luboobi, a product of the once cherished Z options was pained to see the demise of Mathematics Z degree programme. So, he began to think of ways of bringing it back, albeit in a slightly modified way. However, his enthusiasm to revive the Z course was coming at the backdrop of changed times. Few serious students were interested in studying Mathematics. More and more students who would otherwise have made excellent mathematicians were opting for other professional courses such as Commerce (Accounting), Pharmacy, Engineering and related disciplines. The declining demand for mathematicians in the labour market exacerbated the problem of finding good students further. Most of the mathematicians graduating from Makerere were ending up as school teachers, a profession of limited appeal to most students. So, even if he wanted to revive the combination in the old format, he would have had difficulty finding the kind of students who met the old stringent requirements.

The department cleverly went round the problem by waiving the rule that required all Mathematics Z students to have offered Pure and Applied at the principal level at the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education and to have studied the two as separate subjects in their first year at the university. Livingstone Luboobi suggested to the Faculty Board of Science that Mathematics Z should be treated like Chemistry Z, which did not impose too much restriction on the subject combinations a student had to study in the first year as long as Chemistry A was one of them. In those days, subjects such as Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics had the A and B options. The B option was terminal, while option A continued beyond the first year. In other words, his proposal was that a potential Mathematics Z student would study Mathematics A in addition to two other subjects; the selection for the Z option would take place in the second year and would depend on the student's performance in the subject in the first year examinations. Secondly, the department was now well staffed and, therefore, in position to remount the specialist degree programme. It was a controversial proposal. Some thought it would not produce the kind of students who would meet the intellectual rigours Mathematics Z demanded. At the end of the day, Luboobi was able to convince the Faculty Board, Senate and ultimately the University Council that there was merit in the proposal. It worked and, before long, Mathematics Z was back just as Chemistry and Physics Z had earlier made a comeback.

After the programme resumed, we discovered that our initial fears were unfounded. It was possible to identify students with the right aptitude for the subject and many were excelling. Dr Venasious Baryamureba was one of them. After obtaining a first class honours degree in Mathematics at Makerere, he went to the University of Bergen for his MSc and eventually got his PhD in

Informatics. However, on return, he transferred from Mathematics to the Institute of Computer Science, where he became its Director and later the first Dean of the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology. I was happy and satisfied to see all these exciting developments take place in this old but important department during my stewardship. But the difficult rejuvenation process in the Mathematics Department reminded me of how easy it was to destroy and how difficult it was to rebuild. I can only hope and pray that at no account will the painstaking work of Professor Luboobi and his colleagues, that put a floundering department back on its feet, be in vain again. One only needs to remember that a few years earlier, the Department of Mathematics could not find good candidates to hire as Assistant Lecturers and the Appointments Board had to waive the requirement of a BSc degree of at least second class-upper division standing to ameliorate the bad staffing situation the department happened to find itself at the time. However, the insistence of the board that the department makes every effort to find the right candidates and that those without the normal minimum requirements be appointed on contract terms of not less than three years, yielded results. Those on contract could only earn tenure after they had obtained a Masters degree in Mathematics from a recognised university. As we shall see later, Professor Luboobi, under whose leadership most of these developments took place, went on to serve as Dean of the faculty for eight years before he moved on.

Besides the loss of a PhD student, Kirunda, the death of Mr Kizza was another blow to the Mathematics Department. Mr Kizza, a specialist in Numerical Analysis, had returned after spending many years in exile in Kenya. When Uganda became unsafe, he took refuge at the University of Nairobi, where he taught in the Department of Mathematics until he was sure that the situation was sufficiently safe for him and his family to come back. During my time as Head of the Department of Chemistry, I had asked him to help me with the teaching of our third-year Industrial Chemistry students in Numerical Analysis, a request he willingly accepted. But before Kizza came back to Uganda for good, the department had lost a PhD holder, Dr Sennyonyi, to the Church of Uganda. After completing his PhD in Mathematics in Australia in the 1980s, Dr Sennyonyi had returned to Makerere as a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics at Makerere. A devout Christian, he soon felt a strong calling to the church ministry so much that he decided to take up full-time preaching with late Bishop Festo Kivengere's Evangelist Enterprise (EE). Apparently, he also had a calling to priesthood. After a few years as a lay preacher with the Evangelistic Enterprise, he decided to go to the Bishop Tucker Theological College in Kampala to train for priesthood. After his ordination, he joined the Namirembe Diocese, where he was one of the highly educated priests in the Church of Uganda. There, he joined Reverend David Sentongo who at the time was doubling as a priest in the Church of Uganda and Makerere's University Secretary. In spite of my passionate pleas to persuade

him to return to his Mathematical roots by offering part-time teaching in his old department whenever I happened to meet him, Reverend Dr Sennyonyi never came back to Mathematics. He later joined the Christian University at Mukono as Deputy Vice Chancellor, and I strongly suspect that he played some role in Dr Patrick Mangheni's decision to leave Makerere for Mukono.

In spite of the good progress the department had made in less than ten years, a few black spots remained. There were a few red herrings that, for reasons best known to them, refused to register for the PhD. Perhaps they were trying to test the university's resolve to implement the Mujaju Report, which required every lecturer to have a PhD or its equivalent, or otherwise show why they should remain on the university staff. These few members of staff are not ashamed of the fact that they had not moved beyond the rank of lecturer since they were appointed into the university service almost fifteen years earlier. Students they taught years ago had beaten them to it and were making good progress up the promotion ladder. I just hoped that those were the last of their kind. That setback notwithstanding, by the time I retired the department was boasting of ten PhDs out of a teaching staff of fifteen, which happened in a space of less than ten years. The days of Mugambi, Luboobi and Mangheni as the only PhD holders in the department were long over. Besides a few gray-haired grand masters, the department had a good pool of young Mathematicians, which made it a ticking department that it once was.

Shortly before I left the university, the department introduced a two-year Master of Mathematics – MMath. It was unlike the MSc, which primarily trained students who wanted to apply their advanced knowledge of Mathematics in industry, scientific research and those who were simply interested in the fundamental Mathematical ideas. The MMath was modelled more or less along the same lines as the Master of Engineering in the Faculty of Technology. It was designed specifically for people in the field, people working in industry or as college or high school Mathematics teachers. It was largely a taught course. Students attended lectures and sat for written examinations after which they wrote just a short paper instead of a complete dissertation, which was a requirement for the MSc degree. As I was about to leave the university in 2004, rumour became rife that the department thought it had come of age and therefore wanted to transform itself into a bigger unit with a wider mandate. It wanted to become an independent Institute of Mathematics, in much same way as the Department of Economics had been transformed into an Institute of Economics and later a Faculty of Economics and Management. Since I was timed out, I never participated in that debate. However, to borrow a leaf from Nelson Mandela's autobiography, we could safely say that the mathematicians at Makerere and their department had walked the long and hard walk to recovery. They had also walked the talk.

Unfortunately, and for reasons dictated by many years of tradition, unwritten rules, as well as stereotyping, the majority of female students in the Faculty of Science opted for the biological sciences. At least that was the tradition during my undergraduate days. The biological sciences were perceived as the least quantitative discipline and therefore appealed to female students, many of whom disliked anything to do with numbers. Rightly or wrongly, at the time I was an undergraduate most female students considered the highly quantitative science disciplines like Mathematics, Physics and Physical Chemistry as the domain of male students. Even after many years of attempts at changing this perception, still fewer female students attempted these disciplines than male students. Therefore, it was not surprising that Botany and Zoology at Makerere tended to attract females in fairly large numbers. It was also little wonder that the two departments boasted of the largest number of females on their staff in the entire Faculty of Science. Zoology was actually the first department in the faculty to have had a full female Professor, Dr Mary Nakandha Okwakol. However, this is not to say that fewer male students studied Botany or Zoology; on the contrary, even then, men formed the majority of the teaching staff in the two departments. Interestingly, recent advances in disciplines like Biotechnology, Molecular Biology and Genetics have kept attracting male students to the discipline of Biology. In fact, some people had predicted that advances in Biology were likely to dominate Science in the Twenty-first Century.

The Department of Zoology at Makerere had a good track record for research. In 1968, Dr William Banage, the first African Professor of Zoology at Makerere, took over its headship from the famous Professor Biddle, who had a respectable record as a researcher. Unfortunately, Professor Banage did not last long in the department. He left abruptly when Idi Amin appointed him Minister of Animal Industry in his first cabinet. Coincidentally, John Babiha whom Banage replaced as Minister, also hailed from the old district of Toro in Western Uganda. Besides being a Cabinet Minister in Obote's first Government, John Babiha also doubled as Uganda's Vice President. We recall that Amin's first cabinet was made up of essentially technocrats and civil servants and Professor Banage was one of them. I am tempted to believe that Banage's name came to Amin's attention in the aftermath of the sudden appearance in 1970–71 of a rare colourful lizard called the embalasasa in various parts of Kampala. When the highly colourful reptile (that often sports purple, red, blue and yellow colours) first appeared, most people believed it was an extremely venomous lizard and its sight scared everyone to death. The patterns on its back gave it a really fearsome look. Professor Banage, as the leading zoologist in the country at the time was asked to provide the public with some facts about the strange looking lizard. Was it really as poisonous as it was assumed to be? After studying the specimens presented to him, Banage quickly allayed public's fear by declaring the lizard totally harmless. He pointed out that its fierce-looking back was a form of protection against its predators. That ended the embalasasa frenzy in Kampala.

When Professor Banage and other senior members of staff left the department almost en masse, the responsibility of running it fell on a young Senior Lecturer by the name Gwahaba. Before then, it was unthinkable for an academic department at Makerere to be headed by a person who was not a full professor. In fact, Gwahaba made history. To complicate his situation even further, he was also still a PhD student. A brilliant young man, Gwahaba was extremely well organised and always wanted to do everything to perfection. Due to staff shortage, he was combining a heavy teaching load and his PhD research with administration that was equally demanding. The combination was to prove lethal. He came down with a serious stroke that left him almost speechless and paralysed. He never recovered from it. Whenever I met him, I could not help feeling deeply sorry for a productive life abruptly cut short by the chaos rogue leaders had decided to subject the country to. He had paid the price for Idi Amin's actions, which had left most of the university departments without staff. However, the late Gwahaba was a man of extraordinary courage and unbelievable determination. He was not ready to be put off by the misfortune that had befallen him. It was as if he was telling us that, even though he may be down, he was not yet out. The intensive physiotherapy and speech therapy he underwent helped him recover some of his speech and the partial use of his limbs. Although he was now frail and confined to the wheel chair most of the time, he insisted on teaching a few undergraduate classes. But with the speech slurred, the students had a lot of difficulty understanding him. He also tried to continue with his research on the bird menace at the Entebbe Airport. Time came when he was so weak that he had to abandon the teaching and his research altogether. In 2002, he died after almost two decades as a vegetable researcher.

At the time of Gwahaba's death, the Zoology Department had sufficiently recovered. Professor John Okedi, who had been Director of the Fisheries Research Institute based at Jinja had re-joined the department and had taken over as head. Years before when the department was under the stewardship of Professor Biddle, John Okedi was one of the few young Ugandan students who took their PhDs there. In July 1985, once again the Government of Uganda changed hands and Dr Michael Agrochai Owiny, who had been at the university, requested a transfer to the Department of Zoology as full professor. Dr Owiny was another accomplished zoologist. He was a holder of the University of London PhD and, as we saw earlier, he had taught at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya for many years before returning to Uganda to take up the post of University Secretary at Makerere. The former Minister of Education in the short-lived Government of Tito Okello Lutwa, Professor Timothy Wangusa, who had been picked from the Department of Literature at Makerere and appointed Minister of Education accepted Dr Agrochai's request and promoted him to the rank of full Professor of Zoology. As we have seen before, under the old Makerere University Act of 1970, amended by decree in 1975, the Minister of Education had the prerogative

to appoint professors for the university. Unfortunately, Professor Owiny died from natural causes soon after he had moved over to the department. At about the same time, Jonathan Baranga had completed his PhD under the supervision of Professor Fredrick Kayanja, and so had Boniface Makanga and Eldad Tukahirwa. P. M. B. Kasoma, Mary Okwakol, Gilbert Isabirye Basuuta, Anne Kezimbira Miyingo and Deborah Baranga among others were also busy working on theirs. On a happy note, all completed their PhDs successfully. In fact, for a while, the Department of Zoology had the highest number of PhD holders on its staff in the Faculty of Science. I cannot forget how proud I felt when one day the young Ms Anne Akol came to my office to break the news that she had been admitted for the Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree at Cambridge University in the UK. Cambridge was also giving her a full scholarship. Akol went to Cambridge, successfully completed the MPhil and went on to do a PhD at the same university. Like a true patriotic Ugandan, after completing her two degrees at Cambridge she came back to Makerere to continue teaching and doing research. Anne Akol was a further proof that despite the difficulties, Makerere was still producing quality graduates.

Professor Okedi did not stay long at Makerere. The Ugandan Government and the World Bank were in the process of reorganising agricultural research countrywide. Professor Okedi left Makerere and joined a team of experts that set up the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), in the mid-1990s. He later joined the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) as its first Executive Director. I had collaborated with him on a research project that was evaluating the extent to which the Nakivubo Channel, Kampala's main drainage channel, had been polluted. We were also studying the effect of pollution on River Nakivubo's aquatic fauna. Our MSc student on the project, Yusuf Kizito, produced an excellent thesis. Our study showed for the first time that the marsh between the Kampala Sewage Works and the open waters of Lake Victoria's Murchson Bay had the ability to filter pollutants which River Nakivubo would otherwise drained directly into the lake. The swamp was acting as a filter, protecting the lake from both organic and inorganic pollutants from Kampala and its environs. Without the filtering effect of the marsh in the swamp, the lake would be receiving a lot of phosphates and nitrates, which in turn would stimulate excessive algal growth. The excessive and rapid growth of algal blooms would lead to the death of that part of the lake through a process known as eutrophication. Our findings were confirmed by others who also carried out a similar study on the same channel. I felt sorry to see Professor Okedi, who had become a co-researcher and a close friend of mine, go. However, I was fortunate to have joined him again as Chairman of the NEMA Board of Directors in 1998. By then we were both out of active research; administration had started bogging us down. After completing the MSc and before Professor Okedi left, Kizito joined the staff of the department as Lecturer in Hydrobiology. After a few years, he secured a

scholarship to study for a PhD in Limnology and other aspects of Hydrobiology in Austria. Once again, he wrote an excellent thesis that earned him not only a PhD, but also a prestigious international award in Belgium. His work in Austria led to several publications in good international journals and, before long, he was promoted to the rank of Senior Lecturer and eventually Associate Professor. I was extremely delighted to see Dr Kizito progress so fast. We had worked together on the Nakivubo Channel project under extremely difficult conditions. We had no funding to speak of. On his own initiative, he had managed to secure some money from the Muslim Supreme Council, but it was hardly enough to support him. What I admired about him as a student was his determination and ability to endure. I was happy that I had found him and trained him well in research methodology, which put him in good stead when he went to Austria.

When John Okedi left, Boniface Makanga took over the departmental headship. Like Gwahaba before him, Makanga was also a PhD student working on the control of water snails that had the potential to spread bilharzias. He was collaborating with Dr Olwa Odyek of the Chemistry Department. Once, Makerere University had a policy that if you were a student, you could not head a department. However, during the hard times, the policy did not hold, and could not be enforced any more as members of staff were compelled to double as graduate students and Heads of Departments due to the crucial staff shortage. This had the inevitable effect of slowing down their progress as students, and so many of them were taking too long to complete their higher degrees. Graduate study was essentially research work, either on the field or in the laboratory, and that was where the problem was. Fortunately, as the staffing situation continued to improve, we were forced to revisit the policy. After very careful consideration, we came with a new policy that required a member of staff who had registered for a higher degree to request for study leave from the Vice Chancellor and be relieved of any teaching and administrative responsibilities. For the Masters degree, the leave was initially granted for two years and for the PhD, three; but with good reasons backed up by a supervisor's report and recommendation, the leave could be extended. However, the change in policy came too late for Makanga. Being an extremely resourceful person, he successfully managed to combine his PhD research with teaching and administration and, before long, he had completed his PhD thesis and was ready to graduate. He was fortunate to have survived the misfortune that befell his predecessor, Gwahaba.

Dr Makanga continued to shoulder the departmental administrative responsibility for two full terms of three years each. Meanwhile, Dr John Kaddu had returned from Nairobi, where he had been working as a Research Scientist at the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIP). Soft spoken, Dr Kaddu quickly settled in and when Dr Makanga stepped down, his colleagues elected him the new Head of Department. He continued with his research and

publishing, which soon earned him the promotion to full Professor of Zoology. In the process, the department lost Dr Jonathan Baranga who left Makerere to join Mbarara University of Science and Technology, where he started a Faculty of Science. He later became a professor there and the first Dean of the newly created Faculty of Science at Mbarara. Given the relatively healthy staffing position the department was now enjoying, his departure did not cause too much disruption. After all, he had made his own contribution. He had seen the department hit rock bottom in the 1970s when he was recruited as a Graduate Assistant and had seen it recover from the ashes, from the mid-1980s. It was perhaps the right time for him to move on. The good thing he did for the department was to leave his wife, Dr Deborah Baranga behind, having obtained her PhD from Makerere in 1995.

In the late 1980s, the UNDP came up with a scheme that would help universities and other institutions to benefit from the wealth of knowledge and expertise of African professionals working abroad. The UNDP had come to the conclusion that the constant and excessive brain-drain of expertise from Africa to the more developed world was beginning to have a serious negative impact on the development of Africa. Although it was nearly impossible to repatriate all African professionals working outside the continent back to Africa, it was possible to use their expertise to solve some of the continent's problems. The UNDP code-named the scheme TOKTEN, which literally translated, was Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals. Makerere University was one of the universities that benefited from the scheme. In Uganda, the scheme was administered by the Office of the UNDP Resident Representative. As Vice Chancellor, I was called upon to identify suitable candidates and submit a request to the Resident Representative. The UNDP would take it from there. Initially, the UNDP sponsored the TOKTEN fellows for six months but, under certain circumstances, the sponsorship could be extended to cover a full year. The experts coming under the scheme worked on short-term assignments like curriculum review and design or on a problem like implementing a new academic programme. After the assignment, they would write a report to the university and to the UNDP and went back to the country of their domicile. Afterwards, they would indicate to the UNDP whether they wanted to return to Makerere for good or not. Unfortunately, some of the Ugandans who came on the scheme were a disappointment. It seemed they were more interested in the money from UNDP than doing real work. In fact, some went back without accomplishing anything.

The cheats notwithstanding, we hosted several good Ugandans in the Diaspora under the TOKTEN scheme. Several of them had been members of staff before. Professor William Banage was one of the former members of staff who came back under this scheme. He had been away in Zambia, where he had been a professor at the University of Zambia. The TOKTEN assignment afforded him the opportunity to test the waters. At the end of his short assignment, he chose to stay. Since his

contract with the University of Zambia had expired, the UNDP decided to waive the rule that required him to return to Zambia before deciding to relocate to Uganda for good. Unfortunately, his wife had died a few years earlier. All he had to do was to go back to Zambia briefly, pick up his children and wind up. Finally, good old William Banage was back to his alma mater and to the old department he had to abandon against his will to save his life. Of course, while he was away, many changes had taken place at Makerere. Many of his contemporaries were no more. A few, such as John Ilukor and Paul Mugambi, were still there but almost in the twilight of their time at Makerere. Many more young people, some of them his former students, were now running the show. I guess his consolation was to find the department very much as he left it, less of course the Goodman Laboratory, the Animal Yard and the Cow Shed. The snakes too had long disappeared. Nevertheless, one thing or two were new. The course work and thesis for the Master of Science in Zoology was one. Secondly, the department was churning out more PhDs than during his time in the '60s and '70s. Thirdly, Dr B. Masaba, a former Minister like him had joined the teaching staff of the department as Associate Professor after serving as Minister in the NRM Government, moreover in the same portfolio of Animal Industry. There was also Owayegah Afunaduula, a graduate of the Universities of Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, who never shied away from controversy. As some would say, he was a man you loved to hate for his outspokenness. To tolerate some of his outbursts, one had to be constantly reminded of the fact that in a truly academic institution like Makerere University, all shades of opinion were tolerated and therefore, he was at liberty to speak his mind freely as he so wished, without feeling intimidated or gagged. Afunaduula was a complex character. He had an incredible passion for politics and Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC), was the only political party he staunchly believed in and recognised. The environment was his second passion. He was equally passionate about staff welfare and was once a firebrand member of MUASA. At one time, he had registered for a PhD at Makerere and seemed to be progressing well, but soon his registration ran into difficulties when he and his supervisor failed to agree. In a nutshell, that was the Zoology Department William Banage was returning to at the dawn of the new millennium; but being the man he was, he had no difficulty settling in again. However, he had to learn quickly to live with the good and the ugly he found at the department. It was indeed a pleasure to see him back at Makerere after many years in exile. When Idi Amin fell in 1979, he was not in a hurry to come back. With him back, the department was now boasting of three full professors on its staff list, another first. That was before Michael Agrochai Owiny died and John Okedi left Makerere to start NARO.

It was not usual for a non-zoologist to gain acceptance into the Department of Zoology. Dr Yusuf Kizito, who was there before him, was both a chemist and zoologist, but Dr Fred Bugenyi was an analytical chemist through and through. Hydrobiology had become of significant importance to the economy of Uganda. It encompassed the study of Fish Biology, among other things, and fish had

become a big money spinning business in Uganda. After the traditional exports like coffee, whose world market price kept fluctuating wildly, fish export was now a close second. It was one of Uganda's high value exports. Fish Biology (or Ichthyology) had always been part of the undergraduate curriculum for as long as one could remember, but when commercial fishing became a booming industry, the department had to take a more serious approach to the study of all aspects of Fish Biology, both in the wild and on the farm. Fish farming was rapidly gaining popularity in the country, but with few well qualified professionals in Aquaculture and water quality.

Dr Bugenyi had been the Director of NARO's Fisheries Research Institute at Jinja for many years and had published several papers to his credit. In the process, he had accumulated a wealth of experience in all aspects of fresh water fisheries research. He had completed his assignment with NARO and was now looking for a career change and new opportunities. Fortunately, he did not have to look very far. The opportunity for an appointment in the Department of Zoology was just knocking at his door. He was the kind of person the department was looking for to kick-start the new programme in Fisheries and Aquaculture; a programme which, as we have seen, the Faculty of Science shared with the Faculties of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture respectively. Dr Bugenyi secured an appointment at the Zoology Department at the Senior Lecturer level. He, together with Dr Kizito and other members of the department, was instrumental in the design of the Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Aquaculture degree programme, launched in the 2001/2002 academic year. Although the Chemistry Department had serviced the Zoology Department for many years and many students reading for a BSc in the two-subject combination or the X combination were offering Chemistry alongside Zoology, this was the first time a chemist had actually been appointed on the staff of the department. These were indeed changing times. The department was also closely collaborating with the University of Bergen on a "Man, Water and Society" research project. Professor Peter Larsen of the University of Bergen was one of the most active researchers from Norway on the project.

Through the Bergen-Makerere collaboration, the department acquired a motorised research boat which was moored at the National Water and Sewerage Corporation Waterworks at Kiruba, Gaba. The project also involved the use of a sonar, the first time I saw it being used on Lake Victoria, to locate and identify fishes in the deeper waters of the Murchson Bay and to assess their population densities. Although in recent years, fish catches from Murchson Bay had been on the decline, the sonar images which I had the privilege to see indicated that fish was still plentiful in the Bay. The reason why the catches were low could well have been due to the fact that the large fish stocks were residing at depths that the traditional gill nets could not reach. Dr Anne Kezimbira Miyingo was also quite an active researcher and the Makerere team leader on the project which I found quite exciting.

During my time at Makerere, Biology in the Faculty of Science was still being offered as two separate disciplines: as Zoology, which deals exclusively with animals and animal-rated organisms; and as Botany, which is a plant science discipline. The link between the two used to be the study of Genetics. However, in the 1990s, Biology was among the worst done science subjects at the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE). High school students were failing at unacceptable levels. The high failure rate in Biology alarmed the then Minister of Education, Mr Amanywa Mushega, and it prompted him to find out what was going wrong. He wanted to know where the problem lay. He was convinced that his Biology teachers were much to blame for the dismal performance. If indeed the teachers were at fault, he wanted to know what was wrong with their training at Makerere. At the time, all graduate Biology teachers were trained at Makerere. It turned out that the problem had nothing to do with low teaching standards of the teachers but rather, at least in part, with the way Biology was taught at the university, as two separate disciplines. In the old BSc Education programme, students were required to offer only two subjects in their second year of study, the 3.2.2 combination and as a matter of course, the second subject that had to be studied in the second and third years was Education. Whereas a good high school Biology teacher needed a good balance between Botany and Zoology, the structure of the BSc Education programme had made this balance unattainable. Second-year BSc Education students had only two options: either to drop Zoology at the end of the first year and continue with Botany and Education, in which case their Zoology knowledge would not go beyond first-year university Zoology; or take a Zoology and Education combination and drop Botany, in which case the students' Botany knowledge would stop at first year level. Short of that, such students would have had to continue with the three subjects in their second and third years. The short and the long of it was that for a student to have a good balance of the two biological disciplines, he or she had to take a 3.3.3 subject combination of Botany/Zoology/ Education in the first, second and third years. That was not acceptable to the Faculty of Science for several reasons. Firstly, that kind of combination was difficult to accommodate on the timetable without creating too many unnecessary subject clashes. Secondly, it was at variance with the requirements of an honours degree in the Faculty of Science. Thirdly, the students too would be unnecessarily overloaded. As we discovered, this was the heart of the Biology crisis at high school. Most Biology teachers were either botanists with no specialist knowledge in Zoology or zoologists without sufficient knowledge in Botany. The Minister wanted an immediate solution and we had to come up with one quickly.

Traditionally, the School of Education had left the teaching of the content subjects to other faculties like Science, Arts, Social Sciences and Agriculture that had the capacity to teach them efficiently. Its main responsibility was handling trainee teachers in teaching methodology and other professional education subjects such

as Education Psychology, Sociology of Education, Educational Management and Philosophy of Education. However, in the early 1980s, the School had opened a Department of Science and Technical Education and for many years, Dr Jane Mulemwa, a PhD holder in Physical Chemistry from Queen's University, Belfast, headed it. It was supposed to take care of the teaching of Science, Mathematics and technical subjects. Lack of sufficient staff, laboratories and workshops had made progress extremely slow. Some of the few original biologists and mathematicians she started the department with had left and joined the Islamic University at Mbale in Eastern Uganda, amidst a lot of misunderstanding, most of it stemming from the struggle for leadership and divided loyalty between Makerere and Mbale. However, the Minister's concern was not something we were taking lightly. We very well knew that sooner than later, he would be asking for answers. After a series of discussions at Faculty Boards of Science and Education respectively and in Senate, we agreed on a way forward. The remedy was to find a way of teaching the BSc Education students Biology instead of Botany and Zoology. However, the Faculty of Science was not prepared to add Biology to its already congested time table. The School of Education too wanted to teach subject content to its own students in a way that would avoid misunderstandings that used to crop up from time to time over issues like untimely release of marks and the alarmingly high failure rates of Education students, particularly in the Faculty of Science. The Senate decision and recommendation to the University Council was that Biology had to be taught in the Department of Science and Technical Education (DOSATE, as the department was popularly known). And so, we began to address the Minister's concerns. By the time these changes were implemented, Dr Jane Mulemwa had left the department and taken up the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Education Service Commission. Incidentally, there were also many students who had studied Botany and Zoology for their BSc degree and wanted a teaching career. These students too were encouraged to study for the one-year postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) as it used to be called. At the time of writing, I had not been able to assess the impact, if any, these changes have had on the students' performance in Biology at the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education, nor had I seen any evaluation report. However, going purely by the hunch, the situation seemed to have improved somehow. As a senior administrator, I had to be prepared for the unexpected all the time. This problem was one of them.

The Department of Botany too has had a distinguished record. During its many years of existence, it had played an important role in sorting out the taxonomy of Uganda's rich flora. In the process, many new plant species hitherto unknown to Science had been discovered and properly documented. Its rich herbarium collections stand testimony to this work. After confirming that the plants the Makerere botanists had discovered were indeed new species, the taxonomists at the Kew Gardens in London, which acts as the World Centre for

Plant Taxonomy, decided to name some of these new plants after their discoverers at Makerere, hence immortalising the names of people like late Anthony Katende. One of new plant species he discovered in Mabira Forest Reserve on the Kampala-Jinja highway was named *Katendesis* as part of its Latin botanical name. Taxonomists decided long time ago to use latinised names as scientific names for both animal and plant species. Therefore, instead of calling the plant Katende, the name was latinised to *Katendesis*. Interestingly, Anthony Katende, a product of Nyabyeya Forestry College in the present day Masindi District, started his career as a non-graduate forester in the defunct Government Forest Department. Later, the Department of Botany recruited him as a Technician. Despite his lack of a university degree, his knowledge of plant taxonomy was remarkable. He even co-authored a book entitled *Useful Trees and Shrubs for Uganda: Identification, Propagation and Management for Agriculture and Pastoral Communities*, with Ann Birnie and Bo Tengnas (both Sweds), which was published as a handbook in 1995 by the Regional Soil Conservation Unit, a programme of the Swedish Agency for International Development (Sida). It was sad to see Anthony Katende retire. He was a real asset to the department.

Fortunately, Anthony Katende had not been the only taxonomist in the department. Dr Remegius Bukenya Ziraba had also devoted much of his research effort on the taxonomy of the *sulamun* family of plants to which eggplant or aubergine (*biringanya*) and garden eggs (*ntula*) belong. It was a pleasure to see Dr Bukenya earn his designation as full Professor of Botany in 1994. A few years earlier, he had completed his PhD at Makerere under the guidance of late Dr Joseph Carasco. Professor Bukenya was one of the enduring members of staff in the Department of Botany. I remember him during the hard days of the early 1980s when we had to double as lecturers at Makerere and high school teachers in order to make ends meet. Since then, he and I had become good friends. Professor Bukenya's success story was another tale of how a person with a determined mind, organized and focused thoughts can achieve what many would consider impossible. Of course, Makerere has had several such success stories; his serves as yet another example of that breed of individuals. Apart from a stint at the University of Ghana at Legon where he obtained his MSc Degree, all his research work had been done at Makerere. It had culminated into high quality publications in reputable international journals and, when he submitted his papers in support of his application for promotion to associate and full Professor, they passed very well the scrutiny of the external vetters. It was interesting to note that Professor Bukenya did most of this research when he was the head of his department.

For as long as I could remember, the Department of Botany had had no new undergraduate programme ever since the BSc Botany, Z option and BSc Botany combined X option were introduced in the 1950s. That was the way it had been all

those years. Under the leadership of Professor Bukenya however, the department introduced a new three-year undergraduate degree programme in Ethnobotany. The new programme had, as part of its objectives, the advancement and dissemination of indigenous knowledge of plants as a way of conserving the country's plant heritage. Secondly, the new programme was intended to train a cadre of professionals that could make a contribution to the scientific utilisation and conservation of the national plant resources. It also aimed at raising awareness of the role plants play in the economic, cultural, social and healthcare aspects of a nation like Uganda, without overlooking the role Ethnobotany plays in promoting the appreciation of the extreme richness and value of Uganda's flora. At the time the new degree programme was being launched, I only had a vague idea of what Ethnobotany was all about and, quite frankly, I had mistaken the discipline to be closely related to Anthropology in the same way Ethnomusicology is a sub-branch of Anthropology. I almost told Professor Bukenya that some faculties, and Arts being one of them, had already expressed the desire to mount degree programmes in Anthropology, and so he should link up with them instead of duplicating efforts. He had to do a lot of educating before I could fully understand what the new programme was about and before he could present it authoritatively to Senate.

The University Council had noted with concern the absence of new and innovative programmes from the Faculty of Science which could also attract a clientele of fee-paying students. This was the Department of Botany's response. In its first year of launch in the 2000/2001 academic year, it attracted very few private students. I suspect a lot of it had to do with the fact that the new programme had not been given sufficient publicity in the media. The following year saw a dramatic improvement. I was pleasantly surprised to see the kinds of things the Ethnobotany students could do when they mounted an exhibition during the UNESCO Science Day. The Ethnobotany exhibits were impressive. Besides the medicinal products, there were several other products that the students were extracting from plants, such as capsaicin, the chemical compound that makes pepper – particularly red pepper – hot to the tongue. The students showed that besides making food tasty as a spice, capsaicin had many other medicinal uses. The exhibition gave us a good insight into what this relatively new science discipline was all about. Besides Ethnobotany, which had some elements of multidisciplinary that the university had started promoting, the department was also collaborating with the Department of Zoology and the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation on another new undergraduate programme, the BSc in Conservation Biology.

In my years as Vice Chancellor, one of the things I really enjoyed most was to see colleagues completing their PhD programmes successfully and also getting promoted. The colleagues in the Department of Botany were no exception. I was particularly pleased to see my old friend, Dr Byarujali, obtain his PhD. At some

point, I thought that he had long lost what it took to do a PhD. He had taken a course in Limnology in Austria and that seemed to be about all. He was about to prove me wrong. Despite the fact that I left the university before I could see him climb the academic ladder, I was convinced that with the PhD out of his way, the rest would just fall in place for him. I had known him many years before for his keen research interest in the study of lower plants, especially the algae blooms. I had also moonlighted with him at Kampala High School for many years. It was equally gratifying for me to see Esezah Kakudidi, another colleague from the same department, receive her PhD in 2000. She too had taken her time to register for the degree. It was from her research that I learnt that palms in general are some of the slowest growing plants on earth. All these were senior members of staff in terms of rank and length of service. Inevitably, some were beginning to spot grey patches in their hair. That meant that, sooner than later, most of them would be retiring. Fortunately, the department had adequately taken care of that eventually. It had recruited a crop of young brilliant botanists, initially as Teaching Assistants or Assistant Lecturers, but they were now maturing academically. The department had also built sufficient capacity to supervise PhD students. So many of these young upcoming botanists started registering for their PhDs under the supervision of their senior colleagues. Others went abroad. Among them were people like Patrick Muchunguzi, who had worked almost non-stop from the BSc to the MSc, and finally to the PhD. After cranking out a number of good publications in refereed journals, he quickly earned promotion to the rank of Senior Lecturer and when Professor Bukenya stepped down as Head of Department, he was asked to take charge. He also took over the responsibility for the implementation of the NORAD Botanic Garden Project, which we shall come back to later. The crop of young upcoming blood, who were on their advanced degrees also included C. Nyakoojo, J. Kalema, S. Nyakana, J. Tabuti, A. K. Tugume, Ms G. Nabulo, P. Tugume and M. Kamatenesi. The era when some members of staff believed that a Masters degree was enough to give you a comfortable stay at Makerere as a lecturer was sadly coming to an unceremonious end, at least in the Faculty of Science. The message was being driven home to those who had not yet woken up to that fact that, to command respect from your peers and students, particularly the graduate students, a doctorate degree was a must.

As I have said before, one of the most serious problems we had to contend with so often was the rampant death of staff and students, many dying in the prime of their lives and careers. Hardly a department escaped death's ugly thieving arm. Besides a few members of staff who died in tragic road accidents or through premeditated murder or suicide, death of staff and students at Makerere was a rare occurrence in the past. It had now become commonplace. Death was everywhere, particularly in the early and mid-1990s. At the time, it was a terrifying and traumatising experience. The Department of Botany was not an exception

to the new scourge. In my ten years as Vice Chancellor, it lost two members of staff – Ms Ogwal and Associate Professor Hugh Buruga – in a space of less than five years. Hugh Buruga was a long timer in the department and had specialised in Genetics. He had worked alongside people like Ms Tallantire and Professor T. R. Milburn, who had served as Head of Department in the 1960s and a bit of the early '70s, and had done much to improve the organ in the St Francis Chapel to which he devoted a great deal of his time. The two were his mentors. Besides being a plant geneticist, he was also an accomplished guitarist and musician. I guess if he had not chosen an academic career, he would have made a successful one in pop music. The consolation came when Professor Hannington Taligoola decided to return to Makerere after a stint at the University of Botswana, where he had taught for some years. Professor Taligoola was one of the few Ugandan academicians who did not desert Makerere during its darkest moments in the '70s. In spite of the extreme difficulties, Dr Taligoola, then a much younger man, stayed and braved it all up until the late '80s; but that was before he married and started a family towards the end of the '80s, which as could be expected, marked a turning point in his life. It was the time for him to choose between serving Makerere on a peanut salary and helplessly watch his family starve or look for other ways of catering for his young family. He chose the latter, which was the most sensible thing to do at the time. However, his stay in the '70s had been a blessing to his department. Not only did he help to keep it afloat, he saw a number of Special Assistants, left stranded by the departure of their expatriate supervisors, through their Masters degrees. Many had been appointed Special Assistants at about the same time I was appointed one, including my old friend, Mathias Male. After completing their MSc degrees, they were later appointed full Lecturers, which helped ease the acute staff shortage in the department at the time. I always knew Professor Taligoola as an expert in the field of Mycology, the science of fungi that includes all the edible mushrooms.

At the time of Idi Amin's coup in 1971, the young Taligoola had just returned with a PhD from the University of Nottingham in the UK. He was one of the Makerere academicians whose careers were almost ruined by the turmoil that followed the coup d'état. Like Professor Banage, by the time he came back from Botswana, many things had changed – some for the better and others for the worse. I remember him writing to me to complain about lack of essential and basic equipment for teaching. At that time, I was equally helpless to do anything about his complaint, because I couldn't find the resources for the equipment. The little I had on the Crown Agent account in London was almost exhausted. I was now banking on the African Development Bank deliveries.

Physiology, which deals with the study of how cells and organs of both animals and plants function, is an old but still an interesting subject; and Biology, as a discipline and in whatever form, cannot be complete without it. There is a common saying among life scientists that structures is to Anatomy as function

is to Physiology. Both are an integral part of the discipline of Biology. In the Department of Botany, Dr Gerald Mutumba had been one of the people trying to push forward the frontiers of the subject. A BSc graduate of the University of Dar es Salaam and a holder of a PhD from the University of Wales, Dr Mutumba's interest in recent years had focused on the relatively new method of plant breeding, using a physiological technique known as tissue culture. It was a technique which was rapidly gaining favour with the agricultural scientists who had to deal with a myriad of plant diseases almost daily. These diseases were largely responsible for the low crop yields in Africa. The technique allowed the scientists to produce disease-free cultivars. It takes advantage of a reproductive method, called vegetative reproduction that nature has perfected in plants over millions of years. There are plants which reproduce themselves, not through seeds but by allowing a part of them to grow into a new plant. Banana, sugarcane and cassava are typical examples of such plants. For maize, a farmer plants seeds; but for banana, it is the sucker. In tissue culture, scientists take another advantage that nature has also perfected. Under the right conditions, every cell in a living thing, particularly plants, is capable of growing into an entire organism. This makes cloning possible. Scientists have learnt to make use of this property of cells to grow entire plants from a few cells. The cells are cultured on suitable media in a sterilised environment. The results are plants which are copies of the originals but without the bacteria, fungal spores and virus found in the original plant from which the cells came. It is a form of biotechnology which is rapidly gaining wide use. Perhaps in the very near future, Makerere researchers will have moved in the more controversial animal cloning technology. For the time being, the Departments of Botany in Science and Crop Science in the Faculty of Agriculture and Kawanda Research Institute are at the forefront of this technology. Banana farmers have begun to reap the benefits of this new technology, and this is another area where Makerere University scientists and their counterparts at Kawanda Research Institute are providing the farming community with better varieties of crops capable of giving the small holder farmers higher yields from their small farms.

Despite the insufficient funds for research, Makerere was forging ahead with some serious basic and applied research of value to society. Tissue culture was one of the few technologies developed by the university in which the private sector had picked serious interest. Some businessmen formed a private company which was located along the Kampala-Mityana highway that produced disease-free banana suckers, using this technique for sale to farmers. Perhaps driven by his research interest in this technology, Dr Mutumba had indicated to me that he was seriously thinking about asking for a transfer to the Department of Crop Science because it had better facilities for this kind of work but I guess when he became Deputy Dean of Science, he changed his mind. It was natural for botanists to switch to Agriculture and a good many of NARO's research scientists started out as botanists.

Throughout my long years at Makerere, only four out of the present seven departments that made up the Faculty of Science had so far produced a Dean for the Faculty. Among the four departments, Mathematics had the lions share and held the record. It produced Cornelius Welter, Jekeri Okee, Paul Mugambi and Livingstone Luboobi. Biochemistry came a close second, with Professor Tom Boyd and James Albert Lutalo Bosa. Physics had the late John Ilukor. Botany has had one so far, Professor Hannington Oryem-Origa. At the time of my departure, he was the incumbent Dean of the Faculty. The Departments of Chemistry, Geology and Zoology had yet to produce one. It was a pleasure to see my colleague Oryem-Origa take over the leadership of the faculty, after Professor Luboobi's eight years as Dean. Both of us were relatively young men when, in the 1980s, we were suddenly propelled into positions of departmental heads. In spite of being soft spoken, he served diligently; he was an effective Head of Department and like his predecessor, Professor Livingstone Luboobi, Hannington Oryem-Origa managed to combine in a successful way, teaching, administration and his research work. While still Dean, the papers he published out of his research earned him promotion to the rank of full Professor of Botany, thus becoming the third Ugandan to be so elevated at Makerere.

I cannot end the story about the Department of Botany without making mention of one member of staff with an interesting background. A Catholic order called the Brothers of Christian Instruction with its headquarters in Canada had been running several Catholic Church-founded secondary schools in the country for several years. St Mary's College Kisubi, located almost halfway between Kampala and Entebbe on the busy Kampala- Entebbe highway, is one of their most prestigious and much sought-after secondary schools in the country. For much of the Obote II administration, 1980-85, Brother Cosmas Kiwanuka Kafeero, a biologist had been the Headmaster of that prestigious school. At the time, Professor Isaac Newton Ojok, who had to serve a prison sentence for participating in Alice Lakwena's failed rebellion, was Obote's Minister of Education. St Mary's College Kisubi, like most secondary schools founded by the missionaries was now under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education of Uganda. For some reason, a misunderstanding arose between the Minister and Brother Kafeero. Although I have not had the opportunity to interview Dr Kafeero on this matter, other sources had attributed the misunderstanding between him and Professor Ojok to the Minister's insistence that Brother Kafeero admits under-qualified students to the school as a special favour to the Minister and Kafeero's refusal to do so. Hence, Brother Kafeero had invited trouble for himself. This meant he had slapped the Minister in the face and for sure the Minister would not take such a snub from a headmaster. Brother Kafeero had to be reminded in no uncertain terms who the boss was. In fact, he was lucky not to have been labelled one of the rebels or a collaborator with the rebels that were fighting the Government at that time. Such accusations or allegations had dire consequences. Apparently,

Brother Kafeero had no choice but to relinquish the headship of the school. After stepping down as headmaster, he applied to join the Department of Botany as a lecturer. He already had an MSc from Plattsborough University in the USA. At that time, the MSc was the minimum academic qualification required for one to be appointed lecturer at Makerere. Fortunately, the department had an opening and immediately offered him the job. A few years later, I was pleasantly surprised when I learnt that he too had decided to register for a PhD. He had no difficulty completing it. It was conferred on him in 1996. Kisubi had lost him and Makerere had found him and put him, perhaps, to much better use.

After the coup of Idi Amin in 1971, it was Ugandans who normally emigrated, either for the security of their lives or for economic reasons. By commission or omission, Idi Amin had given Uganda such a bad name that few professionals of other nationalities came to Uganda in search of refuge or high profile professional jobs. Normally, the majority of people who came to Uganda in search of work were either semi-skilled or totally unskilled. Others came to join their relatives or countrymen who had settled in Uganda years ago. For a highly qualified national of another country coming to Uganda in search of a job at local salaries was one of those things that took you by surprise; but then, surprises are part of life. I recall Remigious Bukenya Ziraba, then Head of Botany, coming to me one day to seek my advice on an application for a Lecturer position from a Congolese national going by the name Mosango-Mbokuyo. This must have been in the mid- or late nineties. I think I even made a joke that I knew the Congolese for good music, Lingala and smart dressing but not for academic excellence. Mobutu's regime had destroyed whatever good academic institution the country had. All the same, I advised him to forward the application to the Appointments Board and let the Board decide. After scrutinizing his credentials, the Board decided to appoint him on condition that both his written and spoken English were to the required proficiency. Fortunately, he had a good command of English, because he had taken his degrees at Makerere, which I had not realised at the time. At the time of his appointment, he had only an MSc as his highest qualification and no PhD. To the surprise of us all, he turned out to be a serious and hardworking member of staff and before long, he had registered and completed the PhD at Makerere, which I thought was an amazing feat. From then on, he never looked back. For him, it was a steady march forward and by the time I retired from Makerere in June 2004, thanks to his prolific publication output, he had risen to the rank of Associate Professor, surpassing many Ugandans who had been in the department much longer than him.

When the Islamic University opened in 1988, there was an exodus of Makerere staff to Mbale. The new university offered far better terms of service than old Makerere. However, for some reason, many members of staff still decided not to quit Makerere altogether, but rather to provide part-time teaching at Mbale. In fact, I recall as Head of Department being contacted by the authorities there

to allow their Chemistry undergraduate students access to our laboratories for their practical work. I had no idea how to go about the request until I sought the advice of the Vice Chancellor, Professor George Kirya. Some of my own staff had also joined the trek to the land of Mount Elgon and used to commute to Mbale every weekend. However, instead of commuting to Mbale every weekend, Dr P. S. N. Ssekimpi of the Department of Botany chose to relocate to Mbale on a full-time basis; but before leaving, he promised us that as long as Makerere needed his services, he would continue to teach as a part-time lecturer. Makerere had no reason to refuse his offer, after all he had benefited from the university's Staff Development Programmes. Like many of us, he had started out as a Special Assistant and as was the practice then, after completing his MSc he was appointed Lecturer. A few years later, he was off to the USA for his PhD at the University of Arizona and when he returned, he was one of the very few members of staff in the department with a PhD. So, Makerere was not about to dump him when he was willing to continue serving. Dr Ssekimpi was a man whose word you could take on face value. All the years I was Vice Chancellor, Dr Ssekimpi didn't miss his classes at Makerere. He served diligently despite the fact that there were times we could not pay him on time. But for reasons I could not understand, most Makerere people soon grew cold feet about Mbale. The exodus and commuting ended quietly, and only a handful decided to take up permanent positions there.

As I have pointed out earlier on, the Department of Botany had played a key role in documenting Uganda's indigenous flora. I was once told that no self-respecting university Botany Department could do without a herbarium. Ours has had one for years but unfortunately, as the volume of specimens in the collection continued to grow, the small herbarium became hard squeezed for space. Help came from an unexpected quarter. The UNDP and Global Fund for the Environment GEF, decided to provide the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources with a herbarium, but after some discussions, it was decided that instead of duplicating efforts, the old herbarium in the Botany Department be transferred to the new building as a shared facility. The UNDP/GEF provided the funding and the University Council, through its Space Allocation Committee, approved the construction of a bungalow on a plot adjacent to the southern boundary of the Botanical Garden, next to what is popularly known as the Nkrumah Roundabout. Dr Panta Kasoma and his colleagues at MUIENR played an instrumental role in securing the funding for the new and modern herbarium, which also serves as a national reference facility. Dr Esezah Kakudidi was assigned the responsibility of managing the new facility on behalf of MUIENR and the Department of Botany. This was another milestone in the recovery of the University from years of decay and stagnation. Botany was back on its feet.

Biochemistry is one of those sciences that brings together two disciplines in an interesting combination. Just as physiology deals with the way cells and

body organs function, biochemistry deals largely with the complicated chemistry behind physiology. It deals with an array of important life-maintaining processes like protein synthesis, carbohydrate metabolism, the catalytic role of enzymes in cellular metabolism and many more. Therefore, students of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural Science and allied professions are expected to have a good mastery of Biochemistry. At Makerere, Biochemistry used to be taught as part of the medical and veterinary curriculum until the University decided to establish a full-fledged Department of Biochemistry in the Faculty of Science. To avoid duplication, the Biochemistry unit in the Medical School at Mulago was merged with the new Department of Biochemistry in the Faculty of Science. Although the department was not under the jurisdiction of the Faculty of Medicine any more, its home at Mulago was not closed down. Hence, Biochemistry became one of the few departments at Makerere that happened to have two homes at different locations; one on the main University campus and the other at Mulago. The Head of Department had to divide his or her administrative time between the two places.

I believe for reasons based on the projected demand for biochemists in Uganda's labour market, right from the start, the department chose to offer Biochemistry in combination with another subject, (the 3.2.2 combination or X combination). Up to the time the University changed from the term system to the semester system in 1996, no attempt had been made to offer it as a single subject (3.1.1 or the Z combination). The other restriction was that Biochemistry was not offered as a first year BSc subject. Students wishing to study Biochemistry as part of their BSc had to wait until they had qualified to proceed to the second year of study and had a satisfactory pass in the first year Chemistry. Before the 1971/72 academic year, students could combine Biochemistry with subjects like Botany or Zoology. Later, the faculty changed the rule. Biochemistry could only be combined with Chemistry. The same thing applied to Physics X. There was a time students could combine Physics with Chemistry in the second year. Later the faculty changed that rule too and Physics could only be combined with Mathematics and nothing else. Besides the BSc degree programme in Biochemistry and Chemistry, the department was also servicing the Faculties of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. For some reason, the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry was not part of this arrangement; they handled their own Biochemistry teaching in the faculty. The first-year laboratory in the Department of Chemistry was the one of largest laboratories in the Faculty of Science that could accommodate a combined practical class of BSc, Medical and Veterinary students at the same time. That was the only time the first and second year Medical students had classes on the main campus of the University. Their practical classes used to take a whole day. Perhaps that was not surprising, since most biochemical reactions and processes are notoriously slow.

Professor Tom Boyd and Dr Winnie Stafford were key in setting up the department in the Faculty of Science. In spite of the fact that Professor Boyd's background was in Medicine, he went on to become Dean of the Faculty shortly before Idi Amin ordered the expulsion of all expatriate staff from Makerere. In 1972, Dr James Lutalo Bosa, a graduate of the University of Nairobi, returned to Uganda after completing his PhD in Biochemistry at McGill University in Canada. In fact, he was one of the pioneer Ugandans to join the staff of the new department. Dr Edward Kakonge joined the department a few years later. Kakonge had his undergraduate training in the UK; a BSc from St Andrews University in Scotland, an MSc from the University of Sheffield and a PhD from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. The year 1973 was a good one for the department. For the first time, three students, including a female, graduated with second class in the upper division. A fourth student who was always on top of the class missed it by a few marks. All were my classmates on the Chemistry side. The department decided to keep all the four as Special Assistants. In fact, the return of Dr Lutalo Bosa was a real boost to the department and for the graduate students, who were starting out on their MScs.

After the departure of the European expatriates, including Dr Winnie Stafford and Professor Tom Boyd, Dr Lutalo Bosa took over as Head of Department and did his best to get Jane Kaggwa, William Isharaza and John Patrick Kabayo through their MSc. However, one of them, Bernard Turyagyenda Kiremire decided to specialise in Chemistry instead, and so left Biochemistry. Indeed, all of them were good and determined students. After the MSc at Makerere, Jane Kaggwa went to Cambridge University in the UK for her PhD. John Kabayo did his at Bristol University, also in the UK. William Isharaza went to Belgium for his. The unending problems of Uganda forced all the three to remain outside. After graduating from Cambridge, Dr Kaggwa went to Zambia and taught at the University of Zambia for some years; Dr John Kabayo joined the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna while Dr William Isharaza joined the then East African Trypanosomiasis Research Institute. Later, as the situation seemed to have improved, Jane Kaggwa left Zambia and came back to Makerere, but her stay was a short one. Eventually, she left for one of the universities in Saudi Arabia. Isharaza joined the newly opened Mbarara University of Science and Technology to start Biochemistry as a service department in the new Faculty of Medicine. After Vienna, John Kabayo came back to Uganda and even contested for a seat in the Parliament of Uganda in a rural constituency in Mubende District. He won and briefly served as a Member of Parliament of Uganda. He seemed not to have had a serious calling for politics, because he did not sit in Parliament for long; he soon quit his Parliamentary seat and joined the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). In-between, he taught in his old department for some time.

Another long serving “stayee” on the staff of the department and an MSc student of Dr Lutalo Bosa was A. Rutesasira, a modest and soft spoken man. He was appointed Lecturer in the late '70s soon after obtaining his MSc degree. By the time I called it quits in 2004, he was still there and had risen to the rank of Senior Lecturer. In his long career at Makerere, he had taught Biochemistry to scores of students, some of whom were now his colleagues on the staff of the department. I remember his keen interest in the tsetse fly research. Way back in the 1980s, he kept a constant colony of tsetse flies.

It appears the class of 1973 was exceptional, in a league of its own, at least until the 1990s. The class of 1975 was the closest match. It produced two outstanding students, James Ntambi and Florence Isabirye. Instead of taking the appointment as Special Assistant, Florence found a husband, Manuel Muranga (a linguist) and followed him to Germany where he studied for his PhD. James Ntambi took up the appointment, registered and completed his MSc under Dr James Lutalo Bosa. He then left for the USA to study for his PhD at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. When he completed it, the University of Wisconsin at Madison offered him an appointment and has never looked back. He quickly progressed through the ranks and soon became a full tenured Professor of Biochemistry at that University. However, for him, Makerere remained dear to his heart. He kept returning every year to teach a course or two or to engage in research or some other academic activity. In the intervening years, the department seemed to have run out of luck; it hardly recruited new Special Assistants with the kind of flair matching that of the 1973 class, primarily because in the intervening years, there were hardly students graduating with degrees of the right quality in Biochemistry and Chemistry that would qualify them for appointment as Special Assistants. The Medical School and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine would have been sources of good candidates for the department but, unfortunately, most Medical and Veterinary students had no interest in Biomedical Sciences beyond studying them for their first degrees.

On a positive note, Dr Joseph Carasco (now deceased) one of the pioneer students to have studied Biochemistry for their BSc degree at Makerere had returned to the department with a PhD in Plant Biochemistry. After the BSc at Makerere, he proceeded to the UK and read a PhD at Durham University. As an undergraduate at Makerere, Joseph Carasco studied Biochemistry and Botany. During his time, the rule requiring Biochemistry to be combined with only Chemistry was not yet in force. After his PhD, he had a spell in Brazil and eventually settled at the University of Dar es Salaam before returning to Uganda. Being a Ugandan of Asian origin, there was no way he could have returned to Uganda when Idi Amin was still in power. Amin had declared them *persona non grata* in Uganda. Joseph Carasco's return was a most welcome relief for the department. He was not only academically active; he was keenly interested in a

broad spectrum of social issues, the welfare of the academic staff being one of them. As we have seen before, he replaced Fred Juuko as Chairman of MUASA and organised the second staff strike in 1994 that almost dragged on for weeks, demanding that the Government makes good on the promise it had made to Makerere University staff in 1989, of paying them a living wage. We shall return to this strike in some detail later. Besides supervising several PhD students, including Florence Muranga, he also served as Head of Department for six years. He died on his return from Dakar, Senegal after attending a conference when the Kenya Airways Airbus plane on which he was travelling crashed in the sea soon after take-off from Abidjan Airport in Côte d'Ivoire. His body was one of those that were never recovered from the sea.

James Lutalo Bosa was one person I admired for his resourcefulness. Like Professor Luboobi, he was a workaholic and teetotaler. Indeed, Makerere was fortunate to have had him at a time the institution was going through one of the most difficult and trying episodes in its history. Shortage of staff forced the few that had remained behind to take on more than their fair share of responsibility, be it teaching or administrative chores. James Lutalo Bosa soon found himself doubling as Dean of the Faculty and Head of department. I remember many people who wanted to see him for one reason or other had to check with his two secretaries – the one in the Dean's Office and the other in the Department of Biochemistry – to find out when and where they could see him.

In addition to this heavy administrative responsibility, he still carried his full teaching load and combined it with his research. However, it was not long before the University recognised his enormous potential and indeed his contribution and research output – measured in terms of publications – and promoted him through the ranks up to full Professor of Biochemistry. As a Head of Department in the 1980s, I had revived the tradition of what used to be known as the Departmental Colloquia. I invited speakers from outside the department to deliver papers on various aspects of Chemistry, including its application in industry and other disciplines. The seminars were open to both students and staff. I remember one delivered by my class and room-mate, the late David Katongole, who was then Manager of the Dye Department at the Nyanza Textiles (or Nytil as it was popularly known), at Jinja on the industrial application of Quantum Mechanics. Most students were amazed to learn that even a subject as theoretical and abstract as Quantum Mechanics, had industrial applications. One day, I decided to test the waters; I asked Professor Lutalo Bosa, busy as he was, whether he would be in a position to deliver a paper to the Chemistry Department on his recent research. Given his tight schedule, I expected him to turn my invitation down. He surprised me when he agreed and, true to his word, he delivered an hour long paper on his work on lipoproteins. It was little wonder, therefore that in 1989 Professor George Kirya asked him to act as Deputy Vice Chancellor when Professor Fred

Kayanja, who had been the substantive Deputy Vice Chancellor was appointed Vice Chancellor of the new Mbarara University of Science and Technology. We badly missed our busy bee Dean. At one time, I thought he would either break down or get a stroke, because of overwork. Fortunately, he survived them. He used to tell me that pig and poultry keeping was his way of moonlighting. That was how he was able to fulfil all his responsibilities at Makerere and make ends meet at the same time. It looked like, after years of rearing the people's favourite animal, it became a practice he would find difficult to give up, even when the old difficult days gave way to much better times. In the farming circles, he was a renowned pig farmer and breeder. Besides being an accomplished academic, he was an effective administrator and some of us learnt a few tricks of the trade from him.

In the military jargon, there is such a thing as a battle-hardened soldier. In the Makerere of Idi Amin in the '70s and Milton Obote's in the 1980s, an administrator had to be problem-hardened. No doubt, Professor Lutalo Bosa was one of Makerere's problem-hardened senior administrators. Even the car he used to drive, a dark green Datsun, bore the hallmark of the times – old and rugged. It had to be, because it was constantly on the road between Katalamwa and Makerere, taking his wife to work, his children to school and himself to Makerere and Mulago; carrying sacks of animal feed or trays of eggs and jerry cans of water. It was his little workhorse. Its absence from the Science parking lot was glaringly visible when he finally sold it. Save for Lutalo Bosa's old Datsun, Kakonge's yellow Mazda, Mugambi's VW Variant, Ilukor Sekaalo's Citroën and one or two of Jude Nyangababo's cars that used to put in an occasional showing, as well as a few departmental vehicles that used to park there, the Science parking lot was a permanently empty place, where dogs would play. But by the time I left in 2004, people were fighting for parking space there! We had come a long way.

During the hard times, Dr Kakonge made good use of his Mazda to make ends meet. When he was not in classroom teaching, he was on the road ferrying paying passengers from Mulago to Kampala and back. Whenever you saw the yellow car in the parking lot, Kakonge was in the lecture room teaching; and when it was absent, you were sure he was on the road somewhere looking for passengers. Perhaps in today's university vocabulary, he would be best described as a part-time lecturer cum part-time cab driver. That was how humiliating Uganda had become! After serving briefly as a Minister in Museveni's first Government in the late 1980s, he returned to Makerere to continue doing what he knew best – teaching and research. He rose through the ranks, becoming full Professor of Biochemistry. Before Professor Lutalo Bosa moved further into the University Administration, he had recruited a young man, Gabriel Bimenya, whom he put through the MSc and eventually through the PhD as well. Dr Bimenya's interest was in Medical Biochemistry. After rising to the rank of Senior

Lecturer, he decided to switch to Chemical Pathology and joined the Department of Pathology in the Medical School at Mulago. By the time I left Makerere, he was the Head of Pathology.

The 1990s were the years the fortunes of the Department of Biochemistry began to turn for the better. A new crop of good students were enrolling for Chemistry and Biochemistry, and graduating with good grades. The department had managed to attract some of them and the Appointments Board had appointed them as either Assistant Lecturers or Teaching Assistants. Soon most of them had embarked on their MSc degrees. After the tragic death of Joseph Carasco, the responsibility to run the department fell on the shoulders of the little known Ms Rhona Baingana. She had her undergraduate training at the University of Southampton in the UK and later moved to the University of London for her MSc degree. She was young and had no previous exposure to administration. It must have been rough for her but she managed to keep the department together. While we were contemplating whether, in spite of the new age restriction, to ask Professor Kakonge to take over the headship of the department for the second time, we received an application for a Lecturer position in the Department of Biochemistry from Dr Fred Kironde, who had completed his PhD at the State University of New York in the USA. Dr Kironde was one of those Ugandans who began their academic careers in a humble way but, with incredible determination, had progressed all the way to do the PhD. The Appointments Board did not hesitate to appoint him. Fortunately for him, during the years he was away, he had been busy publishing. With more than enough papers to qualify him for the rank, he soon was promoted as Senior Lecturer and elected substantive Head of Department. Ms Baingana must have given a sigh of relief that the heavy burden of running the department before she had completed her PhD was taken away from her. She was now free to pursue her PhD, supported by the Staff Development Fund.

As we shall see later, South African universities were the preferred destination for PhD students sponsored by the University. Compared to universities in Europe and North America, South African universities charged reasonable fees and many of them were just as good. Secondly, while on their PhD programmes, the students who were full-fledged members of staff, and were not completely cut off from their families and Africa in general. Some of the Assistant Lecturers in Biochemistry heeded the Academic Registrar's call. Dr J.F. Hawumba was one of the early respondents to the call. The University of Pretoria, one of the most endowed universities in South Africa accepted him for the PhD, which involved research on high temperature performing enzymes. Such enzymes had a lot of potential for industrial applications. After successfully completing his PhD in the stipulated three years, he returned to the department. I was happy and relieved to see him back. At some point, I was not sure he would come back, thinking that a South African company interested in his research work would lure him

into staying behind. He set a good precedent for the rest. While some members of staff were leaving the department for their PhDs, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt had entered into a technical cooperation agreement with the Government of Uganda. Under the agreement, the Government of Egypt committed itself to sending and paying for Egyptian experts to assist Uganda in the various scientific and technical fields. Makerere University was one of the institutions which had been identified as beneficiaries of the Egyptian assistance. As soon as the agreement became operational, I started receiving applications from Egyptian academics looking for appointment at Makerere. Many of them were well qualified and appointable. Others were not and that caused problems for me. Biochemistry was one of the departments to have benefited most from the Egyptian experts. By June 2004, four Egyptians were teaching there. Dr Yussif was serving as a Visiting Professor; Drs A. H. Mustafa, El Safty and F Attia had been appointed as Visiting Senior Lecturers. Although they did not come on long-term appointments, their presence was playing a vital role in augmenting the department's staff strength. Interestingly, all this was happening after the department had moved into the new and modern home in the JICA building. Right from its inception as a department in the Faculty of Science, it had been squeezed and crammed between the Mathematics and Botany Departments in the Math-Science block.

By 1970, the year I entered the university as an undergraduate, Geology was a very young department in the Faculty of Science. Its founders were mostly British who had to leave in a hurry when Idi Amin turned against Asians and the British. There were hardly any highly qualified Ugandan geologists at the time who were ready to take over the running of the department. In 1973, a classmate of mine, Patrick Mazimpaka had graduated with a good BSc in Geology and Chemistry and the university had retained him for staff development. While Professor MacDonald was still Head, the department had introduced a Postgraduate Diploma in Pure and Applied Geology. Mazimpaka and Mboijana, who had graduated a year earlier, were the first students on the new Diploma programme. Because the staffing situation was so desperate, on graduation both Mazimpaka and Mboijana were appointed as full Lecturers without having a Masters degree. I believe Mboijana did not stay long, he went back to the Department of Geological Surveys and Mining at Entebbe. By 1979, the year I returned to Makerere, Patrick Mazimpaka was the substantive Head of Department. He had bought a brand new Datsun 120 car, which the Government had imported in early 1980 for allocation to senior civil servants and Makerere staff. It coincided with the rampant thuggery in the country and car theft had become common place in Kampala. One day, we met near Nkrumah Hall and I cracked a joke that he should give me a ride in his new car before the thugs stole it from him. Sadly, it turned out to be a prophecy. A few weeks later, the car was taken away from him at gun point along Namirembe Road at a place popularly known as Bakuli. It

was a highly potholed stretch of the road, where every motorist had to slow down in order to manoeuvre through the myriad of potholes. He too had been forced to slow down when out of the blue a gang of armed thugs approached, stopped him and ordered him and his passengers to get out and hand over the ignition key. The car was never seen again. Understandably, he never quite recovered from the shock. I am sure the anger and the bitterness he felt at the loss of his new car with a debt to pay must have played a role in his unexpected resignation from the university. A few years later, I guess when he could not take it anymore, he left Makerere for an unknown destination, which left us speculating about his whereabouts. Some thought he was somewhere in Nairobi, but no one seemed sure where he was. In his absence, Stephen Sinabantu, still a Junior Lecturer in the department had taken over as Head of the Department. Much later, we learnt that Patrick had joined the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), which at the time was waging war on President Habyarimana's Government and, after the war, he had been appointed Minister in the Office of President Pascal Bizimungu in Kigali. In fact, I had the occasion of meeting him in his office in Kigali in 1998 when I led a delegation of Deans to the National University of Rwanda at Butare.

After the departure of Professor El Etri, who had joined the university in the early 1980s as a Geology expert under the UNDP/UNESCO Project and the death of Stephen Sinabantu, the department was once again struggling for staff. Fortunately, help was on the way and would come from the least expected source. The CIM, a German international organisation which supported German experts to work in developing countries on a long-term basis, assisted the department to recruit a German geologist, Dr Thomas Shulter. Being the most senior in the department at the time, he was requested to take charge of the department and he immediately began to reorganise it. Under the UNDP/UNESCO Project, the department had received an assortment of essential equipment and was one of the best equipped departments in the Faculty of Science. Dr Shulter was a very resourceful Head of Department. He not only rebuilt the department, he also set up a strong research team that saw several postgraduate students, some already members of staff, register for advanced degrees at Makerere. No doubt, his six years at Makerere were very productive years for the department and for himself too, through the many publications from the research projects he had initiated. He rescued the department from near-closure. Along the way, he also recruited several young Geologists and those who were able to complete the MSc degree were appointed as full Lecturers. Erasmus Balifaijo, Michael Biryabarema, J.V. Teberindwa, F. Kabanda, A. Katerema, among others were some of the prominent young geologists who joined the academic staff of the department about this time. By the time Thomas Shulter left, the department was in a much stronger position than he had found it. Shortly before he left and through the auspices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Dr Shulter had been joined by another German geologist, Dr Shumann, who came in at Senior Lecturer level.

When Thomas Shulter left, my former student, Andrew Muwanga, took over as Head of Department. Andrew Muwanga was one of the first students I taught when I had just returned from Belfast in July 1979. He had performed well in both Chemistry and Geology in the final year examinations, which qualified him for appointment as a Graduate Fellow, a title which had replaced that of Special Assistant. After a few years, he secured a scholarship and proceeded to the UK for an MSc in Geology at the University of Leeds in the UK. After his MSc, he returned to his old department, combining teaching with administration, as Head of Department. A couple of years later, he won another scholarship to study for a PhD at the old Technical University of Braunschweig in Germany. When Andrew Muwanga left for Germany, the responsibility of running the department fell on the shoulders of another young geologist, Michael Biryabarema, who had already made arrangements to register for his PhD at Makerere. Michael Biryabarema was a hard working student. Before long, he had completed his PhD, graduating in 1999. Later, it was Erasmus Balifaijo's turn to have a go at the headship. Balifaijo had come to Makerere with a BSc and MSc from Carolina in USA. Earlier during his PhD thesis research, he had worked with some professors from Kanazawa University in Japan through a link the department had forged with that University. He completed his PhD in 2000. It was a re-assuring experience to see the number of PhDs steadily growing in a department that had suffered so many setbacks in the seventies and eighties; and to see so many young men and women, some having graduated a few years earlier, go out to far places like Norway, Germany, Belgium, France and South Africa, to mention a few, for their advanced degrees and other professional qualifications in Geology and come back to the department to take up appointments as Lecturers or Assistant Lecturers. The department also celebrated another important milestone when, for the first time at Makerere, a woman, Ms B. Nagudi received a PhD in Geology. By 2004, the full time academic staff strength in the department had risen to twelve, with one part-time Lecturer, Dr I. Ssemenda and one Visiting Lecturer from Egypt, Dr H.M. El-Asmur. The staff stabilisation was, in a way, proof for one of the smallest departments in the Faculty of Science, that resilience had triumphed over tragedy.

In spite of the impressive recovery, Geology was still not attracting many students. I later learnt that Geology did not appeal to students because it was perceived to be a dull and boring discipline. Perhaps because of the way it had been taught for many years, students, could not immediately see the connection between Geology and Civil Engineering, Hydrology, Seismology, mineral prospecting and of course Petroleum exploration. Most students saw Geology just as the study of rocks. The department was in dire need of some innovative ideas to stimulate interest in the subject. However, when people are in the midst of chaos and unending crises, and everything around them seems to be falling apart, their intellectual output suffers too. No one is able to think straight or focus properly

on the future when the present is riddled with so many uncertainties. In such a situation, no one has the motivation to innovate. That, unfortunately, was the situation the department had been in for many years and the consequence was that the BSc Geology and Chemistry degree the department had been offering year-in year-out had not undergone any serious revision and was becoming a little stale.

As the dark clouds of the '70s and '80s began to lift, the department began to innovate, and more exciting academic programmes started. Besides the traditional Chemistry and Geology BSc programme, which had been running since the inception of the department in the Faculty of Science in the late 1960s and the Postgraduate Diploma in Pure and Applied Geology, the department had introduced a new three-year undergraduate BSc degree course in Geological Resources Management and a Master of Science degree in Geology respectively. The two programmes were launched in the early 2000s. The main objective of the new undergraduate course was to produce geoscientists that were well equipped with skills to best exploit and manage mineral resources, civil engineering works, environmental and natural disasters; and in addition, to train professional geologists who were also well grounded in management techniques. The renewed interest in the mining industry in the country, the petroleum exploration in Western Uganda and the country's quest to provide clean and safe water to all its citizens, were some of the stimulants that led to the design of this degree programme. Given the history of the department, this was by no means a small achievement. The new programme emphasized the enormous economic benefits Uganda as a country stood to gain out of a well-managed mineral sector; in short, the department was telling the policy-makers in the country that there was wealth in Geology. As we saw earlier, the MSc degree the Department of Geology used to offer in the past was based on purely supervised research and a thesis. The new MSc in Geology was based on a series of taught advanced courses, which a student had to pass in order to qualify for the degree, followed by a short dissertation. The dissertation was now only a partial fulfilment for the award of the degree, and not the sole requirement. It was, therefore a gratifying experience for me to see the department put new muscle on its old bones in my time.

Additionally, the relocation of the Geology Department to the new and modern premises in the JICA Building in 1992/93 coupled with the enhanced staff research interests and increasing postgraduate student enrolment, were reflective of this mood of optimism. For instance, some members of staff were studying groundwater contamination and the role of geologic strata in retaining pollutants around solid waste disposal dump sites in Kampala. Others were looking at the environmental impact of copper mining on the streams and rivers that flow through the Kilembe Valley in Western Uganda; the impact of human activity on the vegetation North and West of Lake Victoria and the Geochemistry of the

Singo granite and its associated gold, wolfram and cassiterite mineralisation in some parts of Uganda. Incidentally, the latter two ores are the major sources of tin worldwide. This was an impressive stuff with a lot of relevance to the environment, as well as socio-economic and sustainable development of Uganda. But just as we thought the department had fully recovered from the hard times, and research and publication had become buzz words, it was to suffer an unexpected setback when Dr Michael Biryabarema – one of the most soft-spoken persons I have ever met and a key figure in the department's research effort – resigned in 2003 to take up an appointment in Rwanda.

Michael Biryabarema was a promising young man in the department and, through the prolific publications which came out of his research work, he had quickly risen through the ranks, becoming an Associate Professor even before completing his PhD, which was indeed a rare feat at Makerere. I had reason to suspect he was the first Ugandan to rise to this rank in the department. His sudden resignation coming as it did on the heels of my departure from Makerere, I could not help feeling sad to see him go. I thought that, through him, we had truly built the future of Geology at Makerere. He was now the most senior member of staff in the department and although we could only speculate, my gut feeling was that if he had stayed longer, he could have become the first Ugandan Professor of Geology at Makerere. I tried hard to persuade him to stay, but it did not work. He had made up his mind to leave, and there was nothing further I could do to stop him. To paraphrase one of William Shakespeare's famous lines, it was as if he was saying that as far as he was concerned, "the world was a stage; you played your part and left". I guess Dr Biryabarema had done just that all the years he had served his department and the University. For him, it was time to move on. Fortunately, Dr Andrew Muwanga had completed his PhD and had returned. This, to some extent, cushioned the impact of Michael Biryabarema's sudden departure.

In 1988, almost a year after I had been appointed Head of Chemistry, I went on to produce a small pamphlet. It was an attempt at providing prospective students with a little bit of information about the Department of Chemistry at Makerere and why they should seriously think of studying Chemistry. I tried to detail some of the important programmes and research activities in the department. In conclusion, I posed a question: What on earth was not Chemistry? I did not answer the question for the reader, but left it begging for an answer. In recent times, I have heard so many nasty things being said about Chemistry and chemists, and good things too, depending on which side of the environmental lobby you happen to support. One of the things I pointed out to the reader of that pamphlet, and which I believed was true then and now, was the fact that – directly or indirectly – chemists have made our modern world what it is today. Therefore, the talk about Chemistry being the laxior of life was, after all, an

exaggeration or a far-fetched idea. Imagine what a modern physician would do without a chemist disguised as a pharmacist, that chemist who synthesises the wonder drugs behind the near miraculous cure of diseases once thought to be incurable and for which modern Medicine is now renowned! There was a time when Tuberculosis (TB) was a death sentence, because there was no known cure for it. Physicians could only look on helplessly as they watched their patients succumb to the disease or survive by sheer brutal force of the body's immune system. In the absence of a cure, rest was one of the recommended remedies. Through long and hard work, chemists discovered a cure – an antibiotic known as Streptomycin, the first in a string of successful anti-TB drugs. At that time, Science had not yet discovered Genetic Engineering and Gene Therapy. Now, Chemistry and Biology are intertwined in the new and emerging Sciences of Biotechnology and Molecular Biology, which are poised to give humankind more scientific miracles.

Secondly, I have also heard, over the years, people ask the question: Why do chemists, and for that matter scientists, make good managers and administrators when they have no basic or formal training in management? – a question to which I could only hazard a guess. Much as management is an art, it is also serious science, much in the same way Engineering is an art and crucial science. Skills such as critical and analytical thinking, ability to organise thoughts and actions, decision-making, systematic approach to problem solving, ingenuity, creativity and innovativeness, good report writing and record keeping, team building, as well as intuition and perseverance are hallmarks of scientists' way of life. These are also some of the things that preoccupy managers, most of their working life. Ever since the American space programmes began in the 1960s, I have been one of its avid followers. I have read virtually every piece of literature written about space exploration which I could lay my hands on. By all accounts, it has been an extremely successful programme. The thing that fascinated me most about the space programme was the managerial, organisational, coordination and problem-solving skills of the vast number of people involved in all aspects of the programme. The people who made it possible for twelve men to land on the moon and come back safely, even in the face of disasters as one which befell the Apollo 13 mission when the spacecraft was about a quarter of a million miles away from earth. NASA Engineers had to solve all sorts of unimaginable problems to bring Jim Lavall and his fellow astronauts back to earth safely. What makes this epoch-making story even more interesting was the fact that most of the people in key decision-making positions were engineers, mathematicians and scientists with hardly any formal management training. Managing such a vast, complex and dangerous programme required skills far beyond what most business schools could have taught them. As Gene Kranz, one of the Flight Directors on the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions, puts it in his book, "Failure is not an option", they had no textbooks to make reference to for most of the things

they did and for the critical decisions they had to make. They were working in unchartered waters where none of them had ever been. As such, they had to write their own textbooks as they went along. It was like writing the rules of a new game when you are on the field playing. What they had was their brains, solid science and engineering. It was all they relied on to get the job done. In real management terms, most of them were amateurs.

One can argue that the space programme was in the main an engineering enterprise. However, like all enterprises, it had all the ingredients of a manager's job, namely people and resources. In fact, I used to be bemused by people, who had had long training in management and yet failed to manage organisations entrusted to them. In most cases, the best they could do was shift blame for their failure to scapegoats. This prompted me to coin the phrase, "If you cannot manage your own affairs, you have no business teaching others how to manage theirs". I know that some readers will not agree with me on this one, but the empirical observations I have made over the years have led me to one simple conclusion: that when you are practising good science, you are indirectly teaching yourself and acquiring good management skills. I guess this and the American space programme example provide a partial answer to the question. To illustrate the point, in 1995, I attended the Association of Commonwealth Universities congress in Malta. While there I was intrigued by the large number of Vice Chancellors from all over the Commonwealth who were chemists. Other science and engineering disciplines were represented too, but in lower numbers than the chemists.

The Department of Chemistry, which I am a proud product of, is one of the oldest departments in the Faculty of Science at Makerere. If you happen to enjoy a well brewed and chilled beer from one of the breweries in Uganda like I do, chances are that behind every bottle of that clear golden solution, there is a Makerere-trained chemist; or if you have ever had a problem involving a court action that required a forensic test and you were referred to the Government Chemist at Wandegaya, you were in the hands of Makerere-trained chemists. Makerere-trained Chemists are everywhere making life tick the people and institutions they serve.

When I was appointed as Makerere's eighth Vice Chancellor, I bet few of my colleagues in the department believed the news. As we have seen, since Makerere University College became Makerere University, the department had never produced a dean. The closest I ever got to being a Dean was during Professor Mugambi's time when I used to stand in for him from time to time. It was one of those little wonders that do happen in life. By the time I returned from Kyambogo, my old classmate Dr Bernard Turyagenda Kiremire was running the department as Head. Like his elder brother and myself, he too had part of his undergraduate training in the same department, with the other part in Biochemistry. He was

one of the golden graduates the Department of Biochemistry produced in 1973 that I referred to earlier. A PhD graduate of the University of Windsor in Ontario Canada, he was a man of principle. He had returned to Makerere a few years after me, and had steadily risen through the academic ranks to Senior Lecturer and later to Associate Professor. Unable to continue with the kind of research in synthetic Chemistry, he turned his interest to Environmental Chemistry, with emphasis on pesticide residues. His new research area was attracting funding from donors and with it came equipment and a small vehicle, as well as a crop of MSc students and good publications. During his time as Head of Department, Professor Kiremire had overseen the last part of the rehabilitation of the department, which the European Union funded. He also took delivery of the new equipment supplied under the African Development Bank loan which the Government of Uganda had negotiated in the mid-1980s. Although he could have served another three-year term as Head, he chose to step down at the end of his first term. I believe he wanted to leave administration to devote more time to his research.

After Bernard Kiremire, members of staff decided to give the mantle to Dr George Mpango, another Canadian-trained Organic chemist. Dr Mpango was one of the few students in the department who were able to complete their MSc degrees at Makerere within the stipulated time during the reign of Idi Amin in the mid-70s. He was supervised by Dr (now Professor) Zach Fomum, a Cameroonian, who had earlier completed his PhD under Professor Stephen Landor, shortly before Idi Amin expelled all British expatriates from Uganda. After his MSc, George Mpango proceeded to the USA for his PhD, but for some reason he switched to the University of Waterloo in Canada. At first, he had difficulty coming back to the department; but when I became head, I encouraged him to come back to join hands with the rest of us to rebuild our old department. After a few lean and frustrating years, as far as research was concerned, he submitted a funding proposal to the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada for his research on Value Added Products (VAP), with emphasis on cassava. The IDRC accepted his proposal and provided him with a research grant, which included a vehicle for his fieldwork. His interest was to find a way to add value to cassava by discovering new products from the roots of the cassava plant. He presided over the department for three years and during his time, the department started generating some income of its own from which he was able to increase the stock of furniture for students, among other things. Most of the money was coming mainly from hiring out teaching space. It was also during his time as head that the department introduced an MSc degree in Chemistry, based on course work and dissertation, which was a break with tradition. He too served only one term as head.

After George Mpango, Professor Henry Sekaalo, one of the most senior members of staff had a shot at the headship. He had joined the department as Associate Professor in the late 1970s, shortly before I returned from Belfast in

July 1979. He had spent most of his working years in research and he had etched out a successful career. Among his many colleagues I have had the privilege to work with over the years, Henry Sekaalo stands out as one of the most organised and hardworking people I have ever known. During my time as Head in the late 1980s, he took a one-year sabbatical at the University of Texas at Austin, which was a very productive year for him. During that year in Texas, he worked so hard that, in such a short time, he was able to publish several good papers from his research work there. Armed with these and a few more papers from his earlier work at Makerere, he applied and was promoted to full Professor, which I thought was long overdue. Apart from his work and ability to stay focused, Henry Sekaalo is also a man of very strong convictions. Some people thought that those strong convictions could at times make him unnecessarily inflexible. Under his leadership, the department completed the reorganisation of all its courses into a credit unit system that saw the phasing out of the old X and Z options, and replacing them with “major” and “minor” subjects. He was also very much interested in the good things for which the department had become famous in the past. For instance, he made sure that the lawns were always properly manicured and the buildings kept in top clean conditions. In spite of the fact that the department had to do many things for which transport was required, including supervision of Industrial Chemistry students on industrial attachment, the department had never owned a vehicle of its own. Henry Sekaalo saw the need for this and started saving some money from the department’s internally-generated income. The University Purchasing Department had never been keen on a second-hand car, but the money Professor Sekaalo had was only enough to buy a used car and he had even identified a suitable one. He convincingly recommended and was allowed to purchase the vehicle, but only after the Estates Manager, a Mechanical Engineer by profession, had inspected it to ascertain its soundness. Finally, the department had a vehicle of its own.

As we have seen elsewhere, the Industrial Chemistry option started in the early 1980s with the UNDP/UNESCO assistance and, like Biochemistry, the option was being offered in the second and third years only until Professor Sekaalo took over as Head of Department. As part of the programme reorganisation and to ensure that the students were adequately grounded in all aspects of Industrial Chemistry, the old two-year course, which had been running since 1985 was transformed into a full-fledged three-year BSc in Industrial Chemistry. Finally, Industrial Chemistry had come of age. From the pioneer class of 1985, a few students who had done well in the final year examinations had been retained for staff development. Moses Bogere was one of those pioneer graduates and had gone on to take a Masters degree in Chemical Engineering at the Middle East Technical University in Turkey. On return, he was appointed full Lecturer in Industrial Chemistry and taught for a while. Fortunately for him, a few years later, he secured another scholarship for a PhD, also in Chemical Engineering at the University of

Akron in Ohio, USA which he successfully completed. This time, he found the opportunities out there too tempting and the inevitable happened. We lost this brilliant young man as part of Africa's seemingly unstoppable brain drain. The University of Puerto Rico had made him an offer he found hard to resist. Uganda was already difficult enough and for a young man like him, moreover with a young family to look after, an appointment to the rank of Assistant Professor was not something to be turned down for the sake of patriotism.

Gerald Babigonza (now deceased) and Patrick Mwesigye, as well as Tom Okia Okurut from the Chemistry Z stream, went to Nigeria for their MSc at the University of Ife, Ile Ife; the first two on the sponsorship of UNESCO's African Network for Scientific and Technological Institutions (ANST). We had been fortunate, because all of them came back after completing their degrees, which greatly boosted the staffing situation. Sadly, just as Babigonza was about to go out again for the PhD, he died, which was a big loss to the department. Tom Okia Okurut, who had specialized in Physical Chemistry, also left the university for a job with the National Water and Sewerage Corporation. Later, he joined the International Institute for Environment and Hydraulic Engineering in Delft, Netherlands for his PhD. After the PhD, the Secretariat of the East African Commission offered him a job at the headquarters of the East African Community in Arusha. Despite this setback, Industrial Chemistry still had a reasonable number of staff. Robert Muyanja, the chemical engineer we had recruited from the University of Manchester Institute of Technology in the late 1980s when I was head, was still there. After his MSc in Chemical Engineering in Nigeria, Patrick Mwesigye had secured another scholarship to study for his PhD at the University of Sydney in Australia, after which he came back and continued teaching. There was also Daniel Kasule who, after a BSc in Chemistry Z had gone to China and converted to Chemical Engineering for his MSc. George Nyakairu had also completed a DSc in Austria and was back.

With all these people around, the department was now in a much better staffing position than I had left it at the beginning of the 1990s. There were two full Professors, including Dr David Kanis; two Associate Professors, Dr Bernard Kiremire and Dr Jude Nyangababo. Jude Nyangababo was promoted to full Professor as I was about to leave the university in 2004. In addition, there were five Senior Lecturers, including my PhD student, Dr Jolacam Mbabazi, and Dr Steven Nyanzi another postgraduate student (who was also my student) who had left Makerere in the late 1980s to complete his MSc at the University of Nairobi on a DAAD scholarship and later won another DAAD scholarship for his PhD at the University of Karlsruhe in Germany. The rest were Patrick Mwesigye, George Mpango and long-serving John Sirike Muruum.

After his return from Australia with more than enough publications, Patrick Mwesigye was among the younger members of staff who had quickly risen to

the Senior Lecturer rank and, to the best of my knowledge, the first permanent Industrial Chemistry member of staff to have risen to this rank. In addition to the Ugandans, the department was host to two Visiting Lecturers: Dr N. H. Kirsch from Germany and Dr S. A. Abdul-Ghaffer from Egypt. There was a total of twenty-four members of staff in all. All they needed were the right tools to get on with the job of training future chemists and industrial chemists.

Whenever time and my heavy schedule permitted, I would drop by my old department for a chat with my old colleagues. Occasionally, I would also join them for an end-of-the-year party in the departmental library. It was a reunion I always looked forward to because it was the time I would see old but familiar faces, as well as a few new ones. People like Edward Ssekubunga I had left acting as Chief Technician, Tom Adriko in the office of the Head of Department – the man you could trust with the photocopying of the examination question papers and you would rest assured that nothing would leak from him; Ruhara Budigi, in charge of the Physical Chemistry laboratories; Mrs Betty Musoke, my old time technician in the first year laboratory. The two were promoted in 2003 to the rank of Chief Technicians – the first time the department had had two Chief Technicians at the same time. In fact, Betty Musoke who in her earlier years was handling sophisticated instruments like the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectrophotometer, made history when she became the first woman Chief Technician in the department. There was also Jane Kayanja, a lady with a melodic voice; Winfred Yuma, the long-serving chemical stores keeper; John Basajja, one of the few male secretaries in the university; and my old friend, Ignatius Birekyeraho. It was always fun and nostalgic for me to be back there.

In fact, when I returned from Kyambogo to Makerere as Vice Chancellor in 1993, my old department hosted a party to congratulate me on my new appointment and, more than ten years later when time came for me to leave Makerere, they organized a farewell for me. If only I had enough resources at my disposal, I would have done a lot more for my old department, which had contributed so much to the advancement of my career in administration. The best I did was to donate a few brand new computers to equip the new computer laboratory they had set up, a modern Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrophotometer and one or two other things. During the major rehabilitation of the university buildings in 2002, I made sure that the Chemistry Department was included and in the process, the departmental buildings received the much-needed facelift.

Indeed, time runs fast and waits for no man. By 2004, Professor Sekaalo's three years as Head of Department were over and he was out. He too served one term. Probably he would have served another term, but age had caught up with him. It was now the turn of young Steven Nyanzi to step into the shoes. I had known Steven Nyanzi as one of the brilliant Graduate Fellows the university had

recruited in 1978/79 for staff development. I had started him on the MSc under extremely difficult conditions, when security of life and property in Uganda was at its lowest ebb. I recall an incident when he nearly lost his life at the hands of soldiers. He had gone to the Nakivubo channel to collect water samples for his experiments when the unruly UNLF soldiers caught up with him. He was roughed up and in the process the soldiers took the little money he had on him and his wristwatch. It was a scary moment for the young man and me; and so, when DAAD offered him a scholarship, I encouraged him to go to Nairobi to complete his MSc there, even if that meant starting all over again. After this, he proceeded to Germany for his PhD. In fact, he too made some history. He skipped the Lecturer grade, as his first appointment after completing his PhD was Senior Lecturer. This was so because he had done so well at his PhD and had published several papers in highly acclaimed journals. His doctoral thesis also had been published as a book. When the Appointments Board received and viewed his credentials, it decided to appoint him at the Senior Lecturer grade. It was not usual for the Board to make such an appointment. Like late Dr Josephat Kibalama, Steven Nyanzi was another one of those brilliant people who went to a lowly-rated high school but who ably combined Chemistry and Mathematics. He could have specialized in Mathematics if he had chosen to because he was equally good at it; but instead, he found the appeal for Chemistry irresistible.

The Chemistry Department, which is right at the entrance of the Faculty of Science, and certainly one of the oldest and largest in the faculty, has not only trained students of its own, it also used to service the Faculty of Medicine. Before the curriculum change, it used to be a requirement for all first year Medical students to study Chemistry. It also serviced the Faculty of Technology during the new faculty's formative years in the early 1970s. It was a department that seemed to have a limitless future at Makerere. However, one would have wanted to see more innovative courses as a way of stimulating and reinvigorating interest in the discipline. Nevertheless, I am certainly proud of my roots there.

### **Faculty of Veterinary Medicine – Minding the Animal Health and Welfare**

The creation of the University of East Africa had deprived Makerere of its School of Veterinary Medicine when it was transferred to Kabete, near Nairobi. I learnt much later that even after the University of East Africa had ceased to exist, the campus at Kabete still retained the name Makerere. After the transfer of the School to Kenya in 1963, the old Vet School buildings, situated below the new faculty and overlooking Mulago hill, remained idle for several years until the university decided to turn them into a primary school for the children of staff and the neighbouring community. In 1970, when the University of East Africa ceased to exist, Makerere had to restart its own Veterinary School from scratch. However,

before the construction of the new building for the faculty was half way done, tragedy struck. Like Technology, it was one of those faculties that were caught up in the Idi Amin chaos and confusion. The company Obote's Government had contracted to construct the new buildings abandoned work. It proved extremely difficult in the latter years to complete them as they were originally designed. In fact, most of the faculty's buildings were either poorly finished externally and internally or were never fully completed. The small Animal Hospital on the north-western side of the faculty's main building, which is sometimes referred to as the Science block, remained unfinished with several of the steel bars that were meant to reinforce the concrete, exposed to the elements and rusting away. The animal houses on the east of the main Science block were eventually completed, but several buildings between the Science block and Livingstone Hall remained at the foundation stage. No one has ever found money to complete them. Like the Faculty of Technology that suffered a similar fate, nearly all departments, teaching and research laboratories, the dean's office, staff offices, lecture rooms, the small animal clinic and the specialised library, were all crammed in the Science block.

I think it is quite legitimate for one to ask why up to the time I left, over thirty years on, the university had failed to complete all the buildings in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. As we have seen before, the problem with the Science disciplines – of which Veterinary Medicine is one – was that they did not generate sufficient income of their own, from which savings could be made and ploughed back into infrastructure development. Donors too were less inclined to provide money for a building. We had only two fall-back positions: either to continue reminding the Government that it was its responsibility to provide funds to complete the buildings, which had remained unfinished for years, or to divert some of the university's own income earned from other sources. For a while, we used both sources when the Treasury was still allocating a little money to the university for the capital development budget. There was always some money in the capital development budget, which the Government used to earmark for specific construction works in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine until 1997 when that source dried up. Some of that money was used to complete the animal houses and the Science block. However, due to the problem of constant leakage, the original flat roof on the block had to be covered with corrugated iron sheets. This was not part of the original design, but had to be done out of necessity. We also used the Government funds to complete a small house at the far north of the Science block, which now houses the new Department of Wildlife and Animal Resources Management (WARM), as well as a Pathology amphitheatre between WARM and the Science block, fully equipped with a modern cold room. The parking lot in front of the Science building also needed proper sealing, but we had no money left to do it.

When I returned to Makerere from Kyambogo, Dr Jackson Nakasala Situma was the Dean of this relatively young faculty. The old big guns had given way

to the young generation of academic vets. Situma Nakasala, a dynamic young man, was one of them. He had studied Veterinary Medicine at Makerere during the '70s and had gone to Germany for a doctorate in the same discipline. There was some discussion within the faculty at the time as to whether a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine earned from German universities was equivalent to a PhD or was a lower qualification. As far as I recall, that was never quite resolved. Some argued that it was its equivalent, others thought it was a lower qualification. That aside, at the time, we never suspected that Nakasala Situma was terminally sick. Over time, he started getting weak, but he was not ready to give up without a fight. He was unbelievably a man of extreme courage and stamina. In spite of his ill health, he continued with a full load of teaching and administrative responsibilities, even when the illness had totally disfigured his face. In fact, he had become a sad sight to see at meetings. After a short spell at Mulago Hospital, he died and was buried at his ancestral home in the hills at the foot of Mount Elgon or Masaba Mountains, a place I had never visited before. In his death, the university had lost a brilliant and resourceful individual, who had tried so hard to build a faculty on a shoe-string budget.

Dr Situma Nakasala had taken over the deanship of the faculty after Professors Charles Katongole and Frederick Kayanja, who made up the first generation of African members of staff, had seen the faculty off its feet in its most difficult formative years in the '70s, but in spite of their heroic efforts to save the faculty from premature closure, a lot remained to be done. Nakasala Situma had come into administration after President Museveni had appointed George Kagonyera Mondo, a PhD graduate of the University of California at Davis, who was then Dean of the faculty, Minister of Animal Industry. After the departure of Mondo Kagonyera, the faculty lost yet another senior member of staff and veteran. The Government decided to appoint Professor Gustavas Sennyonga, a PhD holder in Veterinary Parasitology from the University of Edinburgh, as Permanent Secretary to the former Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Unfortunately, his appointment as Permanent Secretary was also the beginning of his troubles, which saw him incarcerated for a while. When Professor Sennyonga went to Luzira, we could not help feeling sorry for him. Many of his students and colleagues fondly remembered him as an excellent Professor of Animal Parasitology and a jovial personality. He was one of the most genial colleagues I had ever met. As the faculty was rallying from the loss of its senior members of staff, Professor Justin Epelu Opio, who had been the pillar in the Department of Veterinary Anatomy after the departure of Professor Kayanja, also left after his appointment as Deputy Vice Chancellor of Makerere University in September 1993. That was the situation that Dr Situma found himself in when he took over as Dean. In his relatively short time and despite the teething problems, there were several things Dr Situma did for his faculty. Besides shouldering the heavy responsibility as Dean and being sick, he continued to publish scholarly works in reputable

scientific journals, which in turn earned him promotion. At the time of his death, he had risen to the rank of Associate Professor.

It was during Dr Situma's time as Dean that the faculty intensified its linkage with the Free University of Berlin. Through this linkage, the faculty hosted German students studying some aspects of tropical Veterinary Medicine, among other interesting bilateral activities for periods ranging from a few weeks to three months. At about the same time, the German Government technical cooperation arm (GTZ) was also actively engaged in the reinvigoration of the faculty through the provision of technical experts, who taught and supervised students, along with providing badly needed equipment. I once visited the faculty in my early years as Vice Chancellor and was pleasantly surprised to meet the GTZ team leader, who introduced herself to me as Mrs Mwanje. Coincidentally, this same name, Mwanje, happens to be my second son's surname. She quickly pointed out that although she was German, she was married to a Ugandan from Buganda, who belonged to the leopard clan. I told her that I also belonged to the same clan and by custom, was her husband too. We had a good laugh which turned out to be a good icebreaker to an informative tour of the faculty. Situma also oversaw the completion of some structures that had remained unfinished for a long time and the establishment of Buyana Stock Farm as one of the faculty's teaching facilities. The GTZ brought Dr Wandeck, whose job was to help manage and oversee the redevelopment of the former run-down farm. It was also during his time that the faculty initiated the South African Boer goat-rearing scheme, which he personally supervised. These exotic goats, with their familiar white and brown fur coats, big udders, drooping ears and backward-bent horns, soon attracted the attention of the Ugandan farmers. At the time, in the mid- and late 1990s, a big breeding he-goat or burke weighing close to 90 kg was going for as much as two hundred thousand shillings. Dr Wandeck and his wife stayed full-time on the University Farm in rural Buyana, some 90 or so kilometres west of Kampala, coming only occasionally to Kampala and to Makerere to collect consumables, teaching materials and pay-cheques for his farm workers.

Dr Wandeck was an amazing man. As soon as he settled down in Buyana, he began making friends with the people in the local community, who lived around the farm. He became even more popular when, after the farm water reticulation had been inaugurated, he decided to provide the communities living in the villages surrounding the farm with clean and safe water. I remember the first time I visited the farm with Dean Nakasala Situma and my colleagues in the University Administration. Dr Wandeck had organised his "village mates" (as he used to call them) to put up a show of traditional Kiganda singing, drumming and dancing to welcome us to Buyana and to thank Makerere University for allowing them to access clean water from the University Farm. It was quite a show, with him participating in the dancing. His "village mates" also liked him for something

else. He provided them with employment as farm workers, a rare opportunity for them to earn a regular income. I must confess that I found it rather confounding and outlandish to see a sophisticated German living deep in rural Uganda and being at home with the local communities and the rural environment. He fitted in quite nicely. His wife helped him with the farm accounts and records. It was a life that both of them seemed to have enjoyed. It was also about this time that we began to see the herd of Ankole cattle that President Museveni had given to the faculty as experimental animals start to multiply. The herd had hardly grown before Dr Wandeck took over as Farm Manager, which left us wondering what was happening there and why the herd had not grown in over five years. Different explanations were given but none convinced me. Besides poor management, the plausible explanation was that someone who was in charge of the farm was secretly selling the young animals. In addition to the growing herd, I was amazed to see a huge Ankole bull, which weighed close to 500 kg according to the Farm Manager's estimate. Besides their huge horns and unlike the Zebus of Teso and Karamoja and the Borans of Southern Ethiopia, Ankole cows are generally low live weight cattle. That one was a giant, the type of elite Ankole cow Professor Kiwuwa of the Faculty of Agriculture was looking for.

There were also several other equally important things that happened while Situma was still Dean. However, it was most unfortunate and regrettable that during his last years as Dean, rumours started flying about implicating some senior members of his faculty in sexual harassment scandals. Some female students started alleging that some prominent and fairly senior members of staff in the faculty were menacingly demanding for sex from them and threatening whoever was not willing to comply with poor grades and failure. Although the allegations had for several months been the subject of hearsay at the department, we failed to establish the truth, because the students who were making the allegations failed to come forward to substantiate them and without a smoking gun, it was difficult to prove anything. Nevertheless, those were serious allegations that nearly disgraced a few senior members of staff, whom the students had accused of being the perpetrators of the hideous practice. On the other hand, members of staff whom the students had implicated in the sex-for-marks scandals felt deeply bruised and hurt, but they too found it difficult to seek redress in the courts of law, because the allegations were anonymous.

After the death of Dr Nakasala Situma, the faculty had to look for a new Dean. After a fiercely contested election, Dr Elly Katunguka-Rwakishaya, a specialist in Medicine, the equivalent of a physician in human medical terms, emerged as the winner. The aftermath of that election, which included a lot of acrimonious statements, made us wonder whether the idea of electing Deans and Heads of Departments was not going contrary to Professor George Kirya's ideals. As I said before, Professor Kirya was the Vice Chancellor under whose

administration the University adopted the new democratic method of electing Heads of Departments and Deans. After this election, I began to see worrying signs. It looked like the fiercely contested elections were beginning to polarise departments and faculties along so many lines of all sorts of allegiance. I was once compelled to voice my concern in Senate about these dangerous signs which had begun to erode the very fabric of the fraternity and collegiality spirit for which Makerere University was known and which had helped to keep it together as a community, even in the toughest of times. The majority of the Senate members, while admitting that the system had flaws, expressed the view that it was a much better and preferred system, as opposed to the old system of appointing Heads, Deans and Directors. Although the debate ended there, we remained concerned about this unfolding trend of events. However, instead of rolling back the clock by re-introducing a system which had been rejected long time ago, we decided to respect the wishes of the majority. In so doing, we hoped and prayed that the situation would not spiral out of control, where the negative effects of the system would not become too destructive to the detriment of the harmony that had hitherto existed in the university.

For some reason, Veterinary Medicine was one of the few faculties, if not the only one at the time, that had a male Senior Personal Secretary to the Dean, Mathew Mutabuuza. Before coming to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Mutabuuza had served in the Department of Geography as secretary for many years and, after further training, he was promoted to the rank of Senior Personal Secretary, which was the topmost grade for secretaries at Makerere. At the time, only Deans and the university's top administrators were entitled to senior personal secretaries. So after his promotion, Mutabuuza had to leave the Geography Department. It was the University Secretary's responsibility to deploy secretaries on the advice of the Personnel Department. About the time Mutabuuza was promoted, the Dean of Veterinary Medicine had no Senior Personal Secretary, so the University Secretary decided to deploy him there. The Dean had no choice but to accept his new secretary. Apparently, the chemistry between the two men seemed to have worked well enough for the two to stay together without any squabbles. The one thing I recall about Mutabuuza during the difficult 1980s was the beer bar he used to run in the small house that had remained in the car park on the northern side of the Faculty of Agriculture, which served as a watering hole for the thirsty souls. Then, beer was a scarce commodity in the country, but Mutabuuza had found a way of getting it and sold it at very reasonable price. His little bar was a popular evening meeting place for Makerere staff, regardless of rank and social status. Unfortunately, he went out of business because many of his patrons were drinking the beer on credit and failed to pay. However, the times were changing fast. Competition outside the university, particularly at Wandegaya, was intensifying. Compared to the new drinking places outside the university, his bar had become too small to survive.

Dr Elly Katunguka-Rwakishaya, a graduate of Makerere for the Bachelors degree in Veterinary Medicine and holder of a Master of Veterinary Medicine from University College, Dublin in Ireland and a PhD from the University of Glasgow in Scotland, worked hard to get the faculty going again. He was one of the smartest members of staff. He was both intellectual and fashionable. I remember my wife referring to him as the “smart boy”, but his opponents often accused him of being too brash.

During Katunguka-Rwakishaya's time as Dean, the faculty underwent several changes. One thing the new Dean kept reminding me about was the absence of equipment and suitable means of transport to take students for field training and to maintain the ambulatory service. Students, particularly the graduating class, had a lot to learn from the hands-on experience the ambulatory services offered. Fortunately for him, his relentless reminders eventually paid off. Somehow, I was able to find some money to take care of some of his urgent needs. On several occasions, I used spare time and visited the faculty. The visits proved very informative because, through them, I was able to form first-hand impressions of the magnitude of the problems the faculty was facing, instead of relying solely on reports and the Dean's pleas. We were convinced that fieldwork, which involved taking students out to farms, was a vital component of their practical training and therefore, a top priority. We looked for the money and bought two thirty-seater buses to take care of the immediate transport needs. Even with the two new small buses, we had not solved all the faculty's transport problems. The two small buses were not off-road vehicles, but they could only take students to Buyana and a few other places. Although we could now take students to Buyana regularly, we were still not able to take them to real problem areas – the farmers' farms. The only four-wheel drive station wagon the faculty had was too old and kept breaking down; and the University Bursar, Ben Byambambazi, had started complaining about the rising maintenance and fuel costs. The Faculty needed a reliable vehicle. When Dr Elizabeth Kyewalabye took over as Head of the Department of Medicine, the first favour she asked from me was a reliable vehicle. Her concern was that without sufficient field training and exposure to the hands-on practical experience, the faculty would be passing out half-baked Vets that would give the it and the university a bad name. The pressure from her and the Dean, who coincidentally came from the same department, was becoming too much for me to resist any more.

The several visits I had made to the faculty had also revealed a lot to me about the appalling state of the undergraduate laboratories. We came to the inevitable conclusion that the laboratories were in urgent need of re-equipping and modernising. We had to find money fairly quickly to revamp them with new and modern equipment and supplies. The responsibility fell on the Vice Chancellor as the university's chief academic officer. It was both a challenge and

a dilemma for me. How could I raise the money to fix all these problems in such a short time? But as we had seen it, the problems called for a quick fix. After scratching my head for a while, I came up with an idea: why not use the interest earned on the university's Endowment Fund in London, which we used to refer to as the Crown Agent fund, to solve some of these problems? I decided to float the idea to my colleagues. We all agreed that it was a good idea. It was not a lot of money, but we were convinced that even that little money would make a huge difference between putting a student through five years of training without ever using a working modern microscope and having access to one that worked. We then decided to seek approval from the University Council to use some of that money to buy new equipment for the faculty.

Incidentally, even the Chairman of the University Council then, Dr David Matovu – a seasoned biologist in his own right – had already expressed concern about the state of the laboratories in some science-based disciplines. It was, therefore, a meeting of like minds. We had to tread carefully though, lest we were accused of practising favouritism; after all, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Epelu Opio, was one of the faculty's big guns. People would automatically assume he was using his new position to dish goodies to his old faculty. To counter such an accusation, we decided to carry out a critical examination of all the needs of all science-based faculties and how we could raise the money to take care of their problems.

When all was said and done, I made it a point that I would have a louder voice in the way the money from London would be distributed to faculties. I wanted to make sure that the faculties that were in the direst need got the lion's share of the little money. I had visited all the affected faculties and I had a good idea about their equipment needs. I had less than a million pounds, so I had to choose carefully which faculty or department got a share of it. According to the results of my needs assessment, Veterinary Medicine had the greatest need. It therefore received the lion's share of the funds; some US\$ 200,000. For reasons I never quite understood, Crown Agent had decided to release the money to us in US dollars and not in UK pounds. Nevertheless, it was better than nothing at all. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine's allocation included money for a brand new four-wheel drive vehicle, a new engine for the old Land Cruiser and an assortment of laboratory equipment that included modern and more powerful microscopes and personal computers. All deliveries were received. The only problem reported to me after the faculty had taken delivery of the vehicle and new equipment was that the Dean had decided to keep the new vehicle at his office. I decided not to intervene; after all, the man had struggled hard to extract a few new things from me. Secondly, I was not in the mood to embark on new wars about the sharing of the vehicles and equipment when all I was looking forward to was my forthcoming retirement.

Besides the vehicles and new equipment bought out of the Crown Agent fund, the Department of Veterinary Pathology was also enjoying a new amphitheatre, fully equipped with a working cold room and facilities to hang and move animal cadavers. The Head of Department, Professor Ojok Lonzy, could not contain his excitement with the new facility. He had been longing for such a facility for many years. Finally, his dream had come true. Like the other buildings that made up the Veterinary Medicine complex, the theatre had been planned in the late 60s and early 70s, but it had never been completed. We had mobilised resources from the university's small capital development budget to complete the facility. Now, the department had a place where they could teach all aspects of animal pathology. The creation of a fully equipped and up-to-date food analysis laboratory in the faculty was also a big achievement for Professor Katunguka.

Besides being used as a teaching and research facility, the laboratory served as a supplementary source of badly needed revenue for the faculty. It carried out food and animal feed analysis on behalf of the public, a service for which it charged a fee. Besides the University Administration's effort to complete the buildings that were left uncompleted in the '70s, the Dean too looked around, found some money and gave the Science block a new coat of paint and a general facelift. In the dry season, dust was a constant menace in the faculty. The untarmacked parking lot was the source of much of this dust. The wind would blow the stuff right into the building, wreaking havoc on its sensitive equipment and making everything around look very filthy, as if no one ever cared about the cleanliness of the faculty's premises. In the wet season, it was another story. Mud was all over the place; staff and students carried it inside the building and soiled the floors. The building had to be constantly swept to maintain some semblance of cleanliness. For a long time, I had struggled to find money to seal the parking lot to no avail. It had become an eyesore which we had to live with, no matter how much I hated it.

Getting money was always tight, very tight indeed, and there were far more important and pressing needs the University Bursar had to spend the little money available on. So, tarmacking a parking lot was certainly not top on his list of priorities. I therefore gave up the idea. Fortunately, Dean Katunguka-Rwakishaya was able to find some money and, without much ado, he had the job beautifully done. Only the small patch of the access road to the faculty besides Livingstone Hall remained untarmacked, but I was hopeful that, someday in the near future, that patch would be tarmacked too.

As we grappled with the problem of academic decay, several members of staff in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine who had long given up on the idea of studying for the PhD degree suddenly revived their interest in the idea. Perhaps they had heard the wake-up call and seen the handwriting on the wall signalling the fact that the days of academic malaise were drawing to an end and fast giving

way to renewed confidence in Makerere as one of the leading institutions of higher learning on the African continent. Instead of spending much of their valuable time and energy in occupations that had very little to do with their academic advancement, though crucial to their survival and their families, time had come for them to order their priorities right in favour of their academic career. It was not that the university had dramatically improved their salaries overnight, far from it; the living wage was still far beyond their reach. It must have been something else that was inspiring them to return to the research laboratories, either at Makerere or abroad, and get started on the tough road that would eventually lead to the acquisition of the PhD degree. In fact, many members of staff in the Veterinary Medicine Faculty had completed their PhDs long before late Professor Mujaju had written and presented his famous report and before the university had created the Staff Development Fund. It was a joy to see colleagues like Ojok Lonzy, who had had a brilliant undergraduate career at Makerere, trained for his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Giessen in Germany, had several diplomas from Kassel University, and bagged his PhD degree at Makerere; and George William Nasimanya of the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine who got his own PhD from the University of Guelph in Canada. While at Guelph, Professor John Opuda-Asibo acted as his co-supervisor on the Makerere side. On his return to Uganda, with several publications to his credit, Dr Nasimanya was quickly promoted to Senior Lecturer and subsequently elected Head of his department. In spite of his relatively advanced age, Edmund Mugabi Bukenya too, a zoologist that Professor Kayanja recruited for the Department of Veterinary Anatomy in the '80s and who later became the Head of the same department, decided to have a crack at it at University of Cape Town in South Africa. He was one of the members of staff to have received sponsorship from the university's Staff Development Fund. Some of us were a bit apprehensive about his ability to cope with the rigorous requirements of the PhD programme. In fact, I took a bit of time to approve his sponsorship on behalf of the Staff Development Committee. We were in for a pleasant surprise. He completed the degree within the time limit and even asked me to give him a year so he could take a post-doctoral appointment at the University of the Western Cape, which I gladly granted. I had no reason to deny him the opportunity after he had pleasantly surprised me. Unfortunately, as he was settling down to recover from his PhD grilling days at Cape Town and to celebrate his hard-earned achievement, his long-time wife, Agnes who had worked as a Senior Assistant Registrar at Makerere for many years, died rather suddenly. Death, in its funny ways, rudely cut the joy of his achievement short.

Dr Rose Azuba Musoke, an avid tennis player, who had started out as a Clinical Officer in the Department of Veterinary Medicine – one of those unique positions in the university establishment – registered for her PhD at Makerere. After a few gruelling years, she received it and later the Appointments Board gave

her a substantive appointment as Lecturer in the same department. Others like Drs Elizabeth Kyewalabye, Odoi Agricola and O. Olila went to the University of Nairobi for their PhDs. Dr Ruth Muwazi of Veterinary Anatomy also obtained hers from Makerere under Professor Fredrick Kayanja in 1995, with part of the work done in Germany. When Professors Kayanja and Epelu Opio left the department, Ruth Muwazi had the arduous task of keeping it going amidst acute staff shortages, until Dr Mugabi Bukenya took over. Dr Christopher Rubaire-Akiiki of Veterinary Pathology and Microbiology was another colleague who had stuck it out during Makerere's bleak days and had seen the thick and thin of Makerere's difficulties. For some years, he seemed to have hit a dead end and had stagnated at Lecturer level. I was happy to see him receive his PhD in 1996. After the PhD and because he was now publishing quality papers out of his research work, he started rising quite rapidly through the ranks. At the time of my retirement, he had made it to the Associate Professor grade. Professor Johnson Acon was another person with a track record that amazed me. First, he was a man who seemed to enjoy the best that life could offer. He was one of the vets at Makerere that had won the confidence of several expatriates working in Uganda who happened to have animal pets like dogs and cats. They unreservedly entrusted the care of their pets to him. Given this background, you would not have expected him to come across as a serious academic, but he was. After his MSc at the University of Florida, he came back to his old faculty and for a while he seemed to have forgotten about the PhD. After sorting himself out, he decided to register for it at Makerere and before long, he had completed it. What followed the PhD was promotion. As he churned out high quality publications, promotions kept coming until he was appointed full Professor in the Department of Veterinary Surgery and Reproduction, the second Professor there after the return of Professor J. S. Ogaa from the University of Zimbabwe, where he had taken refuge during the difficult times Uganda went through in the '70s and '80s.

Professor John Opuda-Asibo was one of the few Heads of Departments who impressed me for the vision they had for the future of their departments. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, like the rest of the university, had been dogged with staff shortages for a long time. The Department of Veterinary Medicine, of which he was Head, was one of the departments that was experiencing serious staff shortage. As we have seen, the situation in this department was not typical of other departments in this faculty at the time. On one extreme end of the scale, you had a few remaining greying and ageing members of staff, most of them inherited from the defunct University of East Africa; and on the other, a growing population of very young staff, the majority of them armed with only a Bachelors degree in Veterinary Medicine. The gap in-between was virtually empty. In an academic institution like a university, a bottom-heavy staffing situation is regarded as unhealthy. The young and inexperienced members of staff need academic leadership that only the more senior and experienced staff

can provide. This was the situation that Professor Opuda-Asibo, who had taken over the headship of the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine, after completing his Master of Public Health and PhD degrees at the University of Minnesota in the USA, found himself contending with. For the solution, he devised a simple plan: send out as many of your young members of staff for their advanced degrees and, in the meantime, carry most of their teaching load yourself and wait for them to return. When he floated the idea to me, it sounded a crazy thing. I told him he was in for a quick burn-out. "How sure are you that they would come back?" I asked. His reply was again simple. He just said he was prepared to gamble on it. His colleagues, who saw him struggle with a heavy teaching load, wondered whether he had made the right decision to let so many of his staff go out at the same time, leaving him almost alone in the department. One day, he came to me, asking whether we could help him hire some part-time lecturers although in the course of our short discussion, he told me that he was not overly worried that he had let so many of his Assistant Lecturers and Teaching Assistants go for their Masters and PhD degrees at almost the same time. He was confident that in a few years' time, his department would be in a stronger position than ever before. I concurred with him.

How dead right he was! By June 2004, the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine had long ceased to be a one-man department. Out of a staff strength of eight, six of them were PhD holders, the highest number of PhDs in any single department in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. What was even more interesting was the fact that, after completing their studies abroad, the majority of them returned to their department. He sacrificially built the future of his department and of Makerere University. It is also perhaps worth noting that all the PhDs in his department were obtained abroad, thus minimizing the risk of excessive in-breeding. Some of them attended the topmost universities in the USA and excelled. For example, while studying for his PhD at the University of Louisiana, Dr E. Kagambe made an impression on his professors there as he turned out to be an outstanding student. In fact, if all his young staff, who went to the USA came back, Professor Opuda-Asibo would have had a lot more PhDs in the department. Another young man, Dr S. R. Were went to the University of Edinburgh for his MSc and proceeded to Cornell University at Ithaca, upstate New York, for the PhD which he successfully completed and came back. We have already alluded to Dr Nasimanya, who went to Ohio State University in the USA for his MSc and then to Guelph in Ontario Canada for his PhD.

Dr Francis Ejobi went to the University of Saarland in the West of Germany for his PhD. In 1998, on my DAAD-sponsored tour of some German universities, I visited his university and found him busy finalising his bench work and beginning to put his PhD thesis together. I had the opportunity to share a moment with his supervisor, Professor Muller, who had very high opinion of his young student's

intellectual ability and the teaching standards at Makerere. Indeed, Francis lived up to our expectations and graduated within the stipulated time. After his PhD in Germany, he immediately returned to Makerere. By the time Professor Opuda-Asibo left the department for the School of Postgraduate Studies, where I had given him an appointment as acting Director of the School – following the death of the substantive Director, Professor John Mugerwa – he was leaving a department that was in an excellent shape. That is what I call vision. Interestingly, in spite of carrying an extraordinarily heavy teaching load, Professor Opuda-Asibo kept an active research programme of his own. He kept publishing his work in internationally-recognised journals. The list of journal papers is impressively long and with the long list of publications came promotion. By the time I came back to Makerere as Vice Chancellor in late 1993, he was a Senior Lecturer, but in a space of less than eight years, he had moved through the ranks to become a full Professor.

As I saw all these interesting developments unfold in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and other faculties, I kept asking myself, “Was all this quest to return to the old roots of academic excellence that Makerere had always been known for, the work of some form of magic?” I had no simple answer. I could not pin it down to good salaries; after all, pay was just marginally better. People were still struggling to make ends meet, so the salary could not have been the key motivator. However, one thing was certain: something had inspired in us the confidence and the zeal that led so many members of staff to return to the good things some of them had long given up – excellent academics. As every schoolboy knows, research and the publications as well as the advanced degrees that come from it are the hallmark of a university in good academic standing. Perhaps after many years of trying to bootstrap itself out of its difficulties, providence was at work for Makerere; perhaps people just began to feel good again about themselves and about their good old university, as if they were saying, “Let us put the past behind us and get on with the present and the future”. As they say, “You cannot change yesterday, but today and tomorrow you can shape.” And that was what Makerere did. While some people, as expected, were bent on criticising us, rightly or wrongly for allegedly letting standards at Makerere fall, our quiet revolution was just edging forward unrelentingly and, for those who cared to see, the results were out in the open. We were back on the road, walking the long walk to the pinnacle of academic excellence as exemplified by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Professor Opuda-Asibo happened to be one of Makerere’s academics in this re-awakening period. A Fulbright scholar and a meticulous worker – perhaps sometimes too meticulous for the liking of some people – he came to the Graduate School with the same kind of enthusiasm. Besides heading his department, the four-and-a-half-year stint he had as Acting Director of the Graduate School

and his competence and outstanding achievements as a scholar, Professor Asibo was an excellent example of the people who kept Makerere ticking despite the difficulties. I had expected him to move on to higher things in the University Administration and I was sure he would. Shortly before I retired, he came close to being my successor. He came very close to getting there, but never quite crossed the bridge. I guessed some of his colleagues did not quite know what to make of him. I wondered why and ventured to ask some people whom I thought knew him well. Wherever I inquired and whoever I asked, the answer that came back was the same. Everyone agreed that Professor Opuda-Asibo was an excellent academic, but always hastened to add that they thought he was too strict and needed to work more on his Public Relations (PR). People believed that his strict temperament was best suited for a technocrat, but not for leadership. One day, while having a tat-a-tat with him, I took it upon myself to ask him if he was aware that his peers were failing to recognise his potential as a leader; that they strongly believed, rightly or wrongly, that he was too much of a no-nonsense man and wished if only he could be a little more flexible. He too seemed to be aware of this problem and he knew that his adversaries kept pinning it on him as a weakness. According to him, they used it to scare away his supporters from him. He was well aware that he had become a victim of his insistence on professionalism, excellence, efficiency and effectiveness and always demanding only the very best from those working under him. This had sometimes gotten him into trouble with his colleagues, especially when he was serving as Director of the Graduate School. However, given his potential, I know for sure that someday he would make it to top leadership, perhaps with a little mentoring, though probably not at Makerere. I was grateful to him for the many difficult assignments he used to do for Senate. Whenever Senate identified some serious problem within a department or faculty that called for an investigation, like high failure rate or a slackening of standards, Senate would throw the tart assignment at Professor Opuda-Asibo, knowing fully well that without fear or favour he would turn everything and anything in his wake upside down until he came to the bottom of the truth, with a hard hitting report, delivered on time with a full dissection of the problem and a way forward. Perhaps these assignments also contributed to his rather low popularity with his peers, but I personally found him a pleasure to work with.

The next best thing to have happened in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine during my time was the opening of Professor George Lubega's Molecular Biology Laboratory, the first of its kind at Makerere. Professor Lubega, a McGill University PhD graduate, was one of the few members of staff at Makerere with a good nose for research grants and the skills to write grant-winning research proposals. As soon as he returned from Canada and settled down in his old Department of Veterinary Parasitology and Microbiology, he started thinking of how he could sustain the research tempo he had come back with from Canada, in a department that hardly had any equipment that one could use for serious research. He chose,

among his research interests, to focus on an old zoonotic disease problem – trypanosomiasis, the cause of sleeping sickness in humans and nagana in cattle. The parasites, the trypanosomes which cause the disease use the tsetse fly as the vector to jump from the animals to humans and vice versa. Over the years, there has been a concerted effort all over Africa, the region most affected by the menace of the disease, to eliminate the tsetse fly – the parasite's main vector – with limited success. The search for a vaccine had also been an exercise in futility. The vaccine had eluded scientists for decades. Professor Lubega decided to have a crack at the unsolved vaccine development problem, using the new techniques of Molecular Biology. To raise funds for his research, he submitted proposals to funding agencies, and he eventually succeeded in securing funds from the World Health Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland.

Being a new field, he had to build up a new laboratory within the Science block of the faculty which houses most of the departments. He found space in the eastern wing of the building and placed an order for his equipment. It so happened that one piece of equipment was too big to fit into the small room. It could not be fitted in the room without knocking down a few walls. As he began knocking the walls down, he ran into problems with some of officials in the University Administration who were in charge of space allocation and utilisation. He was ordered to stop immediately, citing as reason the fact that he had done it without going through the proper university machinery and therefore, was doing it without permission. That was despite the fact that the faculty had allowed him to go ahead. The whole thing turned into a heated argument and nearly stalled the entire project, moreover at the risk of losing his grant. It was a glitch we had to fix as fast as we could and we did. My view was that if he were not making substantial alterations to the building that required planning approval, why not let him go ahead and have his expensive equipment installed as quickly as possible before the warranty expired. In the end common sense prevailed, and the University Council gave him permission to go ahead with the alterations he wanted to make, but insisted that the structural integrity of the building had to be safeguarded. Therefore, a qualified engineer had to supervise the demolition work. The equipment was installed and the laboratory was soon fully operational.

Professor Lubega's Molecular Biology laboratory had the latest state-of-the-art equipment you could find anywhere in the world. When he started publishing his research findings in international journals, his work caught the attention of some scholars in the USA. For as long as I can remember, American Professors have been coming to Makerere over the years as Fulbright fellows, primarily to teach. However, Professor Lubega succeeded in being the first person at Makerere to attract a Fulbright fellow from the USA, primarily to conduct research in his new laboratory. Professor Lubega's story was one of the best success stories that ever occurred at Makerere during my time as Vice Chancellor. It made me feel proud

about the quality of the academic staff we had. I had made it a habit whenever I hosted important guests to take them to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine to showcase the exciting things that were happening in Professor Lubega's laboratory, sometimes at very short notice, sometimes without notice at all. What used to captivate me was the fact that every time I took my visitors there, I found Professor Lubega and his research students, who at one time included a German student, busy at work in the main section of the laboratory and in the clean and dark rooms where they carried out experiments on DNA and things to do with electrophoresis. Professor Lubega never got tired of receiving me and explaining to my visitors the research they were conducting in their hi-tech laboratory. If he did, he never expressed it openly, a mark of refinement of manners and speech around others. He would always go out of his way to offer a simple explanation about what they were doing. It seemed his funders too were impressed by his work, because whenever he asked for more funding, it kept coming. The one requirement his donors always asked him to fulfil was that the Vice Chancellor had to endorse all his grant applications and that I religiously accomplished on his behalf until I left the university.

The many publications that kept coming out of this work translated into rapid promotion for him. From Lecturer, Dr Lubega rose quickly through the ranks and, in 2003, he was promoted to full Professor in the Department of Veterinary Parasitology and Microbiology, a department that had gone without a full Professor for many years after the departure of Professor Sennyonga. While some of his colleagues who had been members of staff much longer than him were still busy marking time for reasons best known to them, Professor Lubega made it to the top in no time. Professor Lubega's example was to me a clear illustration of what I so often used to tell members of staff that, ingenuity, imagination, hard and quality work always paid handsome dividends to those who laboured. In fact, my long-time friend, Professor Elly Sabiiti, sometimes used to tease me by referring to me as "Mr Publish or Perish", because I perpetually emphasised the need for academic members of staff (junior and senior) to stay active in research and to publish their results, even if they were looking for a rose and, in its place, found a weed. That way, they would avoid being academically thumped by their junior contemporaries. Besides the publications and the PhDs coming out of the laboratories, Professor Lubega conceived the idea of launching a two-year taught MSc course in Molecular Biology. There was no such course at Makerere before.

Although the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine had the highest number of PhDs amongst its staff, other departments too were slowly catching up. We have already come across some examples. However, this success story would not be complete without mentioning a few younger vets in the faculty who had done equally well. Unfortunately, we lost a few on the way who went out for their PhDs but chose not to return. They

became part of Africa's brain haemorrhage. Many are still stuck in the USA. However, out of those who thought home was best and returned, some had taken over the leadership mantle of their respective departments. Below are examples of the young staff who went out for either MScs or PhDs and came back to serve Makerere, the institution that had given them the opportunity to study for advanced degrees abroad: P. Waiswa who went to Imperial College London for his MSc and PhD; and D. Nalwanga, one of the brightest female students the faculty had ever had, who went to Cornell for the MSc and to Glasgow for the PhD. By the time I left, she had not returned. Sadly for her, while studying abroad her husband died. M. J. Musenero was another female young member of staff who also went for her MSc at Cornell; E. Nyatia went for an MSc at Edinburgh; R. Barigye, for the MSc at the University of London; B. M. Kanyima, MSc Michigan; M. G. Nassuna, MSc Alberta, Canada; R. Tweyongyere, MSc Edinburgh; M. S. Mulaiteyo-Kaahwa, MSc Brunei; J. B. Nizeyi, MSc Colorado, USA; G. M. Kamugisha, MSc Punjab; I. Naigaga, MSc Rhodes, South Africa; and J. D. Kabasa, PhD at Gottingen University in Germany.

When time came for Professor Katunguka-Rwakishaya to step down as Dean at the end of his two terms, the majority of members of staff in the faculty believed that Dr Kabasa, young as he was, was the obvious successor. They elected him the new Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Before I stepped down as Vice Chancellor, I was happy to see the gap between the young and old staff in this faculty slowly closing. In 1993 when I took over as Vice Chancellor, I thought it would take years to close the gap. My pessimism was based on the fact that at the time very few young people were being appointed there and the few that were there appeared to have stagnated.

I believe we had built for the future of Veterinary Medicine at Makerere, thanks to our development partners, such as the World Bank, that provided the funds for the Agricultural Research and Training Programme (ARTP) that granted several young members of staff of the faculty scholarships to study abroad; the Government of Uganda, which negotiated for the funds from the World Bank and our own Staff Development Fund, as well as the home-grown capacity at Makerere to supervise MSc and PhD students; many young members of staff studied for the MSc and PhD degrees at Makerere. The University of Nairobi too trained, and continues to train, several of our young and sometimes not so young staff at Kabete. South Africa too, especially the University of Pretoria, had offered another avenue for the MSc and PhD training. Before I left the university we had a couple of students at the University of Pretoria, including Dr L. M. Koma, who was Head of the Department of Veterinary Surgery and Reproduction for many years, and my personal vet, Edmund Bizimemyera. A few found their way to Rhodes University and Stellenbosch University. The latter two universities did not have specialised schools but had departments which taught

and researched into Animal Science. The challenge that faced the university now was the capacity to retain these young budding PhDs. The question of a living wage and even a development wage had to be squarely addressed. In order to keep this calibre of highly intelligent young staff, the university had to become a competitive employer. Perhaps that would be one of the ways of attracting back even those who had defected to places like the USA where bread and butter was, to them, sure a deal as sunrise and sunset. I must admit though, that achieving a meaningful wage was one of my glaring failures. I failed to address this obstacle, however hard I tried. Eventually, I kept getting into trouble with my hungry and angry colleagues who were demanding for a living wage. I will say a little more about my goof on this one later.

Like most faculties in the days of academic malaise, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine had never innovated a new programme ever since the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, (BVM), degree programme was launched in 1970, much of it a transplant from the University of Nairobi. Initially, the BVM was a four-year programme. However, under Professor Katunguka-Rwakishaya, a case was made to add an extra year to the BVM, thus making it a five-year programme. Both Senate and the University Council accepted the change, which made the BVM as long as the MBChB. The rationale was to use the fifth year to build field skills and competences. One of the reasons for extending the BVM to a five-year programme was based on the argument that unlike the new medical doctors, who have to do at least a full year of internship after graduation in a recognised hospital under the supervision of a senior doctor, Fresh Veterinary Medicine graduates had no such opportunity for internship training. Once they left the university, they were on their own. Whereas the medical services were still the domain of Government, it had decided to privatise the veterinary services, so every vet graduate coming out of Makerere went into private practice straight away or joined some non-governmental organisations, with little or no meaningful field exposure. This was the first major transformation that we saw coming out of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine since its inception in 1970, but more innovations were on the way. Since its inception, the faculty had not taught MSc courses. However, it soon began to develop a series of MSc degree programmes, based on coursework and thesis, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Wildlife Health and Management. The diploma was introduced when the country's wildlife heritage had started attracting more and more tourists. It was also to ensure the role of the vets in making sure good disease control programmes were designed and implemented and the national parks, where most of the wild animals lived, were managed on firm and sound scientific principles. It had been realised that the role of a vet had transcended the traditional boundaries of domesticated animals into wildlife as well. The vet's mandate was expanding rapidly. The Diploma programme was being run under the aegis of the new department, Wildlife and Animal Resource Management (WARM). Here are samples of the new Masters courses that came

on stream in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine during the last eight years of my stay at Makerere as Vice Chancellor: MSc in Veterinary Medicine (Food, Animal Production and Health); MSc in Veterinary Pathology; Master of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, which had been planned to commence in 2000; Master of Wildlife Health and Management and MSc in Molecular Biology, which I have mentioned earlier. This was in addition to the old thesis-only MSc and PhD in Veterinary Medicine.

The curriculum innovations did not stop at graduate level; new courses were introduced at the undergraduate level. The Bachelor of Biomedical Laboratory Technology was the first in the series. This programme targeted mainly diploma-holding technicians who wanted to upgrade their laboratory skills and techniques. Scores of technicians at Makerere enrolled on the programme and many graduated too. As we shall see later, the graduate technicians posed a challenge for the university. This was a case of bad or no planning at all on our part. Metaphorically speaking, we put the cart before the horse. The Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Health Management was the next in line, followed by the Bachelor of Animal Production Technology and Management (BAPTM). When the proposal to start this degree programme in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine came to Senate for discussion, the presentation unexpectedly turned into a showdown between Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture. The two faculties had never had a cosy relationship. They were resentful of each other and suspicious of anything that either of them tried to do. Professor Opuda-Asibo's recommendation, in one of his reports to Senate, that the Department of Animal Science be transferred to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, had angered the agriculturalists and made them more resolute to resist all attempts by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine to encroach on anything they regarded as their professional mandate. According to them, the Department of Animal Science had to stay in the Faculty of Agriculture where it rightly belonged, period. Vets had nothing to do with animal breeding and animal husbandry; that was turf for the agriculturists. Theirs was disease control, animal medicine and meat inspection, pure and simple. It was like the Faculty of Agriculture was telling the Dean of Veterinary Medicine not to venture into fields where vets had zero competence. Battle lines had been drawn between the two Ellys!

When Senate began discussing Professor Katunguka-Rwakishaya's BAPTM proposal, hell virtually broke loose in the house. This time, the volcano blew the cap and erupted into a temporary, but serious burst of anger, spewing some of the animosity that had existed as under-currents between the two faculties for years right into the faces of Makerere academic Senators. I had the unenviable task of chairing Senate that day and feared for the worst. To make matters more difficult for me, I had friends on both sides of the divide. I simply prayed that somehow congeniality and common sense would eventually prevail. As the debate

progressed, I braced myself for sudden walkouts. For the first time under my chairmanship, I expected some Senators to walk out of the meeting in protest, which was a real possibility. Fortunately, my lucky stars held my luck firm that day. No one walked out and no one challenged decisions and recommendations Senate made at the end of the debate. I guess what helped cool the flared tempers was allowing open exchange of views for as long as Senators from both sides of the dispute, as well as others, had something to say for or against the proposal. I had learnt to use this tact to build consensus and the technique had served me well. The logic was simple, never cut the debate short until everyone has had his or her say. Sooner than later, a point of convergence of opinions is reached where everyone agrees to agree or to disagree. In such tough situations, time ceases to be of essence. The strategy worked and at the end of the day, Senate made good decisions.

The debate was protracted. The Dean of Agriculture, Professor Sabiiti, led the charge, drawing plenty of inspiration from his colleagues who had rallied around him and insisted that the BAPTM in the form it was designed was best suited to his faculty, with the vets servicing some aspects of it. Another proposal was to offer it as an inter-faculty programme. The worst case scenario was to ask the Dean of Veterinary Medicine, Professor Elly Katunguka, to take the document back to the drawing board and have the programme re-cast. The agriculturalists insisted on seeing more originality in the proposal document. Professor Sabiiti was not convinced that vets had not simply lifted ideas from his faculty's Animal Science curriculum in a copy-and-paste fashion and labelled it as a new programme. Earlier, he had complained that some departments in the university had made it a habit to replicate programmes from other faculties by simply changing course codes and presenting them to Senate as new and original programmes. Of course, this statement did not go down well with Professor Elly Katunguka and his fellow vets in Senate. It also reminded me of what Professor Kayanja, as Chairman of the NARO Board of Directors had once told the NARO research staff, "Do not replicate yesterday's discoveries and call them today's breakthroughs". Apparently, the agriculturists had done their homework well. They had studied and analysed Professor Katunguka's proposed document thoroughly and had concluded that over 60 percent of the course units in the proposed new programmes were already being taught in the Faculty of Agriculture.

However, the agriculturists had missed the fine details, so most of what they were putting forward as counter arguments for the course to be offered in their department or to be redesigned was technically flawed. As it had now become standard practice for every new programme where the protagonists did not agree, the proposals had to be referred to the Harmonisation Committee of Senate, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor; so, Senate was of the view that the BAPTM proposal document should also be referred to that committee for

arbitration. The agriculturists raised some objections, citing probable bias since the committee chair, Professor Epelu Opio, was from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. That was seen as a conflict of interest. Fortunately, Professor Epelu Opio had excused himself from chairing the committee, but not before he had made his views known. That was the first time I saw him take a defensive line in support of his old faculty. He complained about those who were trying to give the vets a raw deal. I was sure Elly Katunguka was enjoying every bit of the moment as Professor Epelu Opio delivered his verbal punches which were seen as a morale boost to his faculty when it needed him most. He even chose to make his remarks while standing, something he rarely did. His strongly worded opinion seemed to have turned the tide in favour of Veterinary Medicine; and the tempo of the debate changed. When the dust settled, all outstanding issues had been amicably resolved. The two Deans were shaking hands again and on talking terms. Both Senate and the University Council approved the new programme. The lesson I drew from this episode was a simple one; we had succeeded in building harmonious working relationships between members of staff of divergent views and opinions. That was what helped us to solve most of our problems as a united community. Those who had been entrusted with leadership as Deans and senior administrators had what it took to be leaders. We had learnt to build consensus on even the most contentious of issues and came up with well cut out decisions, while at the same time minimising the negative fallout of those decisions. It was a debate to remember.

Professor Katunguka-Rwakishaya was quite an achiever. In spite of his heavy responsibilities as Head of Department of Veterinary Medicine, and later as Dean of the faculty, he maintained an active role in research and supervision of PhD students although some of his colleagues kept alleging that he was doing it all at the expense of undergraduate teaching, which they said he never did. However, his publication output attested to his scholarship and also helped him to rise through the ranks fairly fast, becoming a full Professor. During his tour as Dean, his faculty was transformed in many ways. I have a feeling that his pleasant personality also helped him pull off a few hat tricks that contributed to his success as Dean. On the flip side, he also had too many detractors. By the time I was leaving the university, I had begun to see the tell-tale signs which pointed to his loss of popularity amongst his peers. Some accused him of conducting a smear campaign against his so-called opponents but, as it turned out, much was done by other people allegedly acting on his behalf. Nevertheless, they were beginning to impact negatively on him. Whether he was aware of it or not, there was a clique of people who chose to remain faceless but claimed to be his ardent admirers and supporters, who were putting out most of the malicious and disparaging remarks. They had made it a habit to go round, crafting and disseminating insults to people through e-mails, intranet and mobile text messages, making all sorts of allegations about whoever they perceived or considered to be his opponent. They

even seemed to know who went out with whom at Makerere, who suffered from which incurable disease and had even started playing the role of death messengers; predicting when so and so would drop dead. I thought that was unhealthy and unhelpful for him.

Despite his distinguished academic and administrative track record, which spoke volumes for itself, his so-called admirers succeeded in portraying him as a desperate man, which only served as a dent to his remarkable academic reputation. He did not need such admirers or supporters. If anything, this kind of gutter spite undermined the credibility of the individual on whose behalf the admirers meted out the insults and profanity. Moreover, they seemed to have forgotten one important thing: that people take offence to abuse and uncivilised language, especially when such language was used by people who were purportedly “well educated” some of whom included PhD holders. When given a chance, they could hit back in unpredictable ways because no one person had the monopoly of foul language. It was even more painful when what was said about some people was pure fabrication. Without doubt, Elly Katunguka had a lot of potential and credentials to lead a University like Makerere on his own merit but such spiteful people, claiming to speak on his behalf, were simply wrecking his chances.

I have every reason to believe that the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine exemplified the true revival of Makerere as one of the premier universities in Africa. It started out in 1970/71 as a two-department faculty, without a teaching farm. By 2004, it was boasting of eight departments and several other innovative developments. It was also a pleasure to see the long-serving and well-seasoned veterans, such as Professor O. Bwangamoi, return to his old Department of Veterinary Pathology after a long spell of absence. By the time I left the university, he had gone on retirement from Makerere and had joined the new public university in Gulu. As we have seen elsewhere in this account, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine had so far produced two Vice Chancellors for two of the four new public universities in the country: Dr Penymogi Nyeko for Gulu University in Northern Uganda and Professor Frederick Kayanja for Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Western Uganda. It had also provided Makerere University with two Deputy Vice Chancellors: Professors Frederick Kayanja and Justin Epelu Opio respectively. By 2004, six of the eight departments in the faculty had one or two full Professors each. Most of these new Professors were young men in the prime of their lives. The only woman who had attained that rank in the faculty was Professor Tereza Kibirige Sebunnya, who left Makerere in the late 1980s to join the University of Botswana. However, it was also sad to see the fathers of the faculty, such as Dr Mukiibi and Dr Yakobo Bosa, retire from service. Sadly, Dr Bosa did not live long to enjoy his retirement. He died soon after retiring from the university. The best gift he bequeathed to Makerere was his daughter, Dr Jane Bosa, whom I appointed and left acting as the Director of the University Hospital. Once, Professor Justin Epelu Opio told me that he had derived

much of the inspiration to study Veterinary Medicine from Dr Yakobo Bosa, who used to work in Teso District as a Veterinary Officer when the young Epelu Opio was growing up in the '60s. He said that Dr Bosa's motorcycle used to impress him so much that he decided that when he grew up, he too would be a vet like him. Little did he know that one day his dream would actually come true and he would be a colleague of the man who had drawn him to the vet profession, and that his chosen career would lead him to better things as well.

Most of the younger men and women who were Assistant Lecturers and Teaching Assistants when I took over as Vice Chancellor in 1993 were, at the time of my departure in 2004, at Senior Lecturer rank and climbing, all in a space of about ten years. That is what I like to call achievement. Although the staffing situation in some departments was not yet optimal, I believe we had laid the foundation on which to build for the future of the faculty. I am sure that sooner than later, the faculty would join hands with other faculties to form a single autonomous college. The faculty celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its return from Nairobi in 1996. It had every reason to celebrate.

### **Faculty of Medicine – The Bedrock of Uganda's Health Care, Makerere's Reputation for Pioneering Research and the Finest that Makerere Offered to the World**

If I were ever asked to compile a list of faculties I visited most during my tour as Vice Chancellor at Makerere, the Faculty of Medicine would certainly be topmost on the list. Not that there was something stunningly special that kept me magnetized to Mulago or that it was the most troublesome faculty that I had to manage; the simple reason was because it was the faculty to which I owed my very existence and that of my family. If I were to be honest with myself, I would say I am one of the freaks of modern medicine. Perhaps without it, I would have never survived beyond my infancy; I was always a sickly child, but thanks to my mother who in spite of her lack of formal education had the wisdom to put all her trust in modern medicine, even when the so-called native doctors were advising her to the contrary. I survived to write this story because of her unwavering belief in the men and women in the white overcoats, who have taken care of me all my life. Even as I write this story, I am kept alive by the wonder drugs that modern medicine can offer. I dare say that I also owe my existence to those unrecognised hard working chemists who have kept the pharmaceutical industry churning out new and ever more potent drugs to fight man's number one enemy, disease. I say I am still alive up to now for the reason that the long years I spent at Makerere as Vice Chancellor took a toll on my life. Something went terribly wrong with my body. It was as if my body had suddenly rebelled against itself. My heart was pumping at a much higher pressure than it was designed for, something I discovered after a trip to Harare with Dr (now Professor) John Ddumba

Sentamu. We had gone there to finalise discussions with the African Capacity Building Foundation on the funding of the new Master of Arts in Economic Policy Management programme; and before long, all my favourite goodies that I used to enjoy, such as confectionary, ice cream and pastries had become potent poison because of the unbalanced sugar metabolism in my body. I had to choose whether to continue consuming them in the quantities I used to and be sure to take on an early retirement from this earth or forego them and live to tell the tale of another day. That was the choice my doctors gave me. Even after I had opted for the latter, I had to keep swallowing pills of all sizes and colours till the day my breath and I would decide to go our separate ways. Since I was not so sure St Peter was really ready to receive me, I figured I had some debts to clear here on earth before I part for the eternal peace; I chose to take my doctors' advice and quit everything that had to do with sugar. I also reduced my salt intake. It was a hard choice, but I am happy I listened and changed. I did not have to bother St Peter when he was not ready for me. It was a journey I thought I would continue to postpone until the good Lord himself decide otherwise. That was one good reason why I kept remembering the Faculty of Medicine, formerly Makerere Medical School, and going back there every now and then.

The less obvious reason why I kept going back to the Medical School was the HIV/AIDS pandemic that was devastating the university and the country as a whole. Like my mother those many decades ago, I strongly believed that someday in the future, however distant it was at that time, our professors and researchers in the Medical School would provide us with some badly needed answers to the many unanswered questions about this strange and hideous disease, which ingenious Ugandans had dubbed the "slim" long before the medical scientific fraternity had fully understood it. I had known about their efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS right from the time the disease came to people's attention in the early 1980s and was quickly given the appropriate name – "slim" – because one of the obvious symptoms of the disease was an unexplained weight loss and body wasting, which led to the slimming effect. Professor George Kirya, a virologist and then the Head of Makerere University's Microbiology Department and Chairman of the Uganda Medical Association, plus a few of his colleagues in the Faculty of Medicine, had identified it as a new disease and had started talking about it in the Medical Brain Trust programme, which was aired on Uganda Television in the 1980s and moderated by Professor Kirya himself. At that time, most Ugandans were convinced that "slim" had entered Uganda by witchcraft through the Rakai District, one of Uganda's southern-most districts which shared a border with the United Republic of Tanzania.

We had moved from the point where and when virtually nothing was known about the apparently new and strange disease, how it was transmitted and why people who had contracted it were losing weight so fast, despite the fact that they

were eating well and had good appetite up to the time they died. We even believed that some mosquitoes brought into the country by unscrupulous people were responsible for spreading the disease indiscriminately. Little did we know that mosquito bites had nothing to do with the spread of the disease. We also learnt much later, thanks largely to the efforts of Makerere University Medical researchers and reports from other parts of the world, that AIDS had an extraordinarily long incubation period. People who had the disease would appear normal without any clinical sign of the disease until the virus had had enough sleep in the body and suddenly had woken up and started wreaking havoc on the immune system. That was the time the disease showed its true colours, the worst part being the lingering and agonising slow death. Everyone would know it was the slim disease killing you, but dared not say it aloud. All the partners you had enjoyed live sexual shows with began to think hard about writing their wills, because for them too it was a matter of time, although some would continue to deny that they had it until they too died. In short, we did not fully fathom what had hit the state of our nation's health but, without a doubt, it had hit us hard.

In those days, death from the slim disease was a shameful death, a true sign of your promiscuity and sexual indiscipline. The cause of your death was there for everyone to see although no one ever said that the person they are about to bury had died of the slim disease. At every burial, it was customary to tell the mourners the cause of death. People had learnt to cover it up nicely. For instance, if the deceased had died coughing, the real cause of death would be described as pneumonia or flu even when everyone knew that it was the slim disease that he or she had died of. It became a taboo to mention the word "slim" at a funeral service. In the Anglican Church, people had stopped sharing the holy cup for fear that the wine could be contaminated with a sick person's saliva or that the bugs responsible for causing "slim" had stuck to the rims of the chalice. We even feared to shake hands with people suspected to have the disease. About twenty years ago, that was how desperate the situation was in Uganda. We saw what was killing us in the most agonising way we had never experienced before, but we did not know what was killing us, or how to treat or prevent it. The holier-than-thou mentality kept driving it home to us that it was God's curse for our sinful ways. But what terrible sins had Ugandans committed to deserve such a punishment? Had we not suffered enough under Amin's tyrannical rule? We had many questions but too few answers and clues about the new killer and how the killer disease spread from human to human, although the initial reports had indicated that it was a disease of gay men in the USA. We were in for a rude shock when we discovered that it was also a disease of the heterosexuals.

The Medical School started to work hard on the problem and soon they were unravelling some of the mysteries and myths surrounding the new disease that appeared to defy any known medication and was sucking people dry to the

bone, making them look like living skeletons and putting the pieces of the most complex medical jig-saw puzzle in modern times together. Makerere University Medical School was back at it, doing what it used to be best known for – good research that led to big breakthroughs in tropical medicine. We shall see more about this story under the Rakai Project.

When I left Makerere for Kyambogo in September 1990, Professor Raphael Owor, that legendary Makerere pathologist and one of the smartest people I had ever met, was Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. I recall one important innovation, which took place in the Medical School during his time as Dean, which stands out vividly in my mind – the community-based medical curriculum introduced in the late 1980s. The idea was for medical students to spend part of their training – during their clinical years – working in the community in the rural areas instead of spending it in the teaching hospital at Mulago. The rationale was that this kind of training would produce better doctors, willing and better equipped to work in a rural setting. The community training would be assessed and the marks earned would contribute to the students' final grading for the award of the MBChB degree. I remember how he struggled to make the uninformed Senators understand what the new curriculum was all about and how it would be implemented. The School had identified Buyikwe in Mukono District and Kiyeye in Tororo Districts as the possible training centres. The new sites were an addition to Kasangati in the former Mpigi District, now in Wakiso District. Kasangati Health Centre was opened in 1959 after the faculty had realised that the teaching of clinical medicine at Mulago would be incomplete without students being sufficiently exposed to community medicine. Some people have pointed out that the new worldwide concept of Primary Health Care had its beginning at Kasangati. They refer to Maurice King's book, *Medical Care in Developing Countries*. The centre had basically three functions; teaching Public Health or Preventive Medicine, as it was known then, to medical students and other allied staff; serving as a research centre in Community Medicine, and providing basic health services to the surrounding communities. It was an excellent facility, only to fall into almost total decay as a result of the ravages of the 1970s.

Professor Owor wanted to take the Kasangati concept a step beyond Public Health. He successfully negotiated and secured a big grant from the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada which funded the initial phase of the new programme. I am compelled to point this out because, over the years, I have heard some new universities in Uganda making claims that they pioneered the community-based medical training in Uganda, without due recognition or reference to the real pioneers. This was the first time medical students undertook a big part of their clinical years in the rural communities. From the IDRC grant, Professor Owor bought several bicycles and other inputs students used during their community training. They had to ride those bicycles

for the grand rounds in the villages. Hostels to take care of their accommodation were rented for them at Buyikwe and at Kiyeye in Tororo. By the time I returned to Makerere as Vice Chancellor, the leadership in the Medical School had changed from one pathologist to another. Professor Owor had handed the mantle to Professor Joshua Mugerwa. Both taught in the same department. At the time, both were some of the few professors in the Medical School who had the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degrees. While in other parts of the world, including the University of Dar es Salaam, the MD is the first degree in Medicine and Surgery; at Makerere, it is a serious research advanced degree obtained after the MBChB and the MMed. So, it is in the same league as the PhD, the only difference being that while a PhD student is allocated a supervisor or thesis advisor, the MD student soldiers on alone until he or she is ready to submit the thesis for examination. In the academic jargon, the PhD is regarded as an academic qualification whereas the MD is more of a higher professional qualification in Medicine. At Makerere, few professors had it. Professor Marcelino Andrew Otim, the endocrinologist in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Medical School, was the last to have obtained it during my time at Makerere.

Much of what I would have written about the long and rich history of the Medical School at Makerere was covered by Professor Alexander Odonga. His book, *The History of Makerere Medical School*, tells it all. I would like to recommend it as a must-read for those who want to know more about how the great Makerere University Medical school came to be, its glorious times and how it survived the brink of collapse during Uganda's turbulent times. Therefore, I shall not repeat what Professor Odonga has ably articulated. I will only talk about the part that relates to my times as Makerere's Vice Chancellor. This was also the time Professor Joshua Mugerwa (now deceased) was Dean. Interestingly, late Professor Joshua Mugerwa was the first Dean to host me as Vice Chancellor at Mulago in 1994. At the time, I was doing my familiarisation rounds of the entire university and I had not yet visited the Medical School. He took me around the entire School like he was doing a grand ward round in the hospital. He and his colleagues showed me all there was to see and all I wanted to see, including an old preserved specimen of the heart – in the Pathology Department – of a patient who had died of a heart condition which later became known as the African Heart Disease. As he told me, that type of heart condition had never been observed anywhere else in the world. That was also the first time I saw the rich and interesting collection of specimens kept in the Department of Pathology. What made me sad was the fact that there were no new ones added to the collection. It was during this tour that I learnt the truth about Dr Denis Beckett, the discoverer of the Becketts Lymphoma, a cancer of the jaw that afflicts mainly African children. Professor Mugerwa told me that Dr Beckett was not part of the Makerere staff. He was a consultant with Uganda's Ministry of Health but he also held the title of Honorary Lecturer in the Medical School, because

all consultants at Mulago participated actively in the teaching of the medical students in their clinical years and examining them, and also in the research projects at the school. Professor Mugerwa also informed me that, besides his work on the lymphoma named after him, Dr Beckett had another peculiar research interest, but apparently with a serious medical purpose related to other types of cancer. He had observed that the quantity of the stool (faeces) an African adult passed out was much more than that of a European. His research interest was to correlate the incidence of colon cancer in both Africans and Europeans and find evidence to support his theory that would explain why the Africans had a lower incidence of colon cancer than the Europeans. He believed that the explanation had to do with the high quantity of fibre in the African diet. The quantity of the stuff the rumen threw out after the food had gone through the alimentary canal was, according to his theory, an indication of a diet rich in fibre. He also believed that the Europeans had a higher incidence of colon cancer because they ate less roughage and therefore passed out much less faeces. He perhaps had good reasons to suspect that there was a link between colon cancer and the quantity of faeces one passed out. However, Professor Mugerwa was unsure whether the theory was ever confirmed.

As we toured the various departments in the school, I began to realise how far the school had decayed over the years of neglect. With very limited resources, our predecessors had pitched all flat roofs with GI sheets. However, as we have seen elsewhere, the rescue came too late. The damage to the buildings was in some cases almost irreversible. Besides the dilapidated buildings, the equipment was also in a sorry state. Much of it was old and had seen better days. But the beauty of it all was to find most old equipment in working condition, thanks to the dedicated technicians who took care of them. I was impressed by the level of care and devotion most departments paid to their old equipment. But also a lot of them were beyond repair. The Department of Physiology caught my attention in a rather special way. The Chief Technician there, Meeya, had special talent for keeping his equipment in tip top condition in spite of their age. He was also a meticulously organised man, which I gave him credit for. As we moved from one department to another, I asked my assistant to record detailed notes about what we had seen and heard. This was the first time that I was touring the entire Medical School which, a few years earlier, had changed its name to the Faculty of Medicine. For convenience, I preferred to refer to the faculty by its old and no longer official name. As we continued with the grand tour of the school, I began to feel a sense of guilt that as a university and as a country, we had let one of the finest medical schools in Africa run down. For many years in the past, this school had been Makerere's flagship. I could now understand why the World Bank had initially objected to the opening of another medical school. Why start a new one when the old one is still in shambles? When I started thinking about how we could fix the school's numerous problems, frankly, I did not know where

to begin. A quick mental calculation had shown that we needed a budget in the upward of five billion shillings if we were to restore the Medical School to its former shape. I had no idea where all that money would come from. On a positive note however, which helped me overcome the initial shock, I took a lot of solace from the School's enduring human resources. That was its greatest asset. In spite of the formidable constraints they had to put up with, fine and patriotic members of staff like Professor Joshua Mugerwa had braved all the storms and continued to train, as best as they could, credible doctors.

On the same tour, I had occasion to visit the place in the Department of Anatomy, where the likes of my namesake, Professor Peter Ssebuwufu, had made their mark. During that visit, I was given a guided tour of the room where cadavers, called the specimens in the trade, were prepared and preserved for the dissections which every first-year medical student had to perform. What a way to introduce students fresh from high school to Medicine. At high school, Biology students dissected frogs but not a human being. I remember, many years ago, some Asian students (particularly females) running away from the Medical School in the first few weeks because they lacked the nerves of steel to cut up a human body to pieces. As I discovered during the tour of the department, the storage area where the cadavers were kept was also in serious need of repairs; the smell of the formalin was unbearable, we had to find a way of venting it out. After Anatomy, my host and his team took us to the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, housed in a building that was constructed in the late 1960s, during the time Professor Karim was conducting his ground breaking research on prostaglandins. By the Medical School standards, it was one of the newest buildings in the Medical complex, but had taken some serious beating from the elements during the days of neglect. Its exterior was as brown as an African termite mound. It was a depressing site. There had been some attempt at some repairs on the building, but it had been shoddy work and had concentrated just on stopping the roof from leaking.

On the western side of the main Pharmacology building were two older small buildings, roofed with red burnt clay tiles. One of them belonged to the Department of Biochemistry, Mulago wing. The other housed the Department of Pharmacy; one of the newest departments in the Faculty of Medicine after Dentistry, having begun in the late '80s. This new department was hard squeezed for space. Everything it owned was crammed in this tiny building. In terms of resources, the Biochemistry laboratory was relatively better equipped than most departments I had so far visited there.

As I have said, the Medical School tour was intended to be a grand tour, and it had to be if at all I had anything to learn about the school's teething problems before I could dream up solutions. Everything I saw seemed to be crying out loud as if to say, "please Mr Vice Chancellor, do something about my plight".

I imagined that every unit I visited was saying, “I used to be a respectable part of this Medical School, but look at me now”. Those were the voices that kept ringing in my ears as we continued with the tour. The Department of Dentistry was still very much stuck in the Mulago Paramedical Schools complex, north of the main Medical School campus. The university had never managed to find an appropriate home for it. Associate Professor Stanley Ecece, who had been teaching at the University of Nairobi, had been persuaded during Obote’s second Administration to come back to Uganda to start the Department of Dentistry at Makerere. Unfortunately, he died rather suddenly, leaving the young department with a leadership vacuum as, besides him, the department had no other member of staff above the rank of Lecturer. Suffice it to mention for now that it was the first of the new departments in the Faculty of Medicine in decades.

The Department of Nursing, another addition to the growing list of new departments in the Medical School, was squeezed in this one Paramedical building too. It was a small, derelict, ugly looking building, in dire need of repairs and a coat of paint. During the European Union (EU) funded rehabilitation of a few Faculties in the early ’90s, the Clinical Research building in the Medical School complex was one of the few buildings that the EU agreed to repair. This building in the main complex housed most of the offices of the clinical Departments of Surgery, Gynaecology, Internal Medicine and others. Incidentally, I had never heard of its existence until we started discussing the rehabilitation work in the late ’80s, shortly before I left for Kyambogo. Some of the research laboratories for these departments were also located there. The building was still in a good shape, but it was beginning to look more like an isolated island in a sea of dilapidation and decay. The Institute of Public Health, the unit closest to the southern end of the Medical School, which is the side facing Kampala and the main entrance to the new Mulago Hospital, was also in a reasonable shape because it was also one of the buildings in the School rehabilitated under the EU grant.

At the time I visited the Department of Pathology, Professor Owor and Associate Professor Wamakota (now deceased) were the only two senior members of staff there. Professor Joshua Mugerwa had left and moved over to the office of the Dean. Besides the rich and interesting collection of specimens I referred to earlier, the department had an impressive collection cards, detailing practically every post-mortem and everything else the generations of members of staff had examined as gross anatomical features on slides under a microscope for almost all the period the department had been in existence.



Plate 1: Faculty of Economics and Management (Formerly Institute of Economics)



Plate 2: Department of Women and Gender Studies



Plate 3: Senate House/Building (Front View)



Plate 4: Senate House/Building (Back View)



Plate 5: Institute of Computer Science (Now Faculty of Computing and Information Technology)



Plate 6: Lincoln House (Refurbished: Front View)



Plate 7: Lincoln House Department of Mass Communication/Makerere University FM Radio Studios (Electronic Media Training Facility) in the Refurbished Lincoln House



Plate 8: Main Building (Refurbished: View from the Freedom Square with Students in the Foreground)



Plate 9: Department of Food Science and Technology (Front View)



Plate 10: Food Science and Technology with Conference Centre (View from South)



**Plate 11:** Faculty of Technology Incubation Centre (with some of the Sprawling Private Students’ Hostels in the Background)



**Plate 12:** Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation



Plate 13: New University Main Library Extension



Plate 14: The Refurbished St Augustine Chapel



Plate 15: St Augustine Students' Centre



Plate 16: Faculty of Law (New Building)



Plate 17: Faculty of Law, Human Rights and Peace Centre



Plate 18: [HYPERLINK “mailto:-%20I@mak.com%20”](mailto:-%20I@mak.com%20) – I@mak.com Resource Centre



**Plate 19:** Faculty of Social Sciences – Community Based Rehabilitation Extension (Left), Old building (Right)



**Plate 20:** St Francis Students' Centre

I was impressed by the department's capacity to keep records. On another occasion while I was there, the teaching Hospital sent a specimen which was the size of a full-grown pumpkin, possibly weighing up to five kilogrammes or more, wrapped in a polythene bag. It had come from the operating theatre where the surgeons had removed it from a patient. I remember my nephew, Dr Martin Musisi Kalyemenya, who at the time was MMed Pathology student, telling me that all the mass I was looking at was once a kidney. Only a tiny portion of the healthy kidney was left on top of this huge mass, the rest was just some sort of a tumour. It transpired that the patient came from the rural area and the witch doctors there had convinced him that the growing swelling in the abdomen was due to a spell someone had cast on him and kept assuring him that he would be alright, because they had the means to cure him. Unfortunately, they failed. It was when his relatives realised the gravity of his condition that they decided to seek help from the doctors at Mulago.

Next door to the Department of Pathology is the Department of Microbiology. After the departure of Professor George Kirya, things had never been the same for this department. When I visited, late Dr Baingana, then a Senior Lecturer was the departmental head, as there were no senior people above him at the time. In fact, he had just a skeleton of staff, most of them at the level of Assistant Lecturer. When I inquired why the department was so poorly staffed, he gave me a very revealing answer. Young doctors were not interested in non-clinical disciplines where it was hard to make money, so only few of them were keen to take up teaching positions in what was broadly termed the biomedical departments, which include Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology and Biochemistry. It had therefore become increasingly difficult to attract new staff to these disciplines. Makerere's low pay and the insistence of the Appointments Board on a good academic transcript of at least B+ standing, without retakes or repeated years, made it even much harder. I suspected that one of the factors that contributed to the low grades from the medical school was lack of access to adequate textbooks. Deprived of the facilities necessary for a favourable learning environment, even the brightest of students could only perform marginally. In spite of the fact that every year, the Medical School admitted the best students in the Uganda Advanced Level Certificate Examinations (UACE) countrywide, majority of students failed a paper or two during their five years of study at the Medical School. This in turn reduced the size of the pool from which departments in the Medical could pick potential members of staff. Many applied, but the Board would not appoint them because they did not meet the minimum requirements for appointment as Assistant Lecturers or Teaching Assistants. This was one of Dr Baingana's problems, which took us a bit of time to solve. As we toured the various parts of the Microbiology Department, we went to a section which Dr Baingana warned us was unsafe and dangerous for people with a compromised immune system to enter. I believe the section contained colonies of deadly microbes like those that cause tuberculosis, but of course securely locked

away. I knew none of the members of my entourage had taken an HIV test but, all the same, we all entered the room. At that time, we assumed that only people who were HIV seropositive had compromised immune systems. Again, like most of the departments we had visited before, Microbiology was no exception. It lacked modern equipment. Most of the equipment was old and out of order, largely for lack of spare parts and good technicians to repair them.

For several years, I had heard of the Department of Medical Illustration, but my knowledge of the department up until I visited the Medical School was simply that of people whose main job was to assist departments like Anatomy sketch the anatomical features of a human body. However, as a result of my visit there, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that medical illustration involved a lot more than just drawings of human anatomical features. In fact, if Professor Mugerwa had not arranged a visit to the department for me, it was probable that it would not have featured on the itinerary and I would not have been as enthusiastic about the department's new programmes we had to approve later in Senate and at Council.

Indeed, the tour educated me about many things in the Medical School which, at that time, I either did not know or had just vague knowledge of. The Medical Illustration Department was certainly one of them. For instance, I did not know that they made three-dimensional casts of normal and abnormal human structures to augment the students' learning experience, and that the department was also responsible for making high quality illustrations for medical textbooks and journals, among other things. I found it an exciting discovery. I am quite certain that every student who has passed through the Medical School is familiar with the face of the soft spoken Serumaga, a fine artist who specialised in Medical Illustration in Britain way back then when most of the teaching staff at the Medical School were expatriates. When the last expatriate there left the department in the early '70s, Serumaga took over as head and had been there ever since. In fact, people had started referring to the Department of Medical Illustration as Serumaga's department. I am sure most people at Makerere might not have known the owner of the handwriting that appears on many old Makerere certificates, including mine, issued before the ICT era. If you received any academic certificate from Makerere University prior to 1993, chances were that Serumaga wrote your name and degree class on it. Because of his good and stylish handwriting, he had been contracted to write the names on all academic documents of the university, except the academic transcripts. It was a job he excelled at. Unfortunately, the computers edged him out of business. For the first time during my visit there, I had a deeper understanding of what this rather obscure department was doing. In spite of the advances in computer graphics and design, we agreed that the department was still relevant. All that was needed was to modernise it. However, given the limited resources, that would not be easy.

The Institute of Public Health (IPH) at the Medical School started out as a Department of Preventive Medicine, one of the teaching departments for the MBChB Degree. Forensic Medicine also used to be taught there. This was the Department where Professor Josephine Nambooze, the first female in East Africa to graduate as a doctor from Makerere University and the first female Professor of Medicine at Makerere University, as well as late Professor Joseph Lutwama etched out their professional careers. Besides participating in the undergraduate teaching, the institute was offering a postgraduate Diploma in Preventive Medicine, which later changed to a postgraduate Diploma in Public Health. The name also changed from Department of Preventive Medicine to the Institute of Public Health within the Faculty of Medicine. In fact, the institute was basically created as a service unit for the MBChB programme. However, in the early 1980s, the institute started to design its own graduate degree programme. The first in line was the Master of Medicine in Public Health, MMed Public Health. Dr Kyabaggu, now a senior official with the Ministry of Health and a contemporary of mine during our undergraduate days, was one of the pioneer students on the MMed Public Health programme. When we were undergraduates, I used to share a beer with him and the late Dr Joachim Kibirige every now and then. Paris Bar on the Wandegaya-Mulago Road, now called Haji Kasule Road from Wandegaya to Mulago was our watering hole. Dr Kibirige went on to become the Medical Superintendent of Masaka Hospital and died during the Museveni take-over of Kampala in January 1986. Shortly before I returned to Makerere as Vice Chancellor in 1993, the future Vice President of Uganda, Dr Gilbert Bukenya, had also come back from Papua New Guinea where he had taken refuge during Uganda's turbulent time and joined the institute as a member of staff. He was one of the few members of staff of the institute, if not the only one, with a PhD in the field of Public Health at the time.

A few years later, Dr Fred Wabwire Mangeni, a PhD graduate of Johns Hopkins University's School of Public Health in Baltimore, USA, joined him. At the time of my first visit to the Medical School, Dr Bukenya was the Director of the Institute. He was a man who seemed to have fallen madly in love with his research. At the time, he had several ongoing research programmes. He also had the knack for writing highly-selling funding proposals to donors, and was therefore able to raise funds for his research projects. Besides HIV/AIDS and Malaria research, he devoted a great deal of his energy to studying the incidence of Bilharzia, a debilitating tropical disease transmitted by certain species of water snails. He did much of this research in the paddy rice growing areas of Eastern Uganda. In fact, he was a prolific researcher and, as was to be expected, research dollars kept rolling in too. However, the same research dollars almost cost him his appointment as the Vice President of Uganda during the confirmation hearings in Parliament.

By 1994 when I first visited the institute, there were no obvious signs that the man had political ambitions, or that one day he would become Uganda's Vice President. In fact, for the period I was with him, I do not recall ever hearing him talk politics until the general election of 2001. When he finally told me he was going to stand as a candidate for the Parliamentary elections, I could hardly believe him. It came to me as a surprise, not so much because I had not heard about it from the grapevine – after all a Vice Chancellor's ears are ever on the ground and in the process you kept picking up lots of bits and pieces of information – but because he lacked the tell-tale signs of a charismatic and flamboyant politician. To me, Dr Bukenya came across as a typical academic and not the kind of politician we were used to, but deep down the gentle and genial man was someone determined to make his mark in the mucky world of politics.

Even before I embarked on my grand tour of the Medical School and the Teaching Hospital, I had been a regular visitor at Mulago. I went there not so much as a patient, but to visit sick members of my family, relatives and the many friends who were hospitalised there from time to time. In fact, I owe Mulago Hospital a debt of gratitude. Three of my four children were born there under the expert hand of Dr Florence Mirembe, one of the few women members of staff in the Medical School to have risen to the rank of Associate Professor during my time and, further still, one of the very few members of staff who, in addition to the MMed, had a PhD degree in Reproductive Physiology. She was one of the best gynaecologists Makerere and Uganda had. Ever since the Medical School was established on Mulago Hill, Mulago Hospital has been its main teaching hospital. The relationship between the institutions occupying the same hill was a symbiotic one, which had existed ever since the two institutions moved there; the hospital being the first, joined later by the young Medical School in 1923. Makerere staff provided the specialist medical care to patients and the hospital in turn provided space and facilities for training medical students. The relationship worked beautifully. However, as we shall see shortly, I was to be rudely reminded that time had come to change the way this historical relationship between Makerere University and Mulago Hospital worked. Under the new arrangements, Makerere University would have to pay for using the hospital as a teaching facility or look for an alternative teaching hospital.

As a long serving Vice Chancellor, I had become accustomed to hearing crazy ideas but this was one of the craziest I had ever heard. I thought the idea was crazy because Mulago Hospital was making extensive use of the expertise of our professors and lecturers. Secondly, Makerere's Faculty of Medicine was at the time the main training institution for all doctors who run Mulago and other hospitals in the country, from the most junior house officers to the most senior consultants. For years, all including the Mulago Hospital top brass, had trained in the same teaching hospital. We will hear more about this baffling proposal later. For now, let us return to my grand tour of the Medical School and Mulago Hospital.

After I had seen the Medical School, I was anxious to visit the teaching hospital. Mulago Hospital is two hospitals in one, the new complex, which the Duke of Kent opened in October 1962 as part of Uganda's independence celebrations, and the much older one occupying the northern side of Mulago Hill. The latter was a transfer from Mengo, south west of Makerere. Professor Odonga has given a detailed account of the beginnings of Mulago Hospital, as a venereal disease treatment centre, in his book *The History of the Medical School*. For many years, the old Mulago Hospital doubled as Makerere's teaching hospital, and most of the early medical research breakthroughs at the Medical School came out of its humble colonial tin roofed buildings. Since 1962, most of the undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research took place in the new hospital building complex. The new Mulago Hospital is a giant six-floor building, and practically every clinical department is located in that single building, except Psychiatry and Orthopaedic Surgery, which are housed in the old Mulago complex. In my unprofessional opinion, I believe that the new hospital building was carefully designed, with convenience and functionality in mind. The offices of the hospital administration are located on the fourth floor, which also houses the Department of Internal Medicine and most of the medical wards. When I visited the Hospital for the first time as Vice Chancellor in 1994, Dr Lawrence Kaggwa had been appointed Director of Mulago Hospital complex a year or so earlier. Dr Kaggwa, a Makerere-trained surgeon, is an old friend of mine. We were at Makerere together during our undergraduate days. As we have seen elsewhere in this account, Dr Kaggwa was one of the few medical students to break the myth that, for a medical student to be able to perform well, he or she had to be resident in the university halls of residence. For all the years Lawrence Kaggwa was an undergraduate medical student at Makerere, he never lived in any hall of residence on the university campus. He was a non-resident student for all the five years he was in the Medical School and, in spite of this, he passed all examinations without difficulty. So, when the University Council decided to close down Northcote Hall for a year, the medical students resident there protested. All we did was to tell them about Dr Lawrence Kaggwa, the medical student who excelled without having spent a single night on a university bed in a hall of residence.

Professor Joshua Mugerwa was with me on my first tour of the teaching hospital. Dr Kaggwa was delighted to see his old friend now in charge of the university and, indeed, the tour of the hospital began and ended well. Dr Kaggwa took us on a guided tour of the entire hospital complex, including the new one. Unfortunately, he had to leave us half way through the tour because he had to perform a surgery. As he was taking leave of us, he made a joke, saying that if a surgeon did not practise for a day, his hands and fingers would get stiff, which meant that he would not be able to operate again. He did not want to end up a disabled surgeon, so we had to let him go. Even in the midst of a heavy administrative schedule, he still found time to perform one or two operations now

and then. Fortunately, he left us in the safe hands of his deputy, Dr Kikampihaho, also a surgeon. At the time of visit, the entire Mulago Hospital complex was undergoing massive rehabilitation, with funding from the Government of Spain. Before he handed over to his deputy to continue with the tour, Dr Kaggwa took us through the entire rehabilitation programme and some of the alterations they had proposed to make to the existing buildings. A Spanish construction company by the name Dragodas, which had earlier rehabilitated Entebbe International Airport under the same grant and one or two other projects, had been contracted for the civil works. It was gratifying to see the old buildings being given a facelift. Despite being a regular visitor there, I had never been inside any of the new Mulago's operating theatres, let alone know how many they were. It was on this tour that I discovered that the new hospital had several operating theatres. One is attached to Casualty Department on the third floor, with another on the fifth floor for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. These are specialised theatres. The general operating theatres, some sixteen of them, are located on the ground floor, referred to as Ward One. According to Dr Kaggwa, a lot of planning had gone into the rehabilitation of the general operating theatres. At his suggestion, a special room where medical students clerking in surgery would sit and watch, live on closed circuit screen monitors, senior surgeons perform complicated operations was being incorporated as one of the new facilities in the non-sterile part of the general operating theatre complex on the ground floor of the building. The operations would also be recorded on video tape for future playback. Dr Kaggwa impressed me as a man with vision, and possibly someone who was thinking ahead of his time. His idea of the watch-and-learn facility really impressed me. Unfortunately, many of his ideas were never realised, because the grant the Spanish Government had made available to Uganda Government for the rehabilitation of the hospital was small in comparison with the scope of the rehabilitation that had to be done. After years of neglect, there was too much decay to take care of and that included old Mulago Hospital which, in a way, had been left to die after the new hospital complex opened.

To ease the pressure on what was then the only referral hospital in the country, Kaggwa and his colleagues had come up with the idea of an Assessment Centre. Patients referred to Mulago Hospital would first report to the frontline doctors in the Centre, who would carry out the preliminary examination and decide where, within the entire Mulago Hospital complex, to send them. The idea was to save time and make the process of receiving treatment at Mulago more efficient. To my delight, our medical students would also participate in the Assessment Centre's activities. On a sad note, the Government decided not to include the Medical School in this massive rehabilitation programme because, according to the bureaucrats, the Medical School was not under the Ministry of Health but under Education and Sports. Only the teaching hospital was under the Ministry of Health. The Spanish Government gave the grant to the Ministry

of Health, and not to Education and Sports, so the argument went. That was how Government machinery worked. It is perhaps important to note that besides the wards and the hospital administration offices, most of the Medical School's clinical departments also had offices, side laboratories and teaching rooms in the new Mulaago Hospital building. It was really difficult to tell where what belonged to Makerere University ended and where what belonged to Mulago, as a department within the Ministry of Health, began. After many years of working together, the Medical School and the Mulago Hospital had become more or less one institution. This was one of the reasons which led me to believe that those who were advocating the separation of the two institutions were simply out of touch with this historical reality. In spite of our protests, by the time I stepped down in June 2004, the newly inaugurated Governing Board of Mulago Hospital complex was still pursuing the idea of separating the two institutions and asking Makerere University to pay for using Mulago Hospital as a teaching hospital. At the time, Government had decided to upgrade Mulago Hospital complex to a parastatal status with its own Board, and the role of the Ministry of Health in the hospital had changed to supervisory.

I had heard about the existence of a hospital mortuary but, until then, I had no idea where it was located. The one I was more familiar with was just outside of the new hospital; a lonely little red brick house separated from the main hospital building by a road, which belonged to the Ugandan Police. The one that belonged to the Ministry of Health is housed within the hospital building, with the exit overlooking the Police morgue outside. Professor Mugerwa, being a pathologist, made sure that my tour of the new Mulago hospital did not end without seeing his work place – the hospital mortuary – where the pathologists performed post-mortems. I had never set foot in this place before and I was scared of what I would find. Fortunately, the bodies were not left out in the open, except those due for post-mortem or those being collected by their families. What hits your nose as you enter the facility is the strong smell of formalin. I was pleasantly surprised to find the place clean and well looked after. Professor Mugerwa was quick to point out that although the hospital administration does all it takes to keep the place immaculately clean, pathologists have to learn to live with stench from decomposed bodies. It was the unpleasant side of their job which they have to endure all their working life. He told me that there was a time during the difficult days when the morgue fridges had broken down when the stench was unbearable. He said that if the situation was still as bad as it was then, he would not have included a visit there on my itinerary.

I remember teasing Professor Mugerwa by reminding him that it was often said that a pathologist was a physician who made the right diagnosis twenty-four hours too late. After the visit to the morgue, I was given a tour of a few wards where I met Makerere staff and students doing their rounds. It was a

wonderful sight to see them in their neat white overcoats, attending to all sorts of patients. Mulago, being a free Government hospital, everyone who fell sick and was unable to pay for private medical care went there; so some of the wards were understandably crowded. I could not help wondering how little Ugandans, and particularly Makerere's critics, appreciated the tremendous contribution the Medical School made to the nation's health care system.

I followed up my grand tour of the Medical School and the teaching hospital with a series of meetings with staff. I wanted to share with them what I had seen on my tour of the school, to sound out their views on those problems which affected their ability to teach efficiently and effectively, and how they thought we could solve the problems. It was also an occasion for me to get to know those I did not know then or had not yet met. I knew most of the senior members of staff by name, but I had not met most of the younger staff. The first meeting was held in the Davis Lecture Theatre, the largest in the Medical School and named after the famous pathologist J. N. P. Davis, who worked at Mulago for many years before independence. I had never been inside the lecture theatre before, but when Professor Mugerwa ushered me in, my heart immediately sank. What I saw shocked me. The famous Davis Lecture Theatre was in an unbelievably sorry state.

Originally, the building was flat roofed. Before it was given a pitched roof in the 1980s, it had badly leaked, which had made the ceiling and the walls look awfully ugly and unsightly. Everything inside this once magnificent lecture theatre looked old and outdated. The place had seen better days but years of neglect had reduced it to that pathetic state. I could not help feeling sorry for the first-year students who came from well maintained secondary schools like Gayaza, Namagunga and many others, coming to Makerere's famous Medical School and having their first lecture in a theatre that had last seen a coat of paint some thirty years ago. I wondered what their first impressions of the Medical School they had worked so hard for were. Certainly for me, it was an anti-climax to my otherwise interesting tour of the Medical School and Teaching Hospital. After recovering from the shock, we settled down to business. Nearly every member of staff attended the meeting. Although the problems were many and we talked about them candidly; as far as members of staff were concerned, poor salaries were the overriding issue.

Unfortunately, as a new Vice Chancellor, I was not able to do anything immediate to ameliorate their situation. I had no other sources of money except the grossly inadequate Government subvention. At the time, the minimum annual university budget was USh70 billion, equivalent to about US\$ 70 million at that time. The Government could only provide about UgSh 25 billion, the equivalent of US\$24 million, much less than a half of the university budget. It was, therefore, impossible to promise quick fixes. As we shall see later, I felt angry

and bitter at the pittance we were getting from the Treasury and for the Ministry of Finance's failure to understand the plight of the university when in fact the majority of the economists working in the Ministry of Finance were Makerere graduates. I expected them to be more sympathetic to their alma mater. Poor salaries were making it that much harder to recruit and retain good staff, not only in the Medical School, but across the entire university.

I was also acutely aware that poor remuneration was part of the reason for the staff shortages in most departments in the Medical School. Our young doctors were leaving the country in large numbers for greener pastures in the Middle East and the Bantustans in South Africa. In the 1970s, the UK was the main destination of most of the doctors, who were fleeing Idi Amin's Uganda. Now, they were going elsewhere where they could earn reasonable salaries that could sustain them and their families. The Medical School staff expected the new Vice Chancellor and his team to do something about this unbearable situation. Unfortunately, that had to wait for a long time. We also discussed other matters relating to the Medical School in general. After the visit to Mulago, it was time to plan the necessary interventions and to translate our plans into concrete actions. We decided to start the process by identifying the priority areas and possible funding sources. As we have seen, during the EU-funded rehabilitation of the School, only a few buildings were renovated, the rest were still in a dire state of disrepair. As we began to mobilise funds to start on the rehabilitation, the new and old Mulago Hospital buildings were taking on a completely new look. The rusty brown iron sheets, which covered the roofs of most of the buildings in the old Mulago complex, had given way to the sky blue IT4 coated sheets and the dirty brown walls had been white washed. This had suddenly made the old buildings look like they were brand new ones. The Medical School was now the ugly sore in the entire Mulago complex. This made me envious of my friend Lawrence Kaggwa, at the same time angry with the Government bureaucrats, who had left the Medical School out of the Spanish-funded rehabilitation of the hospitals. It was a challenge which, in the end, inspired us to look for the money for rehabilitating our own Medical School buildings. I was already aware that it would be next to impossible to persuade any donor to give us the kind of money we needed to complete the rehabilitation of the School. In fact, most donors had long stopped funding infrastructure, so we had to look elsewhere. It struck me as a good idea to invite the three Government Ministers concerned – Amanywa Mushega of Education, James Makumbi of Health and Joash Mayanja Nkangi of Finance – to see for themselves the pathetic state the Medical School was in. Somehow, the trick worked except for Mr Mayanja Nkangi, the Minister for Finance, whom we needed the most. His two colleagues accepted our invitation and came. Mr Mayanja Nkangi did not reply to our invitation. Even after we had sent several reminders to his office, he did not show up. Perhaps he declined our invitation because he was not prepared to promise what he could not deliver.

Amanya Mushega and James Makumbi saw the sorry state the school was in. They showed a lot of sympathy, but they were not the Minister in charge of the Government purse. All they promised was to take up the matter with the Ministry of Finance on our behalf. As far as I was concerned, that was a dead end. However, all was not lost. By 1994/95, the Treasury was still giving us some money for capital development. To me, that was a good beginning. We would use part of that money to rehabilitate the Medical School, while we looked around for more funding.

After doing some back-of-the-envelope calculations, we submitted our ideas to the Estates and Works Committee of the Council and obtained permission to commission Technology Consult (TECO) to undertake an evaluation of the scope of work and prepare the Bills of Quantities. As usual, TECO quickly came back with a comprehensive report and the estimated cost of all the works – civil, mechanical and electrical. I believe the figure was about or close to UgSh3 billion, about US\$3 million at the time. Although it was much less than the UgSh5 billion we had estimated during the tour, it was still a lot of money to raise in a lump sum, and using only the money in the capital development budget would have taken ages to complete the job. I had the opportunity to discuss the Medical School rehabilitation programme with a team of Japanese who had visited Uganda on behalf of JICA, to explore the possibility of funding and equipping the Faculty of Medicine. They promised to give our request some thought, but after visiting the School, they came to the conclusion that they would not be able to fund the rehabilitation since most of the buildings were in a bad state of disrepair. They would not provide equipment either, because the School did not have any suitable buildings for them. They told me that they would only consider equipping the teaching hospital and the clinical departments. I was disappointed, but undeterred and not about to quit. Although TECO had given us a rather intimidating bill, I was not overly scared. I was convinced that, as long as Government continued to give us some money for capital development, regardless of how little it was, we could do something for the Medical School. It would not be possible to undertake all the rehabilitation work at once; we would have to do it in phases. Tony Kerali, who was then acting as the University Engineer, came in handy. He provided us with a workable plan and way forward. We were now ready to throw the die. We presented our proposals to the Estates and Works Committee of Council. The Committee, under the chair of the then Mrs, but now Lady Justice Mary Maitum, accepted our proposals but advised that we should start with the Departments of Anatomy and Physiology. We called for tenders and a contractor was identified. Unfortunately, he turned out to be an incompetent contractor and we were forced to terminate the contract prematurely. This reminded me of a remark one of the Apollo Space Programme Astronauts made when he was asked how he felt about going back to space after the Apollo 1 caught fire on the launch pad and how safe his space ship was. His answer was straight and revealing. He

said that as long as the contract to build it had gone to the lowest bidder; he could not help being worried about the soundness of his spacecraft. North American Corporation, the builder of the command module of the Apollo 1 spacecraft that caught fire on the launch pad and killed all the three astronauts on board took some of the blame for the accident. I believe North American Corporation won the contract to build the space capsule, because it submitted the lowest bid. That was what happened to us too. We had taken the lowest bidder. What followed when the contractor started work was nothing short of a disaster. The extraction fans he installed in the specimen (cadaver) store in the Department of Anatomy failed to work. There were also several other things that were not going well. The consultants advised that in order to save the precious little project money, it was better to terminate the contract and re-tender the job. A new contractor was hired and, eventually, the rehabilitation of both the Anatomy and Physiology Departments was completed to our satisfaction. However, I was deeply disturbed and disappointed when, one day, I went to look at the recently rehabilitated Physiology laboratory and found dirty foot marks imprinted all over the front of the building which had just been repainted. That hurt me deeply. I regretted and cursed our lack of appreciation for beautiful things and what appeared to be our inborn trait of the “I do not care” attitude to all things public. If I had not remembered in time that the good African culture does not permit use of foul language and swearing in public, I had prepared a mental list of four-letter words I was about to utter as I vented my anger at whoever cared to listen. However, the ethical Africanness in me had the better of me and I restrained myself. I believe I had every reason to be angry. The rehabilitation had cost millions of UgShs and the walls were soiled in no time, how inconsiderate!

As long as the Treasury released money, the University Secretary, Avitus Tebarimbasa, was making good on his promises, paying the contractors promptly – at least by Makerere standards. Sam Byanagwa, the Deputy Secretary in charge of the Project Implementation Office and Tony Kerali, the acting University Engineer, as well as TECO the consultants were doing a fine job and we were not experiencing terribly long delays in settling contractor's interim certificates. Mr Nabongo, the Desk Officer at the Ministry of Finance responsible for our capital development budget, was also delivering on his obligations. Money from the Treasury was coming in fairly timely. Mr Nabongo was a useful member of Mrs Maitumu's Estates and Works Committee and attending the meetings regularly. After Anatomy and Physiology, we had planned to move on to the Department of Psychiatry building, before tackling the Davis Lecture Theatre and other departments in the Medical School complex. But just as we thought we were making progress, in 1997, the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, now under a new Minister, Mr Gerald Sendaula, decided to stop funding capital development projects at Makerere. So, we were back to square one.

Some officials in the Ministry of Finance had convinced the new Minister that Makerere was now making plenty of money from the private students' scheme and under-declaring it. Therefore, there was no reason why Treasury should continue giving a lot of money to the university. It always pained me to see highly educated people making critical decisions based on hearsay or un-researched information. If they believed that we were under-declaring our private income, I wondered what stopped them from coming to Makerere to check our accounts and books to confirm their claims before confusing everyone in the Ministry, including the Minister. On the contrary, all the income the university earned every year was declared in full in the books of accounts and in every financial statement we filed to the Ministry of Finance and Parliament. Interestingly, the Auditor General of Uganda kept a full-time team of Auditors at Makerere to oversee our day-to-day financial transactions and audited our books annually without fail, and had never indicated in any of his reports that the university had under-declared any revenues. I remember a colleague who used to refer to people who made serious decisions based on hearsay or who never bothered to research their information as part-time thinkers. Was this a case of part-time thinking? Whatever it was, it marked the end of the capital development budget, except for a few items which the Government was under obligation to continue funding, such as counterpart funding for donor-supported projects. The Ministry of Finance's decision to cut off capital funding was a devastating blow, and our efforts at rehabilitating the Medical School virtually ended there. Fortunately, I had not promised and although the rehabilitation of Anatomy and Physiology had proceeded smoothly, it presented us with some challenges. The contractor had requested that we close the buildings during the rehabilitation, which we found rather difficult to do because, by closing the two departments, we would be disrupting teaching. Somehow, he had to work alongside on-going teaching. Inevitably, that slowed down work.

While all this was happening, Professor Mugerwa's term as Dean expired and in 1995, he stepped down. It was time for the School to elect a new Dean. Dr Gilbert B. Bukenya emerged as the candidate of choice. The deanship had moved from Pathology to Public Health. I believe by this time Dr Bukenya had risen to the rank of Associate Professor. Professor William Annakkabbong's term as Associate Dean also came to an end about the same time. He was formerly the Head of Pharmacology and Therapeutics. This time, staff elected Dr Nelson Sewankambo, a physician from the Department of Internal Medicine as Associate Dean. Interestingly, Bukenya and Sewankambo were classmates during their undergraduate days at Medical School, from 1971 to 1976. Bukenya came to the Medical school from St Mary's College, Kisubi and Sewankambo from Namityango College: two famous Catholic Schools in Uganda, but with totally different value systems. In fact, some people wondered whether the chemistry that existed between the two during their student days was still there to make them work

together. Just about the same time when they were settling in their jobs, tragedy struck. On the morning of March 11, 1996, armed thugs shot dead Professor Rodney Belcher, one of the American volunteers teaching at the Medical School at that time. He was also the Head of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. They waylaid him in the compound of his department and shot him dead as he parked his car. After killing him, the thugs sped off with his four-wheel drive car. The car was never seen again and the culprits were never caught. It was the news I was least prepared for that day. Professor Belcher's cold blood murder in broad daylight sent shock waves throughout the Medical School and the university. Dazed by the shocking news, it took me time to figure out how I would present myself to his widow or what I would say at his requiem. I did not even know how I would break the news to Dr David Matovu, the Chairman of the University Council. There were days when I really hated my job and this was one of them. The murder of Professor Belcher by an assassin's bullet in the midst of a busy old Mulago Hospital and for just a car was hard to comprehend. It was a tragic and senseless act, but senseless acts had become all too common in Uganda. I saw our country slipping back into the dark ages, when criminals reigned supreme.

Rodney Belcher, a graduate of the Miami Miller School of Medicine in Florida, was not a stranger to Uganda. He first came to Makerere as a Fulbright scholar in 1983, but was forced to relocate to Dar es Salaam, because of Uganda's political chaos at the time. He returned to Makerere in 1986 and was appointed Professor and Head of the Orthopaedic Department. He had managed to reinstate the making of the orthotics and prosthetics for people injured in the war and those stricken by polio, a programme which had started at Mulago during Professor Huckstep's time in the late '60s. I could vividly recall how he had struggled to get the Master of Medicine in Orthopaedic Surgery through the Faculty Board and Senate. It had been a hard fight. My friend Professor Kayanja had been calling from Mbarara almost every day, inquiring why we had delayed the launch of the programme, because he wanted his son, Mark Kayanja to register for it. When the Council had finally approved his programme, Dr Mark Kayanja was one of the first students. Now in a wink of an eye, the expert was gone. It was a bad and sad day for the university, an experience we found hard to quickly recover from. However, in the midst of the chaos and confusion, his wife amazingly managed to keep her calm composure. I really admired her courage because, after overcoming the initial shock, she quickly pulled herself together and told us that her wish was that her husband would be buried in Uganda in the grounds of the Bahai Temple at Kikaaya, in accordance with the Bahai faith rituals. Kikaaya Hill on which the magnificent domed temple is built is about three kilometres north of Mulago. The American Embassy and American community in Uganda were magnanimous too. They took care of the funeral arrangements. Professor Belcher's funeral was my first experience to participate in the Bahai burial rituals. The requiem ceremony was simple and was over in just a few minutes. Prayers

and chants were said for the soul of the deceased in the magnificent and imposing temple, before the body was laid to rest in the cemetery, a few metres away on the eastern side of the temple. In his honour, his colleagues at Mulago suggested that the department should be named, Rodney Belcher Department of Orthopaedics. I am not sure the name was officially approved.

In the interim, Dr Bukenya had settled down well in his new job as Dean and the Medical School was once again buzzing with a foray of research projects. The work on HIV/AIDS and TB, in collaboration with the Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) in Cleveland Ohio, USA, was progressing well. I had been invited to open a new laboratory furnished with latest equipment such as ELISA machines, the polymerase chain reaction, PCR machine and cryogenic containers, for keeping specimens frozen. The PCR machine was an important piece of equipment and central to the work of the laboratory. The PCR machine was used to replicate millions of copies of any DNA or RNA, including that of the HIV, which causes AIDS in humans. Much of this work was being funded by the Forgarty Foundation through the National Institutes of Health in the USA. It was more than a pleasure to see the quantity and quality of research which my colleagues like Professor Francis Miiro and Professor C. M. Ndugwa had accomplished in the HIV/AIDS research. As we have seen elsewhere, the CWRU-Makerere collaboration started in a humble way in 1986 with the first visit of Professor Fredrick Chapman Robbins of the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio and the 1954 Nobel Prize winner for his co-discovery of the Polio vaccine, and had grown steadily. As a result, several departments in the Medical School, as well as staff of the Ministry of Health at Mulago were now participating in the research projects. Professor Miiro's group was focusing on the mother-to-child transmission of the virus, and breakthroughs out of this work were imminent.

In spite of the constant call on his time, and being Dean at Makerere, a job which required one to attend several meetings almost on a daily basis and to travel outside the country, Dr Bukenya remained an active researcher. He was publishing his research results and accumulating papers. I believe it was in 1995 when he applied for promotion to full Professor of Medicine. His application went through the process and the assessors recommended that he merited the rank of Professor at Makerere University. The Appointments Board at Makerere made its recommendation to the Minister of Education to promote him to full Professor, which the Minister did. However, 1996 was the year of the first presidential and general election in Uganda. Several members of staff applied for leave to participate as parliamentary candidates. To my surprise, the Dean of Medicine, now Professor Gilbert Bukenya, was one of them.

When Professor Bukenya finally made his political ambitions known, I could not help asking him how long he had been nurturing the interest in politics and

what had prompted him to abandon his position as Dean of the Medical School at a time when he was doing a fine job and was at his peak performance. And what about all his research work? In a way, I was trying to talk him out of the idea, but I also realised that the country needed some good people in political positions. I had no right to stop him. He too seemed to have made up his mind, although his answer was a typical politician's answer – the people of Busiro North have requested me to represent them in the next Parliament. Much as I wished him to win, I was still ambivalent about it. Makerere was losing a promising Dean and a good medical scientist. After all, he had just been promoted to full Professor. Little did I know at the time that I was looking at the future Vice President of Uganda! Before he came for clearance from me, he had applied to take his sabbatical. He wanted to spend it at the University of Zambia, doing research with one of his collaborators there, and I had granted his request. Apparently, he had been doing his homework for some time. He had opened a few health centres in Busiro and was providing health care to the predominantly rural communities. Shortly before the elections, I attended a family function at Namayumba, one of the small towns on Kampala-Hoima road situated in Busiro North, and met an elderly man carrying a pile of what appeared to be calendars. Indeed, they were calendars. Whose calendars? Professor Bukenya's. Whose portrait was on them? Professor Bukenya's. The elderly man who looked a lot more energetic than his age told us that he was on a serious crusade, selling a precious commodity to the electorate for the forthcoming elections. Professor Bukenya, who hails from a nearby village, was the precious commodity the old man was merchandising. As far as the old man was concerned, Gilbert Bukenya was the next MP for Busiro North. The calendars were free of charge, and he gave me one. That incident happened before Professor Bukenya had made his political ambitions public. In fact, Professor Bukenya waited until the last moment to make his political ambitions known to the rest of us. I am sure he had a good reason for that. As every political aspirant knows, in politics, nothing is certain until the votes are cast and counted.

Nevertheless, I was certain that unless something made him change his mind, which seemed unlikely, it was a matter of time before he would make it known to me that he was intending to stand for candidacy in the forthcoming election, for the simple reason that the Electoral Commission had made it mandatory for aspiring candidates employed in the public service to have clearance from their employers before they could register as bona fide candidates. Nevertheless, Professor Bukenya kept everyone guessing except, perhaps, his trusted campaign scouts. He continued to work normally as if he had nothing else on his mind and making sure he did not let out his ambitions prematurely before the right time came. If you were a good Christian, you could say that the Professor was trying to avoid what young Jesus Christ was pressured to do at Cana. According to the Gospel of John, young Jesus accompanied his mother to a wedding in the

town of Cana in Galilee. As expected on such occasions, the guests feasted until the wine ran out, but they were not yet done; so, they wanted more. Finding himself in a fix, the groom decided to turn to Mary the mother of Jesus for a favour; to ask her young son for a miracle. He wanted Jesus to use his divine intervention to produce some more wine for the guests and save him the looming embarrassment. When Mary asked her son if he could do it, something she had never seen him do before, Jesus is quoted to have told his mother that his time for such things had not yet come. However, being the obedient child he was, Jesus obliged and miraculously turned water into the best wine ever. He performed his first miracle before he was ready for his miracle ministry. No doubt, the feast must have continued into the wee hours of the morning. When I asked Nelson Sewankambo, one of the people closest to the Professor whether they were aware that their Dean was about to leave them for politics, Sewankambo told me that even he, in his capacity as Associate Dean, had no clue whatsoever about his intention to pursue a political career, although lately he had begun to observe small groups of people looking for his Dean and frequenting his office. He had wondered what the frequent short meetings the Dean was holding with them were all about. As the Namilyango boys used to say, even Nelson Sewankambo had not yet “smelt a rat”; in other words, Sewankambo hadn’t yet had a sneaking suspicion of his Dean’s political ambitions. It turned out that his visitors were supporters conducting the initial political mobilisations for him, which in the Kiganda political jargon of the time was called *kakuyege*. This is analogous to the African termites’ habit of covering their trails with mud, while wreaking havoc to anything woody underneath the covered path. In fact, a casual observer would not know what was going on inside the mud-covered trail, despite the fact that the termites were actually busy at work. The soft task force approach worked well for him. In the general election of 1996, Professor Bukenya trounced all his opponents, thus becoming the new MP for Busiro North in the sixth Parliament. We were sad to see him go, but happy to know that one of our own had made it to the parliamentary political echelons. From then on, he never looked back. From an ordinary MP to Minister of the Presidency and to the Vice President of Uganda, becoming the third Medical Doctor to occupy the office in the NRM Government after late Samson Kisekka and Specioza Kazibwe.

After the departure of Professor Bukenya, Dr Nelson Sewankambo, who by now had risen to the rank of Associate Professor acted as Dean for a while until the Academic Registrar called for an election of a new Dean a few months later. In the election, Sewankambo easily sailed through. It was the turn of the physicians to hand over the reins of the faculty and as the joke went, it was the turn of the thinkers. This was one of the funniest jokes I had been told on one of my many visits to the Medical School. I was made to understand that in the medical profession, a mild rivalry exists between the physicians and the surgeons. Physicians liked to portray themselves as thinkers and surgeons the

butchers. However, when I inquired why the strange labels, which I thought were unbecoming of professionals like doctors, I was informed that it was an old joke in the profession. Another interesting story I learnt from the Medical School was about who made more money. According to the story, the surgeons fared better when it came to making money, but since I did not have any supporting data, there was no way I could confirm the claim. It just remained a story. Unfortunately, I never found out what the surgeons called the physicians. Nelson Sewankambo turned out to be an excellent Dean for the faculty.

Almost two years after the cold blood murder of Professor Rodney Belcher in a car jacking, the school had more or less recovered from the shock of that gruesome murder. Unfortunately, the recovery was short-lived. Little did we know that tragedy was lurking in the dark, waiting to strike again. After relinquishing the office of Dean, Professor Joshua Mugerwa returned to his old Department of Pathology and continued teaching until one tragic Saturday morning, May 3, 1997 when someone from the Medical School called me on phone. I was still at home in the Vice Chancellor's Lodge. I believe the caller was Professor Sewankambo or someone I do not remember. He had called to give me the news I dreaded most, particularly on weekends. Professor Joshua Mugerwa was dead. As usual, my first reaction was disbelief. I had not received any report about Joshua's illness, so his death could not have been due to natural causes. Was it as a result of an accident, I asked? If not, how could he have died so suddenly! Much as I knew that sudden deaths do happen, Professor Mugerwa was no ordinary person; he was a medical doctor and as such I expected him to be in tip-top health. Had he died of an undetected heart attack? These were the questions that kept rushing through my mind as I listened to the caller and at the same time tried to come to terms with this dreadful news. Professor Mugerwa's death also reminded me of a phenomenon I had observed for some time. Too often, some members of staff were dying on the weekends, moreover when the Finance Department and other university offices were closed. To make sure I had heard the caller right, I kept asking which of the Mugerwas had died. We had three Mugerwas, two in the Medical School and one in Agriculture, and all were full Professors. The caller kept reminding me it was Joshua the pathologist. Joshua Mugerwa was one of the members of staff who had weathered the storms of Uganda's difficult time. Despite the hard times, he had gone on to earn his MD in the mid-70s. In his death, the university and the Medical School had taken another severe beating. The Medical School had lost one of its strongest pillars. It was another sad day for the well knitted university community.

In the midst of the confusion, I still wanted to know what had killed Joshua. The answer came a few hours later and it was a story that was too hard to believe. It also made a mockery of life. According to his daughter's account, early that Saturday morning, they had travelled together in the family pick-up truck to

their farm near Mityana. The problem began when the truck suddenly fell in a fairly-deep pothole somewhere between Wakaliga and Nateete. As he manoeuvred the truck out of the pothole, he commented that the vehicle had hit the pothole too hard. Nevertheless, they continued with their journey and nothing appeared amiss. However, along the way, he started complaining of pain in the lower part of the abdomen. His daughter, who had recently qualified as a doctor, advised that they should stop there and return quickly to Kampala, which they did. As they drove back to Kampala, the pain intensified, but the brave Professor was able to drive all the way back home. He was rushed to Mulago Hospital, where his colleagues did everything they could to save his life, but it was all in vain. He died a few hours later. Here was a man who, in his professional career, had performed hundreds of post-mortems; now it was being performed on him. The post-mortem results revealed that he had died of massive internal bleeding from a ruptured main vein carrying blood from the lower parts of the body to the heart. The vein ruptured when the pick-up truck hit the pothole. Kampala's appalling roads had claimed the life of one of the country's excellent pathologists. His untimely death was hard to forget. Mugerwa's death was followed by that of Dr Walumbe, a physiologist, who had specialised in Nuclear Medicine. He died in what I thought were strange circumstances. Much as he was a man who regularly enjoyed a bit of fun in Wandageya until the wee hours of the morning, by all accounts he was in perfect health. On the fateful day, he came home in Pool Road village late as usual and went straight to bed. He did not even have time to change his clothes. After removing the shoes, he just lay down on the bed. Lo and behold, that was the end. In fact, it took his children time to realise that there was something terribly wrong with their father until one of them ventured into his bedroom to find out why he was not waking up. When she opened the door, she found him long dead. That was another brilliant member of staff lost.

During the years I was Vice Chancellor, I witnessed first hand the big strides the Medical School was taking towards recovery, in spite of the staff shortages in some departments. Although Government had stopped funding the university's capital development budget, which halted the rehabilitation of the School, that did not deter me from going back there again and again. I remember on one of the many occasions I had been invited to preside over the launching of the School's latest Internet-based facility, Mednet, which was based in the Sir Albert Cook Medical Library. At the time, Dr Maria Musoke was in charge of the Medical Library. I believe the year was 1995 or early 1996, because Professor Bukenya was still Dean of the School. To demonstrate what the new system was capable of, Professor Bukenya keyed in his name and, to everyone's surprise, the titles of all his publications up to date, both old and new, showed up on the computer screen. When another colleague of his keyed in his name, nothing showed up. It was a temporary embarrassment for this member of staff of mine. Everyone present concluded that he had no publications. He too just kept quiet

about it. Before I declared the system launched, I rubbed it in. I warned that I would be logging on the system every now and then to check who in the School was publishing and who was not. I saw a few people shake their heads in disbelief that now it was now possible for the Vice Chancellor to find out who the lazy ones were at the touch of a button. These were the early beginnings of the serious ICT revolution at Makerere. However, the university was yet to have a reliable and easily accessible Internet and e-mail service of its own. As we shall see later, a few years earlier, the IDRC of Canada had assisted Makerere and a few other universities in the region acquire an e-mail service. At Makerere it was referred to as Mukla. The server was in the Institute of Computer Science. Interestingly, the service was being widely used, not only by the university community, but also by people outside the university who could afford to pay for the link-up. However, for some reason, the service folded up. As a result, I had to switch to Healthnet, based in the Medical School. This was an e-mail service for the use of the Medical School, launched a few years earlier. Although they allowed me to open an account on their e-mail service free of charge, my office was not linked to the system, which meant that without a direct link to the Medical School, we had to be contented with hard copies of our mail printed and posted to us from there. To put it another way, as far as my office was concerned, the system operated more or less like a glamourised post office and an inconvenience. However, better things were on the horizon.

One of the significant transformations to have taken place in the Medical School in my time was the change from the traditional curriculum that required the medical students to be examined at end of the year, to a more flexible semester and credit unit system. For the Medical School, the change-over was not easy. In fact, the critics swore that a semester system could not work in the Faculty of Medicine. They saw it as an aberration meant to replace their time-tested system, which they strongly believed had served the School well over the years. So, why try something untested? To convince them that the new system was better than the old, we had to send colleagues like Dr James Higenyi of Technology, himself a product of the semester system in the USA, to the Medical School to show them how the semester system worked. Finally, the School agreed to adopt the new system. The change involved juggling a lot of things before they got it right. It required time and some serious thinking to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. They did it to the satisfaction of Senate and the University Council. This was the beginning of even more radical changes in the school. At about the same time, the range of undergraduate programmes in the school had increased from the three, namely the MBChB, the Bachelor of Dentistry and Bachelor Pharmacy which the school used to offer before my time to five. The new additions were the BSc in Nursing launched in 1993 and the BSc in Medical Radiography. Although Professor Kajubi initiated the BSc degree in Nursing, the actualisation of the programme and the first admissions were in

my time. The postgraduate programmes also increased from one, the traditional MMed, to the MSc in Pharmacology, MSc in Anatomy, MSc in Physiology, MSc in Medical Illustration and MSc in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, which were all new additions. Most of the new Masters programmes were opened as a possible avenue for the School to develop staff, particularly for the non-clinical departments, which were struggling to recruit staff.

In spite of this impressive progress, some problems were still defying solutions. For example, the school's undergraduate enrolment was going down due to lack of capacity in terms of staff and facilities. Yet, the demand for doctors was still rising. I remember the President asking how many doctors Makerere Medical School had so far trained since it opened in the 1920s. When I inquired, in order to give the President an informed answer, I was told that the School had not produced more than 2,000 doctors in more than seventy years of its existence and these included Kenyans, Tanzanians, Zanzibaris and other nationalities. Obviously, some of the Ugandan doctors were dead, others working outside the country, but still, this was not an impressive figure by any standard. Unfortunately, with the capital development budget cut off, it was almost impossible to expand the school's facilities, including the badly needed expansion of the infrastructure. When the private students' scheme began in 1992/93, the Medical School had no capacity to admit extra students, so it lost out. In fact, at the time, the school's annual student intake had dropped from 120 in the '60s to just about 60 in the '80s. Given its state, it was the number the school could comfortably handle. To make matters worse, besides the grossly inadequate Government subvention, there was no other obvious source of funding to ameliorate the school's situation. The choice was for the school to admit some fee-paying students. The demand was obviously there, but the key question was how to create the extra capacity without the means to do so to accommodate the extra students. One option was to cut back further on the number of Government-sponsored students and squeeze in a few fee-paying students, but that too had its drawbacks. The MBChB did not run like a BA in Arts, where it was possible to have both day and evening sessions. The most viable alternative was to admit a few more students above the Government threshold. The rationale was to earn some money in order to improve and expand the facilities. We had learnt from Dr Hyuha's famous answer to those who were constantly criticising us for admitting too many students. His answer was why not get the money first and with it, improve and expand your facilities. The trick worked. Over time, the faculty started generating income and a substantial amount of that income was being invested in infrastructure improvement. By the time I left the university in 2004, even the interior of the Davis Lecture theatre that dampened my spirits on my first visit to the school in 1994 had been fully renovated. It was now a lecture hall befitting a famous Medical School and the name of the person it was named after, thanks to the efforts of Professor Nelson Sewankambo and his colleagues.

Although we did not receive any funding from the Japanese to rehabilitate the Medical School, the university did not come out of the would-be Japanese assistance totally empty handed. Unknown to us, the Ministry of Finance had been setting aside some money as counterpart funds for the Makerere portion of the Japanese grant that never was. Now that Makerere University had been excluded from the entire grant, the funds, amounting to some half a billion Ugsh which the Ministry of Finance had been saving in a project account in the Bank of Uganda, were available. Someone in the Ministry of Health, I guess one of Nelson Sewankambo's classmates at the Medical School, had heard about it and decided to alert him of Makerere's money at the Bank of Uganda. After doing some homework to ascertain whether the money was there, he gave me a brief about it. At first, I did not want to believe him, as we had had similar stories before, only to be disappointed because the money had been used for other purposes. But this one looked genuine, so I told him that together we should do everything possible to get it out of the Bank of Uganda for the Medical School. All we had to do was to contact and write to the Permanent Secretary then, of the Ministry of Finance or Secretary to the Treasury, Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile, requesting him to release the money to Makerere University. Knowing Mutebile's method of work, we had to be prepared to justify why he should give the money to us. Fortunately, Nelson Sewankambo had some idea about the terms of grant agreement between JICA and the Ministry of Health and therefore, what the funds were to be used for. The bulk of the grant was for equipment for Mulago Hospital. Mulago being our teaching hospital, naturally our clinical departments based there would have full access to the new equipment. However, the non-clinical departments located outside the hospital would have no new equipment. Sewankambo advised that the best way to convince Emmanuel Mutebile to release the money to Makerere was not to talk about repair of buildings, although this too was important, but to tell him that the university needed the money to buy new equipment for the biomedical departments. That sounded convincing enough, so we decided to try our luck, and it worked. In spite of the many competing demands he had to take care of, Mutebile agreed to release the money for that purpose. As soon as the money was deposited in our account at the Bank of Uganda, the process of identifying what to buy and the potential medical equipment suppliers began. Since only the departments knew what they wanted, it took much longer than we had expected to compile the list of what we had to buy. Heads of Departments had to frantically look all over the place for new catalogues with up-to-date prices. As it turned out, it was a difficult task as most of the available ones were several years out of date, the reason being that the Medical School had not been buying new equipment for several years; so the departments were not stocking up-to-date catalogues. This led to delays, not to mention the other more laborious processes that lay ahead, where more delays were anticipated.

By the time we had gone through this long and laborious process which involved, among other things, seeking approval from the University Tender

Board, calling for tenders and opening the letters of credit through the Bank of Uganda, the appreciating dollar rate had wiped US\$150,000 off the initial grant. As I have mentioned earlier, at the time the Ministry of Finance agreed to release the money to the university in local currency, the full grant was worth some US\$500,000. It was now worth just about US\$350,000. This experience drove home the debilitating impact a weak and constantly weakening local currency could have on your purchasing power. As a result of the weak Uganda shilling, we ended up buying far less equipment than we had planned for. However, what we were able to buy with that little money was a big shot in the arm for the departments which, for years, had been starved of new and more modern equipment. But even when the equipment was delivered, the problems were not yet over. Most departments had no capacity to install them. We had to hire a firm of competent electrical engineers to verify that everything supplied complied with the specifications stated in the tender documents before they were installed. We wanted to avoid a repeat of the problems we had experienced with the equipment the Government purchased in the early '90s with the African Development Bank loan, most of which had been supplied with missing parts or were defective at the time of delivery. That experience was still fresh in my mind. This time, we had to make sure all equipment supplied were the right models we had ordered and that they fully conformed to our requirements. Mult Konsult, the firm of engineers that won the tender to install our equipment, did an excellent job.

As the department thought of new equipment to acquire, I advised the Dean that since the enrolments were going up, it would be better to go for equipment that had in-built multiple-user facilities or which could project images on to the screen. I had in mind the modern multi-user teaching microscopes. We managed to buy a number which had ten-eye pieces and could be coupled to a computer that could cast images on a screen. When I first saw one in action in the Department of Pathology, I could hardly contain my joy. It was now possible for ten students to use the same microscope simultaneously and, at the same time, the lecturer could project those aspects of the specimen that they wanted the student to examine directly on a big screen placed in front of the class. The Medical School had entered the age of hi-tech. This was one way we were demonstrating to the critics that, using modern technology, it was possible to deliver high quality teaching and laboratory work to a large class and we were slowly driving that point home. I was, and still am, one of those who strongly believe that it is possible to provide quality university education to as many people as possible through the use of modern technology instead of relying solely on the traditional ways of lecture delivery. However, I was disappointed with the reporters who covered the commissioning ceremony in 2003, during which the new equipment was officially handed over to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. We had a wonderful demonstration of the new stereo ten-eye-piece microscopes in the Department of Pathology and I had gone to some length to explain how such

equipment assisted a lecturer to teach a relatively big class of students. In the following day's edition of the papers, only a small caption with a photograph showing me looking at the new equipment was all that appeared. I wondered why the reporters had bothered to come to the ceremony but I decided not to pursue the issue with the newspaper editors. Interestingly, the equipment we bought for the non-clinical departments arrived ahead of that of the Japanese consignment for the teaching hospital. However, by the time I was leaving the university at the beginning of June 2004, the Japanese equipment had also started arriving.

Things were brightening up again for the Medical School quite nicely. Professor Sewankambo had hinted to Senate that the work of the Dean had started to overwhelm him and that an Associate Dean for the Medical School was not enough. Both were drawing in work which, in fact, was in addition to their heavy teaching and research loads in their respective departments. Therefore, the Medical School needed a second Associate Dean. He decided to table his proposal before Senate. Fortunately, Senate listened carefully, debated the merits of the proposal, found the arguments convincing and decided to recommend to the University Council the establishment of a position of a second Associate Dean in the Medical School. Other Faculties were also free to present their proposals for Senate to consider, if they so wished. Senate's recommendation to Council also clearly prescribed and delineated the roles of the two Associate Deans. One was for research while the second was for education. However, both Associate Deans were required to assist the Dean with the day-to-day general administration of the faculty. The University Council accepted the Senate recommendation, but when subsequently the requests became too many, the University Council made it a policy for each faculty to have a second Associate Dean. The position would be filled as and when the need arose. Sam Luboga of the Department of Anatomy was elected the first Associate Dean for Education, while Elly Katabira of the Department of Internal Medicine was elected for Research. Nelson Sewankambo, a workaholic himself, was fortunate to have both men. The two were extremely hardworking and resourceful. Through their hard work, both had risen to the rank of Associate Professor in their respective departments. Now, Dean Sewankambo had no more reason to complain about excessive work. Soon, other Faculties followed his example.

On the staffing side, there was noticeable improvement too. Although the first generation of Ugandan professors in the Medical School, such as Alexander Odonga, Latmer Musoke, Sebastian Kyalwazi, Joseph Lutwama, Charles Ssali, F. M. Bulwa, J. Sekabunga, Joshua Mugerwa, Raphael Owor, Stephen B. Bosa, the famous psychiatrist, S. K. Kajubi, Josephine Namboozie Kiggundu, B. R. Kanyerezi, Peter H. Ssebuwufu, J. W. Kibuukamusoke, P. G. D'Arbela and others had retired or were dead, a crop of young lecturers, who made up the second generation of Ugandan professors, was emerging fast. It was once mentioned that the British Medical Council had withdrawn recognition of our medical degrees, I believe

that was in the '80s, citing as one of the reasons that the Department of Internal Medicine at Makerere, which was considered as one of the key departments in any Medical School, did not have a full Professor. Now, the department had two, namely Marcelino Andrew Otim and Roy Mugerwa. Soon, Nelson Sewankambo would join them as the third full Professor in the department.

In the early '80s, the School had lost most of its top professors. At the time, Kampala's rumour mill had it that one member of staff, supposedly a staunch supporter of the ruling party – UPC – had told the party operatives that some anti-Government professors in the Medical School were maliciously failing students and that they were targeting mainly students they suspected to be party supporters. Without having to wait for the Government security agents to pick them up, perhaps never to be seen again or to be mauled by irate students, the professors who had been identified fled the country for their security. That was the time Professor B. R. Kanyerezi, who was Head of the Department of Internal medicine at the time and Charles Olweny – the oncologist – who was also working with the Uganda Cancer Institute, went into exile. Even Professor P. G. D'Abela – the cardiologist – who had braved the situation for a while, also left.

After that exodus of its senior members of staff in the '80s, the Department of Medicine had rallied again. In fact, one could safely say that for the Medical School, times had truly moved on. It was encouraging to see many younger members of staff moving up the academic ladder, despite the fact that there were still some problematic departments where staff recruitment and promotion was agonisingly slow. But even then, the situation was not terribly desperate any more. For the clinical departments, the Ministry of Health consultants were doing an excellent backstopping job. For the non-clinical departments, we had to keep trying as hard as we could to look for staff for them. Anatomy was one of the worst hit departments in this category. Before I took over as Vice Chancellor, my predecessors had approached the World Health Organisation (WHO) for help and had recruited a Nigerian Professor, Abiye Obuopforibo, a first degree graduate in Medicine and Surgery of the University of Lagos, with a PhD in Human Biology and Anatomy from the University of Sheffield, to provide academic leadership to the struggling department. However, on top of his teaching responsibilities in the Department of Anatomy, Professor Obuoforibo had other WHO assignments in the country, so his time was divided between Makerere and the WHO country office. Besides him, there was also a young American physical anthropologist, Dr Samiento also assisting, but it was Sam Luboga who shouldered most of the responsibility for keeping the department both academically and administratively vibrant. He succeeded his former Head and his PhD supervisor and possibly mentor, the legendary Professor Peter H. Ssebuwufu, one of the most brilliant students the Medical School has ever trained. I believe he still holds the record of the highest score of distinctions on his MBChB degree transcript.

After his admission to the British Fellowships in Surgery, a trend that most doctors in Uganda aspired to as part of their professional growth and international recognition, Ssebuwufu went to the University of Cambridge in the UK for a PhD in Anatomy, a rarity at the time. Peter Ssebuwufu, not a blood relative, was very genial and well known at Makerere for his sense of humour and funny jokes. Some people used to say that many of his jokes were dirty jokes. Once I was told of the story told of a Catholic nun who had joined the university to study Medicine and in the first few weeks of lectures in Anatomy, so the story went, she decided to quit the Medical School, allegedly because Ssebuwufu was overdoing his sense of humour. Apparently, the woman of God had found some of the professor's jokes objectionable to her faith. Unfortunately, I never had the chance to interview Ssebuwufu about this incident, and whether he even remembered it.

Peter Ssebuwufu was also an accomplished musician and guitar player. He even cut a few PVC 45 records, as we used to call the black plastic discs on which the musicians used to record their music at the time. One of his famous hits was titled *Sindika Amatafaali* – (push the bricks) a Kiganda phrase that metaphorical alludes to the “pushing buttocks”, which came out in early '70s. After listening to the funny lyrics and his melodic voice, I decided to buy it for my record collection. I guessed the record was some sort of compilation of his amusing jokes. In fact, he was so musically talented that when the Department of Music, Dance and Drama opened in the late '60/ early '70s, he was appointed part-time music lecturer there. In 1978, President Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa appointed him Uganda's Minister of Health in his short-lived Government. He amused people by promising to introduce mobile fully-equipped clinics all over the country, which he went ahead to order. Most people thought it was the usual Peter Ssebuwufu at his jokes again, but the man was dead serious. In 1980 when Binaisa's Government fell, he temporarily went back to his department at Mulago until the elections of December that year. Apparently, the short stint he served as Minister under Binaisa had introduced him to high stakes of Uganda's politics and its vagaries. Unknown to some of his peers, he found politics appealing and, in December 1980, he contested and won a seat as MP for his hometown, Mukono. The Democratic Party, which he had joined, lost the controversial election which it had widely anticipated to win. As a result, he ended up on opposition benches in the Parliament. However, cunning Obote was at it again. Before long, he had persuaded one of Makerere's leading academic who by all accounts had been apolitical until Binaisa introduced him to politics, and he eventually crossed over to the Government side. He remained there until Obote's Government fell in the coup of July 1985. At the time of writing, Professor Ssebuwufu was resident in the UK, where he had lived for many years. However, unlike his academic mentor, Dr Sam Luboga was different. The latter was more into spiritual things than temporal pop music and comical jokes.

Having failed to find sufficient numbers of young doctors with interest in Anatomy to take up teaching positions in the department, we advised the department to revive its old BSc Anatomy programme. In the '60s and early '70s, before it was discontinued due to lack of staff, it was one of the biomedical degree programmes which was also open to non-medical students. This, we reasoned, would be one avenue of developing staff for the department, because we had realised that Dr Sam Luboga and his skeleton staff were extremely overworked. We also encouraged the department to recruit BSc Zoology graduates and give them training in Anatomy at the postgraduate level. Mr G. M. Masilili was one of the early recruits from the Faculty of Science under this scheme. After his BSc, he enrolled for an MSc in Anatomy under Dr Sam Luboga's supervision.

The imminent closure of the Department of Anatomy compelled the Appointments Board, the first time it had done it in my time, to bend some of its rules to help the floundering department find staff. The Board decided to waive the regulation that required one to have a minimum of a Masters degree to qualify for appointment as a lecturer in order to appoint a young brilliant doctor, Dr Juliet Bataringaya, who had only the MBChB and a good BSc in Anatomy, both degrees obtained outside Uganda. When Dr Bataringaya returned to Uganda in 1992, she was interested in teaching Human Anatomy and had applied for the position of Lecturer at the department. Technically, she had the minimum qualification for a lecturer position, but the Department of Anatomy and the School pleaded with the Appointments Board to make an exception to the rule and have her appointed full Lecturer. I suspect that although they recommended her to be appointed, they knew they were simply trying their luck. The Board was not known to bend rules, so they expected their recommendation to be rejected. But those were the pre-Mujaju Report days. It was still possible then for the Board to consider the request on its own merit and for good reasons. Anatomy, being one of the critical departments in the Medical School was extremely understaffed, yet it had to teach all first year medical students and the MMed students specialising in Surgery. By arguing that her BSc in Anatomy made up for her lack of a Masters degree, the Appointments' Board decided to use its discretionary powers and appointed her full Lecturer. Unfortunately, after teaching in the department for just a few years, Dr Bataringaya chose to go back to Britain for a Masters degree, this time not in Anatomy but in Public Health. In 2000, she resigned from the university. It was a big loss to the department which had worked so hard to get her appointed full Lecturer with the barest of qualifications. Nevertheless, to augment the staffing situation in the Anatomy Department further, the Appointments Board agreed to transfer Dr Gabriel Nzarubara, a Surgeon from the Department of Surgery, to the Department of Anatomy. In due course, he would take over from the overworked Sam Luboga as Head of Department.

As I kept concerning myself with the affairs of the Medical School, there were moments I was tempted to believe that perhaps some departments had been opened with a curse planted at their doorstep. While many new departments blossomed as quickly as they opened and admitted their pioneer students, others failed to grow. Nursing and Dentistry were two of such departments in the Medical School which, like Anatomy, had proved extremely difficult to recruit staff for. For several years, the two departments presented us with a serious staffing problem which seemed to defy all solutions. As I thought about the problem, my mood kept swinging from concern to worry and to bewilderment. I wondered whether we had done our homework properly before we opened these departments. It was true that several older departments were also failing to attract staff, but for the clinical departments like ENT, Community Medicine – an offshoot of the community based training programme which began with a big IDRC grant support under Professor Raphael Owor as Dean – the Ministry of Health consultants, who also doubled as honorary lecturers were coming handy, offsetting the low Makerere staff numbers. We had to thank the visionaries who had done some number crunching and discovered that, without the senior staff of the Ministry of Health at Mulago, the Medical School could never ever meet all its staffing needs. In the same vein, they had also realised that there was no way Mulago Hospital could marshal all the medical expertise it needed without drawing on the specialist skills and expert knowledge of Makerere University staff. The result was an amicable symbiotic relationship between the two institutions. Whoever the visionaries were behind, one thing was certain: the Medical School is heavily dependent on the facilities of Mulago as a teaching hospital and the assistance of the Ministry of Health consultant physicians and surgeons working there for part of the clinical teaching. When the relationship between the two institutions was put in place, the understanding then was that the Ministry of Health would pay its consultants teaching on Makerere's programmes a teaching allowance. In turn, Makerere University would pay its clinicians a clinical allowance for providing health care to the patients at the teaching hospital. However, members of staff in the non-clinical departments of the Medical School were not entitled to this allowance. This later led to some agitation which took time to resolve.

We celebrated when the Department of Nursing opened its doors to the first batch of pioneer students in the academic year 1993/94. It was like saying that, at last, Makerere University and the country at large had finally recognised the important role Florence Nightingale's daughters and a few sons were playing in healthcare delivery. In a certain way, the occasion signified the end of an era when nurses were seen as low-skilled assistants to physicians. They could now elevate their skills to a level where they could give competent advice to the doctors. The BSc Nursing was opening up new opportunities for the nurses and midwives, who had toiled for so long with minimum recognition. It was the herald of a new beginning for the nursing profession which, in a way, was a dead-end profession.

For years, the Uganda Nursing and Midwifery Council had been agitating for this degree, but nobody had listened. Many nurses had ventured beyond the enrolled grade to the Nursing Sister grade, which at the time was the topmost professional grade that qualified them to become State Registered Nurses. Majority of nurses and midwives were content to get to that level and exchange their pink or blue uniform for the white one of a nursing sister, with a large yellow or red elastic belt to go with it. At that grade, they become Ward Sisters or Sisters-in-Charge, commanding a hoard of pink uniformed young, and some not so young, junior nurses working under them. Nursing sisters commanded high respect from the junior nurses. Occasionally, one of them became Chief Nursing Officer in one of the Government hospitals. A tiny minority read for the Nursing Tutors' Diploma, under the aegis of Makerere University, to become nurse trainers.

That was the status of the nursing profession in Uganda then, but that was about to change. Time had moved on and the Nursing Sister grade was not good enough anymore. There was now quest for something else, something more rewarding than the nursing Sisters' white uniform. That something was a university degree in nursing. It was the new thing to aspire to. When Nightingale founded the nursing profession during the Crimean war over two centuries ago, I am sure it never occurred to her that one day her descendants would be reading for university degrees like the doctors they were supposed to work with. Professor Senteza Kajubi calls the strive for more academic paper qualifications the "diploma disease" but, ask any high school student you find on the streets of Kampala what institution they wished to join after their "A" levels, I am sure the overwhelming majority of the respondents would tell you they preferred to attend the university. In the Africa of today, a university degree is a coveted prize even when people know in the heart of their hearts that many university degrees did not lead to automatic job placement and graduates were having a hard time finding gainful employment relevant to their degrees. That is the importance people attach to a university degree.

Before Makerere University opened a Department of Nursing, a tiny minority of tutor nurses had managed to enrol for graduate degrees in nursing at universities abroad. Mrs Specioza Mbabaali was one of them. She had studied for her Masters in Nursing at the University of Liverpool in the UK, among other professional qualifications. She had also played a vanguard role in getting the BSc degree in Nursing started at Makerere. So when the department opened in October 1993, she was one of a handful of Ugandan graduate nurses who formed the nucleus of its teaching staff, after the Appointments Board had appointed her Lecturer. Although she was not yet a Senior Lecturer, we asked her to head the new department she had helped to found. She was the best and most qualified we had. She was joined by Mrs J. Mutabaazi, who had also completed her Master of Nursing degree at the Bolton Pyne School of Nursing of Case Western

Reserve University Cleveland Ohio, USA. In fact, during its formative years, the department was regularly visited and serviced by professors from the Bolton Pyne School, who came down to Makerere to teach for a limited period of time. To a large extent, they cushioned the impact of the acute staff shortages, which the department would experience in later years when that relationship came to an end. I guess one of the critical factors we overlooked when the department opened was the fact that Uganda hardly had a sufficient pool of graduate nurses with Masters degrees. This would be the source from which the department would draw lecturers. Before long, unending staff shortages dogged the new department as we shall see later, and it was a problem that consumed a lot of Mrs Mbabaali's time. The first couple of intakes were upgrading nursing sisters and diploma-holder nursing tutors. Because they had most of the professional basics, they were exempted from the first two years of the BSc Nursing. Theirs was, in effect, a two-year course. It soon became apparent that much as they were assumed to have sufficient mastery of the foundations of the nursing profession, they had serious deficiencies in the biomedical sciences such as Biochemistry and Physiology, which they were supposed to have studied in the first two years of the normal four-year course. To remedy the situation, Senate scrapped the two-year crash programme. So from then on every student, whether upgrading or not, had to go through the full four-year course. That, of course meant more teaching for Mrs Mbabaali and a handful of her staff. Coincidentally, the pool of upgrading nurses had also dried up. The department was now admitting more school leavers than upgrading nursing sisters. We had hoped that, out of the graduating pioneer class, the department would be able to find a few of graduates who merited appointment as Assistant Lecturers or Teaching Assistants. It turned out that most of the pioneer graduates had bad academic transcripts. Others far exceeded the maximum age limit the University Council had set for the two grades. Consequently, it continued to be a struggle to stabilise the staffing situation in this department. The new emerging lucrative market for nurses in and outside Uganda was another factor aggravating an already bad situation.

Even Mrs Mutabaazi, who had been more or less second-in-command to Mrs Mbabaali, also left the department for a better paying job with an international organisation. It seemed the odds were strongly steeped against us. Mrs Mbabaali was shouldering both teaching and administrative responsibilities and I had begun to worry about her health. She could not take leave, she could not do any research, and she could not publish, so she could not be promoted. However, my sympathy alone could not make her situation any better or any easier. We had to work extra hard to find staff for her. I even tried a few applications for Fulbright fellows from the USA, but it was all in vain. Unlike other clinical departments, which had the Mulago Hospital consultants to fall back on in cases of acute staff shortages, the Nursing Department had nowhere to look. On top of all this, the Appointments Board had refused to compromise on the standard requirements

for appointment until we had to make a strong case as we had done before for some departments which happened to be in a similar situation. We had to remind the Board that our poor terms of service were not helping matters either. It was a test of endurance for Mrs Mbabali and for us, who were actually responsible for recruiting staff for her. At some point, I thought the captain too was about to jump ship.

This was how tough it was, but by the time I was retiring in 2004, the staffing situation was already stabilising. The department had somehow managed to recruit a sizeable number of Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers and Teaching Assistants. I must say I was extremely grateful to Mrs Mbabaali who never lost her cool, confidence or captivating smile in the hardest of those times. The departure of Mrs Mutabaazi hit her the hardest; nonetheless, even when the situation looked so hopeless and when some would have thrown in the towel, she was steadfast. To make matters worse for her, she was still operating from a near-derelict borrowed building, and I had no money for new buildings for her department. I had made it a point that whenever she made an appointment to see me or whenever I found her waiting for me early in the morning, I would give her priority because, more often than not, I knew well in advance what she had come to see me about. Incidentally, her younger sister Regina was married to an old classmate at Namityango, Fred Sekandi, and she used to assist me a lot when she was Commissioner-in-charge of the national budget at the Ministry of Finance. As the old saying goes, one good turn deserves another. When Specioza Mbabaali finally applied to take her long overdue leave, I gladly granted it to her.

Dentistry was another one of those new departments that seemed not to grow. When it opened in 1982, Associate Professor Stanley Ecece (now deceased) was running it almost single-handedly. It had virtually no equipment of its own except what was available in the teaching hospital and a few pieces in the paramedical Dental School. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, Friends of Makerere in Canada (FOMAC), a Canada-based organisation founded by Professor Charles Olweny, the oncologist, took an interest in the new department and connected it to a religious organisation in Canada, called Sisters of St Joseph, based in the city of Hamilton in Ontario. The organisation started donating new and used equipment to the department, including dental chairs and other dental accessories. These donations made a difference, but were still a drop in the ocean. However, unlike the Department of Nursing, the Department of Dentistry recovered much more quickly from the doldrums. Several young graduates who had done well at their undergraduate level were appointed Assistant Lecturers. Much as most of them came in the department at these training grades, it was a good start. The appointment of Dr L. Muwazi was one of the early appointments there.

Young Louis Muwazi was asked to head the department almost as soon as he was appointed Lecturer. I knew it would be tough on him, but there was little

we could do about it. When Associate Professor Ecece died, someone had to step into his shoes, lest the department was closed down. I must say that despite my initial concerns about his ability to manage a department, which had teething problems, the young man's performance went beyond our expectations. He was later joined by Mwanika, who had studied Dentistry in Cairo. He was one of those Lecturers I had given a six-month temporary appointment, while we waited for the Appointments Board to process his papers, because Muwazi and I did not want to lose him. That was before the Mujaju Report came into effect. When his application finally came to the Appointments Board for consideration, the Board downgraded him to Assistant Lecturer because he did not have a PhD or its equivalent.

That hurt Dr Muwazi and me, who had worked so hard to attract him to the department, but those were the new rules. The Appointments Board was only implementing University Council's policies. Members of the Board seemed oblivious of the hell we were going through to attract staff to some departments. I was equally angry with some of my colleagues in administration who looked on with indifference at the desperate situations where departments requested us to make temporary staff appointments, while waiting for a proper appointment process to take its course and time, as if what was happening in these poorly staffed departments was none of their business. So, when Mwanika's appointment was downgraded, he could not understand why. I had to give a lot of explanation to him on behalf of the Appointments Board of which at the time I was not even a member. He almost resigned. We had to persuade him to stay for the sake of the department. This experience reminded me why some of my predecessors used to walk out of Council and Appointments Board meetings. I believe such frustrating moments drove them crazy. In our case, some members of the Board had even made it more or less a routine whenever they came for the Board meetings to criticise the University Management and the university as a whole, as if the responsibility to appoint staff did not rest with them. We were trying hard to get out of a ditch into which some of our infamous leaders had plunged the country and the university into in the '70s and early '80s, and as such I expected a little more understanding than I was sometimes getting. Nevertheless, the department's staffing situation slowly started to stabilise and two practising senior dentists, Drs Nkuruhenda and Tutyabule agreed to do some part-time teaching. Their services came in very handy when some of the young members of staff were out studying for their postgraduate degrees and we had to find someone to fill in the gap. This was about the time when Dr Aishah Bataringaya's Masters degree study programme at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa almost ran into problems, when she decided to return to Uganda for a short holiday, not realising that for her to graduate she had patients to constantly monitor. The university wanted her to start that part of her training all over again on account of the fact that she had missed part of it. We were sponsoring her and our funds

were very limited, so I had to intervene so she could be allowed to repeat only the bits of her work that she had missed. After exchanging several letters and making numerous calls to her supervisor and Dean of the School, we eventually reached a consensus and she was allowed to continue.

Dr Aishah Bataringaya had gone to study at the University of the Western Cape on a Makerere University staff development fund scholarship. At about the same time, Dr Charles Mugisha Rwenyonyi, who had obtained his doctorate in dentistry from the University of Bergen in Norway, also joined the teaching staff of the department. Before I left the university, the hardworking Dr Muwazi had risen to the rank of Senior Lecturer. The department had a teaching staff strength of seventeen, which included two part-time lecturers and three honorary lecturers from the Ministry of Health. Although most of them were at junior rank level, they were making steady progress in terms of acquiring higher academic and professional qualifications and participating in research.

### **Institute of Public Health**

The next big transformation that occurred in the Medical School near the end of my tour as Vice Chancellor was the decision of the University Council to grant the Institute of Public Health (IPH) independence from the Faculty of Medicine. The institute, which started in a humble way as a Department of Preventive Medicine, had grown into an autonomous unit at the level of a faculty. In essence, there were now two faculties at Mulago; Medicine and Public Health. When Professor Gilbert Bukenya became Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in 1995, Dr Fred Wabwire Mangheni took over as Director of the Institute. He proved to be a man quick on the draw. He seized the opportunity and mobilised his colleagues to get together and work on the proposal for the institute's autonomy. Before we knew it, they were ready to present their proposal to the Faculty Board of Medicine. After the usual arguments and counter-arguments, the proposal was passed and was ready for Senate.

As I have pointed out before, whenever Senate received well prepared and written documents with very strong and plausible arguments, good and logical analysis, it took a relatively short time to approve a proposal and recommend it for adoption by the University Council. Fred Mangheni's proposal fell into that category. More often than not, Council concurred with Senate. Even this time, Council approved the IPH autonomy from the Faculty of Medicine without delay, but gave both of them a few months to sort out some residual matters, before they severed the link completely.

When it came to electing the new Director, who was now at the level of a full Dean of a faculty, again Dr Wabwire was the obvious choice for the job. He was now the Director of an IPH transformed into a faculty. As was usually the case, with autonomy came departmentalisation. Instead of a single entity as it was

before, they decided to sub-divide the faculty into four departments: Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Health Policy Planning and Management; Community Health and Disease Control and Environmental Health. All the existing staff had to be redistributed amongst the four new departments according to their specialisation. My long serving cousin, Dr Christine Zirabamuzaale, suddenly found herself heading the Department of Community Health, while another long serving colleague, Dr Joseph Konde Lule (by now an Associate Professor), was assigned the responsibility of running the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Department. Dr Baine, a much younger man with a PhD from the University of Keele in the UK took on the Health Policy Planning and Management and Dr. David Serwadda (also now an Associate Professor) became the Head of Disease Control and Environmental Health. Before ink dried, opportunities were knocking on the door of the now independent institute. Soon after it became autonomous in 2002, the Melinda Bill Gates Foundation extended a generous grant to Makerere University for AIDS research and awareness campaigns. The IPH was the lead unit on the awareness campaign programme. Again, Dr Wabwire was the obvious choice for the programme's team leader. After accepting this new and rather heavy responsibility, he decided to step down as Director of the Institute. Dr David Serwadda replaced him as Acting Director.

### ***Transforming the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences***

The revival of our Medical School, from near total collapse to a state where it was being transformed into a College of Health Sciences, was nothing short of a miracle. The Medical School survived the hard times in its history and continued to produce doctors of acceptable standards because there were men and women there, past and present, the departed and the many that had to leave Uganda against their will, who never gave up even in the midst of crushing difficulties. They refused to let their once renowned Medical School in Africa die and, in so doing, they learnt and mastered the art of improvisation and carried on regardless of the odds, never losing hope that one day, things will take a turn for the better. But there were also many who chose to go on their free will to join the ever-growing new voluntary form of African slavery conveniently dubbed brain drain, wishing the ship called Makerere University Medical School would sink in their absence. Fortunately, the ship refused to sink but rather stayed afloat. I believe that by recounting the story of the survival of the Medical School, I have paid a fitting tribute to the many members of staff, who made the miracle happen and the road to recovery possible. For example, I could never have imagined that one day I would visit the National Institute of Health (NIH), in Bethesda near Washington DC and learn that names like Nelson Sewankambo, Elly Katabira, Philippa Musoke and many more were already household names among the top American health research scientists there, with remarkable reference to their outstanding

research work on HIV/AIDS and the fact that that Makerere University Medical School had the largest share of the NIH's budget in Africa.

I heard those things being said to me when I was in the USA in 2003 on a Carnegie Corporation of New York-sponsored study tour of the top American research institutions and universities on the East Coast. We were nine Vice Chancellors on that tour; two from East Africa and seven from West Africa but I did not hear names of researchers from other universities in Africa mentioned. Perhaps, I was temporarily absent-minded, but I am sure I never heard any names from other parts of Africa, including the universities whose Vice Chancellors were on the same tour with me. Knowing pretty well the deep pit our Medical School had bootstrapped itself from, I found it too hard to hold back my tears as I listened to my American colleagues struggle to pronounce the long African names without me helping them out of their linguistic predicament. I must say it was a defining moment for me and the peak of my pride as Makerere's Vice Chancellor. I was convinced that all that was being said was in recognition of my colleagues for the good job they had done. In the same token, as we sat there and listened, I could not forget the many partners and friends of Makerere who, over the years, had provided the badly needed financial support which kept the School not only alive, but also out of the ditch and set it firmly on the road to full recovery.

Perhaps I should end the account of my last visit to the Medical School on something that I thought I would fight for to the bitter end, but all the time I kept failing to achieve, although I never really drew a blank. Africa's intellectuals and highly skilled human resources, and lately even those who are not so highly educated or skilled, are leaving Africa in hoards for Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and other wealthy countries in larger numbers than ever before, because we have failed to recognise their true value, which perhaps would have allowed them to stay and serve their individual countries, instead of seeking the proverbial greener pastures outside Africa. We have over-laboured the excuse that we cannot pay decent wages because our economies are too weak to support such wages. In today's globalised economy, there is a huge market for the brightest brains. People freely sell their labour and skills to the highest bidder in the market. In Africa, we are the lowest bidder and as long as we remain so, Africa's brain haemorrhage will continue. Every time I walked into the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Mulago, one thing that never escaped my mind was the poor terms and conditions of service that left me with no room to reward excellence and work above self, as every so often Rotarian Avitas Tibarimbasa used to remind me.

As far as I can remember, the first staff pay rise in my time as Vice Chancellor came in 1994, after a MUASA-led strike when Joseph Carasco (now deceased) was chairman of the Association. The increase put a full Professor's basic salary at about US\$ 400,000 (186 USD) per month, up from about US\$ 150,000 (70USD) a month. Government also promised to review and make further improvements in

the pay package for Makerere staff as soon as possible. We waited, but Government never fulfilled its promise to staff, until MUASA went on strike again. This coincided with the Presidential elections of 1996. It was led by Dr Moses Katende-Mukiibi of the Department of Surveying in the Faculty of Technology, who had taken over as chairman of the Association from Joseph Carasco. This time, the strike was a protracted affair and costly. At some point, we seemed to be heading for a stalemate as no side was talking to each other. I recall a senior colleague in the Main Building approaching me and suggesting that we should use all means to break the impasse. What complicated our ability to negotiate with Government was the contradictory statements coming from the Ministry of Finance on the one hand and Ministry of Public Service on the other.

Shortly before MUASA decided to go on strike, there were indications that a strike could be averted. We had attended a meeting at the Ministry of Finance in an attempt to resolve the outstanding issue pertaining to the living wage MUASA was agitating for. During the meeting, an official of the Ministry had agreed to our proposal that a non-Medical Professor's salary be raised to the equivalent of UgX 1,100,000 per month and UgX 1,300,000 per month for a Medical Professor respectively. A Junior Lecturer at the bottom of the scale of that grade would start at UgX 500,000 a month. MUASA officials, led by their chairman Katende-Mukiibi, also attended that meeting. The MUASA delegation thought that the proposal was a good starting point for better things expected to come in future and promised to recommend it to their members. Although nothing was in writing yet, we came out of the meeting satisfied; after all, we had been informed that the Minister of Finance had given the officials the mandate to negotiate with us. However, as we were winding up the discussions, the meeting chairman cautioned us that before the Ministry of Finance could implement the agreed new wage structure for Makerere, the Ministry of Public Service had to give its approval to the proposal. It was therefore important for us to seek audience with the officials responsible for the Government payroll there. My first reaction was a naïve one. I had assumed that once the Ministry of Finance gave the assurance of its ability to pay the proposed new salaries, it was a done deal. I did not expect or even anticipate the Ministry of Public Service to raise an objection on what we had agreed with the Ministry of Finance officials. But I was dead wrong!

During our first meeting at the Ministry of Public Service, the officer-in-charge of the Government payroll told us point blank that the Ministry of Finance had no mandate to fix salaries; that salaries and wages for public servants was the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Service. Secondly, there was no way the Ministry of Public Service was going to approve such a hefty pay rise for only Makerere University staff. We reminded her that the meeting at the Ministry of Finance was sanctioned by the Minister and we were simply reporting the position agreed at that meeting. The lady was in no mood to listen and she would not

move an inch from her stated position. Instead, she promised to take up the matter with the Ministry of Finance officials herself. As usual, the MUASA executive was present at that meeting. Dr Katende-Mukiibi told her that he was disappointed and was returning to Makerere to report to his members, and that one thing was certain; members of the academic staff would lay down their tools. The official's response was "if Makerere staff wanted to arm-twist the Government, so be it".

When Dr Katende convened a MUASA general meeting and briefed them on what had transpired at the meeting with the Ministry of Public Service officials, the reaction was as predicated; the general assembly declared a strike there and then. I was really disappointed with Government officials who seemed to be insensitive to the plight of Makerere staff. To add salt to the wound, the same Ministry had recently awarded Judges, Medical Consultants and one or two other categories of public servants an unprecedented pay rise, which put a judge's salary at the equivalent of UgX 3,000,000 per month. It was hard to understand the logic behind the selective pay rises by the same employer. Moreover, I was left to struggle with the consequences and pick up the pieces for a decision I was not responsible for. The Ministry of Public Service had precipitated a crisis at the university and left it to me to manage. As the strike continued, we were being invited to meeting after meeting with the Ministry of Finance which, in the first place, had indicated it would pay the new salaries. The meetings which were initially aimed at resolving the crisis were now becoming more and more acrimonious. The Ministry of Finance officials were trading accusations amongst themselves; the senior officials blaming their juniors for committing the Government to a pay rise to Makerere University staff when they had not been given the mandate to do so. I wondered why in the first place they had been asked to meet us if they were not empowered to commit Government to anything! My colleagues who were attending the meetings with the MUASA executive members who had accompanied us were equally baffled. As far as we were concerned, the meetings were unproductive and a waste of time. All we had achieved was simply to go back to square one, when we thought we had made a breakthrough during the first meeting we had had with the Ministry of Finance, which could have helped us avert a costly strike. Now we were deadlocked, the strike continued with no end in sight. It was time to change our strategy.

From the start of my tour as Vice Chancellor, I realised that low remuneration would be one of the trouble spots and potentially a flash point for a showdown between the university and the Government. I was fully aware of the likely impact a staff strike could have on the university, but I also knew that it would be extremely difficult to convince Government to award Makerere staff a substantial pay rise in one go. So I was well prepared for that eventuality. It was now time to explore some of the options I had been toying for quite some time. I had been thinking on how best we could improve staff salaries from our own resources

without recourse to Government. The strike pre-empted those ideas. However, the longer the strike dragged on, the more I was convinced that time had come to look at this option a little more critically. It was time to put the cards on the table and hope that the ace in the deck would pull it off. However, to be certain of our ability to pay the new salaries from our own resources sustainably, I needed accurate data on our income-generating capacity. Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, was a man with a good mastery of figures. It was time to call him in to do some number crunching. I used to sit with him in my office for several hours, calculator in hand. Sometimes, we would stay until late at night, generating as many scenarios as we could think of. Ben Byambabazi was making sure that whatever new wage bill proposal we came up with was affordable and sustainable. Finally, we thought we had cracked it. We could now put the proposal to the Finance Committee of the Council.

The Council Chairman, Dr David Matovu, was also the Chairman of the Finance Committee. I had made sure, right from the beginning of the strike and even before, that he was kept fully informed of every development that was taking place at the university. This was the way things worked. He too would come to the university and sit down with us as we grappled with the many problems we had to attend to, throwing in a word of wise counsel or two. The Finance Committee was finally convinced and Ben Byambabazi took the members through a number of options we had generated, finally zeroing on the one we believed was the most affordable and sustainable. As usual, our good friend Joel Kahenano of the Bank of Uganda attended the meeting. However, as much as the committee appreciated our effort in the hour of crisis, members wanted our figures to be verified by other people for the committee to satisfy itself that the proposal was attainable and the university could raise the money on a continuous and sustainable basis. What we were proposing had never been done at Makerere before. Government paid staff salaries and other staff emoluments with resource to the university, hence the need to be that extra cautious.

In times of financial crises, the University Council turned to Mr Joel Kahenano, who was one of the Directors in the Bank of Uganda, for advice. He was one of those people gifted with the wit for finding solutions to our seemingly terrible financial difficulties. He accepted to scrutinise the figures we had presented to the committee. Mr Kahenano worked with the University Bursar and one or two other people and came up with a pay package similar to the one which the Ministry of Finance official had proposed in our first meeting with them. The MUASA executive had accepted it before the strike. Mr Kahenano's proposal however differed slightly from what Ben Byambabazi and I had proposed to the Finance Committee. In addition, he confirmed the university's ability to meet the new salary package from its internally-generated income. Now the question was, would some of the more militant MUASA members accept the new package?

We decided not to jump the gun. But before the Chairman of the University Council could meet MUASA members to announce the university's offer, the entire Council had to approve the Finance Committee's proposal first.

The University Council had been called once before for a briefing on the ongoing MUASA strike. This was the second time it was being called in less than a month as members of staff had representatives on the University Council. After more than two weeks of stalemate, it would be an opportunity to gauge their mood and assess whether the University Council's offer was likely to be accepted. Although the staff representatives refused to commit themselves one way or the other beyond saying the rank and file would consider it and make a decision, one could sense that fatigue was setting in and chances of rejecting the council's offer outright were minimal. However, we had to wait and see.

The University Council mandated Dr Matovu and the Vice Chancellor to initiate talks with the MUASA executive on the new pay offer. Dr Matovu was one person I never heard raise his voice even when the situation warranted it; so his composure was to come in handy. As expected, MUASA had a lot of firebrands in its rank and file. So we did not expect an easy ride. We expected to be heckled and booed when we met them. At all such occasions, members of my Central Executive were always with me. This time when we met the entire MUASA membership in the Main Hall, all were there with me also. The process began with a meeting with the MUASA executive in the Council Room. I had expected a stormy meeting, but it was an amicable one. After the Chairman of Council had addressed the MUASA executive, they invited us to meet the staff at a general MUASA meeting in the Main Hall. I had a feeling that it was going to be a rowdy gathering but, after almost three weeks on strike, I guessed most members of staff were getting tired of the impasse. After we had addressed them and put the council's proposal to them, they asked us to leave them alone in the Hall to consider the proposal. What followed next was like pure magic. The members voted overwhelmingly to accept the new salary package and to end the strike. That was history being made at Makerere, because that was the first time staff salaries were supplemented from the University's private income. According to the new package, a non-Medical Professor's salary was now well over a million shillings a month, the equivalent of US\$ 1,000 a month; and for the Medical Professor, it was about the equivalent of US\$1,300 a month. For the first time, Makerere staff was the highest paid in any public university in East Africa. It was a remarkable feat and although it had come at a cost, we had reason to celebrate the achievement. We could now pay our colleagues in the Medical School salaries above the Ministry of Health Consultants. At the time, mid-1996, the money had value too. Now, I had some good news to report to my colleagues in the Medical School who had petitioned me about the disparities between their salaries and that of the Ministry of Health Consultants, alongside whom they were working.

We were glad the strike was finally over. It had drained our physical and mental energy and I was tired. But it was also time to count the cost. Remembering that, each day, student upkeep alone cost the university close to UgX 100 million or the equivalent of US\$100,000, this strike was the most expensive in recent years. If it had continued unresolved much longer, we would have had to send the students home and close the university. However, for some of the striking staff, the students had to be present for the strike to have maximum impact. They did not want to see them go. This tactic was akin to using human beings as shields in a war situation. However, some students had started demanding to know why they were not being taught. In one or two faculties, staff had continued teaching the evening students, but student leadership stepped in and stopped it, saying that if staff is on strike, everything to do with teaching should stop. Whenever there is a strike at Makerere, the Medical School bears the fullest brunt of the lost time, because they happen to run the tightest time table. They need every available hour to cover the syllabus properly. This strike was no exception. In fact, some members of Council wanted the strike leaders taken to court to pay for the loss. However, in the end, the spirit of reconciliation prevailed. No action was taken against the strike leaders.

I had a lingering suspicion about the timing of the strike. To me, it bore the hallmark of a ploy, perhaps dreamed up by some of President Museveni's opponents as a political weapon to discredit him during the forthcoming Presidential election, as a man who never kept his promises and therefore could not be trusted. It was as if they were telling the electorate; "See how Makerere is on fire now, because Museveni had promised staff there a living wage but had never given it to them since 1989. So, out of frustration and disillusionment, they had decided to go on strike as a last resort". In fact, it was a ploy that resonated well with staff at Makerere because, for them, it touched the raw nerve where it mattered most – their welfare. Beyond the gates of Makerere, it was a different game altogether. The old "town and gown" mentality had never gone away completely. So those who believed that they would make political capital out of a Makerere staff strike over pay and allowances had not done proper homework. The ordinary man and woman did not care about what happened at Makerere, so the ploy – if it were a ploy – was doomed for failure right from the start. Whoever had advised some presidential aspirants that such a ploy would work was either a day dreamer or at best a part-time thinker. The ordinary folks still loved their Museveni, no matter what, and a strike at Makerere over a pay rise was not a threat that would dissuade them to suddenly change their mind. Indeed, the results of the 1996 presidential election were a clear demonstration of that. Makerere was simply too far detached from their ordinary lives. However, whatever the original motive was, the strike did not end in total failure for MUASA. If anything, MUASA came out the winner and it had won another battle for better pay for its members, though the war for a living wage was far from over. The Medical School was one of the partakers of the spoils. The Medical School had fallen, but like a cat, it had landed on its feet.

## **Faculty of Arts – From the Brink**

There was – and still is – a mistaken belief that arts are for the supposedly weak students who cannot cope with the intellectual demands of the sciences. So studying for a BA degree, what some students referred to as the BA flat at Makerere, was seen not so much as a sign of intellectual prowess, but a lack of it. Moreover, the fact that for years, the BA students had the least number of contact hours in the whole university, that is, about 120 contact hours spread over a period of three academic years kept reinforcing this stereotypical thinking. Students in the Science-based faculties were sweating with much bigger workloads.

Once in 1995, after the Academic Registrar had carried out an academic audit that clearly revealed what most people had long suspected that the BA programme in Faculty of Arts had the least number of contact hours, this generated heated debate at Senate. Some members were of the view that the contact hours were too few to warrant a three-year degree programme; even arguing that it was the excessive redundancy that encouraged students in the Faculty of Arts to engage in unbecoming behaviour and hooliganism. They went on to suggest that the duration for the BA degree be condensed to two years. Members of Senate from the Faculty of Arts did not take so kindly to this proposal. They thought that the proposal was preposterous. I later learnt that it was a topic for serious corridor talk at the Faculty of Arts for some time. They believed that some of their colleagues from other faculties, particularly from the Sciences were conceitedly ridiculing the intellectual nature and contribution of the Humanities and were out to demean their degrees. But even students used to think that if you came to Makerere to study for a BA degree, you came to enjoy life, and you were essentially on a year's vacation. The workload was rather light. However, what used to baffle the science students most was that BA graduates found better paying jobs much more easily than science graduates. In fact, some students had coined the expression – “minimum effort, maximum benefits”, likening it to the mechanical advantage concept in Physics. However, we chose not to pursue the idea of a two-year BA honours degree. We worked on better ways of going around the problem. In due course, the semester system would eliminate disparities and distortions in the university's programmes. Soon, every student would have to study for a minimum number of credit hours to graduate. So, the Faculty of Arts was spared the embarrassment of downgrading its BA degree to two years. But one thing I knew for sure was that if we had insisted on a two-year BA programme, the faculty would have put up a spirited fight.

At the time I became Vice Chancellor, the Faculty of Arts had the lowest enrolment. I remember Professor Epelu Opio, who was Chairman of the Admissions Board, commenting that there were fewer than sixty students selecting the Faculty of Arts as their first choice. According to him, it was a faculty on the way out. However, in due course, all that would change through the innovative leadership of Professor

Oswald Ndolerire as Dean. Besides the BA in Mass Communication, which Dr Francis Kidubuka (now deceased) initiated in the Department of Literature in the '80s, there were hardly any new programmes the faculty had initiated since then. When Dr Ndolerire, an accomplished linguist and an expert in the French language; having obtained his doctorate from the prestigious Sorbonne in Paris, became Dean in 1995, he started talking of professionalising the faculty. It was a peculiar, yet catchy word. I am sure when I first heard him say it, my initial reaction was that he was talking about something hazy and possibly far-fetched. How do you professionalise subjects like History and Religious Studies, for instance? Would you call them Applied History or Applied Religious Studies? Wasn't he familiar with the old saying that the leopard never changes its spots? Apparently, Oswald Ndolerire and some of his forward-looking colleagues were talking about a totally different school of thought that had nothing to do with Applied Arts as I had imagined. I must admit that, in many ways, they were a step ahead of many of us, at the cutting edge of ingenuity and innovation. In essence, they were saying that time had come for the old leopard called the Faculty of Arts, that never changed its birth spots even when the terrain was fast changing, to change to one that had the will and ability to attune to the changing times and modernise.

The Faculty of Arts has its origins in the liberal and general studies that Makerere College used to offer at diploma level before it started awarding the degrees of London in 1949. At that time, the Arts and Social Sciences were integrated as one unit. The Social Sciences evolved into a faculty of their own in 1963, but up to the mid-1970s, the two Faculties had a joint Board of Studies and before the university adopted the semester system, a student would register at the Faculty of Social Sciences for a 3.2.2 degree with one of the subjects studied in the Faculty of Arts. For example, a student could graduate with a joint honours degree in Economics and Geography. Economics was offered at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Geography at the Arts Faculty. Even under the semester system, it was still possible for a student to have a major in Social Sciences and the minor in the Faculty of Arts or vice versa. Once upon a time, even Mathematics was offered in the Faculty of Arts as well. Geology was there too as part of the Department of Geography. The faculty had grown with Makerere and, over the years, it had produced some of the most distinguished personalities in Africa. The current President of the United Republic of Tanzania was a BA English student there in the 1950s. President Mwai Kibaki too was a student there and so were the distinguished Kenyan playwright, James Ngugi (now Ngugi wa Thion'go), David Rubadiri, now Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi, and many more.

The Faculty of Arts is located to the south of the Main Building and occupies two buildings built in different styles. The older building, constructed in the 1950s and originally called the Queen's Courts, but after independence changed to Arts Courts; and a much smaller pre-fabricated building immediately below

the Queen's Courts to the west, constructed in 1970. The smaller building was originally the home of the Faculty of Law, but when Professor Abraham Kiapi (now deceased) decided to move the faculty to its present location, the building was passed on to the Faculty of Arts to house the Institute of Languages. The old building is shaped in the form of the capital letter A, a design similar to the older Faculty of Agriculture building. I guess the same architect designed them and wanted to maintain symmetry on both sides of the Main Building. The Arts Courts are separated from the Main Building by the St Francis Chapel, much in the same way as the Faculty of Agriculture is separated from the Main Building by the St Augustine Chapel. The Arts or Queen's Courts is a building with some unique features that distinguish it from other buildings in the university; namely, it has a colonnade that forms part of the open entrance to the building which faces east, opposite the Faculty of Social Sciences. The columns designed in classic Greek-Romano style are covered with a climbing plant, which I believe is an ivy plant a close relative of the type found on many older buildings in the USA. The external stone skirt of the building is also covered by the same plant. Beside these two buildings, the Department of Music, Dance and Drama (MDD), occupies two old 1930s tin-roofed bungalows along the Pool Road on the northern side of the new Senate Building. During the tenure of Professor Ndolerire as Dean, proposals were made to construct a new multi-storied building for the faculty on the site currently occupied by the MDD, but for reasons we shall explain later, the plans did not materialise.

In terms of departments, Arts is the second largest faculty in the university, after the Faculty of Medicine. It comprises eight academic departments and one institute which is yet to become autonomous: Geography; History; Literature; Music, Dance and Drama; Philosophy; Religious Studies; the Institute of Languages, which by the time I left in 2004, was still at the departmental level, and the new Department of Mass Communication. Philosophy and Religious Studies used to be one department, but the two went their separate ways in the 1980s with Professor Dalfovo, the long-serving Italian Catholic priest of the Comboni Fathers, heading the Department of Philosophy and Father Byaruhanga Akiki remaining the Head of the Department of Religious Studies. Similarly, the Institute of Languages started out as a unit in the Department of Literature, but broke away to become the Department of English and Language Studies or ELS (as it was popularly known). However, during Professor George Kirya's tenure as Vice Chancellor, the department successfully lobbied and was promised the status of an institute on the lines of IPH in the Medical School.

I recall how hard Professor Ruth Mukama, the first woman to be promoted to the rank of full Professor during my first few years as Vice Chancellor and possibly the first Ugandan woman to head the faculty as Dean, struggled to have the institute formally approved in Senate and Council. Unfortunately, by the

time I returned to Makerere in late 1993, the promised status had not yet been granted. That was one of the first issues we had to sort out during the first few years of my administration. I failed to understand why it had taken so long for the status to be granted. As we have seen elsewhere, Mass Communication as a degree programme at Makerere was the brain child of late Francis Kidubuka, one of the few members of staff in the Department of Literature who had a PhD at the time. The others I could recall were Katebalirwe Amooti wa Irumba, Arthur Gakwandi and Professor Timothy Wangusa. By 1993, Mass Communication was one of the most popular degree courses in the Faculty of Arts. We can safely say that Mass Communication was the first professional degree programme in the Faculty of Arts and it contributed significantly to the revival of the faculty's fortunes. Unfortunately, due to constraints that included insufficient staffing, the Bachelor of Mass Communication had a very small number of students – not more than ten students a year – and remained so for a very long time. This also made it one of the most competitive courses at Makerere. The pioneer students had to hammer out their assignments on the old mechanical typewriters. The department had no computers then.

As a new Vice Chancellor, one of the first things I did for the Faculty Arts was to find some money, which I used to buy three computers for the faculty. Two went to the Mass Communication section and the other to the office of the Head of Department of Literature. At the time, Enerst Okello Ogwang, a promising young man who had some social problems, was the Head of Department. I learnt later that in spite of my explicit instructions, some misunderstanding arose as to how the computers were to be shared within the department, but the problem was later amicably resolved. However, as the demand for the Mass Communication degree continued to grow beyond the annual intake to the course, coupled with the idea of offering an evening programme, it became apparent that Mass Comm (as it was popularly referred to) had come of age. It was time to allow the unit to grow into a full-fledged independent department within the Faculty of Arts. The Faculty Board, Senate and the University Council swiftly worked on the approval process and Mass Communication was approved as a department. So it broke away from the Department of Literature, thus becoming the eighth department in the faculty. The departmental staff strength had also risen to more than twelve. What intrigued me about the Mass Communication programme, which I was not aware of at the time, was the requirement that a Mass Communication student had to take a content subject as well – more or less like Education and Library and Information Science. After acquiring the status of a department, with Ms Linda Goretti Nassanga as its first head, it was time to think of other things and work out a road map for its future. Besides a proper home, staff who had specialised in the electronic media were now asking for a training FM radio of their own, based on the university campus. Up until then, the department was relying on the goodwill of Radio Uganda and some private FM Radio stations

in Kampala for the practical component of the broadcasting course programme. However, it was not always easy to fit trainee students on the schedules of these broadcasting houses.

Fredrick Nagenda Musoke, who had returned with a Masters degree from the University of Houston, Texas, was the first member of staff to float the idea of a university-owned training FM radio station to me. He wanted us to look for a donor who would fund such a project. It was a long shot and likely to be a tough sale. I almost asked Fredrick Musoke whether we were not sending ourselves on a wild goose chase, but my usual never-give-up instinct took the better of me. Although, I strongly suspected that we would draw lots of blanks before we found one, as most donors – including our traditional ones – would find it hard to give us funds to set up an FM radio station. To many people, an FM radio station would be seen as a luxury, or at best a commercial venture which had little or no relevance to the university's hard pressing needs. Nevertheless, we decided to have a go at it. I even thought of asking Mr Ben Byambabazi to include it in the university's budget estimates for the following financial year. However, my past experience with the Government officials at the Treasury cautioned me not to bother, as there was no way the Ministry of Finance would give the university money to set up an FM radio station.

Musoke's request was a challenge I did not want to let go. I promised that I would work with him to identify a source of money. One strategy was to sell the idea to as many potential donors as possible. Musoke wrote the proposal, which I vetted and mailed to wherever we could think of. The UNDP was one of the UN agencies that financed development programmes in Uganda. Lately, the agency had shifted focus to poverty eradication and other programmes not related to higher education. As we have already seen, the UNDP had supported Makerere University for a long time, particularly during the hard times of the 1970s and '80s. Although it had stopped giving direct support to Makerere University, we believed that the idea of training human resources that could pass on messages to rural communities about poverty eradication through radio was something UNDP could buy into, so we requested an audience with the UNDP Resident Representative in Kampala, to introduce the idea to him. I reasoned that even if they would not give the money directly to the university for the purpose, they could include it in the UNDP's contribution to Uganda's budget support for poverty eradication related activities.

At the time, Dr Babatunde Thomas, a Nigerian, was the UNDP Resident Representative in Uganda. He was one of the few international experts working in Uganda. A staunch Catholic, he never missed mass at the Christ the King Church. He was kind enough to grant us an audience. I went to see him with Musoke Fred, the idea bearer. After a good discussion, he politely gave us the news we perhaps had not quite prepared for. Although he thought the idea was

good, the UNDP Kampala had no budget from which he could finance our project. We had drawn the first blank and, to me, that seemed to mark the end of the road for our dream project; and for a while, that seemed to be the case. But Fred Musoke never lost hope. He joined hands with some of his colleagues in the department and decided to continue pursuing other options we had identified earlier. When Goretti Nassanga was on her PhD study leave, Monica Chibita, an MA in Journalism graduate of the University of Iowa stood in as Head of Department. One day in 2003, I was pleasantly surprised when the soft spoken Monica came to my office in the company of Aliphonse Nkusi, one of the newer members of staff, wearing a beaming smile on her face to tell me that the Americans – through the American Centre in Kampala – had agreed to provide the funding for a training FM radio at Makerere. Like Monica, I could hardly contain my excitement. I hugged and thanked them for working so hard to find a donor for the project which I had almost given up on. I realised that for the first time, Makerere University would have its own campus-based radio station! Not many universities in sub-Saharan Africa had them. That was a dream come true.

My original idea was not to have a transmitter, but to use the radio like a closed circuit television, because I had not expected the American friends to provide one, but they did. All we needed to do was to apply to the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) for a frequency in the already overcrowded Frequency Modulated band (or FM as it is popularly referred to). We were not too sure UCC would license a frequency in that band to us as that band was already over-used.

I envisaged that perhaps besides training journalists specialising the electronic media and broadcasting, we would be training Disc Jockeys (or DJs as they are popularly known in the trade) as well. The whole idea of a Makerere University FM Radio was one of those things I had remotely thought about in the past. It never occurred to me that the idea could be realised in my time. I remember referring to this achievement in one of my graduation speeches, shortly before I retired, with a lot of pride. As was usually the case, good things came with their own challenges. I was now faced with two requests. One was for space for the studios. The second was money to pay for the frequency. I had to move fast. That was the time my last contract was about to expire. As usual, when it came to matters of space allocation, I knew where to turn. I decided to throw the challenge to my Deputy, Professor Epelu Opio, the Chair of the Space Allocation Sub-Committee of Council. I asked them to find suitable premises to house the studios of the Mass Communication training radio station. I was expecting him to ask me in his characteristic way, “My boss, where can I find the space for the radio station studios?” On many occasions, he used to refer to me as boss. This time, that question never arose. I am sure he was equally excited about the prospects of Makerere having an FM radio. Soon, he found room in the Lincoln

House, Flat B1. Subsequently, the equipment was delivered and fully installed. What remained now was to mount the transmitter on a mast. I do not quite recall who followed up the business with the UCC, but I remember later meeting Fredrick Musoke and asking him whether we had been granted a frequency, of which he responded in the affirmative, confirming that our application had been approved.

When Fredrick Musoke first discussed the idea of a Makerere radio, we also discussed the possible sites where we could hoist the transmitter if we ever got one. At the time, the Observatory Hill, the tallest peak on Makerere Hill was the obvious choice. However, that choice was overtaken by events. The South African Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) had approached the University Secretary, Mr Avitus Tebarimbasa, with a request to place a mast there at a negotiated annual fee. The MTN proposal had already been approved by the University Council. Professor Epelu Opio had mounted the transmitter for the university security radio there too. Meanwhile, Uganda Telecommunications Limited (UTL) had also negotiated with the Church of Uganda to use their portion of the hill for its mast. With all the water tanks and all these masts, the hill was overcrowded. Since the radio was basically a training facility and its target audience was first and foremost the Makerere community, we thought that mounting the transmitter on a slightly lower ground would still give the intended coverage a strong and quality signal. So, the choice was to mount the transmitter on top of overhead water tanks behind Lincoln House. Unfortunately, by the time all the installation and signal test work was completed, I was long gone. I missed the occasion when the former American Ambassador to Uganda and a former short-term student of Makerere at the time Idi Amin staged the coup in 1972, Jimmy Kolker, was invited by my successor, Professor Livingstone Luboobi, to inaugurate the radio station. With the radio station out of the way, the department presented us with another request; this time a studio for a closed-circuit television (CCTV). Again, with his usual efficiency, Professor Opio and his sub-committee identified one of those wooden bungalows on Pool Road, which Mrs Olivia Mutibwa had previously vacated, as the home for their training TV studios. Unfortunately, both of us left before the acquisition of the CCTV. If only the late Francis Kidubuka were alive, I am sure he would have been amazed and proud of the rapid progress the small unit Professor William Senteza Kajubi had asked him to start, as a part of the subjects in the Department of Literature in the early 1990s, was making. Dr Goretti Nassanga eventually completed her PhD, the first in Mass Communication at Makerere, and she was soon promoted to Senior Lecturer and confirmed as Head of Department. Kyazze-Simwogerere and Onapito Ekomoloit had completed their Masters degrees in the USA and returned. Kyazze went to New York; Onapito to the American University in Washington DC. Although at one point it looked like The Monitor newspaper had offered Kyazze-Simwogerere a fat job again on his return from the USA, after a stint at his old newspaper he had quit in the early 1990s, and decided to stick to Makerere.

After leaving *The Monitor* due to disagreements with management, Onapito and a few friends, including George W. Lugalambi – the paper's editor – started a rival independent paper of their own – *The Crusader* – which they edited from an office on Kampala Road and at the same time taught at Makerere. The two were some of the first graduates of Mass Communication at Makerere. Onapito's paper was on the news stand for a short time, but occasionally it carried terribly sensational and negative stories about the university. Sometimes, we wondered what the motives of writers were, especially since many of them were also full-time members of staff of the university. The paper vanished from the streets of Kampala as quickly as it had come. In 1996, Onapito was one of the members of staff who contested the parliamentary elections in his home District of Katakwi. Surprisingly, in spite of being a political rookie, he made it to the House and in the process earned himself the highly coveted title of "Honourable". Later, President Museveni spotted his talent as a writer and appointed him his Press Secretary.

Peter Mwesigwa had performed impressively at the American University in Cairo, where he obtained his Masters degree before moving on to the University of Indiana at Bloomington, USA, for the PhD, with partial funding from the University's Staff Development Fund. Monica Chibita too had started on her PhD at Makerere. While there were many older departments in the university that had never benefited from the Fulbright programme at Makerere, in its short existence, the Department of Mass Communication had had the privilege of hosting a Fulbright Fellow from the USA, Dr Jack. S. Smith, a specialist in electronic media.

Most of the young journalists working for the major newspapers and broadcasting houses in Uganda are Makerere Mass Communication graduates. Lillian Barenzi, who used to write a satirical column in *The Sunday Vision*, was a typical example. I have singled her out among the many for a special reason. We had to sort out a problem for her in her final year. Her problem bordered on sexual harassment and victimisation for non-cooperation, allegedly by a member of staff who also wrote critical articles about the university for *The Crusader* newspaper. The incident almost ruined her chances of obtaining her degree. Although nothing was conclusively proven, I was bemused to discover that the member of staff who was implicated in the scam, was also one of those who reported negatively on the university. I guess this was a typical example of self-glorifying individuals, who believed they were the angels of Makerere while the rest, particularly the administrators, were the devils who had to be crucified in the press. But as my good friend, late Dr Sam Mukasa used to say, "there are no angels in hell".

If Makerere was hell as those members of staff had portrayed it in their columns and they were part of it, they were just as rotten as they presented it to be. If they did not know they were, then that must have been the worst form of self-deception. This member of staff was reprimanded and nearly lost his job. That also marked

the end of his critical writing about Makerere. That incident aside, I was pleasantly surprised when Sida of Sweden selected the department to coordinate a regional diploma course in Environmental Journalism and Communication, involving over nine countries in Africa. That was an achievement most certainly Francis Kidubuka would be proud of. I pray that in future when Makerere finally decides to honour some people by naming buildings, roads, departments, and other sites, after them, someone will remember to call the Mass Communication Department, or whatever else the department would have evolved into in the future, The Francis Kidubuka Department of Mass Communication or The Francis Kidubuka School of Journalism, as I had heard from corridor talk. I believe this will be a befitting honour in memory of his contribution for sowing the mustard seed and preserving the department's heritage. The success story of Makerere's Department of Mass Communication prompted many old and new private universities around the country to start similar courses in Mass Communication.

It was equally a source of joy and pride to see progress in other departments in the Faculty of Arts as well. I recall being invited as Guest of Honour to an end-of-year staff party the faculty had organised on the front lawns of the Arts courtyard. Speech after speech, people were paying tribute to me and to the University Administration for facilitating the recovery of the faculty. I could not figure out what I had done to help the faculty turn things around, but I believe that late Dr Kasalina Byangwa Matovu, the linguist, had the right words when she said that I had provided them with the inspiring leadership they badly needed. They also thanked me for being a regular visitor to their faculty. It was true that I had visited the faculty several times before when Professor Ruth Mukama was still Dean. However, after thanking them for the compliments, which I thought I did not deserve, I had to remind them that it was not yet time to pop the champagne. The bottle had to remain on ice for a while, because the job had not yet been done. Their faculty was not yet problem free. There were still serious problems which needed fixing.

One of the nastiest incidents I had to handle as Vice Chancellor involved the dismissal of a Head of Department after the committee we had set up to investigate the alleged malpractices proved them to be true. To say the least, it was not only a despicable act, it was scandalous for a Head of Department to change the grades of a final year student from second class-upper division or 2.1 honours to a pass (or third class as it is called in some universities). I also found it hard to understand how a seasoned academic with a PhD from the University of California at Los Angeles, who had a promising career ahead of him, could decide to award first class honours marks to a mediocre script of a cousin. He changed the marks after the external examiner had looked at the script and had concurred with the internal examiner that indeed the student's answers merited a second class-lower division (or 2.2 honours level). The first malpractice of

downgrading a female student's degree class was driven by a vendetta. The second case involving upgrading the degree class of a relative was a question of blood being thicker than water. This experience, painful as it was, taught me the value of keeping records. We were able to unearth the scandal, because some members of staff and the external examiner had kept a record of the marks of every script they marked. Without that and other pieces of evidence, it would have been extremely difficult to get at the truth for the simple reason that the Head of Department had falsified the official mark sheets and had destroyed the student's answer scripts. Confronted with the evidence, the Head of Department confessed to his misdeeds and pleaded for clemency. The case was a rude reminder of what I had heard so many times before. Over the years, I had heard students complain that members of staff in some departments were in the habit of under-marking their scripts. I used to dismiss it as sheer nonsense – students' self-pity talk. I had convinced myself that no sane and self-respecting member of staff could ever indulge in such diabolical acts. This was the first time I came face-to-face with the stark reality. I then realised that students had a point, but up to a point, most of their complaints were exaggerations. Our further investigations clearly showed that what had happened in the Faculty of Arts was one of those isolated incidents. The student whose degree had been downgraded had her rightful degree reinstated and graduated with a BA, second class-upper division degree. The inflated first class marks were discarded and the old marks reinstated on the new official mark sheets. It was an episode that shook us to the bone.

The Department of Religious Studies at Makerere had over the years been recruiting priests as members of staff from both the Anglican and Catholic churches. In fact, most of these priests were quite learned with doctoral degrees in subjects like Theology, scriptures and so on. However, a few of them had long stopped practising their vocation and qualified to be referred to as ex-priests. Others had rebelled against their Bishops, and worse still some of the Catholic priests had forgotten their celibacy vows, and their Bishops had been forced to defrock them. I was tired of the never-ending squabbles so much so that in one of those rare moments, I was forced to dismiss a Head of Department, a priest who happened to be part of the group that was fuelling disharmony in the department. As a Head of Department, he was supposed to build unity and team spirit; but instead, he was busy dividing staff and stirring up trouble for everyone. Some of the priests even took us to court because we had refused to refund money they had spent when they were studying abroad, when in fact the university had never sanctioned such monies and their study leave. Our lawyers failed to attend court to defend the university. On that technicality, the judge ruled in their favour and we had to pay the damages.

The situation at the Department of Religious Studies stabilised only after we decided to appoint Sister Dr Teresa Tinkansimire as acting Head. She was

still in the junior ranks with little experience in administration and I was not sure she would manage those men; but in the circumstances, she was the best we had. To our amazement, she managed to restore order and sanity. The men stopped worrying. In fact, she succeeded beyond our expectations. Because she was not yet a Senior Lecturer, she could not be appointed substantive Head of Department. So we had to organise an election for a new head and prayed that whoever was elected would build on Sister Tinkansimire's strong foundation. Father Dr S. Kabazi Kisirinnya won the elections and was appointed substantive Head of Department in 2002. Fortunately, he was a man of vision and continued to build the department. The days of squabbling were now behind us. Reverend Katahweire, the second Senior Lecturer in the department, had left for his PhD in the USA, which he completed a few years later. As a result of the unpleasant experience just mentioned, we advised the Appointments Board to mix the priests with lay young men and women, and to ensure a good balance between all three mainstream religions of Uganda. At first it was hard to find many Muslims with the requisite qualifications. Fortunately, Ambassador Badru Kateregga, the Vice Chancellor of Kampala University and an old member of staff of the department had completed his tour of duty as Uganda's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and was now back. He asked me whether he could be of any help to his old department on a part-time basis and after due consultations, I gave him an appointment as a part-time lecturer in Islamic Studies. It was a relief to the few young men there who were shouldering most of the teaching load in Islamic Studies.

Another crisis we had to handle at the Faculty of Arts involved an alleged loss of over US\$800 million, the equivalent of about US\$450,000. Professor Ndolerire, who was Dean at the time, discovered to his dismay that the faculty's accounts were rapidly running into the red and if nothing was immediately done to arrest the situation, the faculty would completely run bankrupt. According to the budget for the year 2002 which the University Council had approved, the faculty was expected to have a surplus, which the Dean intended to set aside for a new building. He was now not sure what was happening to the money. Where was it going and who was taking it? At same time, rumours had started circulating in the faculty and beyond that a few members of staff in the Faculty Administration were engaging in corrupt practices and had to be exposed. In order to find answers to these questions and establish the truth, the faculty set up a committee to investigate what was going amiss, and if indeed there was something seriously wrong with the faculty accounts.

The Committee was chaired by Aloysius Kwitonda, a young man I had earlier appointed to act as Head of the Department of Literature when Ernest Okello Ogwang and Abbasi Kiyimba went on their PhD study leaves. After a week of intense work, the Committee submitted a report, which indicated that indeed Uganda Sh 800 million could not be accounted for. The more damning part of the report was the discovery that some members of staff had claimed double

teaching payments and other allowances. Indeed, to the unprofessed eye, the report made grim reading. The Dean was shocked and worried. It was the first financial malpractice to occur in the university in my time. However, the mistake the Dean had made was to set up a committee of inquiry into financial matters made up of people with no expert knowledge in accounting or auditing. The Dean's committee had no accountant or auditor. In fact, later I asked the Dean why they did not enlist the services of Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar or James Kabatangale, the University Internal Auditor. As we have seen before, at Makerere, nothing is secret. Before the Faculty Finance Committee had had time to discuss the report, someone had leaked it to the press and, typical of Uganda's press, they went ahead and published it almost verbatim, flashing it on the front pages of some of the widely-read dailies. To the editors, it was a rare scoop, which made big headlines. The newspaper story made all of us really nervous. Not only was it an embarrassment to the University, it was worrisome. Makerere University had escaped such scandalous incidents involving financial impropriety for so long, was this going to be the first one? Professor Ndolerire too was baffled. He could not tell who had let the cat out of the bag. I had to remind him when he came to report the matter officially to me and hand me a copy of the report, that his faculty was training journalists. The journalist's primary job was to look for newsworthy stories and events. His Committee of Inquiry report happened to be one of the newsworthy stories and someone there, who had access to it, leaked it to the press. For the newspaper which published it, it was the scoop of the week.

I wanted to double-check the accuracy of Kwitonda's committee findings and how the committee arrived at the conclusion that such a huge sum of money had been misappropriated or taken out of the faculty's bank account without anyone noticing. I needed some hard facts and figures before I could move in to fish out the culprits. After discussing the report Oswald Ndolerire had presented to me with my management team, we decided to send in the Internal Auditor, Mr Kabatangale, and a few of his staff to verify the figures presented in the report. We were not sure whether the audit report would confirm our worst fears or not, but that was secondary. After reading the Kwitonda's report, I had the inkling at the back of mind that the findings were not quite accurate. Even from a non-expert like me, I could detect some contradictory figures, but I did not want my judgement to be biased. It was better to wait for Mr Kabatangale's expert opinion, as he had worked as University Internal Auditor for as long as I could remember and had done more than a commendable job.

In the meantime, the story had become the talk of town, almost at the verge of becoming Makerere's scandal of the year. I could not help worrying about the impact the story would have on our donors. Even the Minister of Education and Sports at the time, Dr Khidu Makubuya, had interest in the story. I remember him coming to the University one afternoon and finding me having a question-and-

answer session with the Dean – Ndolerire – in my office on some aspects of the report. The Minister, who came unannounced, was also looking for details and possibly answers about the unfolding and unprecedented financial scandal. Being an ex-Makererean and the Minister responsible for Makerere University's affairs, he was equally concerned. After all, there had been a myriad of allegations about corruption at Makerere, none of which had ever been proved. Was this the elusive smoking gun journalists and the likes had long been looking for? I was shocked when one of my secretaries – and I do not exactly remember whether it was Mary Seremba or Dorcas Muhiirye – ushered in the Minister without warning me. He found me seated next to Professor Ndolerire, busy going through the report. He seemed happy that he found us handling the problem. We informed him that what we had was a document compiled by amateurs, adding that I had asked the Internal Auditor to cross-check it, and was waiting for confirmation from him. I promised to fill in the Minister with whatever data the Auditor would provide. I was almost certain that ever since the report became public, Professor Ndolerire was having lots of sleepless nights. It was potentially a huge scandal which could ruin his career and all he had achieved since becoming Dean of what was once described as a dying faculty.

Kabatangale was able to unravel what had happened and showed that actually most of the so-called missing money could not be accounted for, because the faculty had done sloppy accounting. However, he also established that members of staff in some departments had indulged in financial malpractices, including double dipping. But the amount involved was far less than the Uganda Sh800 million, which was alleged to have disappeared from the faculty's coffers. After establishing the facts, we had to deal with the members of staff who had made double claims. In his usual way, Ben Byambabazi could not wait to recover the money from their salaries. When I inquired further how members of staff got involved in the scam, they explained that the trick was to use a young member of staff such as a Teaching Assistant or a part-time lecturer to teach one class on their behalf, while they taught another class at the same time. Since Teaching Assistants or a part-time staff could not claim a teaching allowance, their names were not on the timetable to teach. The practice, therefore, was for the lecturers involved in the scam to make the claims in their names, and later share the money with the Teaching Assistant or the part-time member of staff, who actually did the teaching.

It was not so much that they were being paid for no work done, they were just driven by greed. Naturally, without knowing this background, you would assume that they were making double claims. However, there were a few dishonest claims, where some staff claimed and were paid teaching allowances when they had not taught. We reprimanded them and recovered the money they had fraudulently claimed. Oswald Ndolerire and his Associate Dean, Dr Hannington Sengendo, who also feared for the worst, weathered the storm and lived to tell the tale. It was a bitter lesson for all of us.

In his final report, James Kabatangale pointed out that most of what appeared to be money gone missing was genuine expenditure. The problem was that when the faculty drew up the budget, they grossly under-estimated the number of members of staff who had to be paid. The calculations were based on much lower staff numbers than the actual figures on the ground. In addition, during the year, the faculty kept recruiting new staff who had not been budgeted for. In the end, it had overspent the staff emolument part of the budget and had even eaten deep into other budget items. That, according to the Internal Auditor, was the main course of the budget over-run. James Kabatangale had been able to reconcile the figures. However, the Kwitonda's committee findings on the double claims were correct. Unfortunately, that meant that there were no savings for the anticipated new building. Even what had been saved in the past was gone, swallowed by the escalating wage and allowance bill.

When the building project stalled, I became a liar. For a long time, I had been promising the Department of Music, Dance and Drama an appropriate home with a modern stage and orchestra put in place when the building was completed. Now the building was no more and I had no clue when the faculty would be in position again to resurrect the project. In fact, during the several discussions I had with Oswald Ndolerire about the proposal for a new building, we had tentatively agreed to reserve the entire ground floor, equipped with a modern theatre with a sitting capacity of 500-plus for the exclusive use of the Department of Music, Dance and Drama. This would have pleased Dr Justin Tamusuza, the man who had been hard on my heels, constantly reminding me of the sorry state his department was in. Much as it was a relatively small department, he thought it deserved a more befitting home than the two old colonial bungalows that housed it. We had even thought of generating some income for the department and faculty by opening up the theatre to the public, but after the faculty's financial problems, most members of staff were opposed to the idea of saving again for the project. They wanted all the income the faculty was generating to go to their welfare and for hiring more staff to teach the big classes. At the time, the Faculty of Arts was employing the largest number of part-time lecturers and it was paying the majority of them from its own resources. No doubt, this was a big burden on the faculty's finances. We had to shelve the project for the future, when the financial situation improved.

In spite of this incident, all was not totally doom and gloom. The Faculty that had almost been pronounced dead was somehow back on its feet. Professor Ndolerire had taken over the deanship of the faculty from the long-serving Professor Byaruhanga Akiiki, a member of the Department of Religious Studies. Before him, Dr Ruth Mukama had served as Dean for a while until she left for the University of California. In fact, her promotion to full Professor was announced when she was still in the USA. Before being elected Dean in 1995, Dr Ndolerire

had served as Director of the Institute of Languages. He was then a Senior Lecturer. Interestingly, he successfully managed to combine administration with his academic work. In a relatively short time, he had accumulated enough publications for promotion, first to Associate Professor and then to full Professor. A soft spoken man, with no airs about him, he was one of the high achievers of my time. Once again, the Faculty of Arts became attractive to students. As a result, the student population kept rising. Under his leadership, the faculty came up with several new programmes; the evening BA was one of them. Until then, the faculty was not offering evening classes. The evening programme was an instant success. Initially, some members of staff were sceptical whether there would be students willing to pay for the course. Against all odds, the programme attracted many and the old faculty never looked back. The highly competitive BA Mass Communication was also now available in the evenings. Even the name of the degree changed to Bachelor of Mass Communication, shortened as BMass Comm which was more appealing. As we have already noted, besides the BA in Mass Communication which started in the early 1990s, the faculty had not initiated new programmes. Building on its success story, the faculty started introducing new and more exciting programmes. As Uganda's tourism fortunes were being revived, the faculty came up with a proposal to start a three-year Bachelor of Tourism Degree (or BTM for short), which was initially offered as an evening programme in the Department of Geography. It was followed by the Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Management (BAEM), also as an evening programme based in the Department of Geography. A few years later, Senate and the University Council decided that the two degrees would also be offered as day programmes. Originally, the faculty had decided not to duplicate these new programmes, but Government-sponsored students who were the majority of the day scholars, exerted pressure on the University to have them offered as day programmes as well. They convincingly argued that they were missing out on the more lucrative programmes. This presented its own problems. Since the programmes were being offered during the day and in the evenings, some smart day students started missing lectures to engage in whatever they pleased. They would then turn up in the evenings to take lectures with the evening students. The evening lecturers began to complain about excessive overcrowding, which was unusual. This was largely the result of the truant day students. Indeed, human beings are skilful at identifying opportunities and exploiting them to their advantage.

Meanwhile, the two new programmes seemed to have triggered a chain reaction in the entire faculty. It was like the faculty had suddenly re-invented itself and had gone into frenzy for new programmes. Not wishing to be left behind, every department was now introducing new programmes in the hope that they would appeal to students. In the process, conflicts with other Faculties which had reason to believe that the Faculty of Arts was encroaching on their mandates were inevitable. Bachelor of Environmental Management was one such programme. The Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (MUINER)

had contested, arguing that it was its mandate to offer courses on anything to do with the environment. Dr David Matovu and his Council strongly believed in the dictum that innovation should not be killed simply because of mandates. The University Council argued that as long as a department was able to demonstrate it had the capacity to execute a particular programme, it should be allowed to do so. This line of reasoning helped to take the sting out of the mandate debate, but not before a showdown between the Faculty of Commerce and the Faculty of Arts in Senate. While the former, the Faculty of Commerce, was preoccupied with just two-degree programmes – the BCom and the BBA, the Faculty of Arts pulled a fast move on them by proposing to offer a new degree programme in Management. “Over our dead bodies”, was the immediate reaction from the alarmed Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, Waswa Balunywa. The Faculty of Arts had neither the right nor the capacity to offer a course in Management. Management was the preserve of the Faculty of Commerce. In fact, Commerce put up a spirited fight to keep the Faculty of Arts off the Management course. In order to maintain harmony, Senate looked for a compromise. Instead of Management, the Faculty of Arts was advised to re-label its programme. There was also the option for the two Faculties to offer a joint course in Management, but Commerce would not buy into it. It would not go into a joint venture with Arts on something that was squarely its own. Finally, the Faculty of Arts settled for Organisational Studies, offered not as a full blown degree of its own, but as a subject in the BA programme. But that was not the last of the controversies the Faculty would stir up in Senate. If anything, its members appeared to be increasingly immune to controversy. They were least perturbed by the accusations that the Faculty of Arts was stepping on other people’s toes. The next punch would come from Dr James Sengendo, then Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, when the Faculty of Arts submitted a proposal to Senate to mount a degree programme in Development Studies at the Department of History.

Development Studies had a bit of history. When the NRM Government came to power in 1986, it requested Makerere University to start a special programme in Development Studies, more or less along the University of Dar es Salaam model. The Faculty of Social Sciences had been designated as the home for the programme. However, the University had grown cold feet over the idea. Rightly or wrongly at the time, Development Studies along the lines of the University of Dar es Salaam was perceived by many as a Marxist-oriented ideological indoctrination. As a prelude to the launch of the programme, some people had been sent to the University of Dar es Salaam to train and return to Makerere to teach on the programme. The programme did not take off and the idea seemed to have died a natural death. Here was Ndolerire and his madly ambitious faculty reviving a dead programme. He was not only reviving it, he was also taking it to the wrong faculty. For a while, a clash between James Sengendo and Oswald Ndolerire was looming. Fortunately, by the time the proposal had gone through

Senate, the two faculties had somehow reconciled their differences. Much as Social Sciences believed it was the legitimate faculty to host the course, their proposal document had not been even written. In recommending and approving the new programme, both Senate and the University Council argued that, given the multi and inter-disciplinary nature of the Development Studies, any of the two Faculties could offer it and staff from both faculties could teach on it. Since the Faculty of Arts' proposal was ready, it was granted the permission to mount it in the Department of History. The Development Studies degree programme had nothing to do with the so-called indoctrination. However, that was not the end of new programmes from the faculty, more were on the cards.

In Uganda, the secretarial profession, much like Nursing, was traditionally a non-degree course. In the 1970s, Makerere University employed graduate secretaries, but their degrees were not in Secretarial Studies. These graduate secretaries were young graduate women mainly with a BA degree, whom the university had recruited as Administrative Assistants. However, when the need arose to have some high-calibre secretaries in the University Administration, these young women were sent to the then Uganda College of Commerce at Nakawa to be trained as secretaries. Over time, the university phased out this grade of secretaries. Most of the graduate secretaries who were still in the university service took on other roles. I do not recall who in the Faculty of Arts conceived the idea of a degree programme in Secretarial Studies. At the time, ITEK was the only institution in the country which offered a degree course for teachers of Secretarial Studies in the Department of Business Education. The Faculty of Arts wanted to start one if it had its way.

Once again, trouble was on the horizon. The Faculty of Commerce, which had transferred to Nakawa to merge with the National College of Business Studies, a non-degree awarding institution, to form Makerere University Business School was immediately up in arms again. This, as the Business School interpreted it, was another provocative act from the Faculty of Arts which had to be resisted. The Principal of the School was quick to point out that the mandate to train secretaries at all levels lay with the new Business School, and not with any other faculty. The Faculty of Arts had nothing to do with such specialised professional courses and, in any case, the Faculty of Arts did not have the capacity to teach such technical courses at degree level.

Frankly, after the Management programme experience, I was nervous about this new course. I also doubted if the Faculty of Arts had the capacity to teach such a specialised course. When Professor Ndolerire intimated to me that they were writing a proposal document to start a degree in Secretarial Studies, I was uneasy and concerned. Like my friends at Nakawa, I also believed that this time the Faculty of Arts had gone a bit too far. However, Professor Ndolerire and his ambitious colleagues were undeterred. They were ready to demonstrate to all

sceptics that indeed the faculty had the capacity to teach the course. Apparently, they were more determined than ever before to break with tradition. It was time to breathe new life in the faculty and they were not going to do it by sticking to traditional BA degree. They pointed out that something might have been missed in the whole debate. Although the students had to be well grounded in the traditional secretarial skills, such as typing and shorthand, the Secretarial Studies course was about new and non-traditional skills, such as communication and language skills, which a modern secretary must have. After all, with ICT, bosses were now doing most of their typing on their computers; therefore the role of the secretary was changing. The arguments were convincing enough for the new course to go through the approval process without much ado, first as a subject in the BA degree programme and later as full-fledged Bachelor of Secretarial Studies (or BSES) degree programme based in the Institute of Languages. This time the Business School did not have its way.

The Department of Geography under the leadership of Dr Hannington Sengendo, a PhD graduate of the University of Nottingham in the UK, was one of the prime movers in the quest for new and more labour market-oriented programmes. The Department had thought long and hard about its survival and the survival of the Faculty of Arts as a whole. If they failed to inject new ideas into their academic programmes, the road to slow death would be the inevitable eventuality. To the geographers, there was more to Geography than its traditional confines. Geography was a key element in many applied and professional disciplines, so why not exploit those new and emerging Geography-related disciplines. As we have seen, Tourism and Environmental Management were the first to come on board, but there was still another unexploited discipline – Urban Planning. Traditionally, many Makerere Geography graduates ended up as urban planners in such places as Kampala City Council and other town councils, but these geographers did not have the specialised training in urban planning when they were students at the University. The mushrooming urban authorities in the country had clearly demonstrated that there was a demand for professional urban planners. The department wanted to put the ideas to the test by starting a new degree in Urban Planning. Initially, the Bachelor of Urban Planning, which started in the 1997/98 academic year, was offered as an evening private programme, but later it was also offered during the day. With all these new degree and non-degree programmes, the Arts Courts had once again become a hive of intense academic activity.

It was an incredible experience to see a faculty which was at the brink of death bounce back to life in such a short time. That was a clear demonstration of the role good and imaginative leadership plays in institutional development. Professor Oswald Ndolerire had demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that he was such a leader. By the time I left Makerere, the range of new and interesting courses on offer was not only impressive, but also bewildering. For instance, for a

long time people thought the Faculty of Arts had nothing to do with computers. That was about to change. The faculty was not about to lag behind in the new technologies which were sweeping across the world. Using its own resources, the faculty set up an impressive and well-stocked computer laboratory for use by both staff and students. Departments and members of staff also acquired computers of their own. This happened at the time the University was embracing the arrival of the Internet and e-mail services as a means of information sourcing and communication.

Secondly, the Department of Music, Dance and Drama ran only one programme, which was a Diploma in Music, Dance and Drama. A few Literature students also used to study Drama as part of their degree. That was about all the department offered, but change was on the way coming. As we have seen elsewhere in this account, by 2000 the department had been in existence for close to four decades. Many distinguished musicians like Moses Serwadda, one of the founding members of staff who Frank Kalimuzo former Vice Chancellor (now deceased) sent to the University of Ghana at Legon as a staff development fellow to study African Music in the early 1970s, Father Dr Anthony Okello and Mr George Kakoma, the Uganda national anthem composer, late Erivania Zirimu, late Rose Mbowa, as well as renowned traditional musicians like late Sempeke, had taught at the department. Over the years, the department had trained outstanding students who became successful playwrights and actors. Names such as Abbey Mukiibi, now working with the Central Broadcasting Service (CBS, or Radio Buganda as it is popularly known) come to mind. Throughout that period, the department had no degree programme, and yet the demand was there. However, that had to wait until the return of Dr Justinian Tamusuza from Northwestern University in the USA, where he obtained a PhD in Music and his wife, Naloongo Silvia Nannyonga, with a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh in the USA. Although the department had yet to find more decent buildings, this did not stop Dr Tamusuza and his colleagues from thinking big. Time had come to move on to more advanced things beyond the diploma. They quickly came up with three new degree programmes: Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Drama and Bachelor of Dance. The degree programmes would run alongside the old Diploma in Music, Dance and Drama, because there was still demand for it. It seemed the revolution was unstoppable. It was also a source of joy for me to see Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare receive her PhD at Makerere in October 2001 when the University did not have a Chancellor. When Dr Tamusuza stepped down as Head of Department, she took over. When I granted the three of them study leave in the latter part of the 1990s, it did not occur to me that I would still be there to welcome them back with their PhDs. Now the department had three PhD holders on its staff list. While Tamusuza was on study leave in the USA, a young Lecturer, Dan Kisense, acted as Head of Department. Now that Tamusuza was back, it was time for the young Lecturer, who had held the fort to go for

his PhD too, in Australia. If he and Jessica Kaahwa completed their PhDs and returned, there would be five, out of a staff of thirteen, with PhD degrees.

Meanwhile, Dr Tamusuza was busy teaching, initiating new programmes and publishing. Sometimes my colleagues amazed me how they combined their heavy teaching loads and administration with research and publishing good papers. Justin Tamusuza was one of those who managed quite successfully. It did not take him long to go up the academic ladder. Soon after his return from Northwestern, he applied for promotion to Associate Professor and, on the basis of his good publications, he was promoted. With Rose Mbowe, the department was now boasting of two Associate Professors. One of the younger members of staff who made the grade to Senior Lecturer was J. Mangeni.

The Faculty of Arts was now truly on the march forward. Gone are the days when staff in some departments in the faculty far outnumbered students. Now everyone had a full load. The Department of Mass Communication was now offering courses in Public Relations, Print Media, Photo Journalism and Broadcasting as part of the Bachelor of Mass Communication, when originally the emphasis was on Print Media/Journalism. Students could also study Mass Communication as a subject in the BA degree course. Besides the traditional BA in the 3.1.1 and 3.2.2 combinations, the Department of History now had Organisational Studies and the Bachelor of Development Studies. Geography had Geography as a BA course in the traditional 3.1.1 and 3.2.2 combinations, Environmental Management also as both a BA subject and the Bachelor of Environmental Management, Tourism as a subject in the traditional BA course and as Bachelor of Tourism Degree, as well as Bachelor of Urban Planning. The Institute of Languages had English Language Studies, Linguistics, Kiswahili for beginners, advanced Kiswahili, French for beginners, Advanced French, German for beginners and for advanced students, Luganda for both beginners and advanced students, Runyakitara, which was actually a combination of most of the Bantu Languages spoken in Western Uganda (Runyoro, Rutooro, Runyankole and Rukyiga), Luo for beginners and at advanced level. Runyakitara and Luo were two new local languages introduced in the institute during the latter part of my time as Vice Chancellor. In spite of the two languages being widely spoken in Uganda, they had never been taught at Makerere. I remember a little discussion I once had with Jane Alowo, wondering when the institute could ever start teaching Luo and Ateso on one of those occasions I visited the Institute of Languages in my earlier years as Vice Chancellor. Then, she was not sure when they could start, but promised to take it up, which she did, but Ateso had to wait. Written literature, books and teachers was one of the issues. Besides that discussion, I also recall arguing with her about the spelling of the word Luo. Should it be spelt Luo or Lwo? I had never seen the word spelt as Lwo, but she convinced me that Lwo was the correct spelling. Then our discussion drifted to many other of

Uganda's indigenous languages. I was informed that the main reason they were not yet taught was because of difficulty in finding enough written material for many local languages and lack of lecturers capable of teaching most of our local languages at the university level, which I thought was rather unfortunate. Besides the old and new languages, the institute also offered Secretarial Studies in the BA degree programme, a Bachelor of Secretarial Studies, Communications Skills and Social Anthropology, which was also at the centre of controversy between Arts and Social Sciences.

The faculty's list of new postgraduate programmes was even more impressive: Postgraduate Diplomas in Mass Communication, Translation and Interpretation, Meteorology, and Environmental Journalism; Master of Arts in Land Use and Regional Development, Ethics and Public Management offered in the Department of Philosophy, Human Rights also in Philosophy, and Music, Dance and Drama – the first ever graduate programme in the Department of Music Dance and Drama. Other Masters degree programmes were in African Languages, Peace and Conflict Management also in Philosophy. The faculty also had PhD programmes in all departments. I have endeavoured to give a list of new programmes which the Faculty of Arts developed in the ten years I was there as Vice Chancellor, to illustrate an important point which was the centre-piece of our administration: reform, transform and modernise. The Faculty of Arts is one of the best examples of this philosophy. You could call it the piece de resistance of my times. It was also a pleasure to see some of the prominent Ugandans who made the department tick before disaster struck in the 1971, return. Austin Bukenya was one of such people. He returned after several years of self-imposed exile at Kenyatta University in Kenya. One of the most brilliant boys Namilyango College has ever produced, he went on to study Literature and French at the University of Dar es Salaam in the mid-1960s, graduating with first class honours, the first student to achieve it in the two subjects at Dar es Salaam. He returned to Uganda and joined the Department of Literature, but had to flee for his safety during the staff exodus of the 1970s, after the brutal murder of members of staff, including the celebrated Pio Zirimu and Byron Kawadwa, one of Uganda's best playwrights. Professor Peter Tibenderana, who had spent most of his exile days in Nigeria, where he obtained his PhD in History at the University of Ibadan and was teaching at Ahmed Bello University, was another Ugandan who returned home and joined the University's academic staff. Dr James Muliira, who also returned to the Department of History, had spent his exile days teaching at the University of Nairobi. We also welcomed back Dr C. P. Emudong, who was in Swaziland during the years of turmoil. He too joined the Department of History. Dr K. B. Kiingi, the lexicographer, who had also spent years at Kenyatta University and Dr John Kalema, who once headed the Organisation of African Unity Language Bureaux in the 1970s, which was then based in Kampala, also made it home and joined the young Institute of Languages.

By the time I left Makerere, Dr Kalema had taken over from Dr Manuel Muranga as Director of the Institute. Professors Matia Semakula-Kiwanuka, the late Samwiri Karugire, Pheres Mutibwa, Livingstone Walusimbi and Ruganda, once considered the Faculty of Arts giants and icons in the '60s and '70s, were around, but were giving way to a new breed of scholars. Even Victoria Mwaka, who had earned her PhD in the tough times of the '70s under the late famous Professor Langlands – one of the few British nationals who had defied Idi Amin's orders to leave the country in 1972 – the youngest member of staff to have headed the Department of Geography, was long gone. Victoria scored a double first; being the first woman Professor of Geography at Makerere and the first Head of Geography. By the time she took over the headship of the department, she was one of the youngest members of staff in the faculty. However, it was equally sad to lose Dr Kasalina Matovu, who had served as Associate Dean to Professor Ndolerire and who, after going through a lot of difficulties, which included change of supervisors, had obtained her PhD in Linguistics at Makerere in 1994; as well as the soft-spoken Rose Mbowa. These were two of the best women the faculty had at the time. While the faculty mourned some of its best, it was equally gratifying to see several members of staff get their PhDs at Makerere. People like Ephraim Kamuhangire of the History Department in 1996; James Kigongo of Philosophy also in 1996, but who the faculty almost lost due to a serious illness; Edward Wamala also of Philosophy in 1998; Paddy Musana in 2001, and many more. Scholarship was slow, but surely returning to this once renowned faculty.

After Professor Nelson Sewankambo of the Medical School, Professor Oswald Ndolerire was the second Dean in the University to have had two deputies: Dr Hannington Sengendo and Dr Edith Natukunda-Togboa, who replaced the late Kasalina Matovu. When he stepped down in 2003, after eight years as Dean he had reason to feel good about his achievements in spite of the occasional ups and down. As we did not want to lose his immense leadership talent, we had to find a way of putting it to better use. His stepping down as Dean coincided with the opening of the regional African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD), with the support of the three Governments of East Africa and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), next to the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology at Juja, Nairobi. The institute was supposed to open offices in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The branch office in Uganda was based at the Makerere University. We were now searching for a suitable Country Director to run the institute's office at Makerere. Fortunately, we did not have to look very far. Oswald was now relatively free and available. We decided to give him the opportunity to head the AICAD office as Country Director for Uganda. It was not a full-time appointment and the position did not carry a salary. It was more or less an honorary position. In the meantime, the faculty had to elect a new Dean. After a hotly contested election, Dr Hannington Sengendo emerged winner, and became the faculty's new Dean in 2003, with Dr Abbasi Kiyimba

of the Literature Department, who at the time had completed his PhD at the University of Dar es Salaam on Makerere University scholarship, as one of his deputies. The big lesson for me in all this was the reconfirmation of the old adage, which says that “where there is a will, there is always a way”. The Faculty of Arts had clearly demonstrated that with visionary and innovative leadership, determination and perhaps a dose of zeal, it can be done. That is what I call thinking outside the box.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences: The Shrinking Faculty – Oratory and Satire**

The Faculty of Social Sciences was one of the few faculties at Makerere to have had a woman as Dean during my time, when Dr Joy Kwesiga was elected in 1997. It is interesting to note that Dr Kwesiga did not start out as an academic, but as an administrator at the Academic Registrar’s Department, where she had been an Assistant Registrar and was later promoted to Senior Assistant Registrar. She had risen through the ranks, from graduate secretary into administration. Although soft-spoken, she was a woman of determination. After many years in administration, she decided to go back to school, combining her tight work schedule with an equally demanding study programme, at a time when full-time paid study leave was unheard of at Makerere. If you chose to study while on the job, you either forfeited your salary and the university accommodation you occupied or you studied in your free time. It was also rare for staff in administration to aspire for a PhD. To most, a Masters degree was sufficient for your job security. There were also many in administration who never bothered to go beyond their first degrees, because a Masters degree was not a mandatory requirement for a job in the university administration. Whatever inspired Joy Kwesiga to consider studying for a Masters and a PhD afterwards, in my judgement was a wise decision.

After her PhD in Gender and Education at the University of London, she left administration for an academic career, which was full of uncertainties. Progress through the academic ranks is totally dependent on one’s ability to do research and translate the research results into publications in reviewed journals or to present them at high profile academic conferences, where they are published as conference proceedings. Even when the publications are of the right quantity and quality, they still must be subjected to an external vetting process before one can be promoted from one rank to the next. Joy Kwesiga was undeterred by such prospects; she had not joined the University’s academic staff to stagnate. Although she had been a Senior Assistant Registrar before she switched careers, that did not count in her new job. She had to start at the bottom of the ladder all over again as a Lecturer in the Department of Women Studies. To many, that would have been regression, but to her that was immaterial. She quickly rose through the ranks, becoming an Associate Professor by the time I left in 2004. Before she

was elected Dean, she had been the Head of the Department of Women Studies since 1996 when Professor Victoria Mwaka, the founding head left the University for a career in politics. As an incoming Dean, she was taking over from James Sengendo, one of the most successful Deans I worked with.

It seemed that before she decided to make a bid for the office of Dean, she had done her homework carefully. She was determined to make a success on both fronts, as an academic and administrator. She sailed through the elections with no difficulty. But she surprised me when soon after her election as the new Dean, she came to ask for a one-year sabbatical to take up a Fulbright fellowship at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. It was not the sort of request a newly elected Dean would make. I nearly rejected her application. I wondered why she had bothered to stand for the office when she knew she would be going away in less than a year, but she had a good reason to go. Here was an opportunity of a lifetime for her to go and publish more papers while in the USA. I was not about to deny her that opportunity. Being an academic was far more important than being a dean. She was fortunate to have had resourceful and hardworking Dr Charles Rwabukwali as her Deputy Dean. For the year she was in the USA, Charles Rwabukwali shouldered the responsibility of running the Dean's Office and he did it in an exemplary way.

One of the reasons I have devoted all this space to Dr Joyce Kwesiga is because she was among the many people I was privileged to work with who exhibited qualities I rarely found in others. She came across as a courageous and resolute person. I found her a woman of very strong convictions. She believed in the elimination of injustice and discrimination of all sorts which society was meting out to women, many of whom who did not have a voice or the means to hit back. To her, gender took on another dimension. It became a passion and a personal crusade. She believed in her cause and expressed her convictions with candour. You either liked what she stood for or hated her for it. I have no doubt that it was through the efforts of people like her that some of us began to take gender seriously. Although not all was put in practice before I left, it made Makerere University one of the most gender-sensitive institutions of higher learning in Africa. In fact, when we created a Gender Mainstreaming Division in the Office of the Academic Registrar, headed by a Deputy Registrar, she gave up the deanship of the Faculty of Social Sciences and settled for a position lower in rank. Actually, she made another piece of history for herself by becoming the first head of this new Division in the Academic Registrar's office.

When Professor George Kirya was Vice Chancellor, the idea of establishing a Department of Women Studies at Makerere, which a few years later changed to the Women and Gender Studies, was first discussed during the Donors Conference of 1987. Although Professor Kirya did not stay long enough to see this unique department start, his successor, Professor William Senteza Kajubi, did everything

possible to get it off the ground. The challenge to start the Department of Women Studies was thrown to Victoria Mwaka. I am sure many people at Makerere at the time did not quite know what Women Studies was all about. However, Professor Mwaka and a handful of other members of staff drew on their vast experience and managed to draw up a syllabus for a Master of Arts in Women Studies, the first of its kind in East Africa, and launched it in the 1991/92 academic year. At the time, when this young department did not even have a proper building, it opened its doors to its first batch of students. The difficult beginning did not dampen Victoria Mwaka's determination to get the department started. It was a success story which I am sure went beyond even her own expectations. The Swedish Research Agency (SAREC), which later merged with Sida to become Sida/SAREC, was one of the department's first donors. SAREC made generous grants to the department in its earlier years, which made it possible for the MA in Women Studies programme to get off to a good start. The African American Institute had also shown a lot of interest in the department, but the expected support never materialised. Sadly, in 1995 the department lost its founding head, Professor Victoria Mwaka, when she was appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly. By then Dr Joy Kwesiga had joined the department as a lecturer and was the most experienced among all members of staff the department had at the time. So, when Professor Mwaka left, we asked Dr Joyce Kwesiga to take over as head, initially in an acting capacity. Later the Appointments Board confirmed her as substantive head for a three-year term. The change-over from Victoria Mwaka to Joy Kwesiga was controversial. Professor Mwaka was expected to return to the university after the Constituent Assembly's work was completed, so there were some staff members who thought we had hastily replaced her. However, Professor Mwaka didn't come back; instead, she decided to try her luck in politics. She was one of the members of staff of the university who contested in the general election of 1996, and was elected Member of Parliament. That ended what perhaps would have been a nasty leadership wrangle in the department.

Professor Mwaka left when the department was still struggling for space. Due to the lack of resources for a new building, the university administration decided to give the young department an old tin-roofed bungalow on Pool Road, which had been the residence of the former Deputy University Secretary in charge of the Project Implementation Unit, Sam Byanagwa. It was a small house which could not adequately accommodate the expanding teaching staff and increasing student numbers, but that was all there was at the time. Interestingly, just about the same time the department recruited its first male member of staff, Mr Henry Manyire. Dr Deborah Kasente, the former Warden of Mary Stuart Hall, who had now obtained a PhD from Kenyatta University, Dr Consolata Kabonesa, who once worked at the United States Information Service in Kampala and May Sengendo, who had an MA from the University of Nottingham, and formerly a teacher at the Makerere College School, had also joined the department as lecturers. Soon

after, Dr Grace Kyomuhendo Bantebya, who had returned after obtaining an MPhil from the University of Cambridge and a PhD from the University of Hull also joined the department's teaching staff.

Besides the donors, the young department also started attracting foreign scholars quite early. Dr Margaret Snyder, a Fulbright scholar from the USA was one of them. Without a doubt, her two or so years at Makerere University were productive years for her and for the department. Her presence boosted the image of the department. She was also a prolific writer and published an interesting book on the role of women in development from her research. She returned to the USA when her Fulbright fellowship ended, but she came back in July 2002 to help the department organise the International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women – the Women's World 2002. Besides Dr Snyder, I was pleasantly surprised to hear of another American scholar who was interested in spending some time in the new department. What amazed me even more was the fact that, in her application, she had said that she was sponsoring herself. She just wanted the University to provide her with accommodation. However, being the first time to receive an application from a self-sponsored scholar, I had doubts initially whether she could afford it. It was by any stretch of imagination an expensive undertaking. Apparently, she was serious and determined to come to Makerere and the department was interested in her too.

Professor Justin Epelu Opio was able to identify suitable accommodation for her in the EEC flats opposite the School of Education. At about the same time, two other scholars – Drs Bishop and Rosemary McNair, both Canadians – also joined the young department. The Commonwealth Secretariat provided the funding that made it possible for them to come to Makerere. During the rapid leadership changes which the department went through after the departure of Dr Victoria Mwaka, Dr Rosemary McNair ended up temporarily acting as Head of Department before Joy Kwesiga took over.

As we shall see later, in late 1998, we began negotiating with the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) for the largest grant Makerere University had ever received from the Kingdom of Norway. The grant was being negotiated to finance a four-year Institutional Development Programme (IDP). It was not surprising that after years of neglect, the list of the university's needs was long. Among the many priorities we presented to NORAD was a new building for the Department of Women Studies. However, when all priorities were costed, the bill came to a staggering NOK 220 million, equivalent to US\$30 million. We knew that NORAD would not approve such a huge grant for a single institution. So on the advice of our consultant, we scaled down the list of priorities to what we thought was a realistic figure that the NORAD Board was likely to approve. We had to cut out many genuinely worthy projects. Much as gender was uppermost on the university's priority list, we did not believe that NORAD would consider

providing funds for a building for the Department of Women Studies. In fact, we were seriously considering eliminating it from the final project proposal document which we were due to submit to NORAD, but Dr McNair, who was then acting as Head of Department insisted that their project remained on the final list of proposals going to NORAD. I remember her warning us in one of the Task Force meetings that we risked having the entire proposal rejected by the NORAD Board if we went ahead with our plan to strike their project off the final list. I thought she was attempting to blackmail us, but apparently she knew the Norwegians better than anyone of us. She seemed to have some inside information about NORAD's stand on gender and women issues and, as we were to discover later, in Scandinavia, gender matters. We chose to go along with her suggestion and left the building in the grant proposal document. She was right: NORAD did not hesitate to approve the building project.

The proposal for a building for the Department of Women Studies was not entirely a new idea. Since 1991, my predecessors had been thinking seriously of constructing a befitting building for the department, but funds were the major handicap. As part of the fundraising drive, the department commissioned TECO to prepare preliminary drawings and bills of quantities. That was where it ended. When it became clear that the former First Lady of the USA, Mrs Hilary Rodham Clinton, would visit Makerere University in March 1998, the opportunity was not lost on the department. Shortly before her visit, Dr Joy Kwesiga and a few of her colleagues came to my office with an architectural model of their proposed building. They had come to ask me to present it to Mrs Clinton, requesting her to help them raise funds for their building. Much as their request made sense, I really had difficulty presenting it. How could I present the model to Mrs Clinton without the permission of her security personnel? After satisfying her security personnel that the model was harmless and, therefore, posed no security risk, I presented it to her during a meeting I had with her in my office. Although the idea impressed her, she made no commitments.

Naturally, we were disappointed and I almost lost hope of ever being able to find money for the Women Studies Department until opportunity struck again with NORAD. Although my Norwegian friends had promised to provide funds for a building, the grant finally allocated to the Department of Women Studies was only enough for a two-storey building. According to the new University Council regulations, any new building within the Ring Road had to have a minimum of three storeys. The choice was either to forget about the building project and ask NORAD to allocate the money to other projects – an idea I thought could have hardly pleased the staff who had worked so hard to put the NORAD proposal together – or raise funds from other sources and put up a building with at least three floors to satisfy the University Council regulation. We also knew that the department was in the midst of preparations for hosting a huge international

conference, which was due in a year or two. Certainly, this made the need for a new and more befitting building for the department that much more urgent. The colonial bungalow on Pool Road was too old and getting dilapidated, there was therefore no way the building project could be stopped. We also took into account the effect it would have had on staff morale. The question was how to raise the extra money for the third floor.

Our weekly management meetings had become problem-solving sessions. Funding the third floor of the Women Studies Department's building was one of them. After some number crunching with the architects and an in-depth analysis of the university's finances, we were convinced we could afford to pay for the extra floor from the internally generated income. The building could now go ahead as originally designed. Next was to sell our idea to the University Council through its Estates and Works Committee. Without hesitation, the council agreed to match up additional money for the third floor. It was the first time for the University Council to use its resources to co-finance a project with a donor. Although co-financing the project with NORAD was an excellent idea and a novelty at the time, it was not without its problems. Through an oversight or over-zealousness, we had overlooked some critical factors in our calculations, namely, the cash flow from the internally generated revenue. As the work progressed, it became increasingly clear that the University Bursar would not be able to raise the money in time to meet the council's contribution to the project. The revenue from fees and other sources trickled in, with it the competing demands, stretching the university's capacity to meet its financial obligations. Sadly, and at the risk of embarrassing the University Council and NORAD, we could not raise the money promptly to pay the contractor undertaking the job. In all fairness, the contractor had completed the job on schedule, slightly under a year. The site was handed over to him in April 2001 and by March 2002, he was ready to hand over the new building. At this stage, we could only pay the NORAD contribution.

Fortunately for us, the contractor was considerate. He waited patiently for his overdue payment. Although the Bursar eventually raised all the money and paid off the contractor, the episode embarrassed the University Council and made us rethink the whole idea of co-financing donor-funded projects. To avoid such embarrassing situations in future, the University Council decided to cancel the policy on co-financing. The setback notwithstanding, we had finally provided the Department of Women Studies with an ultra-modern three-storey building on the site where the old bungalow once stood – 1740 square metres, at a cost of UgSh 1.1 billion, equivalent to US\$600,000 at the time. The department could now boast of a befitting home on Pool Road, alongside the newer buildings belonging to the Economic Policy Research Centre and the Institute of Economics. Rosemary McNair's insistence on keeping the project in the IDP proposal and her perseverance had paid off.

Conferences, seminars and workshops are a familiar feature of the academia. Universities expect members of their academic staff to regularly attend conferences and seminars to present their scholarly and research work to their peers. It is one of the ways for academics to earn international recognition. Ever since academic sanity returned to Makerere in the mid-1980s, members of staff have been constantly attending conferences all over the world. In fact, when the University Council enacted the Staff Development Policy in 1998, attendance at conferences was given due prominence and a vote set aside within the Staff Development Fund for this purpose. In 2000, when Dr Grace Kyomuhendo Bantebya attended the Seventh International Women's Interdisciplinary Congress at the University of Tromsø, Norway, many participants at the Congress had heard and read about Uganda's efforts at achieving gender equity, and the success stories so far registered, including the Department of Women Studies at Makerere, one of the few such institutions in Africa. No doubt, Dr Bantebya lucidly expounded on these interesting developments during her presentation, and the audience liked what they heard.

At the end of the congress, the delegates had to choose a venue for the eighth congress, which was to be held in 2002. Without any dissenting voices, the delegates unanimously chose Makerere University. Caught unawares, Dr Bantebya had no choice but to accept the decision. It would be the first time that Africa had hosted this Congress. However, as she later confessed, she soon realised that she had committed the university to a challenge of huge proportions, moreover without first discussing it with her Vice Chancellor. The congress was usually a mammoth gathering, but it was now too late to turn it down. As far as the delegates were concerned, they expected to be in Kampala in 2002. She had to trust in Makerere's old hallmark, its ability to rise up to challenges and to perform little miracles. In July 2002, Makerere and Kampala would be bustling with fervent activities as the university played host to one of the largest international gatherings in its history and which would put our ability at organising events to the test.

Given the state of the university's infrastructure at the time, I could not help wondering whether we had the capacity to host an international conference of this magnitude. The university risked being disgraced in the eyes of the international community if the organisation of the event failed to meet the delegates' expectations. What would happen if we botched up the whole thing? Would some heads roll? These were questions to which I had no immediate answers. I knew for certain that, the event would stretch all available university facilities to the limit. But, for better or for worse, Dr Bantebya's decision to accept hosting the Congress at Makerere had sealed our fate. But instead of looking at it as an inconvenience, I began to sense the tremendous benefits and opportunities that would accrue to the university if the congress succeeded. The challenge was to get the organisational logistics right. Fortunately, over the years of its turbulent

existence, Makerere had become accustomed to tackling all sorts of challenges and had built a solid record in innovative problem solving. This was just another one of those challenges. All we had to do was sit down and get on with the necessary planning to ensure the congress succeeded. Grace Bantebya was expecting close to 2,000 delegates to attend the congress. I reasoned that to be able to pull it off, the planning had to be meticulous, with nothing left to chance. After that, we would be ready to entrust the things we considered to be beyond the realm of our human capability to the higher powers. One thing was certain though; this time around, the stakes were really high with the institutional and national reputation, as well as names on the block. Success was a must.

Two years seemed to be a long way off but, in reality, it was quite short. Several things had to be taken care of. Dr Bantebya and her colleagues in the department were a very competent and dependable team. They knew what to do and, by the middle of 2001, much of the planning had been done and the budget drawn up. Information about the congress was posted on the university's website and on the other websites, and keynote speakers and paper presenters were identified. The various congress sub-themes had also been identified and carefully thought through. The most important activity that would eventually require my active involvement was fundraising for the congress. Fortunately, NORAD, Sida, the Dutch Government and other funding agencies responded very positively when we approached them with funding requests. From NORAD, the contribution to the congress was additional to the institutional development grant it had earlier extended to the university. However, in spite of the generous contributions from the various international funding agencies, we still had a big deficit which we had to find means to make up for. Furthermore, we had not yet formally informed the Government about this upcoming international event at Makerere. All this time, we had been informally communicating with the Government officials, in particular the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Welfare. It was now high time we made it official. Uganda had earned itself a reputation as a gender-sensitive country and the congress we were about to host was at the heart of it all; so, it was time for the Government of Uganda to get involved and we had reason to believe that the response would be positive and able to make up for the budget shortfall. The strategy was to inform the President, the Vice President and the Minister of Gender, Labour Social Welfare. Through them, all relevant government departments would be brought on board. The usual bureaucratic difficulties and red tape in government departments aside, the strategy worked well. The Vice President, Dr Specioza Wandera Kazibwe, a champion of the gender cause in her own right, agreed to meet us for a briefing on the congress. True to her word, she met us in the Parliamentary Building. Because of the productive discussions we had with the Vice President and other officials, the Government declared the congress a national event. This meant that the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the security organs and other

government officials would work closely with the university to organise and host a successful congress. It also meant that the Government was obliged to commit some funds to the congress budget. The Minister responsible for Gender, Ms Zoe Bakoko Bakuru, was the main Government link with the university and chaired most of the subsequent meetings with the key Government officials. In fact, the Government's quick and positive response and the financial commitment to the congress budget went beyond our wildest dreams. We had gone expecting a lukewarm reception at best. I was happy to have led the Makerere team at most of the discussion sessions at Simbamanyo House, which was the head office of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Welfare. Dr Bantebya and her hardworking colleagues took care of the rest.

Although the Government's response was good news, it placed a heavy responsibility on us to ensure that it did not default on its pledges. Governments, by their very nature, are difficult institutions to work with. Usually the excessively long red tape renders follow-up action on decisions laborious and frustrating, but thanks to Dr Bantebya's relentless efforts and hard work, we managed to achieve as much as we could out of the pledges Government had promised. Most importantly, the President of Uganda agreed and confirmed in writing that he would officially open the congress on Sunday, July 22 2002. The First Lady too accepted our invitation to deliver a keynote address at one of the sessions. This was an incredible feat, but it was not yet time to pour the champagne on to the ice. A lot more had to be done to get the university ready for the event in time. As the pressure mounted, the clock seemed to be ticking much faster. To compound our problems, at the time the university did not have a Governing Council, therefore, no Tender Board or Estates and Works Committee to approve civil works and contracts, yet in everyone's opinion, the University badly needed a face-lift. We had to resort to the time honoured practice that had served us well in the past. Whenever the University Council's term expired, management assumed responsibility for all council decisions and actions, with the new council ratifying the decisions subsequently. However, this time the congress was stretching our powers to make decisions on behalf of a non-existent council to the very limit. We had approved not only major purchases and civil works, but also very large financial expenditures. Fortunately, the university's well-established systems and procedures, coupled with our administrative experience, came in handy. We tasked the acting University Secretary, Sam Byanagwa and the University Bursar, Ben Byambabazi to source for funding to finance the urgent renovations and also top up Dr Bantebya's budget which still had a deficit. It was not an easy task but they managed to find a reasonable amount of money to pay for most of the renovation work. With a limited budget and time constraint, the challenge was to select, in the shortest time possible, buildings and other facilities that needed a face lift. As usual, we turned to TECO to identify them and give us estimates of how much it would cost. Next was to quickly tender and commission the works.

Well before the opening ceremony, the contractors had completed renovating most of the buildings and facilities, which were needed for the congress. It took the contractors less than six months to complete the work. Now, the university was looking like it was ready to host a big international conference.

To our relief and jubilation, the congress went like clockwork. The long hours of hard work, the many helping hands, including the University Administration, staff, Government officials, students and volunteers from abroad; the meticulous planning and close attention to detail without leaving anything to chance, had all paid handsome dividends for the university. We were able to accommodate and feed most of the delegates in our halls of residence. In short, it was a good lesson in event organisation and management. However, no event is without glitches. Just as we thought everything was going on as planned, a last minute hitch unexpectedly cropped up, which almost threw all the meticulous work that had gone before into disarray. I am sure very few people knew the hell and the agonising moments Grace Bantebya and I had to go through the night before the opening ceremony on Sunday July 22, 2002. Thank goodness, I had prepared my speech well in advance. After taking care of every possible detail and logistics, with over 2,000 confirmed delegates, representing over ninety countries around the globe, the stage was now set for what we believed would be a busy week. After giving due consideration to all available conference facilities in Kampala, including the International Conference Centre, Dr Bantebya advised that it would be a fitting honour to the university and her department to hold the opening ceremony in the Freedom Square. Besides the honour that would come with it, there were two other compelling reasons to hold it at the university. First it would legitimise the fact that hosting the congress in Uganda was primarily a Makerere affair. Secondly, after exploring other available facilities in Kampala, we had found none which had the capacity to sit over two thousand people in a single hall. However, holding it in the Freedom Square was tricky and necessitated consulting with some Government officials. Security for the President and delegates was paramount among our concerns. Honourable Eriya Kategaya was then Minister of Internal Affairs, so I decided to pay him a visit to find out his opinion about holding the ceremony in the Freedom Square. He agreed that in the circumstances, the Freedom Square was best alternative. He advised us not to worry about security matters, and that he had enough personnel and necessary logistics to ensure a security-tight ceremony.

Armed with Minister Kategaya's assurance, we went ahead to prepare the square for the grand occasion. The problem was the state of the tarpaulins used for the graduation ceremonies. They were certainly an improvement on the papyrus mats that used to adorn the graduation marquee in the past, but for an international event of this magnitude, especially with the university in the spotlight of the international press, we had to look for something far better,

something of a more suitable quality, even if it meant committing additional funds. Dr Bantebya accepted to do the scouting for one. She happened to know of a company in town, Zipa Models of Sylvia Awori, which stocked a mega white tarpaulin tent. It could sit more than two thousand guests and it was available for hire. When contacted, the Zipa Models management assured us that the tent would be available. To secure its availability when we needed it, Dr Bantebya decided to pay the full hire fee in advance. She was not about to take chances.

A few weeks to the congress opening, Kampala was rife with talk of the wedding of the President's second daughter. The couple had decided to entertain their guests to a reception at Munyonyo Resort owned by Kampala's property mogul, Rupereria Shudir. The resort proprietor was also looking for the same kind of tent for the occasion. As it turned out, he did not have one of his own, so he was shopping around for one too. Zipa Models was the only place in town which had the kind of tent Shudir was looking for and Makerere University had already booked it. Since the President's daughter's wedding was almost coinciding with the congress, just a day before the opening ceremony, the company was reluctant to give it to Sudhir. Knowing that it takes almost three days to hoist the monstrous tent, it would be a risk to take it to Munyonyo a day before the event at Makerere. However, this was no ordinary wedding, it was the President's daughter, and there was no way Zipa Models could refuse to give the tent to Sudhir simply because Makerere University had booked and paid for it in advance. All the company could do was to assure Dr Bantebya that the wedding reception at Munyonyo would be a short affair and that as soon as it ended, they would quickly pull the tent down, load it on the truck and bring it straight to Makerere. Then they would mobilise all the labour needed and do the hoisting throughout the night and by daybreak on Sunday, the job would be done. They confidently assured us that we had no reason to be overly worried about it. We took their word at face value.

As it turned out, the promises they were making was just typical salesman's language. There would be no tent coming to Makerere on Saturday night. The wedding at Munyonyo was virtually an all night-long affair. We waited for the tent all night long in vain. As the old adage goes, it is always easier said than done. Promising to have the tent quickly delivered on site after the wedding at Munyonyo was one thing the company could easily do, but having it pitched on schedule in less than ten hours was another ball game altogether. When we were still in contact with them, we had reminded them that the President would also be presiding over the event at Makerere on Sunday afternoon. So they had no choice but to deliver on their promise. Dr Banebya spent a fortune on the phone bills that night. She kept calling the company from the University Guest House where she spent the night. The company manager kept assuring her that the team with the tent was on the way to Makerere until at some point, I guess

close to midnight, they admitted that they were sorry; they had grossly underestimated the time the wedding reception would end. Now they had no idea when it would end. The news as it was being relayed to me, sent a chill down my spine, but we were determined not to let them off the hook that easily. They had signed a contract with us and if they failed to fulfil their part, then we would initiate legal action against the company. They would have to refund all the money we had paid them with interest and the cost of the suit. We kept calling until the company's staff we had been talking to ran out of excuses and switched off his phones to avoid more calls from us, but not before they had made another assurance that no matter what, they would get the tent to Makerere in time for the opening ceremony. This time, they sounded less confident and convincing. For us, the thought that our two years' hard and meticulous work and planning could be ruined at the last minute, was simply too ghastly to contemplate.

I am one of those who believe that when you organise an event, it is always a good idea to have a Plan B. The long experience in administration had taught me a lesson or two. Regardless of how meticulous the planning and how comprehensive the checklist, something could go wrong at any time. One of the alternative plans we immediately thought of was to ask the University Engineer at no notice to construct a shade using the university's tarpaulins. I do not know how James Sempa, the acting University Engineer at the time could have done it in less than four hours, moreover on a Sunday. That option was not feasible. A better option was to contact another company we had talked to before, to provide several smaller tents which could be clustered together. Although it seemed to be a long shot, the idea made sense and we settled for that. It would be the first thing we would work on in the morning. I then advised Dr Bantebya to have some sleep. She had a lot ahead of her, and badly needed some sleep. I tried to catch up on some sleep myself, but in vain. A myriad of funny thoughts kept racing through my head all night long. I could not help wondering what would happen if the small tents we were banking our hopes on were actually not available, then what? Stand in front of that big gathering and apologise for the mess, which was beyond the university's control. The very thought of seeing all those conference delegates from all over of the world sitting in the open and baked by the African afternoon blazing sun really terrified me. I did not know what to think anymore. What impression would the world go away with from Makerere, once described as the Harvard of Africa? What kind of legacy would I leave behind when I finally retire? Suddenly so much seemed to hinge on this single event – the congress.

Africans have strong faith in God and the supernatural. They believe that every passing day, God performs miracles. How else do you explain how so many Africans manage to live and survive on a continent full of human misery and suffering? It must be by the grace of the almighty God and the many African gods that they worship. Back to our unfolding nightmare about the tent, I thought

that it was time to pray for a miracle. Incredibly, the miracle happened. At about eight o'clock in the morning, just as we were getting ourselves to collect the small tents, a truck suddenly appeared at the Freedom Square, loaded with the long-awaited tent. There was hardly time to ask questions. The most important thing was to get the tent up before two o'clock. The task was a daunting one, but true to their word, Zipa Models mobilised the labour in a relatively short time. I wondered whether the company made profit on this deal! The tent would be ready before two o'clock in the afternoon. Although the security personnel were not amused to see so many people, descending on the Freedom Square, which they had been busy combing and sterilising for days, we had no choice but to let them in and get the job done. This was a race against time. By about one o'clock, the huge tent was up and nearly all furniture in. The work on the stage was progressing well too, but we thought it would not be ready before two o'clock, but that was of no serious consequence now. We were now certain that the grand opening ceremony could start at exactly two o'clock, and indeed it did. Grace Bantebya and her team could not hide their joy and relief. We had been through some harrowing moments which were now behind us. I thanked the good Lord for not forsaking us when we needed help most and for giving us fine weather. It was now time to usher in the guests and swing into action. By all accounts, it was a mammoth gathering.

We were aware that the President would come late, so we decided to start with the opening speeches with some entertainment in between. While we waited for the President; Rachael Magoola, formerly of the Afrigo Band, who was one of Uganda's top female artists then, entertained the delegates with a group of young children. The President arrived when Professor Amina Mama, Director of the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town was delivering her keynote speech. We had to interrupt her to allow the President deliver his opening address and formally open the congress. We were so grateful the President made it in spite of having had a busy Saturday at his daughter's wedding. His presence reinforced Uganda's commitment to the promotion of gender equity. The Director General of NORAD, Dr Tove Strand, was one of the notable keynote speakers at the opening ceremony. The ceremony was so colourful that, as far as I was concerned, it was the appropriate climax to months of hard work and meticulous planning. Dr Bantebya's list of participants was quite impressive too. They came from 94 countries, including the State of Palestine. Uganda's Vice President, Dr Specioza Kazibwe, was there too together with several prominent Ugandans, my wife – Alice –also attended the opening ceremony. As protocol dictates in Uganda, the President spoke last and at the end of his address, he declared the 8th International Congress open amidst thunderous cheers. By all accounts, the opening ceremony had been a real extravaganza. We were now looking forward to an equally trouble-free week of interesting deliberations. Later that evening, I hosted Lady Silvia Nagginda, the Queen (Nabagereka) of Buganda and other

international guests to a music gala, staged by the Department of Music, Dance and Drama outside the Main Building. I was grateful to Professor Opio Epelu who advised that, for the external decorative work on the buildings, we use a more durable and moss-resistant weather guard paint. I felt so proud to see the old Main Building glittering so beautifully under a coat of new paint. I had never seen it so beautiful.

Everything worked as planned. Meals were served on time, the conference venues were constantly kept meticulously clean and in proper order, session after session. It was as though some unusual African magic was at work. Although over the successive years, Vice Chancellors had tried hard to make the university more public-friendly, to many Makerere was still that old ivory tower, and only a few dared to come and conduct business there. This congress therefore provided a rare opportunity for the Ugandan business community to hit the jackpot. In fact, we had expected the Zipa Models Company to pull the tent down immediately after the opening ceremony, but to our pleasant surprise, they allowed us to use it for the duration of the congress. This, in my opinion, was Sylvia Awori's contribution to the congress as a woman who also believed in gender equity. Besides serving as an exhibition centre, the big tent soon became a hive of brisk business. Congress participants sought after curios of all sorts and other Ugandan goods that caught their fancy. I was told later that the taxi drivers made a kill too. They were charging the unsuspecting congress participants venturing out into town as much as ten dollars for a journey that ordinarily costs the equivalent of about three dollars. These were spill-overs of good fortune as the business community was enjoying from Makerere for the one-week duration of the congress. They were making the most out of the unprecedented opportunity while it lasted. After four fruitful days, the congress came to an end on July 27, 2002. Dr Specioza Wandera Kazibwe, the Vice President of Uganda, was at hand to close it and bid the participants farewell on behalf of the Uganda Government and Makerere University. I felt that throughout the congress, Makerere had been at its best. Grace Bantebya's gamble of more than two years earlier had paid off. We were deeply indebted to everyone who, individually and collectively, worked so hard to make the congress such a huge success. Makerere University had earned its well-deserved accolades under my stewardship. Now I could look forward to my peaceful retirement.

The Department of Women Studies served as the Congress Secretariat, besides the conference halls in the Senate building, we had another modern conference centre in the department's new building and we were soon using it. When the USA Secretary of Treasury, Paul O'Neil visited the university in 2002, the Department of Women and Gender Studies building was the obvious choice for his public lecture. The library in the new building was also impressive. Above all, staff no longer worked in cramped conditions in the old colonial bungalow. Their new offices were spacious and the envy of many university staff. This building, like the others

built or renovated in our time, stands testimony to our restless drive to modernise Makerere University. Besides boasting of modern lecture rooms and conference rooms, the new building would soon bring more benefits to the department. For example, whereas the teaching of Computer Science was the preserve of the Institute of Computer Science, the US-based Cisco Systems Corporation identified Women and Gender Studies as one of the departments at Makerere to teach its certified Computer Networking course. The announcement was made when the Cisco management team visited the university. As expected, the choice immediately raised eyebrows. The Director of the Institute of Computer Science was quick to question the wisdom of the Cisco decision to host a computer course there. He wondered whether a department with no known record of accomplishment in teaching such highly technical courses had the capacity to teach the Cisco networking course. The Director of the Institute of Computer Science's criticism notwithstanding, the department was soon conducting the course alongside the one offered at the Institute of Computer Science.

Besides the exciting developments in the Department of Women and Gender Studies, the Faculty of Sciences registered other successes. Like the Faculty of Law, under the leadership of Dr James Sengendo, the Faculty of Social Sciences pioneered a phenomenon that would become one of the hallmarks and perhaps legacies of my vice chancellorship. The faculty used its internally-generated income to construct new buildings and renovate old ones. In fact, we stumbled upon the idea almost by accident. In the early 1990s, the Ministry responsible for Labour, Gender and Social Welfare proposed that the courses in Community Based Rehabilitation hitherto offered by the University of London be transferred to Makerere University. The training would be cheaper and the examples used in the teaching would be home-based. The Department of Social Work and Social Administration was selected to host the new programme. At the same time, the Norwegian Association for the Disabled (NAD), which was supporting a community-based rehabilitation programme in Uganda, had made available to the department funds amounting to some US \$70,000 to construct a new building to house the programme. The NAD grant was just enough for a small building. However, pressure on the limited land on the Kendel Plateau (named after the British expert, who drew up a physical master plan for Greater Kampala in the 1960s) had become intense, forcing the University Council to enact a policy which required all future buildings within this area of the campus to be not less than three storeys. Therefore, the idea of a single-storey building existing behind the Faculty of Social Sciences was out of the question.

In spite of our insistence on a three-storey building, the Norwegian Association for the Disabled (NAD) was not able to increase the grant. There was even a more urgent side to the proposed building. If we failed to resolve the disagreement quickly, the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme would be

in jeopardy. Sensing that Uganda could lose the opportunity to host the CBR programme (at the time it was considered a new programme), the Permanent Secretary, Mrs Tekla Kinaalwa, her Commissioner for Community Development and Rehabilitation, Mr James Baira and other officials of the Ministry decided to step in to save the situation. Philip Wabulya of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, who had worked hard on the programme with, among others, Mr Jackson Mirembe of the same Ministry, who had taken a Masters degree in the same field in London, could not hide his disappointment. With no agreement in sight, Dr James Sengendo was taking all the fire from the Government and NAD, but I kept reassuring him that I would take full responsibility of any eventuality. To complicate matters further, NAD wanted a more flexible programme, which would include certificate courses open to Ordinary Level school certificate holders. Again, we had to say no because the university was in the process of phasing out all certificate courses. This was another bone of contention.

The NAD representative, a young Norwegian man, perhaps in his early 30s tried hard to convince us to accept the proposal for a single-storey building. Given the mounting pressure for space, we were reluctant to have another small building in this prime area of the university. On the other hand, there were some, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare staff, who thought we were unnecessarily too rigid and had started expressing concern that Makerere stood to lose the NAD donation and with the CBR programme because of intransigence over what they saw as a simple matter. The question was, why were we taking a rigid stance when the building was a donation and the CBR programme was of national importance? Again, why reject a donation and risk jeopardizing Government's plans to have the programme transferred from London to Uganda? Were we not mindful of the fact that by being seen to be too bureaucratic and intransigent, we were scaring away donors to the university? In fact, I began to wonder whether we had not gone too far! Moreover, a professor from the University of London, Dr Sally Harty, had come down to discuss with us the modalities for transferring the programme from London to Makerere and we had agreed on the transfer terms. She had also taken part in some of our discussions with NAD and Uganda Government officials on the proposed CBR building. In spite of these fears and concerns, I was convinced that we were doing the right thing. If we gave in, we would have had no moral justification to deny others the permission to put up similar buildings in this area. So, after making our position clear that we would not accept anything short of a three-storey building, the discussions with the Norwegian Association for the Disabled (NAD) ended in a stalemate.

In an attempt to break the deadlock and keep the discussions going, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs Kinaalwa decided to step in, which I thought was unwarranted. I still believed we could have reached a compromise without her personal intervention. I

recall an early morning appointment I had with her at my office. She came with a delegation of her technical officers and the NAD representative; and as we sat down to business, I apologised for dragging her in a matter, which I thought we could have resolved without her direct intervention. Unfortunately, the meeting with Mrs Kinaalwa failed to resolve our disagreement with NAD over the building. James Sengendo appeared unsure of how he would break the bad news to his colleagues, like Phillip Wabulya, who had been through intense preparations in anticipation of the programme being transferred to Makerere. I had to keep assuring him not to be overly worried if the NAD offer failed to materialise. At the time, the university – and his faculty in particular – was earning a lot more money than the US \$70,000 offer and, in the event NAD withdrew its offer or failed to improve upon it, that would be a good fall-back. Indeed, when the talks failed, NAD withdrew its offer. Our only concern after NAD pulled out of the project was whether the University of London would allow us to run the programme without NAD's assistance. When the NAD offer fell through, James Sengendo and I convinced ourselves that we could actually salvage the project using the faculty's internally-generated funds. Although James Sengendo was not so sure, he stood a chance of throwing the idea through to his Faculty Board; he was prepared to give it a try. It was a tall order and no doubt a tough sell, but James Sengendo managed to secure his Faculty Board's approval without much difficulty. Staff agreed to forego some of their teaching allowances for an extra building which they believe would provide their faculty with the much needed space. With the Faculty Board's approval secured, we were ready to re-activate the CBR building project, but this time every cent would come from the sweat of our brows. That was a test for James Sengendo and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

After the usual university procedural formalities, we were ready to cut the sod again, but not before we had cancelled the contract NAD had already awarded to a contractor, who was on site. TECO re-designed the building and supervised the construction by a new contractor. In fact, when we told NAD and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare that we had decided to construct a three-storey building for the CBR programme using our own resources, they appeared sceptical and did not believe we had the capacity to raise the kind of money needed for the project. Construction began in 1996 and by September 1998, the building was ready to be inaugurated. Instead of waiting to call our bluff as the construction progressed, both NAD and the Ministry official came back expressing interest to join hands with us again. Although we had no problem welcoming them back, we had a point that it could be done without donor support. It was a dicey gamble we had taken; we could have failed to raise the money but prudent financial management did the trick. Finally, the Faculty of Social Sciences, one of the largest faculties in the university, could boast of a second and much bigger building in decades. To celebrate this historical landmark, James Sengendo suggested that we invited the President of Uganda and Chancellor of Makerere

University to inaugurate the new building. To me, his request made sense. The President was the kind of person who appreciated self-reliant initiatives, and this was a good example. The problem was how to get him to come to the university to open such a small building. As the President was a busy person, it would have been difficult to convince him to come to Makerere for the inauguration alone. Fortunately, there was another way we could get the President to open the building officially – during the next graduation ceremony at the university. The inauguration of the new Social Sciences building would be part of the programme and would feature in his draft speech. That would be a brilliant idea, but from the practical point of view, it posed some problems. The President had a tendency to come late for graduation ceremonies. Asking him to inaugurate the building first would eat deep into the time for the graduation ceremony, keeping the graduands and guests waiting for too long. In fact, the Academic Registrar had opposed its inclusion on the official programme. The other concern was the President's security. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Epelu Opio, was apprehensive about the idea of taking the President to the unsecured Faculty of Social Sciences. It would be difficult to monitor his security in such an open place.

James Sengendo was visibly disappointed that the odds were against the President's inauguration of the building. He could not understand why the opening of the Social Sciences building had to be cancelled from the Chancellor's programme for what he believed were weak reasons. According to him, the building was of a much higher value to the university than the graduation ceremony. As Vice Chancellor, I was expected to stand to make a decision on this matter. After all, right from the beginning I had been part of Sengendo's efforts, why forsake him now? Interestingly, but also to complicate the situation further, James Sengendo wanted to put up a second and much bigger building that would alleviate shortage of lecture space for the faculty. He had decided that after the commissioning ceremony, he would ask the President to cut the sod and lay the foundation stone for the second building.

Although I was certain that my action would not go down well with some of my colleagues in administration, I decided to overrule the Academic Registrar's decision. The inauguration of the Social Sciences building would be on the programme, after all the graduation ceremony was strictly an affair between the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor, therefore I was in charge of it. I also agreed that the Chancellor should lay the foundation stone for the proposed second building as planned. It was now up to the presidential protection unit security to take care of the security issues. Dr Sengendo deserved our support and the President's recognition for his contribution; this was the moment to do it and I was not about to let him down.

Indeed, the President performed both functions and James Sengendo dominated the Chancellor's off-the-cuff remarks. He kept referring to him as this

man from Mawokota, and paying tribute to him for something that had never been attempted before at Makerere. Once again, we had pulled it off. However, all good things come to an end and so did Dr Sengendo's term as dean towards the end of 1998, but not before the Postgraduate Diploma and Masters degree in Community Based Rehabilitation were approved and launched in 1997. His was a productive tenure. I am almost certain that when his colleagues elected him as dean for the first time in 1993, few expected him to be so productive. I was equally happy to see him promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in his old Department of Social Work and Social Administration, proving that besides his heavy administrative and teaching responsibilities, he could still find time to do research and publish quality papers in peer-reviewed journals. As we have seen, Dr Joy Kwesiga succeeded him as dean in the same year, but did not last long in the job. It was also the end of the proposed second building. By the time I left the university in 2004, the plans were still shelved.

A young upcoming man, Dr Edward Kirumira, from the Sociology Department where he had been head for barely a full term of three years, replaced Dr Joy Kwesiga as dean. He was one of the few members of staff to have obtained their PhD degrees from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Edward Kirumira with Charles Rwabukwali as deputy dean proved to be another effective team for the faculty. However, Kirumira happened to come into office at a time when the faculty had somehow grown cold feet over spending faculty money on new buildings at the expense of staff welfare. As a result, the faculty shelved James Sengendo's second building indefinitely. Nevertheless, the faculty continued to see more exciting developments, as well as tragedies.

In 1991, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada started a collaborative Health and Society Linkage Project with the faculty, which ended in 1995. The project and link were funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The Department of Social Work and Social Administration was one of the key departments in the project, the Department of Nursing being another. Community-based approaches in the education of social workers and nurses, as well as staff development, were the major components of the project. Under the same project, the department recast its curriculum to focus more on community oriented training. It meant that students of Social Work would spend a considerable part of their training in the field. Dr Susan Watt, a Professor of Social Work at McMaster, was overall in charge of the project on the Canadian side.

Stephen Ouma and Peninah Dufite were early beneficiaries of the project's staff development funding. Both had taken their PhDs at McMaster University, with Stephen Ouma returning earlier. By the time I returned to Makerere in 1993, he was Head of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration. He had worked hard to get the Master of Arts in Social Sector Policy degree programme

approved and launched. Although the department had been in existence for a long time and was constantly attracting the most brilliant students, it had never had a postgraduate degree programme. Unfortunately, as Stephen Ouma was putting the finishing touches to his new Masters programme, tragedy was lurking in the dark. What started as a simple illness ended up claiming the life of this brilliant and industrious young man. The death of Dr Stephen Ouma was a blow to a department that was desperate for high calibre young staff.

After Stephen Ouma's premature death, we found ourselves desperately looking for his replacement. We loaded the responsibility onto Dr Peninah Dufite, who at the time was a lecturer. We were lucky, she accepted the responsibility but little did I know that she would also pass away just a few years later. Her death was another tragic loss, coming soon after the death of Stephen Ouma.

The mid-1990s were really bad years for the university. Death was busy robbing us of the young promising members of staff. For the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, the death of its two members of staff came on the heels of the departure of one of its most senior and long serving staff, Associate Professor Patrick Muzaale. Dr Muzaale had headed the department for several years in the past and had long stepped down. After the death of Dufite, Dr Muzaale had volunteered to act as head again, while we looked for her replacement. A few months later, Government appointed him full time Chairman of the Public Service Commission and whisked him away from Makerere. In quick succession, the department lost Dr Nangendo, another McMaster PhD holder to Dr Jessica Gita's Child Health and Development Centre (CHDC), based in the Medical School. Dr Wandera-Nabaho, who had served as Head of Department for several years was approaching retirement, and in accordance with University Council Policy, at his relatively advanced age, he could not head the department again. Even some members of staff appeared reluctant to have backed him as their head. We had no choice, but to turn to the much younger and junior staff to take over the departmental leadership mantle. Nathan Asingwire, who had taken his Masters degree also at McMaster, had shown a lot of promise. Faced with a leadership crisis, we decided to request him to act as Head of Department, until a substantive head could be identified. The young man was shocked at our request. Not only would he be giving instructions to his superiors and former teachers, he suspected he would be in this position for a long haul, which turned out to be the case. After assuring him of our unwavering support, he accepted to take on the responsibility. However, to everyone, surprise, the young man was a performer and turned out to be a good choice. He managed to keep the department going in the midst of the many challenges. Despite my initial concerns about his lack of administrative experience, I was grateful to him for keeping the department together in those rather difficult times. I remember him approaching me once with a request to step down so that he could concentrate on his PhD thesis

research. I had to persuade him to shelve the idea for a while. That was something I rarely did and, perhaps in his case, I did it for selfish reasons. The truth was that we had failed to find a suitable person to replace him. The young man took my advice and continued to act as head at the detriment of his PhD. In spite of the heavy administrative and teaching responsibility, he was also busy writing and publishing papers, which earned him promotion to Senior Lecturer before he completed his PhD, which he obtained soon after I had left the university. To his credit, the department was able to oversee the launching of the controversial Postgraduate Diploma and the Master of Arts degree in Community-Based Rehabilitation.

The sudden death of Professor Akiki Mujaju in a road accident in December 1998 sent shock waves throughout the university community; a tragedy that left many of us dumbfounded. It was simply too hard to believe that Akiki was dead. The same day he died, he had attended Senate, presented and ably defended his proposal for a new Master of Arts programme in International and Diplomatic Studies, which was to be offered in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of which he was the head. After Senate approved his new degree, he sent me a note requesting permission to leave early, because he wanted to go to Fort Portal in Kabarole District in Western Uganda, to attend to an urgent family matter, to which I obliged. At about six o'clock that evening, just as I was settling down to a cup of tea, the phone rang, with the terrible news. The caller went straight to the point, and informed me that Professor Mujaju had been involved in a road accident on his way to Fort Portal and was in critical condition in Mubende Hospital. The accident happened a few kilometres to Mubende town, almost the half-way point between Kampala and Fort Portal. As a result of a burst tyre, the driver lost control of the vehicle which skidded off the road, hitting an embankment and overturning in the process. Only Professor Mujaju sustained serious injuries. The rest survived the accident with minor injuries. Some good Samaritans rushed him to Mubende Hospital, which was the nearest health facility to the scene of the accident. Unlike Mulago Hospital, which is both a teaching and a national referral hospital, Mubende Hospital did not have the kind of the facilities to handle such a serious emergency case. However, the medical officers who attended to him did their best to save his life, but the head injuries he had sustained were so severe that his chances of surviving were at best minimal.

After contacting the Deputy Vice Chancellor and other senior officers in the administration and in his faculty, we quickly organised a vehicle to pick him up and bring him to Mulago. Although time was of the essence, Mubende town is almost a three- hour drive from Kampala. We figured that the round journey would take a minimum of five hours and, therefore, the earliest they could get him to Mulago Hospital would be after mid-night. With the odds stacked against

us, my colleagues in the Political Science Department did whatever they could to get their injured senior colleague to Kampala. Sadly, by the time they arrived at Mubende, Mujaju had already died from the severe head injuries. The body was brought back to the university for a proper requiem. It was another sad occasion for the university. One of Makerere's academic giants had suddenly gone without warning. By his death, a dark cloud had descended over the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, and the Faculty of Social Sciences as a whole. Despite the long distance to Fort Portal, several members of the university community made the journey to bid their renowned colleague a befitting farewell. We buried him in his humble home district of Kabarole.

The passing away of Professor Akiki Mujaju, a PhD graduate of Columbia University in New York, brought to an abrupt end the chapter of a man who had once stared death in the face and narrowly escaped the fangs of Idi Amin's killer machine. He took refuge in Kenya, where he got a teaching appointment in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi, and where he remained for many years. He returned to Makerere after the fall of Idi Amin. Mujaju also battled ill-health for a long time, as well as the hard times which followed the ousting of Amin's Government. He had endured all gracefully. Although he was soft-spoken and could pass for an introvert, he was an astute intellectual giant in his own right and a good orator. He represented that breed of academics that had contributed so much to Makerere's reputation as an African intellectual cradle. Occasionally, he would not hesitate to use his intellectual prowess and wit to make a scathing attack on Government and the Head of State. However, because of the Government's tolerance of even severe criticism, he always got away with it. Interestingly, he never hid his strong support for the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC). Given the party's record, many expected him to be equally critical of UPC. It was perhaps one of those contradictions so common in the lives of many highly intelligent people. Although most Political Science students shared the view that Apolo Nsibambi and Mahmood Mamdani were somehow predictable and the dichotomy between the two men was fairly clear-cut, Nsibambi on the right and Mamdani on the left, it was difficult to pin an ideological label on Akiki Mujaju. His real ideological inclination puzzled many of his students. He seemed to be ideologically neutral, although being a prominent member of Uganda Peoples' Congress could have been taken as an indication that he was on the left. We can only speculate that perhaps he wanted to remain an enigma to many in order to maintain his objectivity as a true political scientist, not wanting ideological inclinations to cloud and bias his judgement. With Mujaju gone, Tony Gingera Pincywa at the verge of retirement and Dent Ocaya Lakidi still living in exile, the sun had set on an era that had seen Ali Mazrui at his best and quickly ascending to the pinnacle of academic prominence, rising straight from Lecturer to full Professor. An unforgettable era and a vibrant department to which Yashi Tandon, Uddin, Apolo Nsibambi, James Katorobo – one of a handful of Ugandans who

have attended and obtained their PhD degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA – had been an integral part. Mahmood Mamdani and Foster Byarugaba belonged to the latter times. Fortunately, there was a new and younger generation of academics coming up. One of them, Rutanga Murindwa, who had just completed his PhD at Javavpur University in Calcutta, India, took over from late Mujaju as Head of Department.

When we came into administration in 1993, the Department of Political Science and Public Administration had just a handful of women on its teaching staff; moreover, all of them were young and just starting their academic careers at Makerere. Hardly anyone of them was above the Teaching Assistant grade and all of them had only their first degrees. Genevieve Ekyarimpa was one of them. It was, therefore, gratifying to see her progress steadily upwards, completing her MA in the Hague, getting appointed as full lecturer and embarking on her PhD. The reason I have singled her out was the way I first met her.

Before the January 1994 academic staff strike, she and other young MUASA members led by the Association President, the late Joseph Carasco, met us in my office some time in November 1993. We had barely been in office for more than two months when MUASA requested this meeting. They came to present to the new university management the old problem of the living wage. Although we were sympathetic to their plight, I must admit it was the least amicable meeting I had ever attended. Rightly or wrongly, it gave me the impression of a hidden agenda. I remember Joseph Carasco (now deceased) lecturing us on how he and other MUASA executive members had come into office in a democratic way, but was unsure how we had come into our respective offices. In his characteristic way, Professor Epelu Opio reminded him that if he was concerned about how we came into office, one thing was certain: we had not been picked from a garbage dump. At the time, Fred Juuko had stepped down as President of the Association. That was also the time MUASA was dominated by younger and junior members of staff, the Teaching Assistants and graduate fellows. Although Genevieve never said much in that meeting, her composure impressed me. She was not one of the vocals. Dr Nansozi- Muwanga was another new addition to the departmental growing list of women members of staff. She joined Makerere in the late 1990s after graduating with a PhD from the University of Toronto in Canada. At the time of my retirement in 2004, the department boasted of three full-time women members of staff – by no means an impressive figure but certainly a tremendous improvement on the past record.

When in 1999 the University Council passed a policy requiring academic staff at the rank of Lecturer and above to have a PhD degree or its equivalent, and those who did not have it had to acquire it within three years, Political Science and Public Administration was one of the departments that took the lead. Several members of staff took advantage of the university's Staff Development Fund which had

been launched, and registered for the PhD degree at universities in South Africa. At the time, the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg had the lion's share of the political scientists. I was happy to meet many of them there in 2003 when I led a delegation of deans and Directors on an academic tour of eleven South African universities with which we had initiated collaboration. Others, such as Dr Elijah Mushemeza and J. Kiiza went to The Hague in The Netherlands and Sydney, Australia respectively. Muhindo Syahuka's PhD registration at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, had almost expired. He had dropped out of his doctoral programme because of lack of sponsorship. I could not help feeling sorry for this young man who had been a victim of circumstances. As a graduate student at Makerere, he had excelled; and based on the quality of his MA thesis, his supervisor, Mahmood Mamdani had recommended that the thesis be upgraded to a PhD. For some reason, the Higher Degrees Committee of Senate turned the supervisor's recommendation down. In the end, Makerere awarded him the MA degree he had registered for in the first place, after which he left for Canada, where he registered for a PhD at Queen's University. However, he was unable to complete the degree because his funding ran out. He then returned to Makerere, where he got stagnated. As chairperson of the Staff Development Committee, I decided to rescue this frustrated young man. After a series of meetings with him and after assuring me that his registration at Queen's University had not yet expired, I conferred with the acting Academic Registrar, Mr Ngobi, who was Secretary to the Committee, on the possibility of sponsoring him from the Staff Development Fund to enable him go back to Canada to complete his PhD. We agreed that, much as it would be costly, it was worth it. I was happy to see the young man go back to Canada to resume his doctoral programme on Makerere's sponsorship.

In spite of the setbacks it had suffered in recent years and the fact that the days of fiery oratory and the duels of intellectual prowess between Ali Mazrui of Makerere and Walter Rodney of Dar es Salaam were long past, the Department of Political Science and Public Administration was taking big strides. It was now attracting good quality staff, but the overriding concern was its ability to retain them. In a relatively short time, the department had succeeded in recruiting a number of promising and even senior personalities such as Dr Kabumba, who was once the Managing Director of the National Insurance Corporation, and Dr Kiyaga Nsubuga, who had returned with a PhD from the University of Toronto in Canada. He was one of the new recruits who did not stay long. He left for the Uganda Management Institute, where he was appointed Deputy Executive Director. In fact, many left as soon as they came but it was equally gratifying to welcome back Dent Ocaya Lakidi, who had spent many years in exile, and Dr Yassin Olum, who the department had enticed to come to Makerere from the Islamic University in Mbale. Besides the improving staffing, Akiki Mujaju (now deceased) even revived the once popular lunchtime public lectures. Like most departments in the university, Political Science had no part-taught and part-

thesis postgraduate degrees. This changed in the 1993/94 academic when the Master of Arts in Public Administration and Management (or MAPAM as we used to call it) admitted the first batch of pioneering students. It was an evening programme, targeting mainly people already in employment. As it was directly relevant to their jobs, the younger administrative staff of the university who at the time did not have a second degree seized the opportunity, and several of them were some of the pioneer students on the new programme. The Master of Arts in Public Administration and Management started when my old friend Foster Byarugaba was the Head of Department. Before the era of word processing, when penmanship mattered, Foster Byarugaba was one of those people whose beautiful handwriting I admired. Some used to make a joke that you could tell who is a Catholic simply by looking at their handwriting. By coincidence, Foster Byarugaba happened to be a good Catholic too.

Initially, some staff in Political Science had expressed reservations and misgivings about the Capacity Building Programme for the decentralised districts in Uganda, which the HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com” \h I@mak.com was funding, arguing that by promoting such a programme, we were perhaps inadvertently turning the university into a polytechnic. It was interesting to see that it was one of the departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences that eventually embraced the programme. The department submitted a proposal to the committee, requesting funding to develop a three-year Bachelor’s degree course in Local Government. Although I was not able to see this new degree through to the final approval stage, it captured the HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com” \h I@mak.com philosophy and objectives of advancing Makerere’s support to Uganda’s development initiatives through decentralised governance. It was a rewarding experience to witness all these interesting and significant developments take place in this faculty and department when I was in charge of Makerere’s affairs.

The election of Dr Edward Kirumira, a sociologist as dean soon after Dr Joy Kwesiga, a gender specialist and James Sengendo, a social worker, marked another break with tradition. By commission or omission, for many years the office of Dean had been dominated by political scientists: Ali Mazrui in the late 1960s, Gingyera Pincwya and Apolo Nsibambi in the ’70s and ’80s, to mention but a few, were all from the same department. Indeed, from cursory observation, Political Science and Public Administration appeared to be the dominant department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Edward Kirumira was one of the most promising upcoming generations of Makerere academics. From my short association with him, I found in him a person who never seemed to run out of energy. He was the kind of person who quickly responded whenever he was called upon to lend a hand on a task, and he did it efficiently. He was a prolific academic too. In spite of the heavy teaching and administrative duties, he still found sufficient time for his research and published quality work which enabled him to rise quickly through

the ranks. He had not even begun his second term as Head of Sociology when his colleagues spotted his potential and entrusted him with the leadership of the faculty as dean. Admittedly and for reasons I can hardly explain, Sociology was one of the few departments I least patronised as Vice Chancellor. Occasionally, there were a few problems there that required us to sort out, including one, which involved a young male lecturer and a female student. The student accused the lecturer of sexual harassment and deliberately under-marking and penalising her by giving her low grades, because she rebuffed his love overtures. However, the investigation did not turn up any incriminating evidence against the lecturer. Her script was remarked by another examiner who detected no deliberate penalisation as she had alleged. In the end, the student failed to substantiate her allegations.

Dr Edward Kirumira took over the headship of the department from Mrs Christine Kisamba Mugerwa, whom I had come to know through her husband, Dr Wilberforce Kisamba Mugerwa. He and I had met as postgraduate students in 1973 when we were both residents of the newly opened Postgraduate Hall, Dag Hammarskjöld. Since then, we had become good friends. Sociology was also the department of Charles Rwabukwali, another good friend of the family and fellow Quarry House resident. A brilliant man, he got his PhD from the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. The soft-spoken Frank Kakinda Mbaaga, who had initially trained as a biochemist at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada before switching career to the Social Sciences, was another old time friend at the department.

Mrs Kisamba Mugerwa was already Head of Sociology before I returned to Makerere in 1993, and a successful one too. Like most Heads of Departments at the time, staffing was her constant headache; but over time, she managed to build a strong team of young staff, including Edward Kirumira, P. Atekyerea, M. Samula who had been there before I left for Kyambogo, Igime Katagwa, Florence Asiimwe, D. Waiswa, Jagwe Wada, Arojjo Obbop and a young man with an interesting and rare name, A. E. State. Some of these young members of staff joined the department at junior ranks. More staff joined the department later as Assistant Lecturers and Teaching Assistants. However, when her husband completed his PhD in 1996, a feat he achieved while he was a full-time senior Cabinet Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Industry in the Government of Uganda, Mugerwa requested to step down and concentrate on her PhD too. She decided to register at the University of Dar es Salaam, on a Makerere University scholarship. As it was now standard practice, I granted her a three-year study leave to enable her concentrate on her thesis. Although the majority of staff in her department were young, we were more than happy to welcome Dr Rose Nyonyintono, one of the graduates of the defunct University of East Africa. She had spent many years working as a consultant with the Eastern and Southern Management Institute (ESAMI), based in Arusha, Tanzania. She came back to Makerere at Senior

Lecturer level with a wealth of field experience. When Kirumira moved up to deanship with Charles Rwabukwali as Deputy Dean and Dr Nyonyintono still relatively new in the department, Dr Atekyereza, who had completed his PhD at Makerere a few years earlier, took over the stewardship of the department, while waiting for the election and appointment of a substantive head.

Like most disciplines during the Makerere of the 1960s, Sociology too had its hey days when late Professor Rigby was Head of Department. He had to leave rather abruptly when Idi Amin ordered every white expatriate to leave the country in 1972. When Rigby died, most of his personal library collection was bequeathed to Makerere University. After the expatriates left, a few Ugandans who were there at the time took over the mantle of leadership at the department. Professor Paul Kibuuka was notable among them and the most senior of the remaining staff, and the somewhat eccentric Dr Bagamuhunda (now deceased) was another. Professor Kibuuka was a specialist in Crime and Punishment and when the United Nations set up the UNAFRI in Uganda, he was one of the first senior Ugandans to join the new institute as Deputy Director, a position he kept for several years. Being a Ugandan, that was the highest he could go, as the regulations required that the Institute Director could not be a Ugandan. His departure for the Naguru-based international organisation left the Department of Sociology without expertise in Criminology, which was becoming increasingly important as crime soared country-wide. Some members of staff agreed to take up the challenge to fill the vacuum. Unfortunately, none of them had the required background and competence to register for a PhD in the discipline. Whoever wanted to take up the challenge had to undergo a crash programme to study the fundamentals of the subject. Mr Samula had already expressed interest in the subject and he was looking for support to finance his basic training in the subject before he could embark upon the PhD. Professor Kibuuka was willing to assist, but he was too busy and therefore not readily available to train him. After some inquiries, we discovered that Samula could take a one-year tailor-made conversion course at the University of South Africa (UNISA), so we decided to grab the opportunity for him. After completing the necessary formalities, he was on his way to South Africa for the orientation course at Makerere's expense. He had the honour of being one of the first members of staff to receive direct sponsorship from the University Staff Development Fund. Before long, the department had a replacement for Professor Kibuuka. Florence Asimwe was another member of staff the University sponsored for her PhD at the University of Cape Town. When we visited the University of Cape Town in 2003, Florence quickly mobilised some Ugandan and South African students and put on a cultural show for our entertainment, which we appreciated. In fact, I used to tease her by calling her a cheeky girl for her easy-going nature. By 2004, a department which had been running predominantly undergraduate programmes for years had a well established Masters degree (MA) in Sociology.

Before I left the university, I was convinced and optimistic that the Faculty of Social Science had a promising future. Not merely as an incubator and clearing house for new faculties and departments, which it had done very well, but in its own right as a serious academic entity. Besides contributing to Makerere's fame in the past, it was one of the few faculties at Makerere to have nurtured and given birth to an impressive list of new faculties. The list included the Faculties of Law; Commerce, which was later transformed into Makerere University Business School after moving to Nakawa; Makerere Institute of Social Research, the Institute of Economics, which became the Faculty of Economics and Management shortly before I left, and indirectly, the Institute of Psychology. Indeed, that was an achievement to be proud of. Although, when the Economics Department broke away, some members of staff had expressed fear and anxiety about the faculty's future, referring to it as a shrinking and endangered faculty, my view at the time was that their fears were unfounded. All they had to do was to continue introducing new programmes which, in due course, would and could evolve into new departments within and outside the faculty. I strongly believed that the discipline of Social Science was not a dead-end discipline. On the contrary, it was an evolving discipline and new fields were emerging. The faculty had to take advantage of these new fields and incorporate them in its structure. That was a lesson I learnt over my long years in the academia.

### **School of Education – Once the only Fountain of Graduate Teachers for Uganda and Beyond**

Education is one of the oldest disciplines at Makerere. For the reader interested in the detailed history of Education at Makerere, Margaret McPherson offers a brief, but interesting insight in her book, *They Built for the Future*, published by Cambridge University Press. It is one of the few faculties at Makerere to have produced two Vice Chancellors – Professors Asavia Wandera and William Senteza Kajubi – with the latter occupying the seat twice. In the past, when Makerere was still a college, Africa's most famous statesman, the late Julius Nyerere of Tanzania studied at the Department of Education and so did Kenya's first Vice President, the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. Another graduate and staff of the faculty was Father Emmanuel Wamala, who later became His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala. The late Bishop Nabeeta, who was Cardinal Wamala's contemporary, was also once part of the school's staff. Both men were Catholic and Anglican chaplains respectively and lecturers at the Faculty of Education. The entire faculty was once a single department, the Department of Education. Over the years, it has evolved from a single department into a multi-departmental faculty, with the National Institute of Education, a semi-autonomous unit, alongside it. In the 1980s, under Professor Jacayo Ocitti as dean, it assumed the status of a school. By the time I left the university, the number of departments had gradually risen from

three to six: Educational Foundations and Management; Curriculum, Teaching and Media; Social Sciences and Arts Education; Language Education; Science and Technical Education, as well as Higher Education. Higher Education was the latest addition. Most of the new departments came into being during the transition from a faculty to a school. I recall how Professor Ocitti laboured to convince Senate that indeed there was a difference between a school and a faculty. Most Senate members believed that there was basically no difference between the two. They thought that the department just wanted a new and more fanciful label. In the end, after some intense debates, Education carried the day and it became the School of Education. The school is located in the older part of the university – the southern end of the main campus. It is also where the first main university administration building, commissioned in 1923 and now part of the School of Education, is also located. The Department of Science and Technical Education (DOSATE) and the Department of Higher Education now occupy this old building.

By the time I came into administration, this historical building and other equally old buildings on the university campus were almost dilapidated. Years of neglect, due to lack of money for maintenance, had taken their toll. Dr Jane Mulemwa, a fellow chemist and like me, a PhD graduate of Queen's Belfast, was then the head of the relatively new Department of Science and Technical Education. Every time I had occasion to visit her, I could not help feeling deeply sorry seeing her working in such a miserable place. In fact, I used to tease her, wondering why she chose to go to the School of Education when she could have made better use of her PhD in Physical Chemistry at the Department of Chemistry in the Faculty of Science. I guess she had her heart and mind in the teaching profession. She would only plead to the university to do something about the plight of her struggling department. At the time, her appeals sounded like a cry in the wilderness. I had no idea where I could source for funds to rehabilitate such an old building. In my candid opinion, I would have recommended for it to be pulled down, but as a friend once reminded me history had an important place in society, and we had a duty to preserve this old building.

Fortunately, at the time, the Ministry of Education had earmarked Science and Technical Education as one of the departments at Makerere that would benefit from the African Development Bank education loan the Government had negotiated way back in 1987. As conditionality to the loan, the bank required the Government of Uganda to set up a counter-fund. Part of the counter-fund would be used to finance the rehabilitation work at the university and that included the DOSATE building. Reverend David Sentongo, who was then the University Secretary worked hard to ensure that the Ministry of Finance did not backtrack on the Government's commitment. Fortunately, the Government lived up to its promise. The Ministry of Finance kept releasing the funds to the university, albeit in small instalments as part of the university's capital development budget. That was good enough for us

to do something about the old building. Soon, we had completed the renovation of this once majestic building, which at the time was the college's seat of power. As we were about to complete the rehabilitation, the old clock in the tower on top of the building caught the attention of one of our Norwegian friends, Professor Endre Lilethum of the University of Bergen. Professor Lilethum was coordinating the NUFU programme in DOSATE and was also very keen to have the clock restored. He pledged to raise private funds in Norway to buy a replica of the old clock which, according to technical experts, was beyond repair. True to his word, he managed to raise the money, and bought a good replica in Norway. Since the national power grid was not so reliable at the time, we decided to install a small solar panel on top of the building to power the clock. We tasked Edward Kirumira (now deceased), a technician in the Department of Electrical Engineering, to install the clock. Before long, the clock in the tower of this historical building was chiming and looking exactly like the old one. In spite of the contractor's less-than-professional workmanship, the building had once again taken on a new and beautiful look, and a befitting home to a department set up to train secondary school Science and Mathematics teachers. I was happy to hand over the rehabilitated building to Dr Mulemwa in 1995.

The Department of Higher Education had an interesting beginning too. It began as an idea in the 1980s when Mr Bernard Onyango, Professor Senteza Kajubi and others felt that university lecturers lacked teaching skills and, as a result, some of them were doing a really bad job. As an undergraduate student, I also experienced some really lousy teaching which could be traced to the problem of lack of formal training in teaching methods. When it came to teaching at the university, a qualification in Education was not a requirement. As far as the university was concerned, all that mattered was one's good academic credentials. Bernard Onyango was concerned and wanted to do something about bad teaching. He strongly believed that lecturers needed training in teaching methods and lecture delivery methodology or pedagogy. Professor Kajubi, who had returned to the National Institute of Education (NIE) after serving his first tour as Vice Chancellor, and a few other members of staff in the School of Education, including Dean Jacayo Ocitti, who had taken a similar course at the University of Manchester, started putting Onyango's ideas on paper. So, the Higher Education unit in the School of Education was born. When Senteza Kajubi left Makerere to take up an appointment as principal of the new Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo in 1988, Dr Hannington Nsubuga, who had also been with the NIE, took over the leadership of the unit. However, for administrative purposes, the unit remained under the ambit of the office of the Dean of Education. But for some reason, the idea of training university academic staff in pedagogical techniques en masse never materialised. When Dr Nsubuga left the university to take up another appointment at Ndejje University, which was one of the new private universities, Professor Ocitti took over the headship of the unit. Under

Professor Ocitti, the unit received some funding from a European Union grant to Makerere University and started organising pedagogical training sessions, but the funds ran out before all staff could be trained. After that, the unit went into limbo. In fact, a committee, which investigated the problems in the School of Education, had recommended that the Higher Education unit be scrapped; but the University Council did not endorse the recommendation.

The appointment of Dr James Nkata, who had completed his PhD at Makerere in 1997 and who for many years had been an Education Officer for Mpigi District; Dr Adonia Teberwondwa (now deceased), who came in as Associate Professor and was later promoted to full Professor and Professor J. C. S. Musaazi, who had been at the University of the West Indies for some years, breathed new life into the unit. Dr Teberwondwa had been a prominent politician, a former senior Cabinet Minister in the Obote II Government and a staunch member of the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC). As a result, his re-appointment into the university service stirred some controversy in the Appointments Board. There were some who appeared to be opposed to his return, but after examining his papers and publications and subjecting them to an external evaluation, the Board was satisfied that he was well-qualified and merited re-appointment and later promotion to full Professor. In fact, Teberwondwa was one of the rare breeds of Ugandan politicians who successfully managed to combine participation in active politics with academics. I wondered how he was able to find time for his academic work and I could not help thinking that perhaps the man never slept. His hard work fascinated me and stood him in good stead when politics went sour for him. Professor Musaazi took over as Head of the unit from Professor Ocitti. Under Professor Musaazi's leadership, the unit was transformed into the sixth department in the School of Education, with a new mandate. Instead of continuing with pedagogical training for university staff, which had no funding, Professor Musaazi and his colleagues decided to turn it into a postgraduate training department, specialising in Educational Management and Planning, among other disciplines.

The new postgraduate programme started with the Master of Arts in Educational Management (MA Ed Mgt). The new two-year programme was very popular among many practising teachers, who apparently were nurturing ambitions of becoming head-teachers, college principals and career educational administrators. To beef up staff, Professor Musaazi approached the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) with a request for funding for two long-term senior professors. The CFTC approved his proposal and recruited two professors, Drs Samuel Owolabi and Alhas Maicibi, from Nigeria. Besides the two Nigerians, a third professor, Dr Martin Amin, a Cameroonian, also joined the department on a semi-local contract. Makerere University paid a portion of his salary in local currency while the rest came from another source. This was also about the time Professor Musaazi had been requested to provide some technical

assistance in Lesotho. He wanted to make sure that his departure for Lesotho would not leave his young department in a vacuum. Mr Avitus Tibarimba, the former University Secretary, was one of the few who taught courses on part-time basis. His lectures were based on his real life experience as a senior university administrator. By the time I left the university, he was in the process of registering for a PhD with the department. The additional staff in terms of numbers and, more importantly, in terms of academic qualifications and experience helped the new department consolidate its teaching and research capacity. Besides the MA students, the PhD enrolment was also rising steadily. My old student and then Minister of Education and Sports in Buganda Government, John Chrysostom Muyingo, was one of them. He received his PhD in March 2004 at my last graduation ceremony as Vice Chancellor. I was fortunate to have been a witness to this remarkable and dramatic transformation of what began as a small unit with a simple mandate and which, by all accounts, was at the verge of being transformed into one of the most vibrant departments in the School of Education. That is the value of quality leadership and what it can do to an institution.

One of the prominent features of the School of Education one noticed was the age difference between the old and young staff. This unusual situation arose largely because of the constant loss of staff in the difficult years that followed Idi Amin's coup of 1971 and the subsequent political turmoil and insecurity the country experienced after the fall of Idi Amin. One of Makerere's best education psychologists, Professor Barnabas Otaala, now at the University of Namibia, was one of the prominent and eminent academics the school lost early in Idi Amin's rule. He narrated to me the harrowing experience he went through to save his life when Amin's security operatives were looking for him, because his surname begun with the letter O and for this reason they had mistaken him for a Langi or an Acholi, who were then considered to be enemies of Government and suspected of collaborating with Milton Obote in Tanzania. While he was teaching a class in the Main Hall shortly before lunch, his secretary came rushing in and took him aside to warn him about three men wearing dark glasses, who had come to the Department of Education Psychology, where he was the head and demanded to know where he was. She told him that when she asked them what they wanted him for, they declined to give an answer. After discovering that he was not in his office, they walked away. To Barnabas Otaala, the message was loud and clear. He decided not to return to the department. Somehow, that very day he managed to find his way out of the country to Kenya, ending up at the Kenyatta University. A few years later, he moved further south and got a job with the University of Botswana, before joining the National University of Lesotho. He finally ended up at the University of Namibia, where he spent the rest of his active working life. Professor Otaala had taken over from Professor Drugyaire, a Nigerian, who had worked hard to build the Department of Education Psychology, which was actually a merger of Psychology in Social Sciences and Education Psychology.

Professor Peter Muyanda Mutebi, a native of the Sese Islands in Lake Victoria who, in the latter years of his career, became the Executive Director of the National Curriculum Development Centre at Kyambogo was one of those who had to leave Makerere after only a short stint. However, in the mid '90s, he came back briefly under the UNDP TOKTEN programme. The conditions attached to TOKTEN scheme were that, at the end of the assignment, he had to return to the country where the UNDP had recruited him. These conditions had also made it difficult for the school to recruit younger academics. The result was the glaring age difference between the senior and junior staff, but credit must be given where it is due. Although the school lost a substantial number of its senior academics, many risked their lives and stayed. The list of those who stayed and braved it is long; but at the risk of inadvertently leaving out some, I will mention just a few whom I believe deserve credit for not jumping ship when the going was rough and turbulent. Professor Jethero Opolot, an education psychologist who I believe started out as a student of Theoretical Physics during his early days at the University of Edinburgh, and served as dean of the school for many years, certainly deserves recognition for holding the fort. The legendary Associate Professor J. C. Sekamwa, an education historian and prolific writer, known to his colleagues simply as JC and who also served two terms as Dean of the School; Professor Jacayo Ociti, who was dean in the 1980s and who later had to defend the name change from Faculty to School of Education in Senate, also deserve an honourable mention.

Associate Professor T. Kalyankolo Mazinga, the education artist; late Professor Kupriyan Odaete, the Comparative Education specialist with a PhD from the University of London, who was instrumental in establishing the collaborative link between the School of Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada and Makerere University, were all there when the going was at its toughest. Thanks to them, the school survived. In fact, one could say that Professor Odaete had become an icon and a patriarch in the Department of Educational Foundations and Management where he had been head for as long as one could remember. Mathew Odada – the Social Studies man, one of the brave academics who never saw age as an impediment to one's academic and professional advancement. He obtained his PhD, under the Alberta-Makerere collaboration in 1995 at quite an advanced age when most of us would have thought of throwing in the towel and calling it quits. In fact, his case presented me with an unexpected challenge. According to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Alberta and the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA) which was funding the collaboration, I had to guarantee that we would retain him for eight years after his PhD. By then he would be well above the mandatory retirement age of 60 and the contractual age of 65. Somehow, we managed to sort out the problem with the Appointments Board. Fortunately, his research papers were enough and of good quality to qualify him for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. Mathew Odada symbolised what it meant to

set oneself a goal and focus on achieving it with single-minded determination, regardless of obstacles, and I admired him for that.

Dr Joseph Nsereko Munakukaama, the Education Philosophy man, was another strong pillar to the school in the days when the future was uncertain. Those who know a little about him and his humble beginnings would tell you that he was a man who bootstrapped himself. Indeed, his last name – Munakukaama – means exactly that and had been the hallmark of his life, which saw him begin his academic career as a teacher – trainee at Busubizi Teacher Training College several decades earlier. He was a truly self-made man and a fine example of that trait which we saw in Mathew Odada. He too registered for the PhD degree at an advanced age, close to his retirement. For him too, age was not an impediment to acquiring knowledge. In spite of the heavy teaching load, he successfully completed his PhD, which was conferred on him in 1998. He later took over from the late Kupriyan Odaet as Head of the Department of Educational Foundations and Management, but because of the new university rules, he could serve only one term. He could not hold the office again because by that time, he was already close to the mandatory retirement age. Time had come for the younger generation of academics who had initially joined the school in trickles, but later in fairly large numbers, to take over leadership. For me, it was more than a personal achievement to have seen so many colleagues who, for reasons not of their own making and whom I believed would never rise beyond where I found them, make such dramatic academic and career turn-arounds.

As I have pointed out, one of the consequences of transforming the Faculty of Education into a School was the creation of more departments. As a result, unrelated disciplines were no longer lumped together. Under the new school structure, it was easy to assign members of staff to disciplines and departments according to their specialisations. As I understood it, Educational Foundations and Management; Education Psychology and Curriculum, Teaching and Media were responsible for the professional aspects of Education as a discipline. Language Education, Science and Technical Education, as well as Social Sciences and Arts Education dealt with methods. Other faculties, the Faculties of Arts, Science, Social Sciences, Economics and Management and Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, taught most of the content on behalf of the School of Education. However, that was about to change. The school was being asked to teach some of the content as well, which was not a new idea. It had been the subject of several debates long before I took over as Vice Chancellor. However, due to poor staffing in the school at the time and the need to minimise duplication of effort, the idea was shelved. However, the inability of the Faculty of Science to offer Biology as an integrated subject rekindled the debate.

Over the years, the performance in Biology at the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) was steadily declining. The then Minister of

Education, Amanywa Mushega, was seriously concerned about the consistent high failure and generally poor performance in Biology at the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education. He wanted to know the cause of the problem and also a workable solution. He asked the university to provide him with an explanation. Our preliminary investigations had traced the problem to the way the Faculty of Science taught the Biological Sciences. As we have seen before, the Faculty of Science did not offer Biology as a subject in its own right. Botany and Zoology were offered as separate subjects. Therefore, a BSc Education student wishing to graduate with Biology as a teaching subject had to continue with Botany and Zoology, combining the two subjects with Education, which for all Education students was a compulsory subject in the second and third years. This would lead to a 3.3.3 subject combination, which was not permitted in the Faculty of Science. The subject combination had to be 3.1.1, 3.2.1 or 3.2.2. The School of Education had two choices: either to admit students who already had a BSc degree in Botany and Zoology to a Postgraduate Diploma in Education as an additional qualification or mount a full-fledged BSc Education course in Biology taught in DOSATE, for the BSc (Biology and Education) students. That meant that besides the Science methods, the Department of Science and Technical Education had to teach content as well. The school settled for that choice.

During my almost eleven years as Vice Chancellor, it was a privilege to see so many young men and women join the academic staff of the school, as well as complete or register for their PhDs, either at Makerere or overseas. No doubt, the Alberta-Makerere linkage, which I found in its infancy, significantly boosted the number of PhDs in the school. The interesting aspect of this collaboration was that the PhD candidates could register as students of the University of Alberta or as Makerere University students. The choice of university was always discussed between students and their supervisors on either side. Those who chose to register at Makerere could travel to Edmonton to undertake advanced courses or use the advanced research facilities at the University of Alberta School of Education. Those who chose to register as students of the University of Alberta University were free to do their thesis research at Makerere. Joint thesis supervision and examining were also strongly encouraged. Thanks to late Professor Odaet's vision, the relationship turned out to be mutually beneficial and productive. Silas Oluka, who later took over the headship of DOSATE when Jane Mulemwa left the university; the late Richard Akankwasa, who replaced Dr Joseph Nsereko Munakukaama as Head of Foundations and Management; E. Olupot; Alice Kagoda and Wycliffe Scott Wafula, not to mention Mathew Odada, also obtained their PhDs under the Alberta-Makerere linkage.

Dr Olupot later resigned from Makerere and joined the new Uganda Martyrs University at Nkozi. Dr Richard Akankwasa (now deceased) left Makerere to take up the new position of Director General of Education at the Ministry of

Education and Sports headquarters. Sadly, he died shortly after his appointment. Poaching and death notwithstanding, the growing list of new and much younger staff in almost every department was hope for the future of the school. Equally interesting was the increasing number of female members of staff, moreover many of them with PhDs. I was pleasantly surprised to see Dr Rose Nassali join the Department of Educational Foundations and Management after obtaining her PhD from the University of Bristol. In the 1980s, Rose and I were colleagues at Kampala High School where she was Head of English Department while I was a moonlighter. Over the years, I had lost contact with her until she joined the School of Education as a lecturer. Like Richard Akankwasa, she left the university a couple of years later after successfully competing for the new position of Director of the Education Standards Agency in the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Interestingly, while many members of staff were leaving the university for greener pastures, many still found Makerere an attractive place to make a career. Although, calling it “poaching” would be a misnomer, Makerere attracted people from other institutions too. For some reason, both Anglican and Roman Catholic priests found it attractive to teach at Makerere, not only at the Departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies, but also in other departments unrelated to religion. Father Dr Dan Babigumira from the National Major Seminary, Katigondo was a good example of men of God doing “Caesars work” in the School of Education. His presence compensated for the loss of some members of staff through death and poaching. At least, we were sure that the supervision of PhD students registered in the school would continue.

While the school was once again registering increases and had encouraging staff numbers, the ugly hand of death was also at work. Dr Felix Passi, a native of Pekele in Adjumani District, was the first member of staff of the School of Education to die in my early years as Vice Chancellor. He was a brilliant academic who was rising fast through the ranks. Although he was still relatively junior in rank, in late 1991 or early 1992, the Minister of Education Amanywa Mushega spotted him and appointed him a member of the university’s Appointments Board. Unfortunately, a few years later after a relatively long illness, he succumbed to the cold hands of death and we lost him. This was another tragedy the university could ill afford. A few years later, the school suffered another blow. Mrs Rhoda Nsibambi had faithfully served the Department of Language Education as an English specialist for over three decades without a break in service. With her husband, Professor Apolo Nsibambi, the two had become an inseparable part of Makerere University. Coming from the Kayanja family, a family blessed with a string of brilliant and highly educated brothers and sisters, Rhoda stood out as a fine example of that breed of Ugandans who chose to serve their country and university amidst incredible difficulties and appalling conditions. I could be wrong, but I have the inkling that the Kayanja Family, more than any family

I could think of in Uganda, has so far had the highest of its members serving Makerere University in both academic and administrative positions. The list includes Rhoda's elder brother, Professor Frederick Kayanja, who served as Head of Veterinary Anatomy, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Deputy Vice Chancellor under Professor George Kirya, before moving to Mbarara in the late 1980s to start the University of Science and Technology, where he was Vice Chancellor for over two decades. Rhoda served as Head of the Department of Language Education for many years and at the time of her death, she had risen to the rank of Associate Professor in the same department. Her younger sister, Mrs Sarah Serufusa, spent most of her working life at Makerere as an administrator, rising to the rank of Deputy University Secretary in charge of the Appointments Board. Their younger brother, Dr James Makumbi, as a consultant physician and later as Superintendent of Mulago Hospital in the 1980s, also taught at the Medical School.

Rhoda Nsibambi died as her husband frantically rushed her from their farm at Buloba along Kampala-Mityana highway to Namirembe Hospital. Sadly, he was unable to save her life. Her sudden death was another devastating blow to her department, the School of Education and the university as a whole. As many testified at her requiem held in Namirembe Cathedral, she was a modest, but elegant lady. She combined her simplicity with brilliance and love for her family, work, colleagues and students. She was an avid lover of flowers, particularly the roses. It was one of those very difficult moments that I found myself least prepared to say something and yet I had to. At sombre occasions like that, it was always hard to find the right words to console the bereaved.

As far as I could remember, the Department of Language Education was one of those departments in the School of Education that had never produced a dean. None of us had expected that a young man would have a crack at it and succeed. Therefore, in 2002 I was in for a surprise, when Dr Connie Masembe Sebbunga, who had joined the Department of Language Education in 1997 after his PhD at the University of Liverpool told me that he believed the time had come for the younger generation to take over the leadership of the school and that he was going to stand for deanship. In the first place, he was relatively new in the school and had just been promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer. Much as I concurred with him that time had come for the younger generation to take over the leadership of the school, I doubted if he stood any chance of winning the confidence and trust of his colleagues. The School of Education had somewhat earned an unenviable reputation of being divided into camps and cliques based on all sorts of loyalties and allegiances. To some, the school was too difficult to govern. Even if he pulled it off, there was the likelihood that he could not last long as Dean. JC Sekamwa had succeeded because, as an old timer, he knew how to navigate the murky waters of the school's internal micro-politics, but for a

rookie like Dr Sebbunga, one doubted whether he could be able to hold the team cohesively. However, in order not to dampen his morale, I gave him the benefit of doubt, kept my reservations to myself and waited for the outcome, after all deans were not made in heaven. Apparently, the young man had done his homework well. He polled the highest number of the valid votes in the election and his supporters had reason to celebrate, but the difficult part still lay ahead; being able to get the entire school to rally behind him. Against all imaginable odds and in spite of being soft spoken, Masembe succeeded beyond our expectations. As it turned out, his term of office was not just a mere change of guard, he was well focused and knew how to avoid the pitfalls, combined with the determination and the will to succeed. The young man had many good ideas for the school, but as we all know, more often than not, change is a slow process, sometimes painfully slow. So, as his reforms were taking their pace, he soon came under intense pressure from another quarter, the Ministry of Education and Sports that wanted to see serious improvements in the way the school trained teachers.

One of the problems the School of Education faced at the time was its inability to keep pace with the ICT revolution. Right from kindergarten, schools were fast going digital and logging onto the Internet. I used to point out jokingly to JC that if they were not careful, the school risked churning out graduates who were already obsolete before they left the university gates. Our graduate teachers who were computer illiterate and unable to surf the Internet could find themselves in very embarrassing situations. Their students and the public would lose confidence in them and the university that trained them. Therefore, it was time we did something about it. Fortunately help was not far, it was on the way coming, but from an unexpected quarter. When NORAD indicated that it would provide the university with a grant to implement a four-year Institutional Development Programme (IDP), beginning in 2001, the School of Education under JC Sekamwa as dean wrote a proposal to set up an ICT Resource Centre in the school, fully equipped with computers and other modern teaching technologies. Luckily for the school, NORAD accepted to fund the project within the IDP quota. Although the project implementation had a slow start, the school eventually received the necessary funds to set up the centre. I was gratified when I visited the centre to find it fully equipped with new computers and other ICT accessories like LCD projectors. Although the school's student population far outnumbered the available computers at the centre, half a loaf was most certainly a preferred option. Now students had a chance to try their hands on the keyboard. JC Sekamwa, who started it all and Masembe Sebbunga who took over from him when we had started implementing the project, had a good reason to smile when the lab was handed over to the school.

The annual school practice (or teaching practice as many called it) was another big challenge that the school had to contend with every year. In fact, school

practice was one of the University Bursar's worst nightmares, because it was an expensive exercise with a budget running into hundreds of millions of shillings annually. With all the budget cuts, it was always next to a miracle for the Bursar to raise enough money to cover both students and supervising staff expenses for the exercise to start on time. If the Bursar was not able to raise the money in time for the exercise, which used to commence in late June or early July, the chances were that the schools would close for the second holiday of the year before the students were ready to go. Therefore, the timetable was always tight. I must admit that I also dreaded this time of the year. I could not imagine the Education students missing their teaching practice because we had failed to find the money. No amount of explanation could satisfy anybody, let alone the students who would see it as an opportunity to accuse the university administration of corruption.

Money had to be found and students had to receive their allowances in full. The supervising staff too expected to be paid and provided with transport in order to be able to visit and assess their students, who were scattered all over the country. Because of its sensitive nature, Ben Byambabazi had learnt to plan for it well ahead of time. That was the only time of the year we had to suspend payment for the non-essential goods and services. As my born-again Christian friends would say, by the Grace of God, for all the time I was there as Vice Chancellor, we never failed to find the money for the teaching practice. Much as we struggled hard to make sure that the money for the exercise was promptly available, we also wanted to ensure that it was not misused.

This was also the busiest time of the year for the University Internal Auditor, James Kabatangale and the resident Auditor General's staff. Over the years, a limited budget had forced the school to restrict the exercise to secondary schools close to the university, which meant that the school practice was confined to schools only in and around Kampala, majority of them being privately owned. Transportation for the supervising staff was a challenge, as it was expensive to convey supervisors on long distances from Kampala. However, with good planning, we could occasionally raise enough money for students to undertake their school practice upcountry and to facilitate the supervisors to reach them.

The perennial school practice challenges forced us to rethink the whole exercise. I began to wonder whether we could not put the millions of shillings we spent on transportation every year to better use. Borrowing a leaf from other faculties like Agriculture, I thought that it would make more sense to use the money to buy a fleet of vehicles for the school that staff could use to visit students on school practice. After all, for all its size, age and school practice responsibilities, the School of Education was one of the few faculties in the university which did not have a vehicle of its own. It was an idea that I had unsuccessfully floated before I retired from the university. As we examined its feasibility, we soon ran into some serious problems. The first obstacle was how to convince the Ministry

of Finance to let us use the money which the Uganda Parliament had voted for the university's recurrent budget money for a capital expenditure. Secondly, the Government had long stopped allocating money to the university for capital development budget; so, much as the idea of buying a fleet of vehicles for the school made sense, it was difficult to spin. Another option would have been for the school to use its internally generated revenue, but that too had its own problems. The idea had to be shelved. However, under the NORAD-funded IDP, the school bought a small vehicle. As far I could remember, that was the school's first vehicle. It was not much of a significant event to celebrate, but for me, thanks to NORAD, it was certainly a step in the right direction.

Another problem related to the school's capacity to supervise large numbers of students effectively. There were even allegations that some students went through their teaching practice without being assessed, because of insufficient supervisors to reach them, and yet the school practice marks counted towards students' final assessment. That was worrisome and a cause for serious concern. One way the school confronted the problem of the shortage of supervisors was to engage members of staff from other university units, who were qualified teachers to assist with supervision and assessment. The down side of this practice was that other university work remained unattended to for the time these members of staff were away, supervising school practice. Besides, much as the selected members of staff had qualifications in Education, they were no longer practising teachers, so they lacked classroom exposure. From that point of view, we tried hard to discourage the practice with limited success. There had to be an innovative way of giving students effective supervision. JC Sekamwa had an idea.

As we shall see later, when we launched the – HYPERLINK "<mailto:I@mak.com>" \h – I@mak.com, education was one of the areas of focus for the capacity-building programme in the decentralised districts. JC Sekamwa was invited to serve on the programme's Steering Committee in his capacity as Dean of the School of Education. Successfully and unsuccessfully, the School of Education submitted many projects proposals to the committee for funding. JC Sekamwa's Co-operating Teachers project was among the successful ones. His idea was to enlist good practising teachers around the country and put them through an intensive induction programme that would equip them with the school practice supervising and assessment skills. The next step was to send the Education students to those secondary schools where the cooperating teachers were teaching. The cooperating teachers would take over from there. There was, therefore, no need for tutors from the School of Education to visit these students except for the occasional quality control check to ensure they were supervising and assessing the students according to the set standards. At the end of the exercise, the cooperating teachers would submit their assessment reports with grades for every student they had supervised to the School of Education. JC Sekamwa, a man who spoke

English with a heavy Luganda accent, had stumbled on a simple, yet elegant and effective solution to a long-standing problem. I actually wondered why we had never thought of it before. It also cost the university less money. Sekamwa's idea was the whole essence of the HYPERLINK "<mailto:I@mak.com>" \h I@mak.com philosophy – innovation. After the pilot phase, the next challenge Sekamwa faced was to scale up his successful experiment. Unfortunately, both of us retired from the university service before the rollout was implemented.

As I concluded my visit to the School of Education, I was happy to see the Department of Language Education and the university as whole putting emphasis on the importance of local languages. Dr Masagazi-Masaazi had the rare privilege of being the first student to register for a PhD in Luganda at Makerere and being allowed to write most of his thesis in Luganda. Dr Masagazi-Masaazi graduated in October 2004. It was also equally gratifying for me to see several female members of staff in the school register and obtain their PhDs. Dr Robinnah Kyeyune in Language Education; Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo of the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Media, one of the few students who studied for the Master of Philosophy degree at the University of Cape Town under the USHEPiA programme and graduated 1998 with a distinction; Dr Mary Ocheng of Curriculum Teaching and Media, who obtained her Master of Philosophy Degree from Makerere in March 2004, just to mention a few. In fact, Dr Kyeyune had an added responsibility. After the death of Dr Kasalina Matovu, she took over the management of the Rockefeller Foundation-funded, "Minds Across" project. I vividly recall her impressive presentation at Nakaseke Teachers' College in 2003, when Dr Gordon Conway, the former President of the Foundation, paid a short visit on his third trip to Makerere. It is also fair to mention the two colleagues, who were with me at ITEK. The first is Maurice Tamale of the Social Sciences and Arts Education Department.

As a new principal who was taking over a volatile institution, Maurice Tamale was one of the few members of staff who helped me to learn more about the inner workings of ITEK and staff politics there. After his MA at the University of Indiana in the USA, I was happy to see him graduate with a PhD at Makerere in March 2000, together with Andrew Cula who was then one of the university's Deputy Registrars. I was happy to meet young H. Okurut in South Africa in 2003, working on his PhD at the University of the Western Cape under Makerere University sponsorship, as well as partially-sponsored Jane Kaahwa who did her PhD in Mathematics Education at the University of Birmingham in the UK. Drs Muhanguzi, J. Oonyu and Sikoyo Namarome and many more I have not been able to mention here were indeed welcome additions to the growing pool of PhDs in the school. Another defector Makerere scooped from ITEK was Raphael Oryem of the Department of Science and Technical Education, a Nairobi University graduate in Agriculture. It was also sad to see veterans such as Dr Paul Balyejjusa, who had served as Associate Dean of the School for a number of years and the

school's long member of staff, JC Sekamwa, retire from service. The school had already lost Reverend Tumwesigye, who had also served as Associate Dean while doubling as Deputy Chaplain of St Francis Chapel and lecturer in Religious Study methods. He resigned from the university service and established a church of his own. Before I left the university, he was thinking of saving some money to construct a few new buildings. The dome-shaped conference room behind the school's main building was the only largest teaching facility it had, with a seating capacity of not more than 500 people. It surely was in need of additional space in view of the rising student numbers.

### **Institute of Psychology – Old Wine in New Barrels?**

I think it is fair to say that ever since Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education Psychology merged under the umbrella of the Department of Education Psychology in the then Faculty of Education, the co-existence had never been a cosy one. To make matters worse, this big department was crammed in two small old tin-roofed single-storeyed bungalows, situated between the School of Education proper and the former Centre for Continuing Education. I must admit that for all the years I was at Makerere, I never figured out the real reasons for the merger. According to the popular version, the powerful Professor Drujayire, the Nigerian education psychologist who was then Head of Education Psychology, just bulldozed the merger through Senate and Council, and indeed the department bore the hallmarks of a marriage of convenience.

In fact, as far as I could make out, there seemed to be a feeling amongst the pure psychologists, such as Professor Munene, that Education Psychology was restricting the advancement of the discipline of Psychology at Makerere. These feelings had slowly translated into outright frustration. My interactions with some of the pure psychologists in the department had left me in no doubt that they were resentful of being under the ambit of Education Psychology. Surprisingly, the uneasy calm between the two factions persisted for several years without erupting into outright hostilities. In fact, the departmental headship vacillated between Professor John Munene, a pure psychologist who the education psychologists considered an outsider, and Professor Jethero Opolot who, after the departure of Drujayire and Barnabas Ojala, had become the guru of Education Psychology at Makerere. It seemed to me that the pure psychologists considered themselves as the legitimate specialists and the education psychologists as just end-users of the discipline. They believed that the university made a big mistake to have lumped them together under one roof. Apparently, the battle lines had long been drawn and the handwriting was now on the wall for all to see. It was clear that it was just a matter of time before the department split up and the two groups went their separate ways. However, it did not happen quite that way, thanks to Professor Munene's innovative idea.

Although the Department of Education Psychology had no students of its own, an interesting aspect of the discipline was the ease with which it fitted into the subject combinations of other faculties such as Arts, Science and Social Sciences, and even Medicine in the later years. Psychology rescued many students in the Faculties of Arts, Science and Social Sciences, who would otherwise have had a hard time finding the right subject combinations in their first and second years. In fact, it was normal for students registered in any of the three faculties to end up with Psychology as a single-subject honours degree – the BA or BSc 3.1.1 combination. While Dr James Sengendo was keen to re-establish Psychology as a Department in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Oswald Ndolerire of Arts too was thinking along similar lines. However, the University Council was not in the mood to listen to the two deans debating which of the two faculties should host the re-established Department of Psychology. John Munene beat them to it and helped break the impasse. Instead of a department, he suggested an autonomous Institute of Psychology. When he floated the idea for the first time, my immediate reaction was whether the School of Education would let go one of its core departments and if it did, whether it would be possible to get the proposal through Senate and Council. However, like Dr David Matovu, the former Chairman of the University Council, I hated to nip a good idea in the bud. John Munene had gone to a great length to write a well-argued proposal that both Senate and Council could buy into. Much as we had to guard against over-fragmentation of academic units, Munene's idea gave us the best way forward. All we had to do was to get the proposed institute through the approval processes. Good paper work, some legwork and prior planning did the trick. The University Council approved the transformation of the Department of Education Psychology into an autonomous Institute of Psychology with Education Psychology as one of the four departments.

As we celebrated the coming into existence of the new institute, it soon dawned on us that operationalising it would present a formidable challenge. To start with, the School of Education had no Department of Education Psychology of its own. It would have to outsource the teaching of this very important discipline from the Institute of Psychology over which it had no control, and we could not help wondering whether we had actually done the right thing. In fact, as the proposed institute went through the various stages of approval, the School of Education had strongly voiced the concern about what it saw as an anomaly, but it was perhaps too early to pass judgement. After all, both Senate and Council had considered the merits and demerits of setting up an Institute of Psychology as opposed to the creation of two separate departments, one in Education and the other either in the Faculty of Arts or Social Sciences. In any case, nothing was cast in stone; the decisions could change if for some reason at a future date things failed to work out as planned. The authorities that had created it reserved the powers to reverse their decisions when they had reason to believe they were not working in anybody's interest.

The second obstacle was leadership. Right from the beginning, we were optimistic that Professor John Munene, the initiator of the idea, would also be the founder and director of his brainchild. He had all the hallmarks of what it took to get the young institute off the ground. Unfortunately, when the position was offered to him, he declined the appointment. At the time the University Council approved the institute, Professor Munene had moved over to MISR as Acting Director after the departure of Professor Apolo Nsibambi. According to the new regulations which the University Council had recently passed, Professor Opolot, who would have been Munene's replacement was age-barred for the position. Worse still, the institute had no other senior members of staff to fall on. I began to worry that, without the leadership of the two most senior members of staff, there was the danger that the institute would be stillborn. As a way of salvaging the delicate situation, we requested Dr Vicky Owens to step in temporarily as Acting Director. We were convinced that although she was still at the rank of Lecturer, being an American as well as an outsider, she would quickly be able to rally all her colleagues around the complex job of operationalising the new institute.

There were new departments to set up; new curricula to develop and write; staff of the former Department of Education Psychology to distribute within the four departments according to their specialisation and new ones to recruit; students to consider for admission and a multitude of other equally important things which could not be put off for too long. Reverend Dr Owens, a native of the Washington State on the West Coast of USA, came to Makerere in the 1990s as a volunteer. I believe she liked what she saw at Makerere and decided to stay. For a while, under her leadership, the institute seemed to be on the right track. We were pleased with what we saw and heard, but little did we know that not all was going quite as well as we had assumed. It seemed that the old dark forces that had bedevilled the old Department of Education Psychology were at work again.

Hardly a year had passed when I received a petition from the staff. They wanted to meet the university administration and discuss the institute's leadership problems, so we agreed to meet them and hear their grievances. During the meeting held in the Council Room, they made it clear that they were discontented with Dr Owen's leadership and wanted an immediate change. Given the fact that the institute had been in existence for a few months, I was not too keen to accept their demands. However, in order not to derail the young institute and because Dr Owens had also indicated that she had no desire to continue as director, we accepted their demands. Although the leadership change we were about to make would still be in an acting capacity, we decided to let them choose the person they wanted to lead them until they were in position to elect a substantive director. The choice went to Dr Jane Nambi, who had returned with a PhD from Florida. She accepted to take on the responsibility,

but I guess she did so reluctantly. Then in 2001, we decided that it was time for the institute to have a substantive Director. Dr Peter Baguma, who had done his PhD in Vienna a few years earlier and had earned the promotion to the rank of Senior Lecturer, emerged the candidate of choice. Soon after the election, the University Appointments Board confirmed him as the first substantive Director of the Institute for a four-year term. Unfortunately for him too, the honeymoon was short-lived. He was another casualty of what we feared was becoming an endemic leadership problem in the young institute.

The problems the institute was facing appeared to be getting out of control, which called for immediate corrective actions. To get to the root cause of the problems, in 2003 we set up a Committee of Inquiry chaired by Professor David Bakibinga, formerly the Dean of Law and later Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. Their task was to carry out an in-depth investigation and make recommendations on the best way forward. In particular, we wanted the committee to investigate in detail the alleged sexual harassment of female students; the disappearance of answer scripts of the female students who had rebuffed the sex advances and the withholding of marks by some male members of staff. To facilitate a fair investigation, I asked Dr Peter Baguma to step down as director until the committee had completed its work. Since the investigations involved all staff in the institute, in the interim, we requested Dr Masembe Sebbunga, Dean of Education to act as the institute's director too. Worse still, the School of Education had also started agitating for the separation of Education Psychology from the institute on the account of the poor services the institute was providing to the school. To say the least, I found the whole idea of subjecting the new institute to a full-scale investigation painful, but we were left with no option. It was the only sure way we could get to the root-cause of the problems in the hope of finding a satisfactory solution.

My colleague, Professor Epelu Opio, who had become a regular visitor to the institute as we grappled with the problems and who for a while acted as the *de facto* Director of the Institute, kept reminding me that it was high time we investigated the unending problems at the institute. When the committee completed what was really a thorough investigation, some of the findings contained in the report made shocking reading. The committee adduced sufficient evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt that indeed the sexual harassment accusations were not mere allegations against difficult male lecturers by disgruntled female students, who had tried and failed to get free marks, but were indeed true. Several female students whom a particular lecturer had victimised for refusing to give in to his demands, came forward this time and gave evidence to the committee in tears. As the committee observed, some of the girls whom he tried to seduce but who turned him down paid a heavy price for being uncooperative. As a punishment, he withheld their examination marks, claiming that he did not receive their answer scripts. That way, he made sure they did not graduate. When his name

came up in the committee's report, I was surprised but not terribly shocked. However, my colleagues, who had no background information on him found the revelation utterly shocking. I recall that a year or so earlier, Dean JC Sekamwa and I had met with this member of staff in my office to talk about the same issue after I had received unconfirmed reports from the School of Education, alleging that he was demanding sexual favours from girls in exchange for marks. Although no one was able to come forward with evidence to incriminate him, we thought that the allegations against him were serious enough to warrant talking to him to clear the air. As Sekamwa and I expected, he went to great length to deny any wrongdoing, but I was not fully convinced. We reprimanded him and warned him of the serious consequences to his career as a lecturer at Makerere if ever the allegations turned out to be true in future. As I ended the meeting, I asked JC Sekamwa to keep a close watch on him. Apparently, our warning and counselling went unheeded. The man was irredeemable. Here was a psychologist who could not overcome his addiction to sex; a predator that was preying on girls, some of whom were young enough to be his daughters. His associates, who knew him well, had long formed the opinion that the man had become a sex maniac and perhaps needed help.

The committee recommended that he should be relieved of his duties and dismissed from the university service for soiling the reputation of the university. After studying the report, the first thing we focused on was to make sure we retrieved all the missing scripts and marks from him so that the affected students could graduate. Amazingly, he had most of them. Later, as was our usual practice, we prepared a charge sheet and invited him in my office to respond to the committee's findings. This time, he grudgingly admitted he had a problem. At about this time, I was preparing to hand over to the new Vice Chancellor, so I did not conclude the case. I left it to the incoming Vice-Chancellor to take it to its logical conclusion. I must admit that much as what this man did was despicable and unforgivable, I could not help thinking about the resources the university had invested in him. He obtained his PhD from the University of Alberta under the CIDA-sponsored Alberta-Makerere linkage. It was also painful to see a fellow compatriot, who hailed from a region of our country which was grossly under-represented on the Makerere staff, messing himself up and leaving the university service as a disgraced man. On the other hand, I could not excuse him for subjecting his victims to such a psychological torture and the trauma they had to endure. I think I had reason to believe that the man was both a sex maniac and a sadist.

Besides this bad case, the committee uncovered other problems. Some members of staff had turned what were supposed to be institutional projects into private business for private gain, but using university facilities to run them. Some senior members were hardly ever in the institute; they were busy elsewhere most of the time, while others were guilty of encouraging cliques and fomenting antagonism among staff. In the midst of these teething problems that needed

urgent action, the committee recommended the appointment of Professor John Munene as Director with immediate effect. This time around, he did not need much persuasion; he accepted the challenge, but the appointment had to wait for the new Vice Chancellor. Dr Masembe Sebbunga continued to run both the School of Education and the institute until I left. The other senior person, Mrs Kiziri Mayengo, who we would have called upon to act in case Professor Munene was not still interested in the job, was away in the USA trying to register for her PhD at Howard University in Washington DC. The committee also discovered that an expatriate member of staff of Indian origin, whom the institute had recruited from Utrecht in the Netherlands on local terms, had no qualification in Psychology. Interestingly, this man had been a promising and an active member of staff, attending conferences all over the world and presenting papers. He even made contacts with the Indian High Commission in Uganda to solicit Indian scholarships for staff development and funding to help the young institute. We had no reason to doubt his qualifications. Before we had had a chance to investigate him, the man mysteriously disappeared from the university, leaving us with an unsolved puzzle. However, on a positive note, I was encouraged by the large number of young and promising men and women joining the staff of the institute. In spite of the aforementioned problems which we were trying to solve, the institute now appeared set on the right track again.

Fortunately, at the time of my departure from the university, we had managed to stabilise the situation, thanks to Professor Epelu Opio and Dr Masembe Sebbunga, Professor Bakibinga and his committee, as well as the cooperation we received from staff. The institute developed new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, such as the Bachelor of Community Psychology, a Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling; the MSc in Clinical Psychology; the MA in Counselling; the Master of Organisational Psychology and the Master of Education in Education Psychology. It had also started registering students of its own, as well as international scholars like Dr Helen Liebling from the UK, who came as a volunteer on a Makerere local contract but later had to go back to Britain to complete her PhD in Clinical Psychology. Even after completing her PhD, with an appointment at University of Warwick at Coventry, she kept coming back. Failure to provide the institute with new buildings is something I deeply regret. For lack of money, the best we did was to allocate the institute another adjacent old building, previously occupied by the School of Postgraduate Studies before the school moved into the new Senate House.

### **Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts – Art: The Thumbprint of Ancient and Modern Day Civilisations**

When I was still at Namilyango College as a young schoolboy in the 1960s, I fancied the day I would become a prominent artist like Professor Todd, Professor

Kingdon, Gregory Maloba and Sam Ntiro, who at the time were teaching in the college's famous Art School. I believed I had some talent which needed sharpening before I could make a name for myself. Interestingly, I enjoyed painting landscapes. The Art teacher at Namilyango at the time, Mr Weatherbay, was a good teacher and we liked him for that, although he could be a bit of an eccentric character too. Unfortunately, two things happened in my life at that early age. First, I discovered the beauty of Science. Secondly, towards the end of Senior Three, every student had to make a choice of the subjects he would register for the Cambridge School Certificate, which were not supposed to be more than nine. Art and English Literature were mutually exclusive. You had to choose one or the other. I chose Art, but for some reason, the Headmaster ended up registering me for Literature, which I hated. I hated cramming and memorising that ancient Shakespearean linguistic form, moreover much of it was written in antiquated English. In fact, I had been attending Art classes instead for a good part of my Senior Four until one day the new Ugandan Art teacher, who had taken over from Mr Weatherbay, drew my attention to the fact that I was in the wrong class. When I complained, the Headmaster confessed that he realised he had registered me for Literature by mistake, but it was too late to change. The papers had already gone to the Cambridge University Examination Syndicate. That was the end of my career as a budding artist! Nevertheless, my Art teacher was also puzzled why the mistake and sad to see me give up the subject because of a mix-up in the Headmaster's office. Although I did not possess the genius of Michelangelo, I am sure I was one of his good students.

The interesting aspect of Art was the fact that if you were exceptionally good at it, you would join Makerere after the Cambridge School Certificate, the equivalent of today's Uganda School Certificate, for a two-year Diploma in Art, which for purposes of graduate training was the equivalent of a first degree. You did not have to wait for another two years struggling with the Higher School Certificate, popularly referred to as HSC at the time, before you entered university. Moreover, with a good Diploma, a student would register straight away for the MA in Fine Art and many did. This was an added attraction. The BA degree programme in Fine Art began in the 1970/71 academic year, the same year I entered the university. My old friends Simon Sagala, Fred Ibanda and Joseph Mungaya Kebengwa, my schoolmate at Gaba Primary School and at St Peter's Nsambya, were among the pioneers on the BA programme.

Fine Art at Makerere has an interesting and humble beginning. The teaching of the subject started as a hobby in the house of Margaret Trowell in 1927, five years after Makerere College had opened. Subsequently, when the college formalised the teaching of Art as an academic subject, the Art School was named after its founder, Mrs Margaret Trowell. For years, the School has been one of the leading training institutions for Arts in Uganda and beyond. It has also had an impressive

list of great artists on its teaching staff over the years. People like Kakooza Kingdon and Gregory Maloba designed and sculptured the 1962 “Mother and Child” independence monument, now located in the Kampala Sheraton Hotel gardens. When the newly founded Bank of Uganda was moving into its new premises, it commissioned Makerere’s Kakooza to design and fabricate the terracotta motif, depicting the Central Bank’s logo, which adorns the front courtyard of the older Banks building on Kampala Road. However, like other departments in the university, the school did not escape the ravages of the 1970s. Most of the good artists left, but thanks to Professor Todd’s hard work, the school endured and continued to produce good artists. Besides building a robust school, Professor Todd designed the current Makerere University logo. The original logo is in the Vice Chancellor’s office.

In spite of the cultural importance of Art and its aesthetic attraction, the school has continued to operate from the same old premises in the older wing of the university, close to the School of Education. In fact, its Art Gallery is a centre of attraction for many foreign visitors to Uganda, who appreciate and enjoy Art. During my time as Vice Chancellor, I attended many staff and student annual exhibitions there and I could see the public interest they generated. However, the near dilapidated buildings and heavily potholed access road to the school were always an eye sore and a depressing sight whenever I visited it. But what cheered me up was the reawakening of my interest in Fine Art. Before Government stopped funding the university’s capital development budget, I was optimistic that in time, we would be able to give the school’s old but historical buildings a facelift, we even prepared the bills of quantities. Sadly, all hopes of ever doing it in my time evaporated when the Ministry of Finance stopped allocating money to the university for construction and rehabilitation. Knowing the value many of our European development partners attached to Arts, I tried hard to interest some of them in the school’s rehabilitation without success. I guess that much as they realised the importance of Art and its cultural value, they were not convinced that it was one of the many university’s priorities worth investing in. This was something we had to do ourselves.

I toyed with the idea of using part of our internally-generated income to do something for the school, but because of the many competing demands on the limited resources, I failed too, and the University Secretary and Bursar could not find the money in the budget. It was time for me to admit failure. I had to resign to the fact that I would not be able to raise funds to give the Margaret Trowell School of Fine Art the kind of facelift it deserved before I stepped down as Vice Chancellor. That was the hard reality I had to accept and live with for the rest of my time as Vice Chancellor. However, while I was lamenting my failure, the school managed on its own to fix a few problems from its meagre internally-generated income. The problem the Dean faced was the enormity of the task.

Our calculations had shown that it required over a billion shillings, which at the time was equivalent to one million US dollars, to rehabilitate the school to acceptable standards. The Dean could not raise that kind of money from the school's modest income, much of which came from the few fee-paying students the school had.

Makerere's beauty as a community, and perhaps its curse too, was its relatively small size; the entire main campus was only about 300 acres. As people living together in a tightly knit community, we knew each other fairly well, even colleagues we had little in common with academically. Therefore, it was not surprising that I knew several colleagues teaching at the School of Fine Art quite well. Professor Francis Naggenda was one of such colleagues. I believe I came to know him in the 1980s when he had returned to Uganda after many years of exile in Germany as a student, and at the University of Nairobi. Those who had the enviable privilege of a close encounter with him attested to the beauty of his daughters. Unfortunately, he lost one of them in Russia where she had been a student. Although an accomplished artist, he was an all-rounder and a very pleasant person. As I became more acquainted with him, I discovered that he had many interesting research ideas he wanted me to work on with him. One of his many interests was the naturally occurring inorganic pigments, particularly some of the oxides found in local stones. He believed he could use them in high temperature ceramic work as substitutes for the imported glazes, and he thought that as a chemist, I could be of some help in that area. Plant resins, the eucalyptus tree resin in particular, were another area of his research interest. Poor equipment, lack of money and the daily struggle for survival at the time rendered our collaboration ineffective. We had no other choice but to shelve the work indefinitely. When I moved into administration, and he into other equally exciting things to experiment with, including welded scrap steel sculpture, we could hardly find time to resume this work. Later I was pleased to see him rise through the ranks to full Professor, but saddened to see him retire from Makerere. He was perhaps best remembered for the "War Victim" piece in the Main Library, which he carved out of an old tree trunk he found around the premises of the school, and which the Rockefeller Foundation commissioned. "Mother with Baana" is another enchanting sculpture he carved in collaboration with Professor Tuck Langland of Indiana University, South Bend.

As I have pointed out earlier, Professor Kirya's idea of electing Deans and Heads of Departments enabled us to discover the hidden leadership talents many of our colleagues possessed. As Deans and Heads of Departments came and went, you could clearly see the naturally talented leaders, those who were struggling, and outright flops. For as long I could remember, the Margaret Trowell School of Fine Art used to be a one-department faculty and pure Art in its fine form was the only thing taught there. However, shortly before I left for ITEK, Pilkington

Sengendo, brother to Professor Apolo Nsibambi, took over as Dean of the School and, if you were one of those who subscribed to the school of thought that university dons were by nature conservative, P. N. Sengendo was about to prove you wrong. Although not as charismatic as his elder brother, Apolo, apparently he had big and innovative ideas which would fundamentally change the school and its entire philosophy for the foreseeable future. His first act as Dean was reforming the old curriculum with an injection of a bigger dose of the applied aspects of the discipline. He was keenly interested in emphasising the wide and daily applications of Art; its industrial application in particular. To this end, Industrial Art became an integral part of the school's new curriculum. To reflect the change in the mandate, the school was renamed Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts. I remember some members in Senate fiercely contesting the retention of Margaret Trowell in the new school's name. They unsuccessfully argued that it was about time Makerere University dropped some of its colonial hangovers, but Sengendo and his colleagues stood their ground, refusing to back off. He insisted that retaining the name Margaret Trowell had nothing to do with "colonial hangovers" as some Senators wanted everyone to believe. The school was simply paying a debt of gratitude to its founder, who unfortunately happened to be a British. They had made their case, Senate was convinced and Sengendo carried the day.

Not only did the School modify its name, the name of the degree was also changed from Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art (BA Fine Art) to Bachelor of Industrial and Fine Arts (BIFA). The change was as fundamental as that. Subjects like Business Administration, Marketing, Finance and Banking, Applied Design, Jewellery, Photography, Industrial Ceramics and many more found their way into the new BIFA degree curriculum and for the first time, industrial attachment – undertaken in the recess term of the second year – became a compulsory requirement which the School's undergraduate students had to fulfil before they could graduate.

Be that as it may, more change was on the way. For the first time in its long history, the University Council agreed to departmentalise the School. Sengendo had asked for more departments, but Senate recommended only three, which Council approved for a start: Painting and Art History, Sculpture, and Industrial Art and Design. Staff had to choose the departments where they wanted to belong or the ones their interests fitted best. P. N. Sengendo and long-serving Ignatius Serulyo ended up in Painting and Art History with young and very smart Francis Xavier Ife, whom I always referred to as FX, as Head of Department. Professor Francis Nnaggenda joined Sculpture with George Kyeyune as the founding Head of Department. The soft-spoken Philip Kwesiga, another young artist, ended up heading the Department of Industrial Art and Design. If I had my way, I would have approved only two departments for the school, one to take care of the more

traditional Fine Art and the other for the Applied Art. However, as it turned out, three were quite adequate for a start and seemed to be a better compromise. The school's good leadership ensured a flawless transition from a single-department school to one with three separate departments. Also gone were the days when the Head of the School doubled as its Dean. Under the new structure, the school ran as any other Faculty in the University with the Office of the Dean separate from that of the Heads of Departments. Unlike the Institute of Public Health where some departments ended up with too few staff after departmentalisation, the school had a reasonable number of staff in each department. Again, tribute was due to the leadership which, even before the University Council agreed to the idea of a departmentalised school, had undertaken a massive staff recruitment drive. I think this was one of Musangogwantaamu's endearing contribution and a legacy to his tenure as Head of the School before P. N. Sengendo took over.

The staff was a good mix of old timers and new blood and was academically productive. As if by design, during my time, the school was one of the faculties that boasted of a large number of women on its staff list. In fact, by the time I left the University, Mrs Josephine Wannyanu Mukasa had taken over from P. N. Sengendo as Dean of the faculty. Being an America-trained artist, who started out as a teacher at Makerere College School before joining the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, some of her colleagues had objected to her promotion to Senior Lecturer. However, the Appointments Board was satisfied that she merited the promotion. Soon after her promotion, she was elected Dean of the School. As far as I can recall, she was the third woman to be elected to the position at Makerere after Teresa Kakooza of the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education and Joy Kwesiga of Social Sciences respectively.

When the University Council enacted a policy which fixed the PhD degree or its equivalent as the minimum qualification for one to be a lecturer at Makerere, the debate whether members of staff teaching in professional faculties should be required to have one began, and continued to rage on. As far as I can recall, the Faculty of Medicine was the first to raise objection to the new policy but later backed off. The School of Industrial and Fine Arts followed suit. Some of the more senior staff argued that a PhD was not necessary for the artists. According to some of them, artists needed professional qualifications and fellowships of learned societies, such as the Fellowship of the Royal College of Art of the UK. Though seemingly convincing, both Senate and Council did not buy into the arguments and continued to insist on applying the new rule uniformly across board. While some of the more senior members of staff in the school wanted to continue with the fight, the younger ones were not convinced the fight would serve any useful purpose, after all none of those who were vehemently opposed to the new policy had been admitted to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Art. Instead, the younger staff chose to prepare for the new reality of a PhD or its equivalent.

At about the same time, the school entered into what turned out to be an interesting and helpful relationship with the Middlesex University in the UK. The collaboration was spearheaded on the UK side by Professor Gale, who had been acting as the school's external examiner for a couple of years. Philip Kwesiga, Vivian Nakazibwe and one or two other members of staff were the first to register for their PhDs at the Middlesex University under the Makerere-Middlesex linkage, sponsored by the Staff Development Fund. Incidentally, over the years, young Lillian Nabulime of the Department of Sculpture had made a name for herself as a sculptor. I remember the University of Bergen inviting her to exhibit some of her works there. Every time I visited the School, I found her works, which were fascinating on display. She had a way of turning ugly tree stumps and roots into beautiful works of art. When the new policy requiring every academic member of staff to have a PhD or a higher doctorate came into force, in 1998, she decided to study for the degree at the University of Newcastle. Unfortunately, the premature death of her husband was a serious setback for her, but she was strong enough to overcome the tragedy that had befallen her and continued with her studies.

While a few members of staff decided to study abroad for their PhDs, others registered at Makerere. In 1996, Brother Peter Andrew Yiga of the Department of Painting and Art History made history by becoming the first member of staff to graduate with a PhD in Fine Art from Makerere. I believe he was the second member of staff to hold a PhD degree in Art after Reverend Kefa Sempangi, who had to flee the country during the Idi Amin era. The difference was that Kefa Sempangi obtained his PhD abroad after he had left Makerere and never came back to teach at the school. After Brother Yiga's triumph and the University Council's insistence on having the PhD, every member of staff wanted to obtain a PhD. Some seized the opportunity to study for it in South Africa when the country opened itself up to the rest of Africa after the end of the apartheid era in 1994.

If someone ever asked me to showcase a truly success story of the university policy based on the famous Mujaju Report, the School of Industrial and Fine Arts would certainly qualify as one of the success stories and would come very close to the top of my list. The mindset turn-around I was witnessing was as unimaginable as it was impressive. I could hardly hide my disbelief when, one day, a senior and long serving member of staff, who had been a staunch proponent of the old school of thought that subscribed to notion that as for artists, a PhD was unnecessary, approached me to help him register for a PhD. I am sure the believers in the Holy Bible are quite familiar with a couple of dramatic stories of latter day converts, St Paul being the most famous of them all.

The sudden upsurge in interest amongst members of staff to go for the PhD was to me the closest you could ever get to the biblical St Paul's dramatic conversion. However, what I cannot say with absolute certainty is whether divine intervention

had a hand in the conversion of my colleagues to the new thinking. Whatever the forces that were at play, there is no doubt the school had gone through a big paradigm shift. The talk about fellowships of professional organisations as an alternative to the PhD had long been forgotten. Once again, the School of Industrial and Fine Arts had clearly demonstrated that contrary to popular belief, universities are capable of reforming with changing times. Although it would be naïve of me to deny that the new university policy on qualifications had a lot to do with the school's change of attitude, we could not ignore the staff's willingness to accept change as an inevitable eventuality; the realisation that after all, what we cherish as our comfort zones is never permanent.

In my considered opinion, the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, as a creator and cradle of Uganda's fine arts, is a university asset worth preserving. It has the potential to attract foreign visitors and African Art collectors from all over the world. Much as we failed to find the money in my time to give the school a good facelift, at some point in future, funds will have to be found to rehabilitate this important School and expand its gallery which attracts several visitors and art admirers during its annual Art Exhibitions. Tribute goes to the many organisations and individuals that have supported the school over the years and, in particular, during my time as Vice Chancellor. For example, shortly before I retired, the Madhavani group of companies made a generous donation of looms to the School to support its new weaving and textile design programme under Mrs Josephine Mukasa. An extra building had to be hurriedly put up to house the looms. In a way, it was a make-shift little building. Besides this small building the school had to put up in a haste to accommodate the looms, the University Council allocated a nearby staff house to the Jewellery section. This house needed a facelift too, which we could not do at the time. Today, graduates of the new school's programmes are now better placed to start businesses of their own as jewellery designers and makers, textile designers, commercial artists and so on. The school had transitioned Art from pure aesthetics to other equally gainful and important applications. No doubt, in spite of these impressive achievements, a few problems cropped up from time to time. For instance, once it was alleged that some senior members of staff had secretly sold off the school's art works abroad for their personal gains. Upon investigation, we could not substantiate the allegations. There were also occasional personality clashes along religious, and ethnic lines, which almost tore the school apart. Fortunately, the situation began to change with the recruitment of a younger crop of staff who hailed from all parts of the country.

In spite of the few problems and setbacks, the school made progress during my time as Vice Chancellor. I must say that I regretted the fact that some long serving members of staff failed to qualify for promotion when they should have. There were various reasons why they failed to make the grade, but failure to produce

and exhibit new works was one of them. That was the assessors' verdict and there was little I could do about it beyond the Appointments Board informing the affected members of staff why their application for promotion was unsuccessful. Apparently, for an academic artist, producing new works and exhibiting them on a regular basis is critically essential for career development. At Makerere, this is the equivalent of a paper in a peer-reviewed journal or a book publication.

### **Faculty of Law – The Learned Friends Contributing to the Dispensation of Justice and Upholding the Rule of Law**

I believe that Law is one of the most misunderstood professions or, more precisely, the misperceived profession. The wrong perception seems to stem from the fact that for some people, it is simply inconceivable for a person who was neither an eyewitness nor a party to a crime when it was committed to stand up in court to defend an alleged criminal. In the minds of others, lawyers are “liars” who lie for a fee. Some even go further to allege that lawyers are employed to confuse witnesses in order to win cases in the courts. In my view, this is the worst kind of stigmatisation of such a noble profession. Those who see lawyers as professional crooks overlook a very simple fact that, in the absence of lawyers, the judicial systems would not exist. To continue to malign lawyers in this fashion negates the fact that proper administration of justice demands that the judicial system works both ways – for the plaintiff and the defendant. The rule of law dictates that the defendant has the same right to legal representation much in the same way as the plaintiff. I guess this is the crux of the matter.

Since the legal profession is an integral part of any modern society, the Government of Uganda was very keen to have Law taught at Makerere in the 1960s when the college was still part of the federal University of East Africa. In this account, we have seen how Kenya and Uganda decided to start their own Law Schools at Nairobi and Makerere respectively, thus bringing to an end the monopoly the University College of Dar es Salaam had enjoyed since the founding of the University of East Africa. From Dar es Salaam to Nairobi and then to Makerere, the Harvard-trained lawyer, Professor Joseph Nume Kakooza, founder Head and first Dean of the faculty, had to endure many difficulties as he struggled to start the Law Department in the Faculty of Social Sciences, which was the fore-runner to the present-day Law Faculty, with a handful of staff. His pioneer students, who had expected to join the University College of Dar es Salaam, were terribly demoralised at how deprived they were in terms of the absence of a library and other learning resources and had to do with the little which was available to them. As it is often said, pioneering has never been easy. I recall a conversation I once had with Professor Kakooza about the many challenges he faced starting the Department of Law. He narrated the tough time some demanding students gave him in spite of his many repeated assurances that, in time, their situation would

only improve. However, despite those rough beginnings, the Law Department rapidly grew to become a full-fledged faculty. Justice Remy Kasule is one of Professor Kakooza's most successful and outstanding pioneering students, but he was also one of the most demanding ones. We have also seen how Professor Kakooza left the faculty when the Government of the day appointed him as a High Court Judge, leaving it in the hands of, among others, Abraham Kiapi (now deceased) who was a Dar es Salaam and Columbia University-trained lawyer as Dean. Professor Kiapi too left his fingerprints in the young faculty. As Dean in the mid-1970s, Abraham Kiapi was instrumental in moving the young faculty from the small pre-fabricated building behind the Faculty of Arts, which was later allocated to the Institute of Languages, to its present location. In fact, the faculty occupies what used to be the Centre for Continuing Studies headquarters before the latter moved into its present premises, also in the 1970s. It was also during Professor Kiapi's time as Dean that the Government put a ban on lecturers in the faculty engaging in private practice; a move that saw many promising and upcoming academic lawyers leaving the university. By the time I returned to Makerere in July 1979, Professor Kiapi had handed the leadership of the faculty over to young David Isabirye. Unfortunately, David Isabirye left Makerere in the 1980s and Frederick Jjuuko found himself taking over as Dean.

Dr Khidu Makubuya, who had returned with a Doctor of Juris Sciences from Yale University joined the faculty as a young lecturer at the beginning of the 1980s and quickly rose through the ranks to succeed Fred Jjuuko as the next Dean. At the time, the impression created was that Fred Jjuuko and a few other young lecturers with strong socialist views were indoctrinating the students with the Marxism dogma instead of teaching Law. I recall Jjuuko pointing out during a student function that he was proud that the Faculty had trained lawyers with social consciences. So when Khidu Makubuya took over as Dean, a change from training lawyers with a social conscience was welcomed. However, Khidu's reign lasted a short time, leading to an upheaval at the faculty. After a showdown with the former Vice Chancellor over the admission of what the faculty believed was an under-qualified student, he resigned. The Vice Chancellor had to identify a new Dean for the Faculty; but after Khidu Makubuya resigned, the Vice Chancellor could not find another member of staff in the faculty willing to succeed him, not even in an acting capacity. In the midst of the stalemate, the University Administration turned to old timer and founder of the faculty, Joseph Nume Kakooza. He was called out of semi-retirement as a Judge and brought back to Makerere to rescue the faculty he had founded more than a decade earlier. As Dean once again, Nume Kakooza quickly proved that he still had what it took to get things done, with a lot of administrative magic left in him. His return to his old faculty as Dean seemed to have calmed the enraged staff. By the time Professor Kakooza left in 1986, the faculty was more or less back on track.

By 1993, the Faculty of Law, which I informally preferred to call the Law School had three departments, namely Public and Comparative Law; Commercial Law; Law and Jurisprudence, as well as the Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC, as it is popularly called) – a later addition. The HURIPEC building was really the first construction project I handled. At the time, I was a rookie Vice Chancellor on a steep learning curve. HURIPEC was conceived as a joint project between the University of Florida at Gainesville and Makerere University. The cost of the building was also shared between the two universities, with Makerere University Faculty of Law footing the larger portion of the bill. It was the first new building at the Faculty of Law since it moved into the former CCE premises. Although not spectacularly big, it was designed to serve as a multi-purpose building, with lecture halls, offices, a computer laboratory, seminar rooms and residences for visiting professors and other scholars from Florida. In fact, it was a small building designed by a young Irish female volunteer lecturer in the Department of Architecture, who was also the project's lead architect under the supervision of TECO. I recall the many hours Reverend David Sentongo and I spent pondering over the architectural drawings with her, Dr Barnabas Nawangwe, Professor Peter Schmidt and Professor Naggan – the Florida team leader – and Dean Jjuuko, before we settled on the final design, which the University Council finally approved.

The inauguration ceremony on December 10, 1997 was a grand occasion, with Dr Karerolin Holbrook leading the University of Florida delegation. As the time approached to the opening of the building and the official launch of the Centre, we had to identify a Director. After advertising the position, which attracted even some Ugandan Law Professors teaching at the University of Botswana, the Appointments Board selected Dr Edward Khidu Makubuya as the best candidate and appointed him its first substantive Director. At the time, he had already risen to the rank of Associate Professor.

Unfortunately, he resigned in 2001 and went to participate in the general election of that year. He was elected Member of Parliament and subsequently appointed Minister of State for Luwero Triangle. That marked the end of his almost 15 years as a member of staff of the Makerere Law School. Before his appointment as Director, he had been an active participant in the Florida-Makerere project. Before he resigned, I had known him as a friend for a long time, but had not realised he had a strong calling for politics. At the time he left the university, he was also in charge of the USAID-sponsored Paralegal and Street Law project at the faculty. After his departure, Dr Joe Oloka Onyango took over as Director. The Harvard-trained SJD (Doctor of Juridical Science) lawyer was one of most industrious and illustrious members of staff at Makerere that I had ever met. As Director, he moved the Centre to a higher level. Like the Faculty of Arts, a computer laboratory in the Law School was a novelty in the University

at the time. The ICT revolution had caught up with the learned profession, this time not in court of law, but where the learned friends-to-be were being taught the tricks of the trade before they went out to exercise their practice in the real world.

After the fall of Idi Amin and the relatively short-lived Obote II Government which took power in the 1980 general elections, the Law School at Makerere took it upon itself to champion the cause of human rights in the country at the highest level possible. The human rights crusade attracted allies from near and far. The University of Florida at Gainesville was an early arrival aboard and a very active partner in the faculty's endeavour to bring to the fore the excesses and abuses that had gone on unabated for so long and, in the process, gave the subject an intellectual dimension. Then Dr Oloka Onyango, with his strong background in constitutionalism and ability to write lucidly, was one of the most ardent proponents of fundamental human rights. In collaboration with Professors Peter Schmidt and Nagan of South African descent, they founded the peer-reviewed East African Journal of Human Rights. Besides publishing his own papers in scholarly journals, Oloka Onyango also co-edited several other works with distinguished scholars, such as Mahmood Mamdani.

The Centre's first Director, Dr Khidu Makubuya, besides serving as a member of the Constitutional Commission that drafted Uganda's 1995 Constitution under the leadership of Justice Benjamin Odoki, also served as a member of the Human Rights Commission. The Government had set up the commission to investigate the extent of human rights violation and abuse during the regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote. At the time of winding up its work, the commission had accumulated a wealth of material which the Faculty of Law, with funding from the USAID, decided to document for proper archiving. The Faculty assigned the responsibility of coordinating this arduous and gigantic task to Mrs Olivia Mutibwa, who was then the Deputy University Librarian. Indeed, HURIPEC was in a way one of Makerere's unique academic institutes in this respect; apparently the first of its kind in East Africa. It was also a novel experiment in putting human rights and peace at the top of the university's academic and intellectual agenda.

With the introduction of the evening LLB programme in the 1992/93 academic year, the faculty was suddenly faced with a rapidly growing student population. The available facilities were beginning to show signs of over-stretching. The tiny Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC) building was the only new structure of the School. The problem of overcrowding needed an urgent solution. In 1999, the faculty elected Dr Grace Patrick Mukubwa, a first class graduate of the University of Dar es Salaam, with a JSD from York University as its new Dean. Dr Mukubwa soon came to grips with the problem and, for him, the solution was simple. Instead of waiting forever for Government to construct new buildings for the School, he decided to use part of the internally-generated income for a

new building. The idea was not entirely strange; the faculty had co-financed the HURIPEC building. Much as it sounded a brilliant idea, some members of staff questioned the wisdom of using the faculty's income to finance infrastructural development. To them, it was the responsibility of the Government of Uganda to provide the university with sufficient buildings and other essential amenities. They argued that, after Government had failed to pay them a living wage, it did not seem reasonable for the faculty to go into income-generation ventures to supplement the Government's pittance. These were powerful arguments indeed, but did not sway Grace Mukubwa to back off. Rather, he continued to convince his colleagues about the merits of a new building financed from their own income. After all, they could all see how crowded the place was. As if that was not enough, some members of staff started raising the issue of the faculty's location. They felt that the faculty was at the periphery, too far removed from the centre of the university. If there were to be a new building, it would have to be built somewhere near the centre. From the discussions I held with a delegation which came to see me over the matter, they wanted the university to find their faculty a new site somewhere along Pool Road or better. Unfortunately, there was no vacant plot along Pool Road that the university could allocate to the Faculty of Law. I had to persuade them to make do with their present location. We had to convince them that being at the far southern end of the university main campus did not mean the Law School was being marginalised as some had implied in some of the discussions I had with them over the issue of space. The Law School was not the only faculty located there. With this explanation, they decided to rest their case for space in what they thought was the university's prime area. When it was all said and done, the majority of staff was convinced that a new building was in their best interest. At the time, many of them were either sharing offices or had none at all. Even the Dean's Office would pass for a rat hole. As we shall soon see, unfortunately, the new building came at a considerable cost to Professor Mukubwa and the former University Secretary, Avitus Tibarimbasa.

The original design was a complex of buildings with one of them serving as the Law Library. However, continued strong opposition and lack of sufficient funds to finance the rather ambitious project forced the faculty to revise the designs. The funds available, some Ugsh 300 million – the equivalent of some US\$ 180,000 at the time – were just enough to finance a small three-floor building. Concorp, a Sudanese construction company operating in Uganda, won the tender to construct the building. Not long after the tender was awarded, the usual rumours started flying around that the Dean, in collusion with the University Secretary, was receiving kickbacks from the contractor. The allegations were so serious that some so-called concerned citizens asked the Inspector General of Government (IGG), to investigate. In fact, the IGG's intervention saved the situation. After months of investigating the University Secretary, the IGG found nowrongdoing whatsoever. In awarding the tender, the University Council had followed the

procedures to the letter. Naturally, the outrageous allegations hurt us all and, for Professor Mukubwa, it was the last straw. Although he was eligible for re-election when his first term ended, he decided not to stand again. As for the University Secretary, allegations of this kind were not new. For him, they had become more or less occupational hazards. A friend of mine once told me that if I wanted a relatively trouble free tenure as Vice Chancellor, I should avoid going into things like construction. According to him, Ugandans had become so accustomed to believing that there was no tender without a ten percent commission or some kind of kickback. During Amin's time and thereafter, it was the accepted norm. I guess this was the perception Africans had of public officials and Government bureaucrats, which was an unpleasant fact of life we had to live with.

Fortunately for Dr Mukubwa and us in Administration, the contractor did a marvellous job. It was a pleasure to watch the new building slowly take shape and eventually the contractor handed over the keys to the university. The burnt red clay tegula-thatched building has, among the facilities, a book bank, a small lecture theatre with a seating capacity of 100 or so, staff offices and a large lecture hall with a seating capacity of about 300. With the inauguration of the new building, the faculty had largely solved the long nagging problem of teaching space for big classes. It was a personal triumph for Professor Mukubwa, who decided to stay on course, despite the never-ending criticisms from a few members of staff. Although the change of leadership meant shelving the library project, I was grateful to members of staff at the Faculty of Law for their far-sightedness and for accepting to forego their allowances for some time to pay for the 700 square metre building, I am sure they were equally proud of their achievement too. With the completion of this building in October 1998, I could see my dream of giving the University an architectural character slowly taking shape. With the exception of the Faculty of Social Sciences' new block, all buildings constructed during my time were roofed with burnt red clay tiles.

As I approached my last years as Vice Chancellor, the faculty elected Joe Oloka Onyango as Dean. When the news of his election reached me, I could not help thinking that in so doing, members of staff had paid a fitting tribute to one of the longest serving members of staff in the faculty and a loyal colleague. After his SJD from Harvard, Oloka Onyango could have stayed and worked in the USA or gone somewhere else where the pastures were greener than the Uganda of the 1980s. Instead, he chose to come back home, in the midst of Uganda's political and economic chaos, to build for the future of Uganda, East Africa, Africa and the world. I was almost certain that if Bernard Onyango had not retired from Makerere a few years earlier, the election of his son as Dean would have been a crowning moment for him too. Through his hard work, at the time he became Dean, Oloka Onyango had risen to the rank of Associate Professor. Becoming Dean meant relinquishing his position at HURIPEC. Young Sam Tindifa took

over as Acting Director of HURIPEC. Although a very much low-key person, under Onyango's leadership, the faculty moved on. As we shall later discover, besides being a successful Dean, Joe was also a prominent founding member of the original Committee of 14, the C14, which planned for and implemented the – HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com” \h – I@mak.com programme until he resigned from the Committee in 2003.

The attempt to defraud the faculty of almost eighty million shillings by one of the Faculty Accountants during his tenure as Dean was one of the few unfortunate incidents that come to mind. A young accountant in his office had forged his signature on a cheque and attempted to cash it. The bank intercepted the cheque and alerted the university authorities. When the results from the handwriting expert came back, the Police proved that the accountant had indeed forged Dean Oloka Onyango's signature. The case went to court. Oloka's occasional jibes at the Government and President Museveni in the press or at public functions did not always find favour for him with some sections of Uganda's political establishment, but to him as an academic, the freedom to express one's opinion without fear or favour was a God-given right.

I suppose it was as a result of the pervasive ICT revolution, when the faculty surprised the Academic Registrar by being one of the first to initiate a computerised system of processing examination results – from the raw marks to the final degree class – moreover using its own in-house developed software. To the faculty's credit, the computer programme was flawless. Although the software had no problem, the first time it was used, in haste, the programmer missed some vital data which led to the computation of inaccurate GPAs and wrong degree classifications. For the final year students, the error was as embarrassing as it was painful. It was detected after the faculty had released the provisional results. The Academic Registrar had no choice but to recall the results to correct the mistake. After re-computing the GPA, grades and degree classes changed. For instance, many final year borderline students previously placed in the second-class lower division honours were later shocked to find themselves in the pass degree category; turning their joy into an explosion of understandable anger, bitterness and curses to the apparently incompetent university administrators. It was one of those agonising decisions we had to make from time to time. In such circumstances, we could only hold our breath, pray and hope that the consequences would not cause chaos within the students' community.

When the Academic Registrar released the results again, this time with new GPAs and degree classes, we feared for the worst. I imagined hell breaking loose in Senate, when the students discovered that their grades had changed and their degree classes downgraded. We could only thank our lucky stars that most of the affected students understood the problem, accepted the outcome and the incident passed off relatively peacefully. That was a bitter lesson which prompted

us to speed up the setting up of a unified university-wide computerised system for processing examination results. Moreover, this unfortunate incident came when scores of past generations of students had been complaining that the Faculty of Law had earned for itself a reputation of being notoriously mean with marks. True or false, many apparently brilliant and hardworking students never graduated with the kind of honours degrees they expected. For as long as I could remember, Makerere Law students always excelled at the international moots, but none of them ever made first class honours. In fact, after Khidu Makubuya's first class (the equivalent of *summa cum laude* in some countries) awarded in 1974, several years passed without a single student ever coming close to getting it. Khidu Makubuya's record stood unbroken for over two decades. Yet, many graduates of the school who went on to postgraduate schools in some of the world's top universities performed brilliantly and, indeed, many excelled. Some wondered whether the Law School at Makerere had not set that bar too high. One could only conjecture an answer! However, the semester system changed all that and students began to excel.

Like Professor Grace Tumwine Mukubwa, Oloka Onyango also decided not to seek a second term. Instead, he stepped down in order to concentrate his enormous intellectual energy on what he did best – writing and publishing. Soon, the labour of his pen earned him the well-deserved promotion to full Professor of Law, shortly after I had left the University. I was proud to see his wife, Silvia Tamale, also get her PhD from the University of Minnesota in the USA after her Master of Laws at Harvard. I think Silvia Tamale's outspokenness on what some people consider taboo subjects speaks for itself. She was that kind person who firmly believed in her convictions and in the right of free speech. Speaking her mind in an unrestricted manner, as she often did, earned her the reputation of being one of the most controversial female academics at Makerere. You either liked her or hated her. To get a true insight of Silvia Tamale's mind, one has to read her book *When Hens Begin to Crow*. Like her husband, she is also a resolute academic. By the time I left the University, she was poised to become an Associate Professor.

After Professor Oloka Onyango, Professor David Bakibinga took over the mantle as Dean. A commercial lawyer and a University of London PhD graduate, Professor Bakibinga came to the faculty after a stint as Board Secretary of the Uganda Revenue Authority. With an impressive record of good publications, he quickly rose to the rank of full Professor. Moreover, before his colleagues in the faculty had spotted his leadership potential, we asked him to act as Deputy Director of the School of Postgraduate Studies. When he left the School to take up his new position as Dean of Law in 2003, Professor Yustos Kaahwa, the physicist, replaced him. As we have seen earlier, Professor Bakibinga led the inquiry that unravelled the problems in the Institute of Psychology. He had as

Deputy Dean, Dr Lillian Tebatemwa Ekirikubinza, a University of Copenhagen PhD graduate, who in 2004 made history for herself and the women in general by becoming the first woman Deputy Vice Chancellor at Makerere. It was an interesting combination, but I did not stay long to see how the two got on with each other. The little that comes to mind about David Bakibinga's time as Dean was the small students' agitation about examinations retakes and related issues, which Mr Ngobi quickly resolved. I remember hearing some students alleging that the new Dean was hard on them. He was one of the candidates in the race for the post of Makerere's ninth Vice Chancellor, but ended taking up the second Deputy Vice Chancellor position.

Promotions at Makerere were, for a long time, frustratingly slow. In part, the problem was the result of deprivation of funding and other critical resources members of staff needed to conduct meaningful research and produce publishable results in credible journals and at conferences. The daily struggle to find enough food to feed their families compounded the situation. At the same time, the university insisted that for one to be promoted from one rank to the next, one must have the requisite minimum publications in terms of quantity and quality. Over time however, the situation changed slightly for the better. More and more academic members of staff were meeting the criteria and being promoted. I had the privilege to witness many colleagues in the Faculty of Law beating the odds and getting their promotions. Grace Tumwine Mukubwa and David Bakibinga were the first generation of new full Professors after Abraham Kiapi and Joseph Nume Kakooza. I was equally happy to see Fred Jjuuko, the "Muwejjere" (common man) making it to Associate Professor and taking over the Head of the Department of Law and Jurisprudence. Jean Barya, the university lecturer with a PhD from Warwick in the UK and at the time Head of the Public and Comparative Law Department became Associate Professor too, shortly before I left. The number of younger and brilliant staff joining the faculty was equally good news. Many had taken their Masters of Law at the University of Cambridge in the UK and passed with ease. George William Mugwanya, with part of his fees paid from our Staff Development Fund, did Makerere proud when he passed his PhD at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA *summa cum laude*, one of few students to have passed in that grade at the university.

Among the many other changes that took place in the Faculty of Law in my time was the re-assigning of staff to the three departments and HURIPEC according to their specialisations and interest. The opening up of the entry requirements, which enabled even Science students and Arts students who did not have Literature as one of their "A" Level subjects to enrol for Law, was in my opinion, another major milestone for the university. The criticism voiced after we had opened up was that students who had a Science background or those who did not have a Literature background had difficulty in writing in the articulate way lawyers are expected to write. Nonetheless, I believe that on equilibrium, it

was a good policy. Apparently, mastery of English Literature made it relatively easy for a Law student to write well. Naturally, without this background, Science students were handicapped but our conviction was that in time the good ones would master the writing skills.

Shortly before I took over as Vice Chancellor, Justice Benjamin Odoki headed a small Committee set up by the Government of Uganda in the early 1990s to look into the legal training at Makerere. At the time, no other University in Uganda offered Law. The Odoki Committee recommended several changes in the LLB degree curriculum, aimed at improving it to meet the new and emerging demands of the legal profession. For instance, in today's world, lawyers are expected to be familiar with DNA finger-printing technology, Internet crime and so on. One of Justice Odoki's major recommendations was to change the LLB degree from a three to a four-year course. We had the onus to implement this recommendation in the 1997/98 academic year. For example, Environmental Law became one of the LLB subjects. The revival of the Master of Law programme, combining course work and a short dissertation, was another landmark in the faculty during my tenure as Vice Chancellor. I was intrigued when Joe Oloka Onyango and a few of his colleagues talked to me about the possibility of introducing a Postgraduate Diploma course in Refugee Studies. Sooner than later, the faculty was offering the course.

When the time comes for the Faculty of Law to celebrate its golden jubilee and other anniversaries, it will look back to its humble beginnings as a department in the faculty of Social Sciences and becoming a full-fledged faculty in 1970 when Makerere was inaugurated as a national university, with a lot of pride and satisfaction of what it has built for the future of Uganda's legal profession over the years. Scores of Makerere-trained lawyers are playing key roles in both the public and private sectors. Several of them are now judges of Uganda's judiciary and others are practising in several parts of the world. Tribute must go to the many members of staff, past and present, for their hard work and many who have already passed away, including Dr Kiwanuka (who died in New Zealand after his PhD), Abraham Kiapi, and Ben Obola Ochola, to mention but a few. Fortunately, at the time of writing this account some of the faculty's founding members of staff were still alive and active. One recalls Justice (Professor) Joseph Nume Kakooza, Justice (Professor) George Kanyeihamba; Dr Joseph Byamugisha, John Katende, Fred Sempeebwa, a fellow Queen's Belfast graduate – all now prominent lawyers in private practice in Kampala; Sam Njuba, another Queen's Belfast graduate, now in national politics. Amanywa Mushega, the former Secretary General of the East African Community also taught at the faculty briefly before he had to flee for his dear life. I recall my old friend, James Mayanja, who was a promising upcoming member of staff in the faculty before he left for Australia for his PhD. I was more than happy and privileged to see so many innovative changes take place in this faculty during my time at Makerere.

### **Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (IACE) – The Pleasure to Learn Knows No Age Limit**

In December 1980, Uganda held her third general election. Three main political parties contested in the elections, namely the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC); the Democratic Party (DP) and the new Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM). Chango Machyo was one of the candidates who had decided to contest a parliamentary seat in Mbale on the UPM ticket. The story goes that the Tororo District Commissioner, who also doubled as the Returning Officer of the area, disqualified Chango Machyo as a candidate on the grounds that he failed to produce evidence to prove he could speak English. In 1953, Makerere College opened the Department of Extra Mural Studies, the new department set up upcountry outposts, including Mbale. What has all this got to do with Chango Machyo's disqualification as an MP candidate in the 1980 election? It so happened that at the time of that infamous general election, Chango Machyo was a resident tutor of the Centre for Continuing Education in Mbale. He had studied in the UK and, while in London, he had been deeply involved in students' politics and was a prominent student leader there for many years before returning to Uganda to take up an appointment at Makerere University College. On his return, he joined the staff of the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) and was posted to Mbale as a resident tutor. Over the years, I have heard contradictory accounts why Chango Machyo was disqualified. However, the popular version at the time was that the Returning Officer disqualified Chango Machyo, because he failed to produce proof that he could speak English. Whatever the truth, the moral of the story was that the Returning Officer's decision seemed to insinuate that Makerere was employing people who could not speak its language of instruction – English. Surely, if the aim was to scare an unwanted candidate, the Returning Officer could have done it in a less crude way. Those familiar with Chango's satirical writing saw this absurd incident as a practical joke carried too far by the Returning Officer.

The Department of Extra Mural Studies was the first attempt to make Makerere College, which at the time was the only seat of higher learning in Eastern Africa, accessible to those who had missed the opportunity to study for a full-time course. When it started out in 1953, its broad responsibility was to provide the general public with various forms of university-based adult education. At the time, the Certificate in Adult Studies (or CAS as it was popularly known) was one of the few formal academic qualifications offered by the department. The CAS course continued well into the 1990s and beyond. After Uganda's independence in 1962, which ushered a period of rapid Africanisation, the department experienced a growing demand for formal courses leading to qualifications that would open up employment opportunities for its graduates. In 1965, the Government of Uganda appointed the Kironde Committee to examine indepth the justification for upgrading the Department of Extra Mural Studies to a college. Following the

recommendations of the Kironde Committee, the department was transformed into a Centre for Continuing Education in 1966, with four units, namely Extra Mural Studies, Residential Course Unit, Correspondence Unit and the Mass Media Unit. In the 1970s, two more units were added – General and Professional Education Division and the Adult Educators Training Division. From these humble beginnings, it was and continues to be the principal organ of the university that specialises in promoting Adult Education and formal Life-long Learning programmes. When I joined Makerere as an undergraduate student in 1970, I wondered why the university had set up this department which appeared to have no students based at the main campus and yet occupied one of the largest buildings on the campus, almost next to the university's main entrance. I saw it as a waste of time and valuable space; after all, anyone who missed the opportunity to join Makerere as a direct high school entrant could do so by taking the mature age examination to gain admission to a degree course. Ignorant as I was at the time, I had not yet quite understood the real value of adult and life-long learning, particularly when it led to no formal academic qualification we were so accustomed to. At the time, a Certificate or Diploma in Adult Studies made very little sense to me. What did people learn in Adult Studies? Were they being taught how to cope with old age and the ageing process? These were some of the ridiculous questions I asked myself as a naive first year undergraduate in 1970. Of course, later on I discovered and understood the purpose of this seemingly "studentless" department. I also came to appreciate the enormous value and importance of Adult Studies and life-long learning. Interestingly, that was also the time the construction of its current massive pre-fabricated building, financed with a Danish Agency for International Development (DANIDA) grant, had begun to be interrupted by Idi Amin's coup of 1971. The Israeli civil engineering company, Soliel Boneh, which introduced the pre-fabricated concrete slab technology in Uganda and built the Bugolobi flats and the new Entebbe Airport among others and had won the tender to construct this huge building, was forced to leave the country at short notice before completing the work. Idi Amin's Government contracted another company, which I could not trace, to complete the job. However, that company lacked the Soliel Boneh's technical expertise and workmanship. The building's flat roof proved a menace when it started leaking profusely a few years after the contractor had handed it over to the university. As with all other flat-roofed buildings in the University, the solution was to pitch the roof with GI sheets in order to prevent further damage from the leaking roof.

Years after its completion, this massive building complex was under-utilised. Apart from the southern wing overlooking the Makerere Institute of Social Research, where the Director's office, staff offices, lecture rooms, studio and the library were located, the northern wing overlooking the University Guest House and tennis courts, was virtually empty. When the university came under extreme pressure in the late 1970s to provide accommodation for the growing number

of students, particularly the females, this side of the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) building was given to the Dean of Students and turned into students' hall of residence. The CCE Complex Hall now included the old Mitchell Hall buildings like Sejjongo and Nsubuga, among others. Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB) which was taken over by the then Standard Bank (now Standard Chartered Bank) Makerere University Branch, following Idi Amin's directive, was an earlier tenant in the building. Originally, Makerere University Standard Bank branch used to be on the first floor of the Main Hall.

In the mid-1970s, after UCB had taken over the operations of Standard Bank, it moved from the Main Building, which had very limited space for expansion, into the more spacious offices in the new CCE building and remained there until 2002 when it moved again into the Senate House. Besides inadequacy of space and modern amenities, the CCE management badly needed the space the Bank occupied, in spite of the Bank being a source of income to the Centre. With the Bank gone, that source dried up but the space vacated by the Bank was now available for the institute's use. The institute needed every available space for its expansion. By the time I returned to Makerere in 1993, the re-organisation of the institute into departments, which had begun in 1992, was still ongoing, but the lack of space was becoming a stumbling block to these efforts.

When CCE metamorphosed into the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (IACE), the University Council approved only three academic departments, namely; Adult Education and Communication Studies (AECS); Community Education and Extra Mural Studies (CEEMS) and Distance Education (DE). When the assets of the now defunct CCE were shared among the three departments, the Department of Community Education and Extra Mural Studies took over the running of the regional centres based in Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Lira, Gulu, Hoima, Fort Portal, Kabale and Arua. When we came in, our first major task was to allocate the existing staff to the three departments. Under the old CCE, everyone was doing more or less the same thing, so disciplinary specialisation delineation was a very thin line. The new three departments were more specialised and as a result, the exercise took much longer than we had anticipated. Everyone was figuring out where they fitted best, according to their original specialisations. Staff had to choose the departments where their academic qualifications best fitted them. However, after distributing the existing staff into the three departments, it soon became clear that without additional staff, the new departments were grossly understaffed. It was a stark reminder to us that expansion and diversification of academic units came with a price tag. Eventually, we had to find a way of addressing the problem of inadequate staffing in the institute, across board.

In the many years I was at Makerere, Anthony Oketch's name had become synonymous with the CCE. Apart from serving as a Director of the Centre,

he did much to promote and popularise adult education and adult studies countrywide and at Makerere, through his writings and outreach work. In fact, Anthony Oketch helped many mature age candidates pass the mature age entrance examination, using his booklets. For the many who attempted to gain admission to the university through the mature age scheme, the CCE provided an invaluable study material which could not be found anywhere else in the country, thanks to Anthony Oketch. When the CCE was re-organised into an institute, Anthony Oketch chose to join the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies, together with Teresa Kakooza, another CCE icon. She too served as Director of the new institute for a number of years. Teresa Kakooza was an incredibly hardworking woman. A widow and a graduate of the University of Wales where she obtained a BSc, and Makerere where she got her MEd, and PhD in 1998, she always managed to combine her teaching and administrative responsibilities at the centre fending for her family single-handedly. I found that an amazing feat. Later, she would combine all this with her PhD research, which she embarked on at a fairly advanced age but still made a success of. I must say I learnt a thing or two from Dr Teresa Kakooza's exceptional honey-bee work habits; for instance, to scoff at able-bodied loafers who always indulged in self-pity. She also taught me the art of self-bootstrapping. I was extremely happy to see her daughter, Angela, who I had the privilege to teach briefly during my moonlighting days, graduate as a doctor from the Medical School. Besides Tereza Kakooza and Anthony Oketch, Nuwa Sentongo was another icon and a good colleague with whom I had an equally long association. Although I had known him in the early 1970s as a good playwright an actor in the Kampala City Players, I got to know him better when he was elected Deputy Director and later Director of the Institute after Dr Tereza Kakooza.

My association with Nuwa Sentongo began in 1973, the year I graduated from Makerere. In November of that year, I met and fell in love with a young beautiful girl by name Alice. I desperately wanted to impress my new girlfriend and future wife with the sophisticated and affluent tastes of a young Makerere graduate. At the time, discotheques were unheard of in Kampala. We danced to live band music and there were plenty of bands around. As you might have guessed, at the time, most of the bands in Kampala simply regurgitated Congolese music, singing the Lingala lyrics verbatim, whose meaning they cared less to know. The word copyright meant nothing to the bad managers who were just too eager to cash in on the popularity of the Congolese music. A few bands however composed and sang their original music, but the beat and rhythm were typically Congolese. In the 1960s and '70s, Congolese music had taken East Africa by the storm, we loved and adored it. The sukusu, rumba, moonwalk (so called because the dance mimicked how the two American astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Buz Aldrin, walked on the moon in 1969), you name it, we danced it all. While the Americans and Europeans had their Elvis Presley, the Beatles, the Mick Jagger

and the Rolling Stones, Cliff Richard and others, we had our Franco and the TP OK Jazz Band, Tabuley, Dr Nico, Bokelo and many more. The extra-agile Suziman of the Raphael Kawumba's band at Mengo was our star dancer and master choreographer. The local bands copied and reproduced every latest hit churned out by the Nairobi-based ASL label to the last notation.

Although I was not a regular theatre goer, Alice hinted she enjoyed going to theatre. At the time, the National Theatre was the place to watch an interesting play and Nuwa Sentongo was a young actor whose group staged good plays there. I decided to pay for tickets for two and that evening Nuwa Sentongo and his group were on stage. We enjoyed every moment of their acting but, more importantly, Nuwa's good acting sealed the deal for me, because when I finally popped the question, Alice did not hesitate to say "yes". I guess she was convinced of my sophisticated theatrical tastes. That was also the beginning of my newfound love for the theatre. That was the time of late Byron Kawadwa, Jack Sekajugo, Eclas Kawalya and a group of dedicated English theatrical enthusiasts. I guess I owe it, at least in part, to Nuwa Sentongo's good acting antics. He made my day. Whenever we had a moment to share a joke, I used to remind him of his vital contribution to my courtship when I needed it most.

In late 1991, two years before I left ITEK, the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education made a proposal to the University Senate to offer two external degree programmes; the Bachelor of Education or BEd (External) and Bachelor of Commerce or BCom (External). This was the first time, since its founding as a Department of Extra Mural Studies in 1953, the institute would offer degrees. Unfortunately, there was a problem the institute had to sort out before Senate could recommend approval of the proposed degrees. It had neither the staff of its own to teach on the degree programmes nor the mandate to offer the two degrees. The mandates lay with the School of Education and the Faculty of Commerce respectively. In any case, ITEK was already offering the BEd degree on behalf of Makerere University, so why duplicate efforts? But as the discussions progressed, it became evident that what IACE was proposing was not necessarily a duplication of the BEd degree offered at ITEK; it was meant to be a distance education version of it. Since the proposed degree had a lot in common with the ITEK programme, we had to participate in the discussions and drafting of the curriculum, using the ITEK BEd as a model.

Mr Gashom Eyoku, the then Senior Deputy Registrar at Makerere, was responsible for coordinating the curriculum development for the new degree on behalf of the University Senate. I received an invitation from him requesting me, as Principal of ITEK, and a few of my colleagues to participate in some of the discussions. The debates were lively and constructive and, before long, a draft curriculum was ready to go to Senate. As a solution to the two sticky points of staff and mandates, it was agreed that IACE would be responsible for the administration

of the programmes only. For the purposes of teaching and examinations, the IACE students would have to register with the School of Education and Faculty of Commerce, both of which would also provide the teaching staff. At the time, the solution looked workable and after receiving Senate and Council approval, the two degree programmes were launched in the academic year 1991/92. However, much as this arrangement was perceived as a good compromise, it deprived the IACE of direct academic control over the programme. In a sense, the BEd and BCom external students belonged to the teaching Faculties, an arrangement which reduced the role of IACE in the programme to that of a mere clearing house. As we shall see later, the arrangement proved problematic, particularly with regard to the BCom programme, which led to unnecessary misunderstanding between IACE and the Business School. That was one of the problems I left unsolved in 2004.

According to the new IACE departmental mandates, the Department of Distance Education was responsible for the management of the two external degree programmes. At the time, Mrs Julian Bbuye, another colleague of mine at Kampala High school during our moonlighting days, was the acting Head of that department. Undoubtedly, the coordination and management of the two degree programmes was a heavy responsibility on a young department with just a skeleton staff. To make the situation even more difficult for the department, the public response when the university advertised the two courses was overwhelming. The programmes popularity stemmed from the fact that the new degrees had opened avenues for many students who had missed joining the university as direct school entrants or under the mature age entrance scheme. It was also an opportunity for the non-graduate teachers and accountants already in employment and who therefore could not afford to attend the university as full-time students to study and earn a professional degree. The way things were going, it was beginning to look as if the institute was falling victim to its own success. No doubt, the IACE had stumbled on a long-awaited innovation. Since the two degree programmes had been designed to be fully self-financing, with no Government input, the number of students required to attain the critical mass for the programmes to be self-sufficient had to be reasonably high. Naturally, that meant big enrolments as the programmes matured. In the 1991/92 academic year when both programmes were launched, only 245 students registered. By 2003/2004, within a time frame of slightly over ten years, the number in the three distance education programmes had exponentially increased to about 6,500 in total.

Besides attending to large numbers of students and acting as the institute's liaison with the School of Education and Faculty of Commerce, one of the major challenges Mrs Bbuye's department faced was course material development. In 1991/92, there was no other institution in Uganda offering a degree programme delivered through the distance education mode, so the institute had to start from scratch. At the beginning, the Vancouver-based Commonwealth of Learning

and the University of Nairobi proved useful sources of some of the teaching and learning materials. Even then, the material from Canada and Nairobi had to be edited and adapted to Makerere's situation. Since the department did not have sufficient in-house capacity to develop and write all the course material, it had to scout around for expertise. To complicate an already difficult situation further, the department had only one senior and experienced member of staff, Nuwa Sentongo, who was also doubling as the Institute Director, which left him with very little time to devote to his department. With amazing zeal, imagination and hard work, the shaky and uncertain start gave way to progress. Slowly, things started falling into shape. The department recruited an editor, S. N. Siminyu, to help with the enormous task of editing and putting together the course materials the experts were writing. The success of this young department gave comfort; in that the university had high quality staff we had reason to be proud of.

As the course material, as well as students' files started to accumulate, the department was in desperate need of additional space. The Vice Chancellor was approached by Mrs Bbuye and her colleagues to present this request. I had made it a practice that every time I was presented with a request for space, I turned to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Epelu Opio, for a solution or advice. However, even before "off-loading" the problem to him, I always knew the kind of answer he would give. He would say, "Mukulu, (Luganda word for 'elder'), where can I find the space you are asking for?" The unpleasant truth was that, without additional buildings, the university was stuck with a chronic space shortage problem. I happened to overhear Mrs Bbuye say that the accommodation the department was asking for from the University Administration would be temporary, because they were saving some money to construct a building of their own. It was a good idea, but still it was not an answer to the burning problem at hand. Their problem demanded an immediate solution so we had to look elsewhere for it. Surprisingly, the solution came in the most unexpected way. Below the new CCE building was an old tin-roofed building which was part of the old Mitchell Hall complex, dating back to the early years of the college, called the Nsubuga Block. As the college grew and acquired more land on top of the Makerere Hill, the students moved to the new Mitchell Hall and the buildings of the old Mitchell Hall were more or less abandoned until students started occupying the old complex again in the late 1970s. With the policy that pegged admission on residence now abandoned, we thought it was time to get the students out and turn it into an academic facility.

When the Space Allocation Committee agreed to allocate the old building to the Department of Distance Education, it was in bad shape and therefore required a good dose of renovation. Fortunately, despite its seventy years or more, it was still in good structural condition. The rooms were tiny, which made me wonder how students fitted in them, but the Nsubuga Block gave the department the

much-needed respite. Although the external degree students studied on their own for most of the time, at the end of each semester, they were required to attend a compulsory two-week face-to-face session, the only time they would meet with their lecturers and officially be in residence at the university. I always had this nagging thought that something could go terribly wrong when the students were in residence, because of the large number. But to my relief every year, they always managed to go through the exercise smoothly. Indeed, it was always the busiest time for the department and for the lecturers, as a lot of material had to be crammed into a space of two weeks and a lot of students attended to. I was to learn later that, in addition to the official two weeks, some students living in and around Kampala organised themselves into groups and solicited the services of lecturers for a fee to give them more of the informal face-to-face sessions. Since that was a purely private arrangement, there was no way we could stop them. Besides, the external degree courses being a year longer than their full equivalents, the students covered exactly the same material and sat the same examinations as the regular students. The external Bachelor of Commerce degree, which at the time had more appeal than the Bachelor of Education, was four years whereas the regular BCom and the external BEd were a three-year programme. Its regular equivalent at ITEK was a two-year-programme. Since the students were qualified and some were practising teachers, for both the regular and external Bed, the practical attachment was not a requirement.

One of the most prominent external BEd students in my time was Uganda's First Lady, Janet Museveni. For her security concerns, we decided that during the examination period, she would write her papers in the Chancellor's office under the strict supervision of two or more lecturers from Makerere and ITEK as invigilators. That was the only time we did not allow her body guards in the same room she was. Fortunately, her body guards complied with the university's instructions. Like all the other students, she had to undergo the compulsory examination search too. At this time, she was no First Lady, but just another university student. I recall some students asking where Mrs Janet Museveni was writing her examinations, because they never saw her in the Main Hall auditorium. We had actually thought of allowing her to sit with the rest of the students in the Main Hall, but the security concerns compelled us to think of a more secure venue for her. Although she was a student, we were not oblivious to the fact that she was, indeed, the First Lady. That aside, there were two major drawbacks with the two external degree programmes. Besides being just coordinators of the programmes with no direct say in their academic management, the institute was also incurring quite heavy overhead costs. Most of the institute's money went into paying teaching and examination allowances, leaving the institute with very little money to plough back into facility improvement. Also getting some lecturers to submit marks, particularly for the BCom students, was a real a tussle which sometimes degenerated into a war of words between the IACE and the Business

School at Nakawa. Shortly before I left the university, some Business School lecturers had started holding IACE to ransom, withholding students' marks until the institute paid them. We were soon approaching a point of "enough is enough". A radical new arrangement was the solution we thought would put an end to the squabbling and poor cooperation between the institute and Makerere University Business School (MUBS). We reasoned that the Institute of Economics was the best alternative to assume the role of the Business School. It would co-run the BCom external with the IACE. I left before we had implemented the new arrangements.

Over and above the BEd and BCom, the institute – working in collaboration with the Faculty of Science and with financial assistance provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York – added the BSc to the list of external degree programmes. Some were sceptical about the feasibility of IACE being able to offer an external degree in the highly practical Science disciplines such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Again, the answer was as ingenious as it was simple. When the regular students are on vacation between semesters, the external BSc students would be in the laboratories in the Faculty of Science for their practical work. In fact, one member of staff in the Department of Chemistry who participated in the trial phase of the programme was amazed at the amount of experiments the students could cover in just two weeks. His observation was that the regular BSc programmes were using time inefficiently. In effect, this meant that in addition to the face-to-face sessions offered at the upcountry centres and in designated schools and colleges, the external BSc students would have two residential sessions at the university per semester, both devoted to field and laboratory work. The experiment was a success, perhaps a befitting farewell to Nuwa Sentongo, who was about to step down after serving as Director of the institute for four good years. By the time the four-year BSc was launched in the 2001/2002 session as the third external degree in the institute, Julian Bbuye had stepped down as Head of Department to concentrate on her PhD thesis research. Mrs Florence Olal Odur took over the mantle of running the busy department. In a way, the women were making a point to be just as good administrators as men, if not better, and were capable of competently running even the seemingly difficult departments with success. Florence was almost deputy to Julian Bbuye. Therefore, she had no difficulty stepping in Julian's footsteps. In addition to the three degree programmes, the department was running the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth in Development (CYP) in collaboration with the Open University of Tanzania and the Commonwealth Youth Secretariat based in Lusaka, Zambia for which I had the honour to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of Makerere University, as well as short courses in Project Planning and Management, Writing and Publishing, Business Planning and Research Assistantship Skills. By the time we left the university, the latter three had not yet come on stream. However, even with the BSc external degree programme up and running, the institute still did

not have a degree programme it could truly call its own. As we have seen, in the three external degree programmes, the IACE only played a coordination role. As if my colleagues in IACE were trying to live up to the joke I used to make every so often when the occasion arose, that “as members of the academic staff, we were employed primarily to think”, and indeed the institute had started thinking big! For the first time in its existence, it would have a full-time degree programme of its own, run entirely in the institute, with little or no external assistance.

As often is the case, when new ideas are first introduced, they sound strange. People are usually conservative and stuck in their old ways. Therefore, I could not blame anyone for dismissing the Bachelor of Adult and Community Education (BACE) degree programme outright. It was a classic case of thinking outside of the box. The question was, what was it all about and what would the graduates be doing with this degree? It was a legitimate question to have asked at the time Nuwa Sentongo and his colleagues first floated the idea. Fortunately, we did not have to wait for long before we got the answer to our question. In 1999, Nuwa Sentongo and his colleagues in the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies decided to launch the BACE degree programme. Naturally, both Senate and the University Council raised questions as to what exactly the objectives of this unconventional degree were. Fortunately, the institute had done its homework well and had no difficulty getting the degree programme approved. According to both Senate and the University Council, the proposed degree – strange as it might have sounded to some – made sense. With the introduction of the BACE degree, the IACE had propelled itself into a true status of a faculty. This meant that the IACE could now register students on a degree programme of its own. The argument in favour of the new degree programme was that, over time, the discipline of Adult Studies had grown beyond the certificate and diploma level, which was natural in the development of any discipline.

The main objective of the BACE degree was to create a cadre of well-trained decision makers, designers and implementers of programmes in Adult and Community Education. This would be done by equipping them with sound knowledge, skills and attitudes in community and contemporary socio-economic issues related to the development process and adult education in general. It was in a way intended to produce graduates capable of accelerating community development and development in the country in general. The curriculum addressed three main themes: Development Studies; Adult Education; and Community Development. It was also intended to have a fair balance between classroom lectures and hands-on practical fieldwork, as well emphasis on developing the students’ communication, which is a critical skill required of a community worker. Admission was open to the direct entrants, as well as those who sat and passed the mature students’ examination and diploma holders. However, when the institute launched the programme, we were not sure enough students would enrol to make the programme self-sustaining and viable.

To everyone's surprise, at the end of the selection and admission exercise, the institute had more than the minimum number required to form a critical mass. That was another crowning moment for the institute that had been the vanguard of Adult Education in the country for almost half a century. I was happy to witness the launch of this milestone and to participate in some of the students' activities whenever they invited me. As I discovered, Captain Abbey Mukwaya, the husband of Minister Janet Mukwaya was among the programme's pioneer students. Earlier, his wife had joined the university in the late 1980s to study for a degree in Political Science and she had long completed, graduating with a good BA degree. Besides the BACE degree and its traditional programmes in Adult Education, at about the same time the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies also introduced another certificate course in Effective Communication for the Uganda Certificate of Education holders. In addition, the institute ran a number of new short and part time non-degree programmes to cater for those who wanted to acquire education and skills in such areas ICT, as well as trainers in Adult Education. In fact, many university and non-university students took advantage of the institute's Computer Science course to acquire and improve their computer skills. In a span of less than ten years, the institute had become a hive of academic activities.

Besides the exciting and innovative programmes, it was gratifying for us to see members of staff beginning to register for the PhD. For a long time, Dr Anne Katahoire, Head of the Department of Community Education and Extra Mural Studies was the only PhD holder in the institute. Dr Tereza Kakooza and Dr Daniel Babikwa, who had studied for his PhD at Rhodes University in South Africa, were the next additions. Dr Denis Atwaru Okello also joined the rank of PhD holders in the institute when he obtained his PhD from Makerere in 2003. Shortly after graduation, he replaced Nuwas Sentongo as Director of the institute. For Jessica Aguti, getting out of the management of the African Virtual University (AVU) was in a way a blessing in disguise because she was sponsored by the Staff Development Fund to study for her PhD at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Equally significant was the acquisition of new vehicles, purchased with funds from the institute's internally-generated revenue. I had the privilege to commission one of the new vehicles shortly before I retired. As the fleet of vehicles grew, my office ended up losing one of our good and long-serving drivers, David Sekandi, to the institute as it offered better incentives than the Vice Chancellor's office. David Sekandi was not the only staff I lost to the IACE. Earlier, I had lost Henry Mayega, one of the young Assistants in the Vice Chancellor's office, who was also doubling as the university's Public Relations Officer before the appointment of Ms Helen Kawesa.

Henry Mayega took over the vacant position of Institute Assistant Registrar. In the great achievements of the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education I have just described, we had a lot to be grateful for. I was deeply grateful to all

the colleagues there, who worked so hard to make it happen in my time, from a Certificate in Adult Studies (CAS) in 1953 to four degree programmes, including the unique Bachelor of Adult and Community Education Degree (BACE).

### **African Virtual University (AVU) – The Promise of the University of the Future**

Convinced that the quality of higher education in most sub-Saharan Africa was declining, and due in part to its policies in the late 1980s, which starved African universities of funding, in 1995 the World Bank mooted the idea of setting up and funding a satellite-based distance learning university for Africa, which became the African Virtual University (AVU). It was initially hosted within the Bank's headquarters in Washington DC. At the time, the World Bank bureaucrats believed that the AVU, with programmes sourced from institutions in Europe, Australia and North America and beamed to Africa via satellite, was the answer to the declining quality of university education in Africa. However, for the AVU to work as a legitimate African institution, the World Bank needed the support of partner institutions in Africa. Makerere University was one of the six African universities that former Burundi-born Director of the AVU at the World Bank, Dr Etienne Baranshamaje, identified as one of the possible African partner institutions that he desired to see participate in the AVU pilot phase. However, when he first visited Makerere in 1995, the AVU was still just an idea. I must confess that when he met me for the first time to introduce the idea and to ask whether Makerere University would be interested in participating in the pilot phase of the project, it took me a while to internalise what the whole concept was about. I kept wondering whether it was not another case of all hats, no cattle. Since when had the World Bank become an advocate of quality higher education in Africa? I could vividly remember the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) our Government had been implementing a few years earlier, which had starved the university of sufficient funding and how the same World Bank had convinced African Governments not to invest heavily in higher education because it was perceived to have a much lower social return on investment than basic education. It all came back in a flash of a second as I listened to Dr Barnshamaje. I wondered whether this was the same famous Britton Woods financial institution now making a u-turn and why? At that time many universities in Africa, including Makerere, were grappling with the disastrous consequences of those policies and licking the wounds inflicted on them by the SAPs.

Those hard days were still fresh in our minds. Granted that the biblical Saul could become Paul; but in an impoverished continent so riddled with hunger, disease and a myriad of other problems related to under-development, was this the best approach to quality higher education in Africa? However, like a good salesman, Etienne was convinced that it was the best for Africa. Having once

been a reasonably good academic, which I want to believe I was at some point in the remote past and one who never wanted to let an innovative idea pass by without grabbing it, I decided to concede to his “hi-tech” talk, which at the time seemed to be a little over-hyped, a try. His convincing arguments had sufficiently aroused my curiosity and interest in the concept. The more I listened to him, the more I wanted to know about what seemed to be a totally new approach to the way we could deliver higher education in our part of the world in the future. It seemed to me that if the experiment succeeded, the AVU could well be the university of the Future for the continent. To Etienne’s delight, we agreed that Makerere University would participate in the project. To my reasoning, we had nothing to lose by participating.

Since the AVU had a lot to do with some form of distance learning, I advised Etienne that the IACE was the most appropriate academic unit best suited to discuss the practical details of the university’s ability and readiness to participate in the latest innovation for Africa from the World Bank. I therefore handed over all the AVU business to Nuwa Sentongo and his colleagues at the IACE. After visiting the premises, Etienne complained about the IACE ICT facilities being sub-standard for an institute. He wanted the AVU to be hosted in the Institute of Computer Science (ICS). Then, the ICS was no more than a little building in the far corner of the Department of Mathematics building. Secondly, only the IACE had the mandate to offer distance education programmes at Makerere. Much as the premises were found wanting, it was the appropriate place for the future AVU at Makerere. After convincing Etienne to accept our decision, the issue was how to fit the AVU within the academic and administrative structures of the university. Was it supposed to be a university within a university or an integral part of Makerere University? From 1997 when the pilot phase was inaugurated until about 2000 or 2001 when it entered into the second phase and the whole AVU concept changed, the issue of the relationships between the two institutions remained unresolved. On the other hand, we thought that, for once, we could swallow a bit of our pride and let our students have access to professors of international repute. That was not to say that Makerere did not have such professors in its rank and file. It was a question of students gaining the experience in the new interactive media technology, which I thought was fascinating. In accepting to participate in the pilot phase, our understanding was that the AVU would complement our own academic programmes. To get the project off the ground, Etienne asked us to identify a capable member of staff who would coordinate the project at Makerere. We had no difficulty finding Ms Jessica Aguti of the Department of Distance Education. She was a young member of staff who had shown a lot of promise. We charged her with the heavy responsibility of coordinating the first phase of the project, which began and ended in 1999, and the second phase which ended in 2002.

As Etienne convinced more institutions in the country to sign on, the Makerere AVU centre became its regional headquarters with other centres at Uganda Martyrs' University at Nkozi and at Uganda Polytechnic at Kyambogo, among others. As we started planning for the implementation of the project, Etienne kept bringing in engineers from USA who he said had come to check how they would install the equipment in the studios located in the basement of the IACE building. Sometimes, I got confused as to who was really supposed to do the job. I guess they were coming to see the site and what they were expected to do before they submitted their tender bids to the Bank, which was the normal World Bank practice. Some of the experts Etienne came along with were retired NASA engineers, who had set up private companies. As part of our obligation to the AVU project, we identified a brilliant young Ugandan electrical engineer, Alex Twinomugisha who had recently graduated from our Faculty of Technology, to act as our technical expert on the project and also work with Etienne's engineers during the installation and testing phase. The young man excelled far beyond everyone's expectation and ended up taking up a much bigger appointment with the AVU International at the World Bank. However, as we shall soon see, the basement in this wing of the IACE building where the equipment was being installed presented us with a huge technical challenge which had dogged the engineers long before we thought of converting the studios there into an AVU facility.

After some delays, the big satellite dish was finally installed within the IACE inner quadrangle. With the huge dish in place and the necessary equipment to receive the telecasts installed, by June 1997, it was time to test the equipment and receive the first signal and then launch the Virtual University. Jessica Aguti was doing her job well and Etienne was showering her with lots of praises. Although the first official transmission was a low key affair with almost no paraphernalia, the AVU launch ceremony was an occasion to celebrate. But the real big launch which had to wait a little longer, was held at the University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Due to other pressing engagement I had at the time, I was not able to travel to Addis Ababa, but Makerere was well represented. Coming after several months of hard work, scepticism and setbacks, the launch of the AVU was in itself a technical triumph for Etienne. As I sat in the AVU studio in the basement of the IACE building, waiting for the maiden live telecast to be beamed on the TV screens, Etienne's image suddenly appeared. As if they were there to ensure a glitch-free telecast, several technicians could be seen working behind him as he sat in the AVU studios in the World Bank headquarters in Washington DC, waiting to deliver his maiden address to all AVU centres he had set up in the various parts of Africa. At the end of his brief speech, we put a few questions to him as a way of testing whether it worked as a truly interactive system. The telecast was flawless.

After the AVU was officially launched in June 1997, we selected a group of students from the Department of Electrical Engineering and a few of their Lecturers to attend the first lectures beamed from Dublin in Ireland, USA and Canada. Later, lectures were being offered in Advanced Mathematics – mainly General Calculus and Differential Equations, Physics, Computer Science, General Engineering, Internet and even Organic Chemistry. Some of the courses were replicas of what was being taught at Makerere, others covered up to 60 per cent of our syllabi; a few were totally new with no equivalents at Makerere. It was a pleasant surprise for me to learn that there was a serious academic discipline called Internet. Initially, about 30 students were selected to attend the AVU courses, but later, depending on the timetabling, more students signed on. It was a fascinating experience and experiment for both staff and students, although a few had earlier expressed misgivings about the whole thing, branding it “back-door recolonisation of Africa”. The interesting part was that the students could see and interact with the professors teaching them live on a television screen in real time. They could ask questions and the professors would answer them immediately as if they were physically with them in the classroom. Interestingly, Makerere students were attending the lectures simultaneously with students at other AVU centres in Africa. The system worked more or less like video conferencing. In addition to the live telecasts, the system had a built-in provision for recording the lectures for future use. As I watched the AVU take shape, I began to visualise the significance of this innovative mode of delivering education. It occurred to me that this mode of teaching could replace the traditional lecture room and the endless quest for space on our overcrowded campuses. Students could be taught from anywhere, as long as they had access to a place with the requisite equipment to receive the signal. As African universities started to grapple with the growing problem of massification, which translated into the never-ending demand for more professors and buildings to cope with the large student enrolments, I could see the important role this innovation was poised to play in the near future in the delivery of quality to what was increasingly becoming massified higher education in Africa. To me, the AVU experience was much more than virtual reality. It was the like the real thing. All we had to do was to figure out how to make the technology affordable and sustainable, with much of the content and teaching coming from Africa, instead of Europe and North America.

Besides the degree programmes in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Physics, the AVU was supposed to offer short-term courses for business executives at a fee. Although Etienne expected us to advertise these short courses, which were being transmitted from time to time as widely as we could, he was still concerned about the state of the IACE building and the AVU studios in the basement. According to him, the whole place fell short of the kind of standards top business executives would expect. As I pointed out earlier, this was a building which had fallen victim to Idi Amin’s erratic policies before it was fully completed.

Naturally, it was in a bad but tolerable shape. To him, it was not tolerable at all, but he had no choice. Admittedly, this was a big minus for a hi-tech and innovative institution like the AVU and I agreed with him. I had personally seen the state of the studio and the building at first hand. Since its completion in the 1970s, the IACE building had never had a major facelift to bring it to a standard befitting a project like the AVU. Unfortunately, that was all we had. We could only promise that things would only get better and not worse anymore. At the time we were giving those assurances, it was just blind faith. However, in 2000 when NORAD gave the university a grant to construct a four-floor building for the Institute of Computer Science, the University Council had agreed to find extra money to add a fifth floor to the building. Then I had made a promise to Dr Baranshamaje that as soon as the new Computer Science building was completed, the AVU would move there. As it turned out later and for reasons beyond my control, my promise never materialised.

Luckily, at about the same time, the AVU also changed its philosophy and mode of operation. Dr Etienne Baranshamaje resigned from the World Bank and the AVU soon after the pilot phase. The AVU later became an independent entity, going by the new name AVU International, and moved out of the World Bank headquarters. Shortly after that, the university's headquarters moved to Lavington, Nairobi in 2000 with Dr Peter Materu, an electrical engineer, formerly with the University of Dar es Salaam taking over from Etienne as Director. Before Etienne left the World Bank, he had come up with a new concept. He wanted the AVU centres to operate as business entities, managed by business managers. Since the original concept had changed, Etienne reached the conclusion that Jessica Aguti didn't quite fit the profile of a business manager. She was an academic and not a business person, and therefore had to make way for a real business manager. Tito Okumu, a mathematician by training was that kind of person they were looking for. In 2001, he was appointed the business manager of AVU Makerere Centre. In my opinion, the AVU underwent too many rapid changes in too short a time, which left us confused and almost at the point of derailing the proper development of this novel institution.

My recollection at the time was that when Etienne first floated the idea of a virtual university for Africa, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering and Computer Science had been identified as the degree programmes the AVU would begin with soon after the pilot phase. To that end, I had been asked to identify academic staff who would work with a Nigerian lady, the World Bank's AVU curriculum development specialist, to write the curricula for the three disciplines. I remember Engineer Kaluuba, who was then Head of the Department of Electrical Engineering, Professor Yusto Kaahwa of the Physics Department and one or two other members of staff, spending time in Washington DC as part of a team that developed and wrote the original AVU curriculum for the various disciplines the AVU had planned to offer as full-fledged degrees. I also recall Alex Twino telling

me when the curricula came out, the proposed AVU Electrical Engineering Degree curriculum was a lot more modern and richer in content than the Makerere BSc Electrical Engineering. Although the curriculum made room for physical laboratory work, the AVU students had to do most of their experiments by simulation – like the airline pilots and astronauts do most of their training. Later, I learnt that in countries like Burundi, where the AVU centres had been founded outside the universities and ran as private initiatives, the proprietors had recruited and registered students for the original degrees the AVU had proposed to offer. They were waiting for the telecasts to begin. Unfortunately for them, when the Vice Chancellors of the AVU hosting universities met the new Director of AVU International, Professor Cheick Modibo Diarra, a Malian who had replaced Dr Peter Materu, for the first time at the Nairobi Intercontinental Hotel in 2002, they were surprised to be told that the original degree programme in Electrical Engineering and others had been scrapped or shelved. Instead, the AVU was going to concentrate on Computer Science and Business Studies, moreover at lower levels. The degree in Computer Science would be offered in partnership with some competitively selected institutions in Australia and elsewhere. This was a big setback for our colleagues from Burundi whom I guess had to refund fees to the disappointed students. The AVU International went ahead to hire a team of consultants, who went around assessing each site's readiness to host the Computer Science degree programme. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Australia had been selected to offer the degree course in Computer Science on behalf of the AVU International. It was now a completely new arrangement. At the same time, more centres had come on stream, including one in Pretoria which kept Alex Twinomugisha busy and constantly on the move, as he was part of a team of engineers responsible for installing equipment at most of the new sites.

I must confess that I was disappointed with the constant shifting of positions by AVU and as a result, my interest began to wane. I started growing cold feet about what I had seen as a revolutionary way of delivering quality higher education to many African students who were in desperate need of it. For reasons I never figured out, AVU International decided to abandon the Kenyatta University site in Nairobi, which Dr Etienne Baranshamaje had all along been hailing as a showcase for a well-managed AVU Centre, rather unceremoniously. In fact, I had visited the Kenyatta University a few years before and I had been impressed by what I had seen at their AVU Centre. Without a doubt, what I saw then had left me with a positive impression. I left with the feeling that Kenyatta, which had joined the AVU about a year later than Makerere, had actually done better than us. Unlike Makerere which had allocated just the studios and a room for the computer laboratory, the Vice Chancellor of Kenyatta University, Professor George Eshiwani, allocated the entire equivalent of Makerere's Institute of Adult and Continuing Education to the AVU. As the Centre began to lose appeal, its

hardworking coordinator, Dr Magdalene Juma, resigned from Kenyatta University and joined the AVU International at its new headquarters in Lavington, as a full-time member of staff. My disappointment with the AVU International was partly because Nuwa Sentongo, Julian Bbuye, Florence Olal Odur and Jessica Aguti had worked so hard to convince Senate and later Council to approve the AVU as part of the IACE, and this had sailed through without difficulty.

Now with all these changes, we were no longer sure how and which way to proceed. It was beginning to look like we were back to square one. I was therefore not surprised when I received news from Nairobi that Makerere was not among the African universities the consultants had selected to participate in the AVU-RMIT Computer Science course. Among the reasons the consultants cited for eliminating Makerere from the list of participating universities was lack of cooperation from the Director of the Institute of Computer Science, Dr Venasius Baryamureeba. Apparently, Dr Baryamureeba had not seen much logic in going into partnership with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology when ICS had already developed its own BSc degree programme in Computer Science. When our bid to participate in the RMIT Computer Science degree programme failed, AVU at Makerere was left with only short courses to run. However, much as they were not the full-fledge degree programmes, some of these short Computer Science courses proved popular with students and the public.

Just as we thought that Makerere was no longer an important AVU Centre, Nairobi sent a reminder that we had to remit a percentage of the fees to AVU International in addition to paying the Business Manager's salary and a multitude of other overheads. By the time I retired, I was on the verge of proposing that Makerere should pull out of the AVU. For Makerere, the AVU experience was a case of a brilliant idea gone sour. However, the university derived other benefits from the presence of the AVU. The digital library, which I alluded to earlier, and a computer laboratory in IACE were some of the spin-offs. Another benefit that comes to mind was the plugging of the leaking floor in the studio at the basement, several engineers had failed to pinpoint the source of the water that was constantly flooding the studio floor, to the extent that they recommended digging up part of the foundation to find the fault. Somehow, when the AVU took over the studios, a solution was finally found. My guess, which was pure conjecture, was that at a particular spot in the studio the water table, which also serves as the source of River Nakivubo, was sometimes fairly close to the surface of the studio, and this was the cause of the flooding.

### **Makerere University Institute of Social Research – Research: Her Prime Mandate**

The Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) established in 1948 as the Makerere College that was preparing to enter into a special relationship with

the University of London, was one of Makerere's centres of excellence before the dark curtain fell on the university. At the time, the institute's focus was mainly on anthropological research. Later on, the Science disciplines were added to its research agenda. With the dissolution of the University of East Africa in 1970, the institute became the Makerere Institute of Social Research.

The history of MISR began with late Dan Mudoola, whose prolific life as one of Makerere's eminent political scientists and scholars was cut short by an errant gunman's bullet on February 22, 1993, while he was relaxing with his long-time friend, Dr Francis Kidubuka, at their usual joint at Wandegeya. Apolo Nsibambi had nicknamed him Uganda's Huntington, because of his unswerving commitment to institutional building. The MISR had been limping before Mudoola, when the Department of Political Science and Public Administration took over as Director in the 1980s. Within a relatively short time and with big research grants solicited from international organisations such as the USAID and the World Bank, Mudoola managed to rebuild the image of this once prestigious research institute. The institute's buildings too received a facelift. Unlike other academic units at Makerere which combine both teaching and research, MISR was conceived as, and continues to be a purely research facility; and that was exactly what Dan Mudoola set out to do. The land tenure system was one of the long running research projects for which MISR had successfully negotiated and obtained funding from the USAID and involved several researchers. Dr Kisamba Mugerwa, who later became a prominent Minister in the NRM Government was one of the team leaders on this project. Even after going into politics, he retained his office at MISR and would somehow find time for his research. Lawyers such as Khidu Makubuya who, as we saw earlier, also left the university, becoming first a junior Minister, then full Minister of Education and Sports and later Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Uganda, and Kigula were part of Kisamba Mugerwa's research team. David Pulkol, once a Minister in Museveni's Government before he broke ranks with the NRM was another of MISR's prominent and long-term researchers. Pulkol also cleverly managed to combine politics with his research at MISR. Once in a while, he would be seen at his office at MISR in the evenings. The institute was slowly regaining its lost glory. Much as Mudoola's sudden death shocked the university community, it did more damage to the institute of which he was the undisputed captain. The MISR had been deprived of a dynamic and effective leader and, for once, the institute seemed to be destined for a return to the doldrums. In fact, his intellectual brilliance had beautifully compensated for his physical disability. One thing I remember about him was his love for smoking the pipe. Then, people cared less about smoking and there was no fuss about the health problems related to passive smoking.

With Mudoola suddenly gone, the search for a replacement was on. Fortunately, we did not have to look far. MISR was still under the ambit of the

Faculty of Social Sciences and Professor Apolo Nsibambi had completed his term as Dean of Social Sciences and was now available; so he took over as MISR's new Director. Very soon, the pressure for more space for researchers and equipment began to mount as the institute's research programmes grew and expanded. Therefore, Nsibambi asked the University Council to allow him convert the parking lot below the north wing into offices for his research staff and fortunately, Council agreed. The flatlets on top of what was once the parking lot retained their original purpose of providing accommodation to guest researchers. In fact, one of them had become home to Cole Dodge, who as we shall see later, played a critical role in the success of HYPERLINK "<mailto:I@mak.com>" \h I@mak.com whenever he came to Makerere. The residence of the Director of the former East African Institute of Social Research was within the institute's complex. However, over the years and faced with pressure to provide staff housing, the university had degazetted building and allocated it to Professor Gustavas Sennyonga of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Professor Senyonga's departure opened an unexpected opportunity for MISR to regain and put the former Director's residence to better use. Before Professor Sennyonga left, Professor Nsibambi had requested the University Management to return the house to MISR to provide extra space for the MISR library, which was expanding. Although we were under intense pressure from staff for housing, we went along with Professor Nsibambi's proposal and the house was handed back to MISR.

Professor Nsibambi quickly found money and renovated it for the library to move in. Nsibambi was very dynamic and before long, new research projects, including one on rational drug use in which Dr Richard Odoi Odome of the Department of Pharmacy was involved, had begun. This was an interesting development because, for the first time, Makerere Scientists were conducting research outside the traditional laboratory setting and field station, but in MISR. For years, Makerere staff from the science-based Faculties considered MISR a no go area for them. This collaboration was at the time considered a change of a decade-old mindset within the university academic community.

In 1994, MISR, which had long been part of the Faculty of Social Sciences was granted autonomy. This was a crowning moment for Professor Nsibambi, as it was one his significant achievements in his short term as its Director and he was very grateful to the University Administration. When he first introduced the proposal for autonomy, it drew mixed reactions and looked as though it would be next-to-impossible to convince Senate. He anticipated tough resistance from his colleagues in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Surprisingly the resistance, if any, was minimal. In any case, the Academic Registrar and the rest of us in the University Administration were already convinced that full autonomy was the best way forward for MISR if it were to grow to its full potential and regain its lost image as a research centre of excellence.

However, with autonomy came other problems. Besides the Librarian, who was under the University Librarian, MISR had two categories of professional staff, namely the Research Secretary, who was essentially an administrator and the research staff. Patrick Mulindwa was the Institute's Research Secretary, a position he had occupied for a long time and was not in dispute. After restructuring the institute as part of the process leading to its autonomy, the Research Secretary position was the only permanent position left in the institute's new establishment. Later, the University Council approved the addition of a statistician and an accountant to the institute's permanent establishment. Like the Director's position, the rest of the positions became contractual. From then on, the research staff had to renegotiate their tenure. This decision immediately became a serious and very sticky issue. As expected, researchers were not happy with the new arrangements. Professor Nsibambi was not in favour of putting his incumbent staff on contract. On the other hand, the Appointments Board insisted on implementing the new regulation to the letter. All existing research staff had to apply for re-appointment. Members of the Board were convinced there was merit in the contractual appointments. It was seen as one way of weeding out unproductive staff and, in the process, boosting the institute's research productivity and research quality. In the end, it became a protracted issue between the Director and the Appointments Board and, admittedly, it was one of those problems I failed to resolve. As far as the Appointments Board was concerned, MISR had a new establishment in which no research staff held a permanent appointment until he or she earned tenure. Even their designations had slightly changed. The research positions were now graded from Research Fellow to Research Professor, the latter being the topmost in the new establishment.

There was more bad news for the MISR staff. As the research staff had no teaching obligations, unless they so wished, the University Council and the Appointments Board wanted more research productivity and output from them, measured in the form of published articles and papers in peer-reviewed journals, to justify their continued stay on the institute's payroll. Secondly, any MISR staff seeking promotion had to produce twice as many publications as their counterparts in the teaching faculties and institutes, all published in peer-reviewed journals; another condition the Appointments Board insisted on applying to the letter. Quality research had become the buzzword and the Board wanted to see more of both quality and quantity. Keeping unproductive staff would undermine MISR's core mandate. All this sounded fine. Indeed, every serious-minded person would have wanted to see MISR as a leading and reputable research centre. On the other hand, the reality was that most of the incumbent MISR research staff had permanent and pensionable appointments. Applying the new rules indiscriminately meant cancelling their existing appointments. That would present the university with a serious legal challenge. In addition, in the process of re-appointing staff, there would be inevitable causalities. It was already apparent that some of the research staff were performing below par and some were bound to lose their jobs. The easier

way out would have been to redeploy them; asking them to join the full-time staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences. This option did not find much favour with the affected staff. Professor Nsibambi continued to defend his staff until he left the institute in 1996 and stood his ground but the Appointments Board maintained its stand that staff employed to do research only must constantly prove they are capable of delivering and therefore, worthy of retaining their positions.

The Appointments Board's position was simple. Research staff at MISR had to write grant-winning proposals to fund their research projects instead of waiting for money from the university. If they could not demonstrate their research productivity in terms of solicited grants and quality publications, there was no justification for the university to keep them as research staff. However, the Appointments Board had another idea. It wanted MISR to keep just a small core of research staff, with the majority of researchers drawn from other Faculties and academic units, who were interested in spending part of their time at MISR, carrying out research in collaboration with the MISR core staff. The Board's proposal, which was accepted by the University Council, was a radical departure from the old way of doing business as usual at the institute. To ensure that the institute adhered to the policy change, its Governing Board, the equivalent of the Faculty Board was radically re-organised to reflect the changes, with Professor Elly Sabiiti of the Faculty of Agriculture becoming its first Chairperson. Dr Deborah Kasente of the Department of Women and Gender Studies was the first member of staff to test the workability of the new policy when she applied for a three-year stay at MISR to conduct research.

In 1996, after the general election, President Museveni appointed Professor Nsibambi a full cabinet Minister in charge of the Ministry of Public Service. To recap, Nsibambi had participated in the planning of the decentralised system of governance in Uganda, which the Government had adopted and implemented. While at MISR, he edited a book entitled *Decentralisation and Civil Society: The Quest for Good Governance in Uganda*, in which he had authored a couple of chapters. Mr F. X. Lubanga, who had been in charge of the Decentralisation Secretariat at the Ministry of Local Government before moving over to the Ministry of Education and Sports as Permanent Secretary, also wrote a chapter in the book. It was a scholarly piece for those interested in governance issues. Published by a local publishing house, Fountain Publishers, the book came out in 1998, two years after Nsibambi had left MISR, the same year he was appointed Minister of Education and Sports. The President must have been impressed with Nsibambi's book and his professional input into the decentralisation policy, so he appointed him a full Minister in his Cabinet. I recall the President at one of the graduation ceremonies say something to the effect that that he had appointed Nsibambi as Minister of Public Service to find a living wage for MUASA members.

Unfortunately, Professor Nsibambi's abrupt departure was another setback for MISR. As he was leaving the university, he could not help lamenting that he was

leaving Makerere, which he had loyally served for 31 years. Little did he know that within a relatively short time he would come back, but in a different capacity, as its Chancellor. Shortly before he handed over, he came to me to discuss the future of the institute as well as his possible successor. He was concerned that his hard work would go to waste if we did not find the right kind of person to succeed him. I pointed out to him that I understood his concerns but, as Vice Chancellor, my powers were limited to temporary and part-time appointments only. Beyond that, I had very little influence over what happened since, at the time, I was not even a member of the Appointments Board. Apart from the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor, who were appointed by the Chancellor, the Appointments Board was the only university body legally empowered to recruit, promote, discipline and remove staff from office. Therefore, the question of his successor was beyond the realms of my powers. However, if we could find a suitable person to act as caretaker Director, I could make the temporary appointment. I wondered whether he had a name in mind and indeed, he came with one. According to the assessment he had made, he believed that Professor John Munene was the kind of person with the intellectual stature to replace him. I knew Professor Munene quite well, so I had no problem appointing him as Acting Director until we were ready to advertise the post. But we had to sound him out for his opinion. After a brief discussion, Professor Munene indicated he was willing to step in as Acting Director; after all, he had been collaborating with MISR for some time. I restrained from writing the letter appointing him Acting Director until such a time when the Appointments Board was ready to fill the position.

While acting as Director, Professor Munene suggested that MISR could make its expertise in research methodology available to other units if we allowed the institute to conduct short courses. His idea received mixed reactions in Senate. Some Senators thought it was a good idea and recommended approval of the courses. Others thought MISR was deviating from its primary mandate. For the rest of the time I was at Makerere, the proposal went cold. The one thing I recall about Professor Munene was his passion for culture. As far as he was concerned, every human endeavour, at least in Africa, had a cultural dimension. Coincidentally, my recent experiences and observations about how Africans approach all sorts of issues, including the way we do and manage our businesses and affairs, have made me believe he had a point. The first time I heard him articulate his ideas on culture, I could not help thinking here was another eccentric academic obsessed with a weird idea. Without a doubt, John Munene helped MISR stabilise after the sudden departure of its charismatic Director, Apolo Nsibambi.

After few months, the Appointments Board gave the University Secretary permission to advertise the position of MISR Director. As expected, Professor Munene put in an application and was one of the top contenders. Dr James Sengendo, the former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Dr Nakanyike Musisi,

an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto in Canada and Professor Abdu Kasozi of the Islamic University at Mbale were Munene's strongest challengers. During the interview, both Munene and Nakanyike Musisi were almost neck and neck, with Munene slightly ahead. Given its stance on gender and in a bid to promote the participation of more women in the top administrative positions, the University Council had advised that where two candidates, one male and the other female, were competing for the same position and were equally strong, after due consideration the Board should give preference to the female candidate.

After weighing the pros and cons, the Appointments Board offered the position to Dr Nakanyike Musisi. It was time for Professor Munene to return to his Institute of Psychology and get it off the ground. As it turned out, this arrangement was not as simple as the Board thought. John Munene had his eyes and mind firmly fixed on the MISR job. Certainly, the outcome of the interview did not go down well with him. He did not pretend about his disappointment and believed he had been robbed of his victory. As the old adage goes, "walls have ears" and indeed, one person amongst us who was present at the interview gave him the full details of what had transpired at the Appointments Board, almost verbatim. Believing that the Appointments Board had done a terrible injustice to him, he decided to appeal to Professor Nsibambi and the Inspector General of Government (IGG), to investigate the case. At the time, the IGG wielded a lot of power and with lots of biting teeth to go with it. When you received a letter or a telephone call from Jotham Tumwesigye, the former IGG, asking for an explanation on an issue which an anonymous informer had reported to him or simply informing you that he was investigating what appeared to be a serious matter at the university, you took his words seriously. Even in this case, we had to act as directed. However, after a thorough investigation lasting several weeks, the IGG reached the conclusion that there was no wrong doing. The Board had acted in accordance with the laid down university procedures and regulations during and after the interview. Therefore, Dr Nakanyike's appointment as Director of MISR was legal and proper. I am sure the decision did not please Professor Munene, but as a true academic, a believer in the rule of law and the institution of the IGG, he gracefully accepted the IGG's conclusions.

Dr Nakanyike Musisi was no stranger to Makerere. She had taken her BA degree in the Faculty of Arts in the 1970s and had joined the university's staff development programme. After her two Masters degrees at Birmingham in the UK, she crossed over to Canada for her PhD at the University of Toronto. With the political turmoil of the 1970s and early 1980s ragging in with no apparent end in sight, she decided to take refuge in Canada. She had been an excellent PhD student and as a result, the University of Toronto offered her a teaching position. She and her husband, Dr Seggane Musisi, a psychiatrist, were some of the few Ugandans in the Diaspora who never turned their backs on their homes

and relatives in Africa. Dr Nakanyike Musisi liked Makerere and whenever she was on her summer holiday in Uganda, she would offer to teach a course or two in the Department of Women and Gender Studies as a guest lecturer for free. Her husband also lent a helping hand in the Department of Psychiatry in the Medical School. One of Dr Nakanyike Musisi sisters, Mary Seremba, was a Senior Personal Secretary in my office. In summer, Dr Nakanyike Musisi kept coming back to visit her family until she and her husband decided to come back to settle. At the time, she had made it to the rank of Associate Professor.

I first met Dr Musisi briefly in late 1979 at Quarry House, where both of us lived before she left for Canada. The Appointments Board was convinced that in her, we had found a person of the right calibre that would be able to continue with Mudoola and Nsibambi's exemplary leadership and push MISR's frontiers even further. Although she inherited the unresolved staff appointments problem, she also inherited an impressive ally of moveable and immoveable assets, including a fleet of relatively new vehicles. Some of her staff, like the long serving Sebina Zziwa, Sarah Neema and H. Birungi had been out studying for their PhDs at the University of Copenhagen. The link with the University of Copenhagen began when late Dan Mudoola was Director. Besides its own research fellows, during her time, MISR began attracting affiliate researchers from all over the world. This was largely through her many contacts abroad. The Makerere Institute of Social Research was beginning to look like the old East African Institute of Social Research once again. Like Professor Nsibambi, Dr Nakanyike preferred to commute to work from her own home in Entebbe – over 40 kilometres away, but she was more often than not on time. So, Professor Epelu Opio was spared the challenge of looking for a house befitting her status as Director of MISR.

I believe that Makerere University will best remember Dr Nakanyike Musisi for her role in the – [HYPERLINK “mailto:I@mak.com”](mailto:I@mak.com) \h – I@mak.com programme. Somehow and for reasons best known to herself, she decided to drop her acquired European name. She always wanted us to call her Nakanyike Musisi or occasionally Nakanyike Seggane Musisi. Besides her regular schedule as Director of MISR, we made extensive use of her talents in many other ways. She was very much in demand and was always available, ready and willing. She even found time to teach at Toronto whenever she could squeeze in a short vacation. I found her a woman of incredible energy, intellect and zeal. She was always on one committee or the other. Occasionally, I would ask her to represent me at some meeting I was unable to attend. She did a myriad of other chores unrelated to her job.

In spite of her hectic schedule, she could still find time to peer review and edit manuscripts for publication in international journals, write papers and even books. One of her interesting publications was a book entitled, *Makerere University in Transition: 1993 – 2000, Opportunities and Challenges*, which she co-authored

with Dr Nansozi Muwanga of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, published in 2003 by Fountain Publishers of Kampala and James Currey of Oxford, UK. The book was published as part of a series of case studies in African higher education commissioned by the original four American foundations that made up the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, namely; the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. This publication captures the period I was Makerere's Vice Chancellor and it makes a lot of interesting reading. I would recommend it to anyone interested in Makerere's transition period or the history of that period from a slightly a different perspective.

As we watched MISR's continued march forward, we soon realised that the institute required more space. Right from its beginning in 1948, the institute owned a number of flats within its complex, built to accommodate resident research fellows. It also had a cluster of smaller buildings, which provided workspace for the researchers. Faced with a near-exponential demand for staff housing in the late 1970s, fuelled in part by the relative security the university campus offered at the time, the University Administration decided to put all of them in the senior housing pool. It was also the time the institute was almost in limbo. Over time, they fell into a state of disrepair. We decided to source for funds from the university's private income to renovate the buildings and hand them back to MISR. The arrangement we had struck with the MISR Director allowed us to keep some staff there for some time until we identified alternative accommodation for them. In the end, we used it to swap debt. It was a messy arrangement, but served the purpose. Dr Nakanyike kept billing me and, more often than not, I had no money to pay her. I kept sending guests and staff there for accommodation and in the process my office kept accumulating debt, hoping that someday the University Bursar would be able to find enough money to pay. The return of the smaller non-residential houses gave MISR a lot more breathing space. It was equally interesting to see a number of research fellows, particularly the women, who had no doctoral degrees before I came in as Vice Chancellor, decide to study for them. Dr Abbey Nalwanga Sebina, originally America-trained, who obtained her PhD from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark really impressed me when she finally decided to go for it. Others like Dr Stella Neema, Betty Kwagala and Dr Fred Golooba Mutebi, to mention a few, also come to mind. MISR was truly back to its research mandate.

### **The School of Postgraduate Studies and Later the School of Graduate Studies**

The little I know about graduate schools or postgraduate schools, depending on whether you prefer the American or the British version, is that they originated from the USA. The majority of British Commonwealth universities, perhaps

with the exception of Canada, did not have separate, moreover non-teaching graduate schools. Postgraduate work was taken as an integral part of a faculty or department. However, over time, the concept of a separate graduate school has spread worldwide. It is now rare to find a university worth its salt without some form of graduate school. For all I know in most universities, graduate schools function as clearing houses, although in a few instances some university graduate schools have staff of their own, normally drawn from the rest of the university academic departments. In effect, it is some form of dual appointment. As we have seen, postgraduate studies at Makerere was for many years the responsibility of a specialised committee of Senate called the Higher Degrees Committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor. Later, that role passed on to the Deputy Vice Chancellor. Research was the responsibility of another committee of Senate – the Research and Publications Committee. As the number of postgraduate students grew, so did the scope and complexity of the work of the Higher Degrees Committee. The Academic Registrar, who was Secretary to Senate, was also responsible for servicing these two busy committees. This was on top of other Senate committees and his heavy administrative duties.

In 1994, Senate recommended the establishment of a formal School of Postgraduate Studies to take over the functions and responsibilities of the Higher Degrees Committee as well as those of the Research and Publications Committee. The School was formally launched in the same year. The School had a Director as its head, who was at the level of a Faculty Dean, and a Board of Postgraduate Studies and Research made up of all Deans and Directors. Like all Deans, the Director reported to the Vice Chancellor and was a full member of Senate. Initially, there was a misunderstanding about the role the Academic Registrar was supposed to play in the School and whether the Director of the School was responsible to the Academic Registrar. The misunderstanding took some time to be sorted out, partly on the account of the personalities involved at the time. The confusion was eventually resolved and the School began to flourish, starting life in one of the university's old buildings adjacent to the School of Education. Before the formal launch of the School, there was some semblance of a postgraduate school, which Bernard Onyango had put in place, with Professor Matia Semakula Kiwanuka as its head. As a result of the changes in the leadership of the Academic Registrar's Department, it was scrapped in favour of a full-fledged independent Postgraduate School.

The opening of a full-fledged School of Postgraduate Studies was a clear indication that Makerere University was moving away from being a predominantly undergraduate teaching university to more of a research and postgraduate studies university. The Director of the School had to be appointed through internal advertising from amongst the academic members of staff for a four year-term, and had to be at a senior position of Professor with a proven track record of research, scholarship and postgraduate student supervision. Through this competitive

process, Professor John S. Mugerwa (now deceased), who was a former Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, was appointed its first Director. Unfortunately, he died in 1999 before completing his full term. Professor John Opuda Asibo of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine replaced him in an acting capacity until a substantive Director was appointed in 2003.

The School's vision was to take scholarship and research to the frontiers of knowledge; a reflection of the reason for its creation. In functional terms, the School was charged with the responsibility to register and monitor the registration status and progress of all postgraduate students at different levels and in different faculties/schools/institutes. Its other responsibility was to receive and approve postgraduate students' research proposals and thesis/dissertation supervisors. In addition, it had to solicit funds to support the university's research and postgraduate programmes, forge linkages with other institutions within and outside Uganda for purposes of supporting and strengthening the university's research function and postgraduate programmes, and also provide courses on research methodology. It had to administer research and publications in general on behalf of the University Senate. The School also had an obligation to produce an annual report on the on-going research and publications in the university.

The school's income for research and research administration came from a variety of sources, the most significant being the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which started supporting the School in 2003 to document all on-going research and improve the School's capacity to manage and coordinate research. At the time, research management and coordination was increasingly becoming a sticky issue between the School and the Faculties and required sorting out. The confusion was mainly about who was supposed to do what, the School's role against that of the Faculties. Some Deans felt that the School was usurping the powers of the Faculties. Besides helping us to sort out what was perceived as toe-stepping and other administrative problems, the Carnegie support enabled the School to capture information on all research projects undertaken by the postgraduate students in every department and the publications from the university's research output. In turn, this helped the School to define research priorities, and reduce duplication of effort and plagiarism.

The Sida/SAREC grant, although specific, was another equally important source of funding for the School. In fact, as we have seen elsewhere, the Director of the School was also the overall university-wide Sida/SAREC grant coordinator. Above all, from its internally generated revenue, the university itself started making a significant contribution to the School's research fund. The University Council had made it mandatory for every undergraduate student to contribute 10,000 Uganda shillings towards research per year. With an undergraduate student population (day and evening) close to 30,000 this source alone brought in almost 300 million shillings per year, the equivalent of about US\$160,000.

Not a jackpot by world standards, but certainly a significant amount by Uganda's economic standards. The university had never funded research out of its own resources before. Now it was doing it and, by and large, this was a sustainable source. The postgraduate students were chipping in with 20,000 shillings each per year. This brought in an extra 60 million shillings to the fund per year. In addition, the University Council passed a policy which required every faculty/school/institute which had students under the private student scheme or was generating income from other sources, to contribute one per cent of that income annually to the university's research fund, managed by the School of Postgraduate Studies. This was another big shot in the arm of the school.

In 2003, the school's Board decided to change the name of the school from School of Postgraduate Studies to the School of Graduate Studies. The change was prompted by a number of factors which the Board took into consideration. *Inter alia*, students, who had received their first degree, were referred to as graduates, so after graduation they went to a graduate school. Secondly, the term Graduate School had become popular worldwide and was preferred to School of Postgraduate Studies. The change was approved and the new name confirmed. The new name came with some additional changes both within the Board and in the School's administration. Before the change of the name, the position of Associate or Deputy Director of the School was not an established post. Up to then, the arrangement was informal. In the revised School's structure, the position was formalised. According to a gentleman's agreement we had with the School, if the Director came from a science-based faculty, the Deputy Director had to come from the arts and humanities. The converse was supposed to apply. During the time of Professor Opuda Asibo, Professors Oswald Ndoleriire of the Faculty of Arts and Professor David Bakibinga of the Faculty of Law had respectively acted as Deputy Directors of the School. When Professor Bakibinga was appointed substantive Director of the School, I requested Professor Yusto Kaahwa of the Physics Department to act as his Deputy. When Senate was re-organised under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001, there was an attempt to make the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) the chair of the School's Board, but the School was reluctant to accept the new arrangement. The School, and understandably so, argued that the new arrangement undermined the authority of the Director, citing that in essence, the directorship would be stripped of whatever power it had in the critical affairs of the School. I could sense some elements of frustration amongst those who were in charge of the School at the time. It seemed that the advocates of this proposal were taking the School back to the days of the Higher Degrees Committee. Unfortunately, I left the university before the problem was fully resolved. However, going by the 2001 Act under Section 48 (1), if the School's Board was constituted as an Academic Board, then the Director was its legal chairperson. However, I had to leave those matters to my successor to resolve.

Other changes included the expansion of the School's establishment from one Deputy Director to two – one to take charge of the graduate studies and the other to manage research. A proposal was made to add four more Assistant Registrars to act as Publications Administrator, Editorial Board Administrator; Grants and Fund Sourcing Administrator and General Graduate School Administrator. However, by the time I left, the School had yet to justify the proposed new posts to Kibirige Mayanja's Planning and Development Department and Council Committee. I must say it was an exciting moment to have participated in the proposal to start a proper Graduate School at Makerere, which I want to believe was another innovation and transformation.

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## Makerere University's Revenues (1993 – 2004)

As every Vice Chancellor would tell you, one of the major challenges in managing a university is lack of money. The challenge is far more daunting in sub-Saharan Africa where money is a scarce commodity. In this part of the world where university education is free, the majority of public universities suffer from chronic under-funding. They literally run on shoe-string budgets because Governments are unable to adequately provide for them. This state of affairs has contributed significantly to the continued erosion of whatever quality most of these universities had in the past when money was relatively plentiful to pay good salaries, buy journals, stock libraries with new books and laboratories with equipment and chemicals. For many years during our turbulent history, Makerere University was just hanging by a thread. No doubt, my predecessors had a rough time, because running a complex institution like Makerere on pittance was such a herculean task. To keep the institution afloat, you had to master the art of budget juggling, spiced with a bit of financial wizardry. However, even with all the financial management skills you could marshal and the fact that everyone looked to you for solutions, the situation was close to mission impossible.

Ostensibly, in our part of the world, the ability to raise funds is the Vice Chancellor's most important responsibility. You could delegate most of the routine administrative chores to your deputies, but sourcing for funds to run the institution is an obligation you cannot delegate. You had to look for money to endow chairs, support research, infrastructure development and a lot more. In fact, it came as a surprise when on my many visits to the USA, I discovered that some universities there required their professors to contribute a significant portion of their salaries from research grants solicited outside the university. But there was an interesting contrast between Africa and North America. In North America, the spirit of giving is more or less an entrenched culture. Many universities there

derive a lot of income from the generous donations of their alumni and other philanthropists. Even the tax system makes a provision for people to give. People and organisations get a tax-waiver for their philanthropic activities. In Africa by contrast, it is very hard for alumni to make huge contributions to their alma maters. From personal experience over the years, I have come to strongly believe that Africans are not generous institutional givers, because very few people receive big income surpluses. Moreover, relatively well-off people are overburdened with the unending demands the extended family system imposes on them. In Africa where social security hardly exists, well-to-do people act as society's social safety net. Our corporations too, do very little research and development, so they hardly invest in commissioned research which is one of the lucrative sources of income for universities in the more developed countries of Europe and North America. As those of us who have been in this game very well know, it is tough business to raise money. As a rookie Vice Chancellor in 1993, I soon discovered that at Makerere, institutional poverty was real and was certainly one of the biggest challenges I had to tackle very early in my administration.

As far as I could tell, Makerere's funding problems had been compounded by the fact that Uganda Government had abandoned central planning. Whereas throughout the 1960s and up to 1972, student admission was guided by the national development plans with periodic manpower surveys, from the 1980s, central planning which – according to some economists meant a planned economy – was no longer practised in Uganda. We were operating in a free market economy, thanks in part to the Reaganomics of the 1980s and beyond. The periodic manpower surveys provided a basis for projecting human resources development at the university. These projections determined the number of students the university could admit and the appropriate level of funding the Government could make available to the university in a given financial year through the University Grants Committee (UGC).

After manpower surveys were abandoned and the UGC scrapped, the Government funding of the university ceased to have correlation with student numbers. While the student enrolment was on the rise, funding was on the decline. This mismatch started to impact negatively the quality of education at the university. As a public university, it seemed the options to raise funds from other sources were limited. The institution was totally dependent on Government for both the recurrent and capital development budgets, and was consistently experiencing serious budget shortfalls. Due to the many competing demands on the national budget, Makerere University's total annual allocation from the Government Treasury had stagnated at fourty four per cent of its recurrent budget and five to ten per cent of its capital development budget. The situation was worse in the 1988/89 and 1989/90 financial years when the Government treasury could only meet thirty five per cent of the university's total recurrent budget. Worse still, it was not uncommon for the Government to

fail to release all the money it had budgeted for the university. Moreover, most of the money for the recurrent budget – almost eighty per cent – went to personnel emoluments, students' welfare and utilities. The impact of this chronic under-funding on the university was visible everywhere. Under-funding had translated into low pay, poorly resourced laboratories and libraries, minimal research output, poorly fed students, dilapidated infrastructure, a demotivated staff and a lot more.

About this time and in spite of the concerted efforts of the previous Vice Chancellors, the university was just about surviving. As an old friend of mine who was visiting Makerere for the first time after almost twenty years abroad commented, "though the university had survived the worst storm, mere survival was not good enough". Something drastic had to be done to regain some of Makerere's lost fortunes and glory. In short, this state of affairs had a profound effect on the quality of teaching and the learning environment. Slowly, Makerere, once a renowned centre of learning in Africa, was falling from academic grace to academic gunk. Equally frustrating as it was for many A-Level certificate holders and their parents, every year the university could only admit a tiny fraction of the candidates who qualified to enter university, ostensibly on the excuse of limited facilities. Every year, the number of qualifying candidates was growing, but the intake had either stagnated or declined. Even for those lucky enough to gain admission to the university, the conditions they found were far from ideal. As one girl from Namagunga, one of the leading secondary schools for girls in Uganda once lamented, "I was disappointed. I had studied hard at school to come to Makerere, the university of my dreams, only to discover that even Namagunga was a far better place than this place called a university. Finding Makerere University in that state was an anti-climax for me. My dream was almost shattered". In many ways, she was right. Her observation was in many ways a true reflection of the conditions that prevailed at Makerere at the time. As we have seen, no doubt, this state of affairs prompted Professor Kajubi and his colleagues to start thinking of other options to raise more money.

When my administration took over in late 1993, we had to confront the same challenge that my predecessors had grappled with for years. The first shock was to discover that whereas in the financial year 1993/94, the university had submitted to Government a recurrent budget of 31.88 billion shillings, Government had approved only 10.71 billions, which was just about thirty two per cent of the university budgetary requirements for that year. I then realised we were up against a huge financial hurdle to keep the university afloat. As a new Vice Chancellor, there were still several sympathetic ears in the Ministry of Finance willing to listen to my pleas. In a small way, some of my talking yielded some results when in the 1994/95 financial year, Government raised the university allocation by twelve per cent. That year, out of the 32.94 billion shilling recurrent budget submitted, Government provided 17.66 billion shillings, representing fifty four per cent.

In 1995/96, the allocation was raised further to fifty seven per cent, but that was about the end of the honeymoon. In 1996/97, the Government subvention (as it was now called) went down again to fifty one per cent and continued on the downward spiral to thirty five per cent in the financial year 2003/04, my last year at Makerere. To complicate the difficult situation further, the Ministry of Finance introduced a new policy which stipulated that for every new financial year, budget ceilings would be set for every Government department, and no department was allowed to exceed them. The new policy did away with the old practice of presenting your budget to the Ministry of Finance, and then the Ministry inviting you to defend it. Under the new policy, the Ministry fixed the budgetary ceilings for the university in advance. There was no more room for negotiations. All expenditure had to fit within the ceiling. We had no way of knowing how the ceilings were arrived at, and the ceiling for the university was more or less the same every year. For example, between 1997/98 and 2003/04 financial years, the university's ceiling averaged twenty nine billion shillings per year or just about forty nine per cent of the total university budget, which had risen from forty seven to seventy eight billion shillings over the same period.

In spite of the pre-determined ceilings, the university was still required to submit its own budget to the Ministry of Finance and Parliament every year, which in effect was just an academic exercise. Since The Ministry of Finance also fixed the vote lines in the budget, our job had been reduced to just dispensing money. We thought we could work with the Ministry of Finance to arrive at a more realistic and rational formula. We had been arguing that it was more realistic to base funding on unit costs, which varied from course to course. One day, the Ministry of Finance instructed us to work out the unit cost for each course. With all the brains we could marshal, we went through a meticulous exercise of computing the unit cost for every programme. It was a truly tedious exercise, but when we finally submitted the figures, the Ministry of Finance expressed doubt about their accuracy. The officials thought our figures were unrealistically high, and therefore advised that an independent consultant should verify them. NORAD provided the consultant and to our surprise, the figures he computed – independently – more or less tallied with our own figures. Once again, we went back to the Ministry with the consultant's figures. After looking at them, the officials at the Ministry of Finance admitted that Government could not afford the cost. Once again, we were back to the old system of fixed ceilings.

For reasons best known to them, the Ministry of Finance officials started accusing the University of failing to declare all the earnings from the private students' scheme and other income-generating schemes we had initiated. I could understand their problems of raising sufficient revenue, but accusing us of something that was untrue was unfair. I was not aware of any income we had failed to declare. Frankly, I found these accusations rather infuriating. Interestingly, the Auditor General had a team of full-time staff in the Finance Department

at Makerere, constantly monitoring all financial transactions and the university accounts on a daily basis. In all his audit reports, the Auditor General had never accused the University of failing to declare all its private income. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance had insisted on including the internally-generated income in university budget as Appropriation in Aid (AIA), and we were religiously doing it every year. I was therefore baffled at these persistent accusations. Was the Ministry of Finance using it as a tactic not to give more money to the university? I could not find the answer. Later, the talk shifted from undeclared private income to Government paying a higher unit cost for its students than the fee-paying private students. I then remembered that these were the same bureaucrats who in 1996 failed to honour the President's eighteen billion shilling pledge to the university to rehabilitate the entire physical plant, saying that the man was just politicking when he made the pledge. Frustrated with the Ministry of Finance, we had to learn to live with what had now become a permanent budget deficit.

Constantly being dogged by shortage of money to run an institution was not fun. As Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, used to say, "money was the lifeblood of the university", and yet it was always in short supply. In medical terms, you could say the university was chronically anaemic. Picking up from where my predecessor, Professor Senteza Kajubi had left, we decided to intensify the internal income-generating efforts. By far, the private students' scheme was the main source of unconditional revenue. Most grants came with conditionalities, so we could not use the grant money to supplement the regular university budget. Some have questioned the wisdom of introducing the private students' scheme and how it led to the decline in quality and academic standards at Makerere – once the Harvard of Africa. I have often wondered what kind of quality and academic standards we were talking about when students had to go without textbooks and libraries were stocked with old and outdated books; when staff and postgraduate students were having intermittent access to the latest journals which came in the expensive hard copy editions only; when laboratories had obsolete and dysfunctional equipment, with insufficient chemicals and other vital supplies; and when professors had to drive taxis between lectures to make ends meet. No doubt, those of us who had to teach in those conditions did more than our level best to produce credible graduates the hard way. We had to combine our responsibility to our students with our personal survival. As Dr Mukwanason used to say, "it was preferable to begin at the end and slowly come back to the beginning", meaning that it was better to start with the students and, as revenue came in, then work on the facilities. Short of that, you would continue to live under the illusion that by keeping the numbers small, but without the critical inputs, you were providing quality university education. For better or for worse, we chose the former. The following is the story of income generation at Makerere during my time, which David Court in one of his publications dubbed the "Silent Revolution".

Income generation started in earnest in the 1992/93 academic year, with the admission of a few private students in some faculties such as the Social Sciences and with the introduction of the evening classes at the Faculty of Law, which later spread to other faculties, schools and institutes. The evening classes gained momentum in the 1995/96 academic year, when the income generated reached the four billion shilling mark, at the time equivalent to about two million US dollars. By 2000/001, the internally-generated revenue had risen to seventeen billion shillings, or about 9.5 million US dollars. This was about seventy four per cent of the Government recurrent budget of twenty three billion shillings that year. Combining the internally-generated revenue and the Government subvention, the budget deficit was reduced from sixty two per cent to thirty four per cent. By 2002/003, the revenue collection had reached an all-time high of twenty nine billion shillings, or sixteen million US dollars. For the first time, the internally-generated income had exceeded the Government subvention by about two billion shillings. As part of the 2002/003 annual report, the Department of Planning and Development produced a pie chart, showing the contribution of each revenue source to the university. The chart revealed an interesting pattern. In that financial year, the Government subvention constituted only thirty seven per cent of the university's revenue. The internally-generated income contributed thirty nine per cent and the income from other sources- mainly donor grants, contributed twenty four per cent. Gone are the days when the Government funded the university almost 100 per cent. Additionally, the combined revenue reduced the overall recurrent budget deficit to twenty seven per cent. Although we had not yet achieved a balance budget; at seventy three per cent of the budget estimates the university had submitted to Government that year, we were slowly getting there. The additional income came from the commercial units, namely the bakery, the guest house, the maize mill and the University Printing Press which, in 2002/003, generated one and a half billion shillings in sales and a sixteen per cent net profit of 245 million shillings.

However, the revenue from the commercial units was not ploughed into the university regular budget; the units kept the profits for business growth. As is the practice in the corporate world, the commercial units also used to declare a dividend to the University Council. With the additional revenue, the stage was set to confront the challenges which had dogged the university for so long, head-on.

### **Internally-generated Revenue: A Critical Supplementary Income**

In 1996, after four years of income-generation experience, we decided to streamline the contribution of the internally-generated revenue to the university budget by apportioning it into various votes, taking into account the fact that the academic units generated the bulk of this revenue and therefore deserved the largest share of the money. So, when the University Council approved the policy

on revenue distribution, it was conscious of this fact and decided – on the basis of a recommendation Senate had submitted in late 1995 – that the faculties, schools and institutes would retain sixty five per cent of the revenue; while twenty per cent was allocated to a central pool to support University Administration. The University Council also decided to create the central pool to cater for the deanship and headship allowance in faculties which had low capacity to generate revenue. These were mainly the science-based faculties, where limited and ageing facilities could not allow admission of too many additional students. It also catered for allowances for staff in the Central Administration as well as topped-up house rent for staff who were accommodated in the National Housing Corporation flats in Wandegaya and elsewhere. Later, it was also used to supplement the Government subvention; to fund the activities not adequately covered by the Government funds, which included the annual teaching practice in the School of Education, academic fieldwork and industrial training, supervision allowances, external examiners' honoraria, part-time teaching, utilities and provision of drugs in the University Hospital – the list just kept growing.

In 2003, the central pool account was reduced to six per cent to cover some of the new initiatives, such as the in-house retirement scheme, the wage bill, maintenance of the university physical plant and infrastructure and staff development. The Library was originally allocated ten per cent of the internally-generated revenue but, due to the new demands, this also continued to suffer cuts. It was the responsibility of the University Bursar to collect, receipt and disburse the money from this source of income. At that time, the revenue was still small, so we decided not to make too many demands on it. The percentages were later revised to cater for the staff development by re-allocating five per cent from the Library to the Fund.

Partly as a result of the MUASA strike of 1996, for better salaries which Government had failed to pay, the University Council decided to revisit the distribution of the internally-generated income. It had become apparent that as the perceived employer of all university staff, at least on paper, there was no way the University Council could avoid being involved in finding ways and means to ameliorate the poor staff salaries and wages. That same year, the University Council approved new income distribution ratios. From the day programmes, each income generating faculty, school and institute retained fifty one per cent, down from sixty five per cent; eighteen per cent went to topping up salaries and wages; four per cent was set aside as Maintenance Fund, which was a new idea; eight per cent went to support the new In-house Retirement Benefits Scheme; ten per cent went to the Central Pool, down from twenty five per cent; five per cent was allocated to the new Staff Development Fund, down from ten per cent; three per cent was set aside for the Library services, and one per cent was contribution to the new Research Fund.

From the evening programmes, which were not supported by the Government subvention and were therefore, entirely self-financing, the faculties, schools and institutes were allowed to retain fifty nine per cent of their income, while eighteen per cent went to the University Wage Bill; six per cent to the Retirement Scheme; four per cent to Maintenance; and three per cent to Staff Development. The central pool was allocated six per cent; the Library three per cent and Research one per cent. From the postgraduate programmes, which had few students, Council decided that the faculties, schools and institutes should retain seventy five per cent of their income. From this source, only nine per cent of the income went towards topping up the Wage Bill and only one per cent was reserved for Staff Development. On the other hand, twenty per cent of the income generated in the halls of residence, mainly from the accommodation fees, went to support the halls, including improvements in the diet. The rest of the income went to sporting activities, the University Hospital, the Dean of Students Office; Students' Senior Common Rooms in the Halls of Residence and other things related to students' welfare. It did not matter the source of income, the Wage Bill top-up, Library services, the central pool account, the Staff Development Fund, the Maintenance Fund, Research Fund and the in-house Retirement Benefits Scheme took a share of that income.

The Academic Registrar's department was another strong income-generating centre and, besides the cross-cutting items just listed above, most of the income from this source went to support external examiners (eight per cent), fieldwork (thirteen per cent) and the Students Guild (four per cent). The University Hospital, utilities and students' sports programmes also benefited directly from this source of income.

No doubt, the internally-generated income went a long way to sustain the struggling university, including the provision of new facilities like the new Faculty of Law building; the HURIPEC house; the Social Sciences building and the Senate House, as well as renovation of the old ones; purchase of computers and accessories for computer laboratories in faculties which otherwise would never have had them; vehicles, such as buses and tractors for the Faculties of Agriculture, Arts and Veterinary Medicine and the Dean of Students' Office; textbooks for the book banks; Internet and e-mail services through MakNet and other Internet service providers; improvements in the students welfare, including the provision of decent meals, and a myriad of other things I have alluded to throughout this account. Below, I want to give the reader an insight into how the private revenue brought about some real fundamental and positive changes at Makerere for the first time in its history, and some illustration of the critical role the private income played, and will perhaps continue to play, in Makerere's future development. The innovations and new initiatives I refer to in the paragraphs below would not have been possible without the university's private income and the freedom to use it as the University Council saw fit for the benefit of all. I was thankful to the

Minister of Finance, who in his wisdom decided to give the university a waiver not to remit its private income to the Government's Consolidated Fund. I am inclined to believe that with these examples, I may be able to start answering the nagging question: Did Makerere University really lose out on the quality of its academic reputation when it introduced the private students' scheme as some critics repeatedly say? Whenever I am confronted with this question, I am always reminded of the old adage of the chicken and the egg; which came first?

### **The Parallel Establishment**

As the student enrolments grew, it became apparent that the University Establishment was too small to cater for the large numbers. However, given the very limited Government subvention grant, the university would not be able to expand the establishment by creating new academic posts without stretching the budget beyond limits. In other words, the regular University Establishment was not infinitely elastic. We had to work within the boundaries of what Government could afford. Secondly, staff in posts were either agitating for better pay or forced to leave the university in search of better paying jobs elsewhere. Since most faculties with large student numbers were also generating some good revenue, we thought it was possible for them to recruit staff and pay them from their internally-generated income. Although the university organs like the Appointments Board would still have a say in the appointment of such staff, their appointment would be outside the normal University Establishment. They would be recruited as either full-time or part-time staff. Staff in this category would constitute what we preferred to call the parallel establishment. I believe this is what some universities prefer to call the adjunct faculty. In a way, it was a revolutionary answer to the old-time problem of too many students, with its negative impact on quality. Even before we had formalised the parallel establishment, many Faculties were already employing part-time staff and paying them out of their internally-generated income. The Faculty of Arts led the way. Although the Government subvention had a vote for part-time teaching, it was too small to allow for the recruitment of the kind of staff and the numbers we wanted. Secondly, the Government hourly rate was too low to attract the good people from town, many of them former members of staff, as part-time lecturers.

As Vice Chancellor, one of my preoccupations was to issue letters of appointment to part-time and honorary staff. I was glad I had an efficient Personal Assistant, Mrs Euphemia Kalema-Kiwuwa. She always made sure that the applicants for part-time appointment were properly and adequately vetted and the letters of appointment or renewal of expired contracts prepared, ready for my signature. We wrote hundreds of them. I was convinced that this was one of the best ways of improving the staff/student ratios. I also saw it as a means of infusing real life experience into the curriculum, which the part-time staff were bringing into the lecture rooms.

In fact, the Faculty of Arts made very good use of part-time lecturers on its new programmes like Urban Planning and Tourism, while many clinical departments at Mulago relied heavily on honorary staff of the Ministry of Health. The difference was that whereas part-time lecturers drew their salary from the university, honorary lecturers did not. In many departments, at Mulago in particular, the adjunct staff outnumbered the university's full-time staff. The parallel establishment formalisation process required legitimization from the University Council with defined terms and conditions of service under which staff falling in that category would be employed, and the benefits they would enjoy as university employees. It was an attractive innovation which needed to be thought through carefully, particularly its legal implications on the university as a Government institution. As was always the case, the University Council set up an ad hoc committee to study the proposals and make recommendations. Unfortunately for me, the committee took too long to submit its report and I had to leave it to my successor to take it to its logical conclusion. Meanwhile, faculties, schools and institutes continued to hire staff informally and pay them from their income. Due to the growing thefts of vital items like computers, some faculties were even hiring extra security personnel, at their own expense, to guard their premises.

### **The Wage Bill Top-up and the In-house Retirement Benefits Scheme**

The internally-generated revenue gave us a big shot in the arm. For the first time in living memory, we could top up staff salaries and wages across board from our own income. As we have noted above, eighteen per cent of the gross internally-generated income was allocated to the University Wage Bill. For example, for the first time in 1996, a full Professor at Makerere was earning a gross monthly salary equivalent to US\$1,000. Not a significant amount, one might be tempted to say; nevertheless, it was a significant milestone for the university at the time. I was told that at the time, Makerere professors were the highest paid in East Africa. By 2004, the contribution from this source of income to the wage bill had risen to twenty two per cent. That same year, the university's contribution to the salaries and wages exceeded the Government portion. Secondly, Makerere University had neither a meaningful retirement nor a pension scheme. For a long time, Makerere University staff had two contributory retirement schemes, neither of which was a pension scheme. One scheme, favoured by the academic and senior administrative staff, was called the Retirement Benefit Scheme (RBS), administered by the National Insurance Corporation (NIC). The other was the Social Security Fund (SSF), administered by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and favoured by the support staff on the advice of their Union. Both were contributory schemes to which both the university as an employer and staff as the employees made a monthly contribution. Unfortunately, the retirement package from either scheme was almost peanuts. Inflation and the currency reform of 1987 had eroded whatever value the pensions

had. In both cases, it was a one-off payment, essentially a gratuity. After the retiring staff was paid the little package, that was the end of it. After that, there was no pension to fall back on, and you were on your own. To make matters worse, retired employees had to wait a long time before being paid the meagre package, which at times created unnecessary friction between staff and University Administration. As Vice Chancellor, I used to feel terribly embarrassed whenever I had to bid farewell to a retiring colleague after many years of dedicated and loyal service to the university. It was always a moment I found most unpleasant. Members of staff had been demanding a meaningful retirement scheme for years without a breakthrough. Due to mounting pressure, the University Council had come up with what it called an Interim Scheme, which was later dubbed “The John Katuramu Scheme”, so called because John Katuramu, who was Deputy University Secretary for Administration, was responsible for managing it. Like the NIC, RBS and the SSF, the interim award was also another form of gratuity. However, it failed because Government was under-funding it. As the Ministry of Finance adopted more and more austerity measures, the scheme was one of casualties of the budget cuts.

Pensions and other retirement benefits were part of the items high up the priority list of my administration. It was an issue we had to address squarely. Besides trying to make life after Makerere more habitable, we also wanted staff to look forward to their retirement with dignity and have more confidence in the university as a caring employer. Again for the first time, we put in place a no-contributory retirement scheme we called the In-house Retirement Benefit Scheme (IHRBS). On our recommendation, the University Council under Dr David Matovu decided to set aside ten per cent of the gross internally-generated income for the scheme. It was financed entirely from the university's revenue. The IHRBS consisted of two parts: gratuity and a pension. Professor Livingstone Luboobi chaired the Senate Ad Hoc Committee which worked out the details and the formula that made it easy to calculate both the gratuity and the pension components of the scheme.

Luboobi's committee made an extensive study of the retirement schemes in other institutions, including the Government's own scheme administered by the Ministry of Public Service. It was ironical that whereas retired Government civil servants earned a pension until death, Makerere University staff had been left out of the Government scheme. It was a rude reminder that autonomy had serious drawbacks, and this was one of them. In our IHRBS, gratuity was a one-off payment, while the pension was a monthly payment which retired members of staff continued to enjoy; up to fifteen years into their retirement for those retiring at the mandatory age of sixty, and for ten years for those retiring between the ages of fifty five and sixty. We had wanted to make it a life-pension, but Luboobi's calculations had shown that if it was stretched beyond fifteen years, the scheme would not be sustainable. Also to make it manageable, the benefits were

calculated on the basic salary and not on the gross salary, as the latter included variable allowances which were subject to change from time to time.

The size of the package depended on one's salary scale at the time of retirement and one's number of years of service to the university. The length of service did not have to be continuous, because the scheme took into account all the years a member of staff had served before and after the break. The new scheme created a lot of excitement. Some members of staff called it the kind of breakthrough staff had been looking forward to for years. As Vice Chancellor, I had reason to be happy and proud too. Now, I could send off people into their retirement with a reasonable farewell package.

When we inaugurated the scheme, I invited the retiring members of staff to a farewell tea party in the Senior Common Room and presented each of them with an envelope containing the gratuity cheque. Some gratuity cheques were quite heavy, in excess of fourty million shillings, the equivalent of 22,000 US dollars. In dollar terms, it was not much, but it was a significant improvement on the previous schemes. As far I could remember, no retiring member of staff had ever received such an amount of money from the university as gratuity and on top still expected a monthly cheque. It was one way we used the income from the private students' scheme to boost staff morale. Every employee of the university, from cleaners to the Vice Chancellor, was a beneficiary.

### **The Staff Development Fund and the Mujaju Report**

Makerere's enduring survival depended largely on its Staff Development Scheme, formally initiated in 1972. It was originally intended to expedite the Africanisation programme, but took on a new dimension in the aftermath of the expulsion of the expatriate and Asian staff in 1972. It was managed by the Staff Development Committee, one of the standing committees of Senate, with the Vice Chancellor as its chair. For many years, the scheme relied almost entirely on external scholarships from three major benefactors: the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, the German Academic Exchange Service or DAAD and the Fulbright Trust. Occasionally, there were scholarships from other sources, but those were not so regular. The number of scholarships available each year was also very limited and some were tagged to specific disciplines; so, many staff development fellows took their advanced degrees at Makerere, but at the risk of excessive inbreeding. That avenue was also limited as many departments had no capacity to run and supervise higher degrees to the level of a PhD at the time. As the external scholarships became fewer, many members of staff had stagnated at a Masters degree level, with almost no prospects of ever moving on to the PhD. That worked well in the olden days, but a Masters degree alone was not good enough anymore for one to be hired as a lecturer at Makerere. The university had set itself a goal to raise the quality of its academic staff through training and re-training.

The famous Mujaju Committee was set up in November 1998 to recommend to Senate, and eventually to the University Council, how best that goal could be achieved. Late Professor Akiki Mujaju was a thorough man. He also had good people on his committee. Unfortunately, that was the last Senate committee he chaired and although he is long departed, his report – dubbed “The Mujaju Report” – still commands attention at Makerere.

To ensure that the Staff Development Fund would achieve the objective for which it was set up and to eliminate waste of scarce resources, and partly on the request of the Appointments Board, Professor Mujaju's committee was required to make recommendations on a range of policy proposals. One recommendation covered staff who registered for academic programmes and failed to complete them for all sorts of reasons, excluding academic incompetence. The second recommendation covered staff who registered for academic programmes and failed to progress or to complete them on grounds of poor performance or academic incompetence. Thirdly, the committee had to propose the minimum qualification for appointment as lecturer and the criteria for assessing Masters and PhD degrees for purposes of appointment, promotion, confirmation in service and creation of new academic posts at training grade. The committee's recommendations were far-reaching. I believe Mujaju's report became famous, because his Committee was bold enough to make such far-reaching recommendations. Both Senate and the University Council accepted most of the committee's recommendations which became university policies. Part of this policy had a direct impact on the Staff Development Fund. Other recommendations had an indirect impact.

Mujaju's committee recommended that an academic member of staff who failed to complete an academic programme without a satisfactory reason was deemed incapable of providing effective academic leadership and would be advised to leave the service of the university. This recommendation applied equally to the non-academic members of staff as well. Secondly, an academic member of staff who registered for an academic programme and performed poorly was also deemed incapable of providing effective academic leadership and had to leave the university. However, the committee was more lenient with the non-teaching staff who performed poorly. The university could retain them, but their poor performance had to be noted. On the minimum qualification for appointment as lecturer, the committee set the PhD or its equivalent, obtained from a recognised university, as the minimum qualification. For appointment to the new post of Assistant Lecturer, which was one of the university's staff training grades, the applicant was required have a Masters degree and a Bachelors degree of at least second class upper-division standing, or an equivalent classification. But priority was to be given to candidates with first class honours or *summa cum laude* in the North American system.

The Assistant Lecturer post was terminal, based on a three-year contract and renewable only once. Renewal was dependent on evidence of satisfactory progress

towards a PhD. Promotion to the post of Senior Lecturer required a PhD or its equivalent and a minimum of three publications in recognised and referred journals. For the Associate Professor rank, again the PhD or equivalent was the minimum academic qualification, but the candidate was required to have a good academic track record of eight years' teaching and research experience and at least six recognised publications, published after the last promotion. For the top rank of Professor, a PhD or an equivalent doctoral degree was required in addition to at least eight recognised publications written since the last promotion and good academic track record of teaching, research and academic leadership. In all instances, publications submitted for promotion had to be in reputable journals and had to be vetted internally for the Senior Lecturer post, and externally for the rest of the posts. This was to re-emphasise what was already in practice. What was new was the vetting requirement for the Senior Lecturer position. The committee further recommended that any member of staff who did not have a PhD or its equivalent, could not be promoted beyond Senior Lecturer. This recommendation sent a shiver down the spine of most members of staff who had long given up on the PhD. No PhD, no Professor at Makerere!

Mujaju's committee also upheld the proposal we had already made that promotion of academic members of staff should not be strictly tied to available established posts. Rather, the main consideration should be on a member of staff being able to demonstrate that he or she had fulfilled the requirements for promotion to the next rank. In the past, many members of staff who merited promotion were kept marking time because there were no vacancies in the posts they were aspiring to be promoted to. This was certainly a big disincentive to the serious and hardworking members of staff. Out of frustration, some had left the university and I have reason to believe that one prominent academic staff in the Department of Political Science and Public administration was one of those who, because of the old University policy of promoting against a vacancy, felt frustrated and resigned. According to what I heard from the then Dean of Social Sciences, there was one vacant position of Professor in the department and two candidates had applied for it. The choice was between this particular popular individual and the lesser-known candidate. Apparently, the lesser-known candidate had an edge and was promoted. So, the well-known one threw in the towel and left the university.

Secondly, many members of staff were writing books or contributing chapters and articles in books, and were submitting them for the purpose of promotion. Mujaju's committee recommended that Senate should devise a mechanism to distinguish between the different types of books and articles members of staff were publishing. In the opinion of the committee, a good book was judged as equivalent to three papers in a reputable journal. The committee also was tasked to address the issue of Teaching Assistants, which the University Council had approved as

a temporary arrangement some years back but had never formalised as a post in the University Establishment. It was a carry-over from the time of acute staff shortages. Council had created it to alleviate staff shortages most departments were experiencing at the time. Nearly every department had Teaching Assistants, but their future as employees of the university was uncertain. Mujaju's committee recommended institutionalising this post as one of the training grades for the young fresh and brilliant graduates. It recommended a first class or at least a good second class upper division honours Bachelors degree as the minimum requirement to make one eligible for appointment. Before that, even candidates with lower degrees were being recommended for appointment. Also, like the Assistant Lecturer grade, teaching assistantship was a three-year contractual appointment, renewable once. At the end of six years, the incumbent was expected to have earned a Masters degree to be able to move on to the next level.

On confirmation into the university's service, the committee's proposal was that members of staff who did not possess a PhD degree or its equivalent be encouraged to register for and obtain one. The committee made an observation that several members of the academic staff had been in the university's service for a long time and seemed to be content with their academic status quo, and so were reluctant to register for the PhD and other advanced degrees. The committee also noted that some members of staff feared that they might fail or perform poorly. As a shake-up, it therefore recommended that members of staff who hitherto had only a Masters degree and had not yet been confirmed in the university's service could only be confirmed if they showed evidence that they had registered or were about to register for the PhD. For those already confirmed, Senate on the advice of the Faculty Boards and Staff Development Committee, had to prescribe and recommend to the University Council the minimum period within which they were expected to have obtained a PhD or its equivalent, after the new policy requiring every academic member of staff to have it came into effect. If one failed to get it within the prescribed time, the University Council could apply the appropriate sanctions. Although both Senate and Council settled for three years as the maximum grace period, it was one of the most difficult policies to enforce. It also meant re-writing the letters of appointment to staff who were already in permanent employment with the university. Many members of staff believed they were too old to register for the PhD, others just ignored the policy.

On grading the advanced degrees for the purpose of appointment and promotion, Mujaju's committee noted that there were several versions of the Masters degree. In some universities, the Masters degree was awarded on the basis of course work and a written examination only. This was usually a one-year programme. Another version of the same degree was based on course work and dissertation. Yet, another version was based on research alone and awarded on the basis of a thesis. As we had observed, this was the practice at Makerere until a few

years ago. Some universities, particularly in the USA, awarded what they called terminal Masters degrees. The committee had difficulties prescribing a solution to the confusion among the various types of the same degree. As a way out of the confusion, it recommended grading all Masters degrees, adding that a Masters degree by course work and dissertation should be rated higher than one based on course work only or thesis alone or a terminal one. The committee wanted the same rating to apply to the PhD as well. Since most members had obtained their PhDs from American universities, one could understand why the committee was inclined to have the PhDs also rated the same way.

The American PhD is based on a prescribed set of courses and a comprehensive examination, which every doctoral candidate has to pass before proceeding to the thesis. The argument the committee advanced in favour of part-taught and part-research advanced degrees over those based purely on research was the exploding nature of knowledge. It was argued that advanced degrees based on course work and thesis produced academic staff with a broad knowledge base which was considered useful for teaching in the postgraduate programmes. In August 1999, the University Council adopted the committee's report with minor amendments, and it became university policy. Mujaju's committee helped to put into proper perspective and re-emphasise the things which were already in practice, like the supernumerary posts that were already in the University Establishment. It was a powerful report, and its implementation was a challenge.

It was one thing to demand that all members of staff at Lecturer rank and above should have a PhD by a certain date. It was another thing finding suitable universities for them to register and study for it. Moreover, most of the affected members of staff who did not have it were well above the age limits for the scholarships most external organisations like DAAD were giving to the university. Therefore, externally-funded scholarships for this category of staff were very few. At the same time, there was a real risk that members of staff who were willing to study for it could fail to raise fees and related expenses, and would lose morale, putting Mujaju's report in jeopardy. There had to be an alternative to total reliance on externally-funded scholarships for the university's staff development programme. The Staff Development Fund (SDF) was the answer. The SDF was meant to finance a comprehensive in-house scholarship and fellowship scheme, with its income drawn from a variety of sources. However, Senate decided that the bulk of the money should come from the university's internally-generated revenue. Senate had long realised that the only way the university could achieve its mandate of knowledge generation, transmission and preservation was through high quality research and teaching. This required mobilisation of a critical mass of high quality and committed academic and professional staff. A staff development programme supported with the university's own resources was the way forward. Therefore, the SDF was set up to serve that specific objective of raising the quality, competence and skills of the university staff. We knew that academic

and professional staff of that calibre did not come out of the blue. They had to be consciously nurtured through systematic and targeted training. However, that kind of nurturing did not come cheap. It required a lot of money which, for many years, the university did not have. Now was the time to do something about our own situation. But before we could figure out how we would raise the money from the various rather overstretched revenue generating units, we had to formulate a proper staff training policy. Up to then, the university did not have one. The policy was necessary to guide a systematic and transparent operationalisation of the SDF. We went through the processes and, before long, the university had one.

A key clause in the new staff training policy stipulated that since the SDF was established with the aim of training and developing the skills and competences of all members of the university staff, the allocation of funds had to be based on properly identified capacity building needs. These needs had to be identified through merit and priority lists submitted to the Staff Development Committee by the faculty, school, institute or department. Secondly, priority had to be given to PhD training which Senate expected to be a continuous process in order to maintain and sustain a critical mass of well qualified academics who in turn would provide research leadership and be able to teach at all levels. Hence, a proportionately large percentage of the SDF was devoted to this priority need. Due to insufficient funds, members of staff who preferred to take their PhDs at Makerere were given an edge over those who registered for it outside. Second preference was given to students admitted for their PhD training at universities within Africa. Only members of staff who had registered for the PhD in fields and disciplines for which Makerere University had no capacity to supervise could be funded to undertake their training abroad. The choices were based purely on economic reasons. In order to further cut down on costs, the policy encouraged members of staff wishing to study for a Masters degree to do so at Makerere or at one of the recognised local universities. Training at Makerere at this level was a way of recycling scarce resources internally. The policy also discouraged sponsoring members of staff for more than one Masters degree, which had become fashionable at the time, instead of staff going on to the PhD. Under the new dispensation, those who had one and still wished to study for another had to do so at their own expense or look for other sponsors.

Besides the advanced degrees, the staff training policy made a provision for diploma, certificate and short courses. Such courses had to be tailor-made to update the skills and knowledge of staff to meet the university's changing demands and responsibilities, and to prepare them for promotion as well as enhance their job performance and satisfaction. The target groups for this type of training were mainly administrative and junior support staff. The training could be organised at Makerere or at some other suitable institutions within and

outside Uganda. The policy also catered for seminars, workshops, conferences and subject meetings organised mainly within Uganda and East Africa, but also abroad if a case could be made. The aim was to give opportunity to university's staff to have some international exposure, and to showcase to the rest of the world Makerere's efforts in research and other areas of scholarship. The long abandoned inaugural lectures, which were supposed to be delivered by newly-appointed professors soon after promotion, and the regular public lectures for which the university had become famous, had also to be supported; if nothing else, to project the intellectual status of the university.

The idea behind encouraging professors to present their research to the wider public was to ensure that Makerere professors kept abreast of the recent developments in their disciplines. The argument to include this aspect in the staff training policy, which appeared to be misplaced, was that the university had to be seen as fertile ground for intellectual discourse where national and international issues were freely debated. Some money was voted for the publication of the inaugural and good public lectures delivered every year.

As part of international exposure, members of staff were encouraged to take sponsored sabbatical leave at institutions abroad which had better facilities than Makerere. This was to help members of staff familiarise themselves with the latest advances in their disciplines, particularly in the rapidly evolving science and technology disciplines. At the end of the one-year leave, staff had to present a report to the Vice Chancellor on their experiences and infuse into their teaching and research the new ideas they had picked up. In fact, several members of staff took advantage of this opportunity but, at the time, my gut feeling was that a good many of them were using their sabbatical leave to do other things unrelated to their academic fields. My suspicion arose out of the fact that very few members of staff whom I granted leave ever filed reports to me, in spite of my reminders. The objectives of this rather ambitious staff training policy was to identify and assess the professional and technical needs of individual members of staff in relation to the needs of the university. With the staff training policy in place, we could operationalise the SDF and properly align it to the objectives set forth in the policy. Hence, the SDF was set up specifically to assist the university improve and strengthen staff training and development for academic and administrative leadership; promote sponsorship to internal, regional and international conferences from the university's internal resources; and provide for deliberate internal measures to maintain an effective balance between the arts and social sciences, on one hand, and the pure and applied sciences on the other, which some people thought had gone on for far too long. As the argument went, this imbalance deprived the arts and social sciences of badly needed staff, because they could not be trained in large enough numbers, since most external sponsors favoured the sciences.

A lot of ground work went into developing the guidelines that would make the SDF self-sustaining, transparent and conform to the university's staff training policy. Much as the bulk of the funds would come from the internally-generated revenue, we had to pin-point exactly where the money would come from. The university's internally-generated income was not freely available money, so we had to exercise some caution, to avoid overloading this relatively small income with too many new demands. However, the large number of unfilled vacancies in the various departments in the senior positions of Professor, Associate Professor and Senior Lecturer in particular, coupled with the fact that the university had to implement the recommendations of the Mujaju Report, made staff development more urgent.

From Senate's standpoint, everything had to be done to recruit and train more staff. Hence, enhanced staff development had become critical. It was a responsibility the university could not run away from any longer. After due consultations, Senate proposed what we believed was a fair formula of sharing the cost of financing the SDF from the university's internal sources. In principle, the burden would have to be shared by all potential beneficiaries.

As a starting point, in November 1995, the University Council approved the proposal to set aside ten per cent of the income from students' fees for staff development. This would now be converted into a Staff Development Fund. Additional income was expected to come from the Government recurrent budget, Government ministries and departments, as well as the university's development partners, namely DAAD, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Commission of the United Kingdom and Canada, Fulbright, Sida/SAREC and NUFU among others. Both Senate and Council felt strongly that since staff training was for the benefit of all students, the burden should not be borne by the fee paying students alone; so, the students on Government sponsorship also had to contribute to the Fund. Therefore, the University Council decided that, with effect from the 1996/97 academic year, all students would be required to pay Uganda shillings 50,000/- each per year towards the Staff Development Fund. As was expected, students protested, but the University Council stood its ground and in time every student was paying the SDF fee until the President abolished it in 2001 for the Government sponsored students as part of his re-election manifesto. Also, a number of university departments had been forging collaborative linkages with institutions abroad, which also constituted an additional and significant contribution to the University Staff Development Programme. Having realised their usefulness, collaborative linkages had to be encouraged and nurtured alongside other staff development initiatives. For the first time, we were able to sponsor both academic and administrative staff for PhD training and for other qualifications and short courses, using our own funds instead of depending entirely on donors. That was history in the making.

The staff training policy, together with the new in-house SDF, enabled us to overcome one major problem – the age limitation which most donor-funded scholarships used to impose on our staff. For most externally funded scholarships, thirty five years was the age limit, but the new policy and the homegrown SDF did away with this limitation; as all members of staff, regardless of age, were eligible for support from the SDF. As long as one was able and still useful to the university, and fulfilled the Staff Development Committee's requirements, one would be sponsored. However, to ensure that the Fund would have enough money to support all deserving cases, the Staff Development Committee of which I was chair, encouraged staff to seek additional funding from other sources where this was possible. In fact, members of staff who on their own made effort to look for additional funding from other sources to support their approved academic programmes, only required supplementary funding for transport, accommodation or stationery, among other needs. These were given priority by the SDF sponsorship.

When the SDF was set up, Senate and the University Council apportioned the funds in the following percentage ratios; fifty five per cent went to academic staff development programmes with emphasis on PhD training; twenty five per cent was devoted to Diploma programmes and short courses; ten per cent was for seminars, workshops and conferences; five per cent was set aside to cater for Inaugural Lectures. The last five per cent was set aside to support staff going on sabbatical leave. So, in allocating funds, these guidelines had to be taken into account. Although all members were eligible for support, selection for staff development funding had to go through rigorous vetting. In deciding fund allocation, the committee rated the applications by the following considerations and priorities: whether the funding request was for a PhD, Masters degree, first degree and non-degree qualifications; for initiation of new programmes; organising a seminar, workshop or conference; for publishing scholarly articles and books or writing seminar or conference papers. The committee rated each category differently. The second requirement was that a member of staff applying for sponsorship could only be funded and released for studies if his or her department was able to find a suitable replacement or could make arrangements to cover his or her duties and responsibilities for the period the staff would be on training. To overcome this rather difficult requirement and to ensure that their staff benefited from the Fund, most departments hired part-time staff or re-distributed the load amongst other members of staff. Although in some departments, members of staff were being asked to carry more than their normal loads at the risk of being overloaded and overworked, few complained. The arrangement worked well most of the time and in a way ensured that members of staff finished their programmes of study on time and came back to relieve their colleagues, some of whom were marking time in anticipation for their turn to go for further training too. Another way to stretch the SDF resources further, the

risk of excessive inbreeding notwithstanding, was to encourage as many members of staff as possible to apply for admission to the postgraduate programmes offered at Makerere, where most departments normally granted fee waivers. One could only be sponsored abroad, especially at the Masters level, for programmes not offered at Makerere, or if one had evidence of additional funding.

In disbursing the funds to the successful applicants, the Staff Development Committee was guided by the university's list of priorities drawn from faculty, school and institute training priority lists. It was intended to be a participatory and transparent process and, by the time I left the university in 2004, over 300 members of staff had already benefited from the SDF. Outside Makerere, South Africa provided us with an excellent opportunity to train our staff in top-class universities and for this, I was most grateful to my colleagues there. The money we could have spent training one PhD student in Europe or North America was enough to pay for three students in South Africa. Moreover, it was one way of fostering the South-South cooperation. That was precisely why the Deans Directors and I undertook a comprehensive tour of South Africa in 2003, during which we visited some eleven universities where most of our students were studying. Although we were criticised in some quarters for undertaking what was thought to be an expensive tour, in my judgement, the cost was fully justified and real value for money. I was happy to meet and see so many of my young and not-so-young colleagues toiling away at their PhDs at universities such as Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Port Elizabeth, Western Cape, Rhodes, Wits in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Sebastian Ngobi, who was acting as Academic Registrar at the time and his team when we first mooted the idea of the SDF, deserve a special mention here, because their hard work translated into an innovative scheme. This hard work was crowned with the initial inauguration of the SDF in 1998.



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## General Administration and Infrastructure Development

### Interesting and Sticky Decisions

Staying in one institution for almost 30 odd years has its exciting moments, but also its down side. You can regard it as a sense of incredible commitment and loyalty to an institution by a naïve academic or an over-stay because you had nowhere else to go, even when occasionally more lucrative alternatives came your way. You overstayed because there were forces at play that kept you in that poorly-paid job. As James Watson, the DNA Nobel Laureate put in his book, *DNA the Secret of Life*, and I paraphrase: “People stay in academics not for money, because there is no money in academics. Academics stay in their respective universities for other more intellectually rewarding reasons”. According to him, if you want money, the academia is the last place to go looking for it. I entered Makerere University in July 1970 as a freshman of twenty-three years and retired when I was fifty seven years old. Save for the four years I spent at Queens as a postgraduate student on Makerere’s Staff Development Programme and as a post-doctoral fellow at the same university and the three years as Principal of ITEK, Makerere had been my home. All my children except one were born there and left when they were grown up men and women. At twenty three, I was a little older than most undergraduates of today. At that age, most of them had graduated and were probably looking for their first jobs with resumes a quarter of a page long. Most of my children graduated at the age of twenty-one plus. As a new undergraduate student entering Makerere for the first time in July 1970, I was very impressed by the sheer beauty and cleanliness of the place, buildings and the well-manicured lawns. The image of the university’s physical appearance I saw captured very well what people used to call Makerere, “the hill of the learned”. It was indeed the place to be and as students, we were extremely

proud of our university. Sadly, over the years, Makerere took on an ugly façade, as buildings fell into disrepair, disfigured and unsightly; roads became impassable; the once meticulously manicured lawns overgrown with bushes; the perimeter fence riddled with holes; the water reticulation system totally broken down and water-closet toilets given way to stinking pit-latrines which littered the entire campus. Makerere had become a shadow of its old self. You could not be blamed for wondering what went so terribly wrong in an institution that had held much promise for the future. Fortunately, we do not have to look far for the answers. We have already seen the causes and their catastrophic consequences.

### **The Decision to Change to the Semester System**

For as long as I could remember, Makerere's academic calendar was based on a three-term year, which is called a trimester in some universities. The system had served the university well when every undergraduate student was sponsored by the Government and the postgraduate degrees were on the basis of research and thesis, with no taught courses. But times had changed and the once cherished three-term system was now due for a critical review which would usher in a fundamental educational change. The university was now admitting fee-paying students alongside the Government-sponsored ones and most of the Masters degrees were taught degrees, with the thesis or dissertation just being one of the requirements for a student to qualify for the degree. These were some of the major developments which could not be accommodated in the old and rigid three-term system. In fact, the problem had long been recognised during Professor George Kirya's time in the mid- and late 1980s. As we have seen, he had proposed that the university should move to a more flexible semester system. However, after his departure, the initiative lost momentum. Now the pressure was mounting and it was now time to revisit Kirya's idea, but with substantial modifications to fit the new times.

In 1995, we rekindled the debate. Although some work had been done during George Kirya's time and I had been privileged to have been part of Professor Sam Turyamuhika's team, which George Kirya had entrusted with the responsibility of planning for the change to a "semesterised" academic year; more work and thinking was needed to ensure that what was being proposed was workable. Fortunately, we had several Senators who had studied in the USA, where the semester system is well developed. To kick-start the process, Senate set up a Committee, chaired by Dr James Higenyi, the former Dean of Technology, to recommend a suitable semester system that would suit the needs and peculiarities of Makerere University. Dr Higenyi was one of the brilliant engineers on the staff of the Faculty of Technology who had taken his MSc and PhD in Mechanical Engineering at the prestigious Rice Institute in Houston, Texas, which later became the Rice University; so he was familiar with the intricacies of the semester

system in the USA setting. The committee took time to submit its report, but when it did, we were all satisfied with the work done. Like the old Kirya's proposal, Higenyi's committee recommended that the academic year should be divided into two semesters of 17 weeks each. Fifteen weeks would be devoted to teaching and the last two for examinations. The remaining ten weeks would constitute what the committee preferred to call a recess term, which would be utilised for field work, industrial attachments and additional teaching for faculties such as Medicine. In October 1996, Senate recommended that the university should immediately adopt the semester system, which the University Council approved that same year. Initially, not every faculty embraced the new system with the same enthusiasm. Some faculties were hesitant to implement it, partly because the new system was seen as a radical departure from a system they were used to and which they believed had served them well over the years. However, with better explanations and a lot of groundwork on the part of Dr Higenyi and some of his committee members, the new system was eventually adopted throughout the university.

One advantage of the semester system soon became apparent. Unlike in the term system, students had to register, study and sit for the examinations in the same particular semester. The grades earned every semester would then be converted into credits, while the courses studied constituted the credit units. An honours degree was no longer based on a simple average percentage mark, but on a new grading system called the Grade Point Average (GPA). In the term system, students were examined at the end of the academic year, and if for some reason a student missed or failed the examinations at the end of that academic year, he or she would repeat the entire year. In the semester system, students accumulated credits as they progressed. Therefore, a fee-paying student who did not have money to pay fees, could skip a semester to source for funds and come back without losing the credits so far earned and without having to repeat the entire academic year. A student only repeated the semester he or she had missed. Another advantage was that, in the semester system, courses were divided into two categories: the core courses which every student had to take, and the electives which gave students the opportunity to choose from a wide range of courses which appealed to them. Where timetabling permitted, students could take one or more elective courses in another department or faculty. For example, a BA student in the Faculty of Social Sciences could choose to take one or more elective courses at the Faculty of Law, although this rarely happened.

In fact, the semester system is sufficiently flexible, and allows students to retake a paper or papers to improve upon their GPA. One thing we did before we implemented the semester system was to raise the pass mark in the majority of faculties from forty percent to fifty percent. We thought that a pass mark of forty percent was too low. In the Medical School, the pass mark had always been

fifty percent. We made it the standard pass mark for every faculty. The grading of the honours classes was also affected. A first class, which used to start at seventy percent shifted to eighty percent. We maintained the same pass mark of fifty percent in the semester system as well. Another advantage of the semester system was the refund of fees. If a student decided to withdraw from a course after paying the full fees for the particular semester the course was being offered, he or she was entitled to a refund based on a formula that took into account the time the student had spent studying before withdrawing.

One of the significant changes that came with the semester system was the elimination of excessive redundancy that was so common in some faculties which, as we saw earlier, almost forced us to reduce the duration of some degrees from three to two years. In the semester system, the minimum number of credits and credit units a student was required to have accumulated in order to graduate was fixed. In the old system, some students spent a lot of time doing very little, not by choice, but because the courses were structured that way. In my time as an undergraduate, we used to refer to them as penguins. Even some of my friends who were studying in one of the faculties where time for leisure was plentiful took on part-time jobs because they had a lot of time to spare between lectures. In the semester system, students in every faculty had to keep busy nearly all the time. The new system also did away with the very long breaks between academic years, which used to last for almost four months, from June to October. In the semester system, the long vacation was reduced to less than three months, with a proposal to bring forward the beginning of the academic year from October to August, making the long vacation even shorter. So, the length of the semester system helped us reduce idleness in a way, because students and lecturers were kept busy all the time, even on weekends. The course load increased significantly, which meant that students had to use their time wisely in order to concentrate on the increased course load. This also led to increased effective use of lecture rooms, the library and laboratories.

The semester system also made it possible for academic departments in a particular faculty to hire staff from other universities, who would come for one semester or longer to teach, conduct examinations and leave. In the old system, that was rarely possible because the final examinations came at the end of the year and some courses had to be taught throughout the academic year. Another thing that was not possible in the old system but became possible in the semester system was the possibility for exceptionally gifted students to graduate in a shorter time than normal by registering for as many courses as the timetable could allow. As an example, an exceptionally able student could do a four-year course in three years. However, by the time I left the university, I was not aware of any student who had attempted to do that. On the flip side, it also allowed students to progress at their own pace. For example, a four-year course could be done in five. Some thought

the semester facilitated the long overdue curriculum revision and development, which in some departments had become stale.

One thing we quickly learnt as we grappled with all these changes was the simple fact that there is no such thing as a perfect system. Every system has its positive and negative sides and so does the semester system. Since the semester system was new and technically in a pilot phase, problems were inevitable. One problem was that of clashing timetables, particularly during examinations, where students had retakes. Many students had to choose between their current semester course load and examinations and their retake courses or examinations. That was always a difficult choice. Secondly, the two-week break between the semesters was perceived too short to enable examiners mark and release the examination results before the next semester began. In the majority of cases, students had to begin a new semester without knowing their performance in the previous semester, which did not augur well with students, who had to retake courses they had failed. In addition, there were those who thought that keeping both students and lecturers busy all the time was stressful and therefore, counter-productive. Yet, another problem we identified had to do with workload. Since students now had heavier course loads, they were finding it hard to do their assignments. This problem was not new in some faculties, the semester system just intensified it. Even in the old system, medical students used to carry very big course loads on top of all other academic requirements like clerkships in the clinical years. These and other problems meant that the system required further refinement.

The first attempt to address some of these bottlenecks was undertaken in 1999, some four years after it was introduced. That revision did not eliminate all the problems. One of the problems which remained unresolved was the need to offer core courses and electives every semester throughout the academic year. Though this would enable the university to admit students every semester, it had two implications: there would be two admissions a year; and students with retakes would not have to wait a full year to retake the failed papers or in instances where they wanted to audit in order to improve their GPAs. The down side was that this would require massive recruitment of additional staff. Assuming that people with the requisite qualifications could be found, given the kind of funding levels, the university budget would not accommodate such a massive recruitment. The double intake per year had to be put on hold.

The nagging timetable problem also needed addressing to eliminate clashes of subjects and when I left office, we had started tackling it. This and the one stop-centre registration were some of the problems we thought the new Academic Records Information System (ARIS), then under development, would solve. As we shall see shortly, there was also a feeling that perhaps the examination format was a problem. It was well suited to the term system, but in the semester system it was more of a handicap; therefore, a revision was due. As the semester system

continued to gather speed across all departments, interest in using ICT in teaching and learning was also gaining momentum. We saw ICT as the lasting solution to some of the problems which came with the semester system. For instance, many people were advocating the introduction of interactive multi-media facilities in the lecture rooms. The technology would make it possible for lecturers to sit in one room and teach students sitting in different rooms or even outside the university simultaneously. At least that was the dream. On balance, most people thought the semester system was a good idea. No one I talked to before I left the university wanted to go back to the term system. Students seemed to like it and had actually embraced it. Therefore, all it needed was continuous refinement and perfecting. That I left to my successors, some of whom had partly been architects of the system. One only needs to remember that in the life of an institution, change is inevitable. It can be quick or painfully slow but, at the end of the day, everything is bound to change. Very few things are ever cast in stone.

### **The Examination Reform – The Ociti Report**

Ever since universities, and for that matter the entire education system, invented examinations in whatever form; be it in written, oral or practical, supposedly as the best means of assessing what a student had learnt and how well he or she had learnt it, examinations have been under constant criticism, but have survived. It seems the world of formal learning at whatever level is not about to abandon this form of assessment. It is a form of assessment that determines the future of an individual in an instant. I guess this is one of the reasons many students dread examinations. I must admit I was one of those students, who used to be almost neurotic about examinations until I was able to overcome my problem much later in life after the gruelling A-level examinations, which have the power to determine the student's admissibility to a university like Makerere and to a course of one's first choice. Once admitted however, students are subjected to further examinations which ultimately determine the kind of degree they exit the university with, at end of their so many years of study. It was a common saying that in the competitive labour market, the quality of one's academic transcript mattered. I want to believe that most of us are what we are today because we went through those dreadful examinations and, by some stroke of luck, passed them. True or false, I have heard experts in the field of measurement and assessment say that examinations, in whatever form they are administered, are a necessary evil which any education system cannot afford to do away with.

At Makerere, as in every university, examinations are part and parcel of the assessment system. However, as we started implementing a number of academic reforms, some experts warned that reforming the university's academic structures without doing something about the current outdated examination system was bound to undermine the very essence of the reforms we were trying to introduce.

In short, the examination system had to be reformed too. As far as I could gauge, that was not likely to be easy. I had long discovered that in a university, some things were easy to change, while others were extremely hard to change. There were strong forces making examination reform unavoidable. The semester system and the expanded student enrolment were not only the genesis of the examination reform, but also acted as the catalysts that drove the reform process forward. The report of a Senate ad hoc committee, which was chaired by Professor Jacayo Ociti of the School of Education, marked the turning point. Like the Mujaju Report, the committee's report was soon dubbed the famous Ociti Report.

In 1998, the University Senate set up an ad hoc committee and basically gave it two terms of reference. One was to study the strengths and weaknesses of the existing examination system, while the second was to make proposals and recommendations on how to strengthen the examination system and any other pertinent issues. Typical of Professor Ociti, the committee's report was not only critical and hard hitting; it also identified several areas of strengths in the system. The weaknesses highlighted in the committee's report ranged from inadequate preparation on the part of students, cheating of all forms, laxity on the part of some invigilators, clashing examination time tables, late release of results, untrained staff handling examinations and understaffing in the Academic Registrar's Department. As for the strengths, the committee pointed out that, despite the identified problems, the system was run in accordance with the regulations set by the University's Quality Assurance Committee. The committee concluded that, in spite of the increase in student enrolment, Makerere University graduates still compared and competed favourably with those of foreign universities and, indeed, many excelled in their postgraduate studies abroad. As the committee pointed out, Makerere University examinations provided good predictors for the future and advanced academic success of its students. The committee also observed that, contrary to the negative publicity in some sections of the local media, Makerere graduates still commanded a high premium and esteem in the country's labour market and were generally preferred to graduates of other local and some international universities. It also lauded the launching of the pedagogical training programme in the School of Education, which helped staff to improve the quality of their teaching, and the setting up of a Senate Examination Committee as good measures aimed at bringing about the desired quality improvements in the system.

As a way forward, the Ociti Committee urged Senate to continue building on the strength but added the following general and specific recommendations, some of which were far-reaching. The first recommendation was that all students should be subjected to a formative and summative assessment. Secondly, there was need for a better examination management system, to enhance efficiency. Thirdly, examinations had to be subjected to critical analysis by competent persons. The

committee also emphasised the need for timely release of examination results, among others. Among the specific recommendations, the committee wanted to see more improvements in formative assessment, which included coursework as a core component. Besides the take-home assignments, the committee recommended intensification of classroom tests and essays as part of the continuous assessment. On summative evaluation, the committee recommended that each department should produce a test-matrix, which was essentially a plan to synchronise syllabus content and its learning objectives in order for the examiners to set balanced examination papers. For each examination paper, the committee recommended a combination of measurement tools. As an example, each paper could be set to comprise of at least 20 multiple-choice items equivalent to one essay-type question, to measure knowledge drawn from all areas of the syllabus; five compulsory short-answer questions to measure understanding; four essay-type questions to measure the student's analytical and higher order intellectual ability. All examination question papers had to be moderated at departmental level by a departmental examinations committee. Every examination script had to be marked by more than one examiner to minimise bias. Above all, since what the committee was recommending was new ground for most members of staff, it proposed that all teaching staff should undergo training in setting, moderating and marking examinations. The committee also made an important proposal on how to improve the compilation of examination marks at departmental level, the analysis of the results at the faculty level, ratification and approval of the results at Senate level; as well as how to restructure the management and administration of the entire examination system in the university to address the identified weaknesses. The committee was in favour of retaining the external examiners as a check on the university's quality assurance.

In conclusion, the Ociti Committee pointed out that the whole university examination system should be seen as an important part of the university's academic function, and not to be narrowly perceived as just an assessment of students. It had to be looked at in a wider context of assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching staff on one hand, and of the performance capacity of all academic management organs of the university on the other. As part of this initiative, Professor Ociti did not fail to remind us that, as teaching staff, we needed to master approved pedagogical skills to facilitate active and productive learning. Senate approved the committee's report with minor amendments and started implementing the reforms immediately. It was one of the best Senate Committee reports I had ever read.

### **The Main Building – Face-lifting Makerere's Icon**

Anyone familiar with Makerere University is also familiar with its iconic magnificent Main Building, with its imposing tower and clock. This building,

which is also referred to as the Main Hall, is Makerere's coat of arms, so to speak. It also served as a lecture theatre in the past. Professor Mugambi once told me that he studied for his BSc special honours in Mathematics in the Main Building, which now serves exclusively as the university's seat of power. The Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and most of the university's central administration staff have their offices there. It is designed in the shape of a Latin crucifix and sits on top of what is known as the Kendall Plateau, but like most of the university's buildings, it had also had its fair share of neglect.

Shortly before I began my tour as Vice-Chancellor in late September 1993, my predecessor, Professor Senteza Kajubi, had hosted a conference organised by the Uganda National Council of Women in the main auditorium, which constitutes a big proportion of the Main Building. As expected, the women were least amused by the state of the building and decided to do something about it. However, given their limited resources, their contribution was limited to painting the interior of the auditorium. So, the rest of the interior and exterior of the building remained untouched. This once magnificent building was fast losing its beauty and appeal, for lack of a coat of paint and much more! Professor Kajubi had also managed to solve one of the nagging and embarrassing problems of the ammonia stench from the unflushed urinals next to the entrance of the hall. It was the first thing that greeted a visitor entering the Main Building. Besides the fading paint on the walls, the blue wooden louvers which served as windows blinds were also in a state of decay. They had taken a terrible beating from Kampala's wet and humid weather. The result was that they had to be frequently replaced, an expensive undertaking for a cash-strapped institution. We had to find a lasting solution that would eliminate the need for regular replacement of rotten louvers. It was a problem I had not given its due attention until one day, Mr Mathias Ngobi who was then Chairman of the University Council until 1996, brought the ugliness of the building to my notice. Although he had come to discuss issues unrelated to the state of the Main Building, after seeing the deplorable state it was in, he worried that if the louvres were left unrepaired much longer, they would continue to disfigure the building's beautiful façade. Although I was quick to assure him that I would do something about it soon, I had no idea how I would raise the twenty or so million shillings that was needed to fix the problem immediately. In due course however, we were able to raise the money from the university's internally-generated revenue.

The solution we adopted was to replace wood with steel. As there were hundreds of louvers to replace, we knew it would be a costly undertaking, but one that would save the university a lot of money in annual maintenance costs. However, as soon as we started removing the old wooden louvers, mail began to pour in from old Makerere students and concerned Ugandans, protesting and saying that any modification to what they regarded as a cherished national

monument must stop. The mail came from near and far places like USA and Australia. My reply was always the same. I kept assuring all of the protesters that what we were attempting to do was essentially cosmetic surgery. We were simply restoring the aged and wrinkled face of the old lady so she could look beautiful again. It worked. The contractor did such a splendid job. When it was finished, you could hardly tell the difference between the old and new building's look. We had found a simple but elegant solution to the perennial louver problem and proved the critics wrong. With its new blue louvers, the building looked just as beautiful as before.

The second problem required a lot more money which took us time to raise. At the time, the Ministry of Finance was still allocating a little money to the university for capital development, but it was far too little to cover the cost of cleaning the old tiles, re-roofing the building, plus re-decorating and re-painting its interior and exterior. With our usual financial prudence, we managed to save over UgSh120 million that was needed to pay for the renovations from the Government budget and from the university's internally-generated income. In 1997, the roof of this magnificent building took on a new look, with the washed tiles looking their brilliant red again; and the stonework covering the basement which houses the University Printing Press and mail sorting room, among others, taking on the clean bright lustre it once had. Many people, who talked to me later were surprised to see the old building looking so grand in its restored original splendour. Unfortunately, the paint the contractor used was of poor quality, so in a space of few years, it faded and some places started to peel. The areas which were exposed to rain, and were constantly drenched and damp, became a haven for an aggressive form of moss. In some places, the building began to look uglier than before the renovation. I was disappointed and learnt a good, but painful lesson about local paint manufacturers. Cheap paint proved a disaster and it would take us a few more years to raise more money to beautify the building once again.

Meanwhile, there were other problems in the building that needed tackling too. For instance, the chairs in the Senior Common Room had become an eyesore and curtains were also in a near-tatters state, while the artwork – apparently donated by the School of Fine Art – was loosely hanging on the walls. As for the grand piano, it sounded as one that had last been tuned decades gone by. Yet, this was a room where we occasionally held important meetings and other functions. Besides using it as a senior staff café, with the long-serving Boniface Kaigwa as its manager, and an informal meeting place for staff (and occasionally students), the Vice Chancellor frequently hosted small official parties and functions there. It also served as a venue for small committee meetings. Someone once told me that, during the colonial administration, the Quaker community at Makerere used it as their place of worship because, unlike the Anglicans and Catholics, the College Administration did not provide the Quakers with a separate chapel. This once magnificent room was now in real shambles.

Naturally, Professor Epelu Opio, the officer-in-charge of the Main Building, was particularly concerned about the state of the Senior Common Room and did not hide his displeasure at what he saw as our slow response. Even when he kept reminding the Bursar to set aside some money so he could do something about the appalling state of the room, the money was never forthcoming. Fortunately for Professor Opio, things were about to change for the better. Using some of the revenue from the private functions which used to be held in the Main Building from time to time, the Bursar managed to raise sufficient funds to pay for the new chairs, new window blinds and tables. In addition, the walls of the whole room were painted. The artwork was later fixed firmly on the wall with the Senior Common Room looking as good as new.

The old small worn-out steel chairs with their green covers were the most outstanding feature of the auditorium of the Main Building, and they had been there for years. I sat on them for the first time when I entered the majestic building as a freshman in July 1970. However, over the years, they were dwindling in number and their sorry state was very much apparent to the keen eye. The long years of wear and tear had taken their toll, moreso since the Main Hall became a regular lecture theatre for the big classes. Students had vandalised most of them to their bare steel frames. They were an eye sore and an embarrassment to the University Administration. In the absence of funds, the ever-increasing demand for more seats in the auditorium had forced us to bring in a few long wooden stools like the ones found in some rural primary schools, which were a misfit, given the architectural and interior finishing of the Main Hall auditorium. On the insistence and persistence of Professor Epelu Opio, we finally raised some money and decided to replace the noticeably exhausted chairs with new ones. The legendary green steel chairs gave way to modern ones in mahogany colour. The new furniture included a few executive chairs. However, before we could replace the aged, ugly looking steel chairs in the auditorium, our attention was drawn to the absence of a public address system. For every function that was held there, we had to borrow or hire one. Using the little revenue generated on the Main Hall account, we were able to install the first-time- ever public address system in the ancient looking auditorium. The system was a relief to members of staff, who used to teach big classes there. Before its installation, lecturers had to shout at the top of their voices, as one addressing a public political campaign rally, in order to be audible to the assembly of eager students.

As earlier mentioned, the Gender Worlds' International Congress of July 2002 served as a catalyst for more repairs on the Main Building. After our initial disastrous attempt to give the Main Building a new décor, using what turned out to be poor quality paint, this time we decided to go for high quality paint. Only paint of proven quality also known as weather guard paint in the trade would do. It was a point we had to drive home to both the consultants and contractors.

There would be no repeat of past mistakes. Indeed, the weather guard paint lived up to its reputation. It maintained its beautiful and clean lustre up to the time I left the university in 2004. I think James Sempa, then acting Estates Manager, summed it up correctly when he observed that each time it rained, the Main Building looked like it was painted yesterday. However, beyond the ordinary coat of paint, the building required further interior works to modernise and restore it to its glorious luster. Due to the limited resources, the renovation of the building had to wait. On the downside, I was deeply concerned that, due to the heavy teaching demands on the auditorium, the Main Hall was losing the reputation it used to enjoy in the 1960s and early 1970s as a place for high profile public lectures and intellectual discourse. Demand for space and increasing numbers had robbed it of that honoured status.

For those of us old enough to remember, the Main Hall was host to one of the famous battle of wits between Makerere's Ali Mazrui and University of Dar es Salaam's firebrand Walter Rodney, in 1972. It was becoming increasingly difficult to schedule a public function there without disrupting lectures. Even in its dilapidated state, it was also a popular venue for weddings, but even those were getting fewer. Weddings were among the main sources of income for the Main Hall account. When I was an undergraduate student in the early 1970s, we always looked forward to the free dance parties and live band music the Students Guild used to organise there every Saturday night, with loads of girls bussed from Mulago Nurses' Hostel, Nsambya and Namirembe, not to mention the regular ones from Wandegeya, Kikoni and Kivuulu. By the time I returned in 1979, the free Saturday night bashes had long stopped, due to the prevalent insecurity at the time.

There were more disappointments to come, and from that experience I learnt that it was far easier and perhaps cheaper to build anew than to renovate. Soon after cleaning and replacing the broken tiles, some parts of the roof started leaking again. In some parts, the leaks were so bad that the ceiling boards became water-soaked and badly disfigured. It was a re-occurrence of a problem we had to grapple with for a long time. As we shall see later, in January 2004, we organised another donor's conference, the second to be held at Makerere after almost seventeen years. Although the Main Hall was now in a far more presentable state than ever before, the big stage curtain, which apparently was made from high quality and durable fabric, was in tatters and looking aged, and had to be replaced. As we scouted around for a replacement, I was curious to know when the old curtain was installed and whether it had ever been changed before. To find the answers, I decided to make some inquiries. Unfortunately, I could not find anyone who could tell when it was installed or whether it had ever been changed and the last time it was changed or washed. My gut-feel was that it was the original curtain, installed at the time of commissioning the building in the 1940s. For the job, we turned to our architects in the Faculty of Technology who had experience in interior design. TECO helped

us identify a source of high quality material in town and an experienced interior designer. We settled for more or less the same olive green colour, with the university logo embroiled in the middle of the huge curtain. Suddenly, the Main Hall had new décor. With new tables on the podium and new chairs in the Council Room where the sticking nails on old blue chairs had become a real nuisance, tearing holes in peoples suits and dresses, most of the money we had set aside for the renovation of this magnificent and iconic building had run out. A new desk and chairs for the security personnel at the main entrance of the building was the final touch. The Main Building was now looking like an old woman who had just come out of an expensive, but successful cosmetic surgery to rid her of wrinkles and loose skin.

Besides the renovation, the building also acquired a few new things. When I came in as Vice Chancellor in 1993, just a handful of offices in the Main Building had functioning telephone lines, but no office had a facsimile machine. By the time I retired in 2004, almost every office had a working telephone line connected to the exchange through the new intercom – the PABX – supplied by Sembule Electronics Company, a local electronics and telecommunications company. Much as PABX eased communication between offices, unfortunately, the Sembule system gave us a lot of technical problems. We had to replace most of the receiver heads almost as soon as the system was installed. The lesson for us was that promoting local technology sometimes came with an unexpected price tag. To minimise abuse of the external lines, which would translate into huge telephone bills, the switchboard had only two unrestricted or direct external lines, one was to the Vice Chancellor's office, the other for general use. Staff could receive external calls but perhaps with the exception of the Appointments Board Secretariat, they could not make external calls without clearance from the switchboard. Besides the high speed optical fibre telephone lines, the Vice Chancellor's office also had a functioning fax machine and an exclusive fax line. The next major addition was the installation of the Local Area Network (LAN) hooked on the university-wide ICT network, MakNet. For the nearly 60-year old building, this was a giant step into modernity. I recall the occasion when President Museveni teased me for choosing to remain in the "ancient building" when the Academic Registrar relocated his office to the new Senate Building. Then, I had no satisfactory answer beyond telling him that the ancient building represented all that was Makerere. Now, I could afford to tell him with a little bit of pride that, "Mr President, the ancient building is not so ancient anymore, it is now modern and ancient at the same time, and very much part of the cyberspace age".

### **The Sister Chapels – St Augustine and St Francis**

If you are familiar with the geography of Makerere University, you would know the two Chapels behind the Main Building: one on the south end, St Francis Chapel for the Anglican community, and the other on the northern side, St

Augustine Chapel for the Catholic community. Both chapels overlook the Kasubi royal tombs, located on top of Nabulagala Hill, which is some three kilometres west of Makerere Hill. The two chapels are almost identical and as old as the Main Building. Looking at them then, one walks away with the impression that the architect wanted to achieve a perfect symmetry among the three buildings. The two chapels look alike in many ways, but they are internally and externally different in subtle ways. St Francis Chapel adorns an interesting fresco in the form of a mosaic on its western gable, which I understand depicts a scene from the Book of Revelation or one of heroic acts of its patron saint, Francis. St Augustine has no frescos; the western part facing its gable is plain, but with beautifully worked wood panels below which form part of the main entrance to the Chapel.

After giving the Main Building a reasonable facelift, the chapels with their long faded paintwork looked so much out of place that we were forced to do something about them. As the Christians would say, by the grace of God I was able to raise some money and donate it to both chapels, just to do some minimal re-decoration. Unfortunately, the paint was of the same poor quality we had earlier used on the Main Building. Within a very short time, it had faded and flaked with parts of the walls, particularly the St Augustine Chapel, turning black. Thick patches of green moss and algae could be clearly seen on the more damp parts of the buildings, apparently feasting on the rich mineral content of the paint. It was another disappointment and embarrassment, but I did not allow the setback to dampen my quest to make these two magnificent buildings look beautiful again. That opportunity to give them a really good decor came in 2002 during the massive university-wide rehabilitation programme. After the work was done, the two chaplains, St Francis' Reverend Ben Mugarura (or Uncle Ben to the students) and St Augustine's Father Lawrence Kanyike (or Larry to some sections of his congregation) were happy to see their chapels shining again.

Both chaplains were extremely hardworking men of God and their congregation members liked them too. Both were interested in development and did not hesitate to remind me of the need to provide them with space for their projects every time I had occasion to interact with them. However, each man had his controversial side. Ben Mugarura was hugely popular with the born-again students but, to the more mainstream Anglicans, he was leaning too far to the evangelical style of worship. The older and more conservative members of the St Francis community voiced this criticism. In fact, some of them used to complain to me about how Ben Mugarura was turning St Francis into an evangelical church. They preferred the Namirembe type of Sunday service. On the other hand, a majority of students enjoyed his service. He was even able to provide them with musical instruments to form a singing group. The members of the singing group composed and sang their own music instead of the traditional church hymns. For the students, it was fun, expressive and inspired worship in

God. On the St Augustine side, Father Kanyike's problem was his outspokenness on what some regarded as touchy political issues outside the realms of a priest, but he was adamantly unrepentant. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, he would shoot. He was also a frequent guest on Uganda Television. Although I was under some pressure to restrain him, I decided to leave it to him to set his limits of free speech. I was not about to start a fight with a chaplain – after all, much of what he said or criticised was in the public domain. My only concern was that, much as I saw a Bishop material in this brilliant, strong-willed, development-oriented, socially progressive University of Notre Dame, Indiana PhD graduate, who Charles Onyango Obbo – then with *The Monitor* Newspaper – once described as uncompromising on matters of doctrinal dogma, I could see his outspokenness weighing negatively against him if his name ever came up for promotion to the coveted status of a Bishop. Although not as charismatic as the likes of Father Musaala, and his outspokenness which sometimes earned him the wrath of politicians notwithstanding, most of us found Larry a very likeable chaplain. Unfortunately, in my latter years at Makerere, I was a less frequent worshiper at St Augustine Chapel, preferring to attend Sunday mass at Gaba, which was now a Parish in its own right; so I saw less and less of him. The times we would meet was when he was reminding me to allow him expand his chapel or give him a plot and permission to build a new one.

I am tempted to believe that Father Kanyike's highest points as one of the longest servicing chaplains at Makerere was in June 2001, when he used his incredible skills to get the usually rowdy Makerere students – with a reputation for unsavoury behavior – to organise one of the most successful Uganda Martyrs' Day, which falls on June 3 every year, at the Namugongo shrine. To most Ugandans, Catholics and Anglicans alike, Martyrs' Day is a very special event, so the preparation for the big occasion begins several weeks before the day. Some staunch Catholics walk long distances to Namugongo as a mark of respect for the fallen martyrs. Some come from as far as Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and elsewhere, just to be at Namugongo to participate in the event.

Namugongo is one of the suburbs of Kampala where most of the first Ugandan christians were burnt alive for sticking to their new faith. June 3 commemorates the actual day in 1886 when King Daniel Mwanga of Buganda ordered 26 Ugandan christians, 13 Anglicans and 13 Catholics, including the 15-year old (now St) Kizito, to be put to death, allegedly for disobeying him. A week before the celebrations, Namugongo usually takes on a carnival-like atmosphere. Businessmen and women set up food and drink kiosks to feed the hungry and thirsty pilgrims, while musicians do the entertaining. Although the bishops have tried to minimise the excesses of the celebrations, that has not stopped people from spending several days at Namugongo feasting, while waiting for the event. For the Catholics, the climax of the Martyrs' Day is a colourful high mass which begins

with a lot of the usual paraphernalia. It is celebrated on an altar located on an island in the middle of an artificial lake outside the Basilica, specially constructed for the event by the who is who in Uganda's Catholic clergy and attended by almost every high ranking Ugandan you can think of. Sometimes, the President and his wife put in an appearance. Every year dioceses throughout the country took turns to organise it. That year, it was the turn of the Kampala Archdiocese and Cardinal Wamala, one of Father Kanyike's predecessors at Makerere, and other bishops selected Makerere University to organise the occasion. When the mass began, I held my breath and prayed for the best. Given the bad image Makerere students had created in the minds of the public over the years, few people expected much out of them. I guess some of my Lord Bishops were equally anxious and hoping that nothing would go wrong throughout the ceremony. Fortunately, my worst fears never materialised. The students performed beyond everyone's expectation. The singing was beautiful and flawless. At the end of the long mass, Father Kanyike was beaming with smiles and was very happy to thank the St Augustine community for the excellent performance, and proudly signed off as Larry. That was the first time I heard him call himself Larry.

As I stood up to shake hands with Larry Kanyike and a few students that I could recognise in the crowd, I overheard one prominent Ugandan comment on the superb performance of the students that day. He was telling his friend that he had now realised that Makerere University consisted of two kinds of students. One kind was the vocal, savage, vulgar and stone-throwing lot. The other kind, who had performed so excellently on that special day, were the more serious-minded and brilliant students, who represented the true Makerere image as a centre of intellectual excellence. To him, the latter were sadly in the minority, which I thought was perhaps an unfair comment. I guess that was how the public perceived Makerere students.

Father Kanyike had other equally impressive achievements to his credit. He was the first chaplain in living memory to have constructed new buildings at the university, using funds he personally raised from his friends in the USA and elsewhere. As we have seen before, the university gave the St Augustine community a plot along Mary Stuart Road, where he constructed the St Augustine Students' Centre and a separate chaplaincy. Soon after its opening, the centre proved a popular place for social and religious events, weddings, meetings and lectures. Not everyone was happy with Father Kanyike's idea of building a students' centre on a site which had been allocated for a new and bigger chapel. Some said that, by so doing, Fr Kanyike had gone beyond the original purpose for which the university had allocated the plot. Although the plot was allocated to St Augustine community shortly before I took over as Vice Chancellor; in hindsight, I strongly believed Father Kanyike did the right thing. The university derives far greater benefits from a multi-purpose centre than it would from a single-purpose chapel, which essentially would be closed most of the time. The only functions which take place in a chapel

are related to worship. Given the acute shortage of space for teaching, the centre used it as a classroom as well. Another advantage accruing to the community by having the centre as one of its assets was the revenue. The revenue generated from the students' centre made St Augustine Chapel financially less dependent on the university. What Kanyike's centre did not solve however, was the overcrowding in the old chapel, which by all accounts was spinning out of control.

As I had predicted, Kanyike was back asking for more land to build a bigger chapel. This time, he was the only one on the crusade, though he had the backing of some of the university's Catholic heavyweights, Professor John Mugerwa (now deceased) being one of them. Perhaps unknown to Father Kanyike and the Makerere Catholic community, the new request for another plot presented me with a big dilemma. Firstly, much as I was a Catholic like them and therefore inclined to be sympathetic to their request, I had no idea where I could find another plot to allocate to the same community that had been fortunate enough to get one before. Secondly, as the university expanded, the Administration was experiencing unprecedented pressure for space from all sections. Thirdly, the fact that I was Catholic made the situation trickier for me. Even if I would have found a way of spinning Kanyike's request through the university organs, the mounting opposition from some of my colleagues in the Administration made it likely that I could not escape being accused of favouritism and pecuniary interests. Predictably, as we grappled with Father Kanyike's request for a second plot, the Chaplain of St Francis Chapel and one or two other christian groups, including an organisation going by the acronym FOCUS, also put in requests for plots. By now, the whole thing was increasingly turning into what seemed to be a domino effect, and became more complicated to handle.

Perhaps little known to most of the Makerere community, before Uganda's independence in 1962, the British Protectorate Government had gazetted most of the land between the far northern end of the university beyond the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Bwaise Township on the Kampala-Gulu Highway for university development, but did not compensate the land owners. In fact, some of the junior staff quarters are located there. As a solution to the mounting pressure for land for churches, a colleague came with what I thought was a brilliant solution. He suggested that any religious group asking the university for land should be given the option to accept a plot in this gazetted area provided they were in position to compensate the land owners. Unfortunately, there were no takers. None of the religious groups had the kind of money to pay off the landowners who had by now constructed permanent and expensive properties on the gazetted land. What seemed to be a brilliant solution had fallen flat on its face.

In spite of Father Kanyike's repeated reminders and a series of audiences with the St Augustine leaders, we failed to find an acceptable solution. At the same time, the St Francis community was turning up the heat too. Reverend

Ben Mugarura wanted a plot to build what he called a multi-purpose students' centre to serve, at least in part, as a hostel. He had in mind the plight of the poor female private students who had to look for cheap accommodation in places that were likely to expose them to danger. After a lengthy approval process, the University Council finally allocated St Francis Chapel a plot, also on Mary Stuart Road, adjacent to the St Augustine Centre. While Kanyike's request went cold, the hurdle Ben Mugarura had to surmount was to raise sufficient funds to finance the construction of a hostel in a relatively short time. As part of the fundraising drive for his project, Reverend Mugarura organised a series of high profile events, including an auction, which was held in the University Freedom Square and attended by President Yoweri Museveni and the former Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, His Grace Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyooyo, among others. That auction brought in some money, but not enough to construct a three-storey building. In fact, his first fundraising function over which I presided was held at Kampala Sheraton Hotel, but was poorly attended. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of a serious fundraising campaign. I used to attend most of these fundraising functions, partly in my capacity as Vice Chancellor and also on behalf of my late father who was born an Anglican, but had long stopped practising until a few years before his death in 2003 when we asked him if he minded being counselled by a good Anglican priest to take care of his spiritual needs in the twilight of his life, and prepare him for his final journey to his Maker. The old man accepted to be counselled and prepared for his last lap. I approached Reverend Ben Mugarura and asked him if he could help me do it. He was more than willing to counsel and re-instruct him in the catechism. He also promised to look for a bishop to confirm him as, at 96, the old man could not remember whether he had been confirmed before or not. After a series of instructions, and language barrier notwithstanding, he was ready for confirmation. Retired Bishop Lucas Gonahasa, formerly Assistant Bishop of Kampala Diocese, confirmed him in 2001 at a short private ceremony held in the Vice Chancellor's Lodge. From then on, Reverend Mugarura became my father's spiritual counsellor.

One thing I admired about Uncle Ben was his confidence and determination to succeed against all odds. He never relented in his fundraising drive, despite the small inflows from most of his fundraising events. The money he was raising from all this effort was still far too short of the minimum the University Council required for him to start the project. In fact, some of us had despaired and considered throwing in the towel, but for Mugarura, it was God's calling that kept him going despite the setbacks he experienced on the way. When they realised that their chaplain was dead serious about his project, the St Francis community started throwing its weight behind him. Besides the cash donations, some members of the community pledged to offer their professional services free-of-charge and before long, the architectural drawings, were ready. However, the problem of insufficient funds persisted and threatened to stall the project. After a series of meetings with

the University Administration, we agreed the best way to help Reverend Mugarura move his project forward was to take it out of the normal University bureaucracy and run it as a turn-key project, with the Estates Manager doing the over-sight on behalf of the University Council. The trick worked. After the University Council had approved the architectural drawings, it was time to cut the sod and lay the foundation stone, which the President of Uganda performed in 2002. Actual construction began in 2004, shortly after I retired from the university. Although I was not invited to the opening ceremony, I am sure it was Reverend Mugarura's crowning moment – a lifetime dream fulfilled. It is an impressive modern building and another addition to the beauty of the campus. As one of the famous French chemists, who discovered the structure of the benzene molecule once said, "Let us learn to dream" and if I may add, "have the will to realise our dreams"; no doubt Reverend Mugarura was able to realise his dream before it was time for him to retire. Reverend Mugarura set a record future St Francis chaplains may find difficult to beat. I guess what the man of God did for the university was the best form of praising and worshipping the Lord.

Although I was beginning to forget about Father Kanyike's request for another plot for a new St Augustine Chapel, he was not ready to give up reminding me. During the several meetings I held with him and members of the St Augustine community, we explored ways of squeezing the new chapel within the remaining part of the plot on the Mary Stuart Road. We realised that the space available was grossly insufficient for a chapel with a sitting-capacity of 500 or more. In fact, none of the subsequent proposals we came up with seemed to satisfy Father Kanyike. As a final solution, Professor Epelu Opio proposed to allocate them a plot on the western side of the Observatory Hill, next to the Faculty of Technology. It was one of the few places where free land was still available. The plot had one big problem though; it was on a slope, and therefore, additional money was required to pay for the excavation and levelling of the ground before laying the foundation. Father Kanyike did not have the extra money, so that offer was turned down. However, before Reverend Mugarura had collected enough funds from his fundraising drives to begin constructing his centre, Kanyike floated the idea of asking him to swap plots. I advised him to discuss it with his colleague and find out whether the idea appealed to him. Kanyike's proposal was a non-starter. Uncle Ben was not about to give up his hard-earned plot, period. So, Father Kanyike was back to square one, as it seemed we had exhausted all options. Stuck, he decided to revisit his original proposal of expanding the existing chapel. We had looked at this option before and discovered that at some point, the Government of Uganda had proposed to gazette the Main Building and the two chapels as national monuments and architectural heritage. For that reason, we were under obligation not to make substantial modifications to any of the three buildings without the permission of the Government Department of Antiquities. However, when the new University Council began work in December 2002, with Mr Gabriel Opio as its Chairperson, we decided to examine the expansion of the

existing St Augustine Chapel afresh. We discovered that the idea of turning the Main Building and the two chapels into a national heritage site had not progressed far. Secondly, the architects had advised that it was possible to alter the existing building without necessarily changing its architectural character to any significant extent. We now had a solution which had eluded us for such a long time. In spite of some initial misgivings and apprehensions some of my senior colleagues had expressed, the University Council approved Father Kanyike's proposal to expand the chapel in 2004. The approval came as a relief, not only to me, but also to Lawrence Kanyike, who had been keeping the money for a long time and unable to give an account to his friends in the USA, who had given him most of it. In addition, during all this time, Father Kanyike was also under pressure from his superiors, Father Obunga (now deceased) being one of them, to build a bigger chapel. Mr Gabriel Opio felt relieved too. That was my final act as Makerere's Vice-Chancellor. I was pleasantly surprised to enter a much larger and more beautiful St Augustine Chapel when I visited the university sometime in 2006. Father Kanyike had delivered on his promise. The expanded chapel looked very much like the old one. When he was suddenly taken ill shortly after a morning mass in 2003, and had to be rushed to Nsambya Hospital almost unconscious, we had feared the worst but prayed hard that the good Lord would spare him to complete his mission at Makerere. Apparently, St Peter was not yet ready for him. He was spared an early departure and was not only able to expand the old chapel, but also to give it a beautiful make-over. That was a record future chaplains would find hard to beat.

Aside from face-lifting the chapels, another nagging problem was the sorry state of the parking lot in front of St Francis Chapel and the access road from Mary Stuart Road to the two chapels. They were all riddled with potholes of all sizes and shapes. The daily heavy traffic to the Faculties of Arts and Commerce, before the latter moved to Nakawa, compounded the already bad situation. The Estates Department had done enough of the patching. No sooner had they patched the road than the potholes reappeared, so a permanent solution was what we needed. Since the Government was no longer funding the university's capital development budget anymore, we had to turn to our own internally-generated resources. We combined effort with the Faculty of Arts, re-sealed both the access road and the parking lot. Unfortunately, by the time I was leaving the university, the old problem was already showing signs of a comeback. That is always the problem with old infrastructure. Unless you do a complete overhaul, whatever solution you implement seems to be patch-work. In this case, the access road and the parking lot needed reconstruction. That was the costly way of doing it, and we did not have the money to do it that way.

Limited resources notwithstanding, we were able to build a staircase which joined St Francis Chapel to the parking lot below. Because the job took a long time to complete, I began to read critical letters in the local English dailies, which

I thought were uncalled for. Apparently, they were written by angry worshippers who had had the misfortune of walking down the uncompleted staircase, stumbled, fell and perhaps as a result sustained some injury in the process. They were apportioning blame to University Administration for negligence and for failure to complete the job. As usual, the authors of those letters never bothered to find out why the work was proceeding slowly. Instead, it was the usual “let’s expose them” mentality at work again. The problem why the work on the staircase was slow was mainly a cash flow problem. While the University Administration was picking up the bigger portion of the bill, St Francis Chapel was also making a financial contribution to the project, but the money was coming in trickles. Luckily, in the end we were able to complete the job to the satisfaction of all. When the staircase, which in my view made it easy for the brides to work their way up the chapel without the risk of stumbling and falling, was completed, I never saw a single article in the newspaper columns commending the University Administration or Chaplain Ben Mugarura for completing the job. Perhaps I was expecting too much from the ever cynical and skeptical press. It also reminded me of what I had heard some journalists say before: “when a dog bites a man, it is not newsworthy; but when a man bites a dog, it is.”

### **Infrastructure Development and Some Administrative Milestones**

Several people have asked me that if I were to name one of my most important achievements during my long tenure as Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, what would it be? I must say I have always found that question difficult to answer. First, to do so could be construed as blowing my own horn, so clearly I would be the last person to talk about my achievements. Secondly, what I may consider outstanding may not necessarily be so. Thirdly, for better or for worse, I am inclined to believe that during the ten or so years I was Vice Chancellor, Makerere University underwent a lot of changes. Perhaps it saw more changes than ever before in its long history. They ranged from the very small and insignificant ones to the more serious innovations. That makes it that much harder to pinpoint which one was the most significant. Nakanyike Musisi and Nansozi Muwanga captured most of the significant changes at Makerere in their book, *Makerere University in Transition, 1993–2000: Opportunities and Challenges*. Therefore, I will not attempt a repeat here. Having said that, there were indeed some notable changes one could name. For instance, the change from the old and inflexible term system to the semester system and the accompanying curriculum reforms, even in those faculties that seemed unwilling or were not ready to change, was a momentous event.

Raising of the pass mark from fourty percent to fifty per cent in all faculties in all faculties, the examination reforms, the evening and external degree programmes and the private students’ scheme, clearly stand out as monumental

changes in the history of Makerere University. Time and again, we had been criticised for overflowing the university with too many students, which to some has had a negative impact on quality. The answer which I have repeated elsewhere in this account has always been simple: What kind of quality was Makerere maintaining when students went through a full academic year without textbooks; when practical classes had to be cancelled because of lack of chemicals and other inputs; when the University Library hardly had new books and journals and the bulk of the teaching staff were Graduate Fellows and Teaching Assistants?, just to mention a few problems the university faced in those hard times?

I also regard as significant achievements the improvements in the staff and students' welfare, which for the first time saw the introduction of a non-contributory and self-financed retirement benefit scheme for staff – a university-financed Staff Development Fund which has helped hundreds of teaching and non-teaching staff obtain undergraduate, Masters, PhD and other types of graduate degrees. I consider the now famous Mujaju Report on qualifications, requiring every academic member of staff at the rank of Lecturer and above to have a PhD degree or its equivalent; the improved process and procedures for appointment and promotion of academic staff; and the introduction of the digital library and the ICT revolution, as equally important events that were implemented during my time, some which were engendered internally and some partly influenced by global forces in the Higher Education sector. The staff salary top-ups from the university's internal resources, and the creation of the Research, Maintenance and Library Funds were also equally outstanding innovations in their own right. One could add the numerous new academic degree programmes – most of them demand-driven, as well as the new academic departments and faculties to the list of significant achievement, if we can call them so. The Mass communications FM training radio station and the Security radio network also come to mind as some of the achievements of small and considerable proportions. The new buildings and the old ones which we were able to repair, and the part of the university road network we were able to rehabilitate, are very much the product of the sweat of our brow. The many development partners we were able to attract to the university and who donated so generously to the revival of Makerere as an African centre of academic excellence, as well as the many and invaluable academic and administrative collaborative linkages we forged with universities and other international institutions across the globe also deserve an honourable mention. However, if you really pressed me hard to come up with one achievement I consider the most outstanding, I would be tempted to mention the Senate House. I believe it was late Professor John Mugerwa of Agriculture who first called it Senate House, which later changed to Senate Building. By the time I left the university in 2004, the University Council had not adopted either of the two versions as the official name for the building.

## **Senate House – Makerere’s Second Iconic Building and the Unexpected Setbacks**

The Senate House (or Senate Building, depending on your preference) stands out quite conspicuously as one of the most significant monuments of my time as Makerere’s Vice Chancellor. The reason is not so much because of its sheer size and beauty – at the time the contractor handed it over to the university in 2001, it was the largest non-residential building at Makerere, covering over 12,000 square metres of built space and financed entirely from the university’s internally-generated income; not a cent came from the Government of Uganda or from any donor – but rather, because of Makerere bootstrapping itself. Incidentally, although President Museveni toured it during one of his last graduation ceremonies as Chancellor of the university, by the time I left it was not yet officially commissioned or, as my American friends would put it, dedicated. I am convinced that this building epitomises an era that saw Makerere University dramatically change from a purely public university, almost totally dependent on the Government of Uganda coffers for funding, to a mixed public-private institution. Makerere had been capable of generating substantial revenue and using it to finance its rehabilitation and development. As the famous physicist and mathematician, Sir Isaac Newton once said, “If I have succeeded, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants”. I can also safely claim I was able to achieve whatever I achieved, a list of which includes the Senate Building, because I stood on the shoulders of two giants. My eminent predecessors, Professors Senteza Kajubi and George Kirya, and my wonderful management team. This modern building designed in the shape of letter L with a roof of red burnt clay tiles and a futuristic tinted curtain glass facade, was erected on a patch of land that was once bare, criss-crossed with a myriad of footpaths. In the latter years, it had been turned into an open-air market. It stands majestically on the south-eastern side of the Freedom Square and Main Building. It overlooks the Students’ Guild canteen and the Faculty of Social Sciences. It is indeed a lasting memory to the huge sacrifice the former Academic Registrar, Dr Mukwanason Hyuha, and his staff made for the university. They decided to forego what should have been their hard-earned allowances, and saved the money for the construction of this majestic building. This was totally new thinking which did not escape the admiration of the former Chancellor of the university, President Yoweri Museveni. At one of the graduation ceremonies he was presiding over in the Freedom Square, he pointed to the new Senate House, which was nearing completion, and proudly told the audience how a simple change of policy had worked wonders for an institution like Makerere; and congratulated the University Administration on being far-sighted and good managers of public affairs. Much as I knew that the credit belonged squarely to the Academic Registrar, I could not help feeling touched by the Chancellor’s remark. He concluded his remarks by emphasising the fact

that because his Government had allowed Makerere to admit private students, the university could now engage in serious and meaningful development, using its own resources.

Senate House was built as a multipurpose facility. It houses the entire Academic Registrar's Department and has a spacious conference hall where Senate meets. It has several lecture theatres and other general-purpose conference halls, one of which serves as a student Internet kiosk, and two well-furnished boardrooms on the seventh and topmost floor. The School of Postgraduate Studies – essentially a clearing house for all research and postgraduate work in the university – is also located there. After I left the university, the office of the newly-established post of Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs moved there, taking over the huge Academic Registrar's office. In addition, it has space for letting out for purposes of generating income for its maintenance. Uganda Commercial Bank, which later changed to Stanbic Bank, was the first tenant to move there and it occupied the entire ground floor overlooking Mitchell Hall and Mulago. The building has a modern canteen located on the lower ground floor. To avoid the usual power interruptions, the building has its own stand-by generator. It is also fully wired for both Internet and Intranet connectivity, and equipped with a modern lift, a rarity at Makerere. As soon as it opened in 2000, it instantly became the venue of choice for all sorts of meetings. In fact, I used to tease Dr Hyuha by referring to his department's new home as his "promised land". If you believe in the power of the African gods and spirits, you could be excused for thinking that perhaps Dr Hyuha and his staff were too much in a hurry to move into their building, and so overlooked a few important customs on the way. One such important African customs demands that before you move into a new house, you make a sacrifice asking the gods to protect and give you blessing in your new house. For the gods to pay attention to your request, you must slaughter a rooster and spill some of its blood on the floor for them to drink. The African traditionalists warn that if you ignore this time-honoured custom and fail to appease the gods; you do so at your own peril. They say that by so doing, you are actually inviting their wrath, possibly with very serious consequences. Going by the turn of events that happened immediately after Dr Hyuha moved into his new building, you can assume that the gods were certainly not amused for ignoring them. They did not take too kindly to the oversight. For that mistake, Dr Hyuha's neck ended up on "blocks' abattoir" and the gods did not hesitate to chop it off. Soon after moving into Senate House, the Academic Registrar began to experience problems with his staff. What surprised us was that some of the most vocal staff had just been appointed in one of the biggest recruitment drives the department had undertaken in recent years. The majority of them had very good first degrees, because that was what Dr Hyuha preferred. I recall Professor Epelu Opio constantly reminding Dr Hyuha that the young bright people he had recruited for routine administrative jobs were academic staff material, more suited for teaching than for administrative jobs.

The problems in the Academic Registrar's Department started as a simple complaint about what some staff perceived as unfair sharing of allowances. According to a memorandum their representatives presented to me, the lower cadre of staff were unhappy about the allegedly higher allowances the senior staff were enjoying. The junior staff were requesting for a fairer remuneration system. To me, the solution was a simple one. All they had to do as a department was to work out what they considered a fair system. That was my initial advice, but unfortunately no one was willing to take the initiative to call such a meeting to discuss the problem with the agitating staff or attempt to find a solution. As I discovered later, I was not being given the full picture of what was really going on in the department. I sensed that the issue of allowances was simply a tip off of a far bigger crisis. Apparently, staff had been silently bottling up a lot of problems about the leadership for quite some time. It was now a question of a dormant volcano threatening to erupt. Inability to take timely action which would have diffused the crisis and the unwillingness on the part of the Head of Department to forestall problems added more fuel to the fire. Accusations of arrogance and insensitivity started flying all over the place. Before we had had time to examine the merits of the staff's complaints about allowances and leadership, the events had taken a sinister turn. Members of staff were becoming impatient with our inability to act fast, and were beginning to lose confidence in the University Administration for what appeared to them to be an administrative reluctance to find a solution to their problems. We had to do something about the turmoil that was fast unfolding in the Academic Registrar's Department.

During a stormy meeting between the staff of the Academic Registrar's Department and the University Administration held in the Council Room in 2000 which, for reasons best known to himself, the Academic Registrar failed to attend, staff demanded an immediate inquiry into their grievances and other problems in the department. They suggested that we immediately set up an independent committee to do the job. The Head of Department's failure to attend this crucial meeting turned out to be a grave mistake on his part. I saw many of his deputies, who were being harangued and crucified by their juniors who were deeply disappointed by his absence. He never told me he would not attend the meeting, and I had no idea where he was at the time. All efforts to contact him failed. We even had to delay the start of the meeting, waiting for him, until we sensed that staff were getting really upset. At the end of the meeting, we had no choice but to go along with the staff's demands. We quickly appointed a high powered Committee of Inquiry, chaired by Professor Oswald Ndoleriire who was then the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. After a gruelling and exhaustive investigation, lasting a couple of months, the Ndoleriire Committee submitted a report on its findings and recommendations, which I was satisfied with. This was the first time a senior member of the University Administration had been subjected to this kind of investigation during my tenure. The report made not only grim, but also painful, reading.

Unfortunately, before we had had time to study and act on the report, an over-zealous person within the University Administration had leaked the whole document to the press. *The New Vision* published the entire document almost verbatim. In spite of the fact that very few of us had had access to the report at the time, I was not surprised that someone leaked it to the press. In fact, some pointed an accusing finger at one of the top university administrators as being responsible for giving the document to the journalist who always had a keen interest in whatever was going on at Makerere. This particular journalist was so frequent at the university that some members of staff suspected that the Chief Editor of *New Vision* had deliberately planted him at Makerere for a purpose. As I have said before, I had long discovered that at Makerere, there was no such thing as confidential information or secret documents. But in this case, I was angry, because the affected persons had not yet been given the opportunity to react to the report and its findings. I am sure that the Editor of *New Vision* saw it as a big headline scoop, but to us it was a real embarrassment. However, there was little we could do about it.

Ndolerii's committee discovered too many administrative lapses, elements of abuse of office and other wrong doings. One of the committee's major recommendations was to ask the Academic Registrar to step down in the interest of the department. According to the committee's findings, the situation would not have spanned out of control if the concerned senior managers in the department had attended to staff complaints promptly, which confirmed my observations. Poor public relations and outright bad crisis management also contributed a lot to the problem. The crisis had claimed its first casualty; the embattled and embittered Academic Registrar left a confused and shaken department in its wake. I am sure that even the staff who started it all had no idea that what appeared to be simple demands would lead to drastic consequences that would end in the suspension of the Head of Department and, eventually, his dismissal. The committee further recommended an immediate staff reshuffle, which we had to implement. It was one of the saddest episodes in the history of the university. It was truly one of the most difficult situations, if not the worst, I had ever handled as Vice Chancellor. In fact, it had an unexpected knock-on effect within some Government circles. Some senior Government officials warned of serious political fall-out if we mishandled it. Fortunately, their fears never materialised. After the usual formalities, the report was formally presented to the Appointments Board for appropriate action. The Board, like the committee, went through the findings and recommendations thoroughly and took pains to ensure justice was seen to be done before deciding the fate of the Head of Department. After the substantive Academic Registrar had stepped down, we had to find a suitable person to act in his stead. We chose one Sebastian Ngobi who was then one of the Deputy Registrars. He had a strong professional background in management and administrative experience as a school principal in Nairobi for many years,

coupled with a lot of skill, tact and plenty of luck, which helped him to rally a department that was still in a state of confusion and gave it a sense of direction once again. Learning from this episode, I was tempted to believe that perhaps our foreparents were right. It seemed to me that, in Africa, if you do not respect the gods, you end up paying a heavy price for it.

Without a doubt, Senate House is one of Dr Mukwanason Hyuha's greatest contributions to the university. However, the construction of this iconic building also had its fair share of the all-too-familiar accusations of corruption. As soon as the sod was cut and construction began, several concerned so-called citizens wrote to the Inspector-General of Government (IGG), alleging that they had watertight evidence that the contractor was paying some senior university administrators hefty kickbacks. They were so concerned that the matter had to be brought to the urgent attention of the IGG, to investigate and prosecute the corrupt administrators. To say the least, we found some of the allegations so disgusting and disheartening that I was about to advise my colleagues to stop spending their hard-earned allowances on constructing buildings. I had no objection to people interested in checking any potential mischief or impropriety; what I found most disturbing and objectionable was the frequency of these accusations and the manner and spirit in which they were being made. The overzealousness of these "informed" whistleblowers was turning the IGG's humble request to the public to provide information on suspected cases of corruption into an exercise in character assassination, a destructive practice which was sending the IGG on wild goose chases, moreover at tax payers' expense. As we tried to probe the sources of these allegations in vain, a friend told me that some of the people making the allegations of corruption were actually rival contractors who had competed for the same jobs and lost. I did not want to believe him at the time, but on hindsight, I think his suspicions had some truth. There were just too many allegations of corruption. Fortunately, for us and for the contractors, the IGG investigated every allegation in detail and found no wrongdoing. As a result, I came to trust and appreciate the value of good record keeping. As we learnt from this experience, good record keeping saves many problems. I am almost certain that without the detailed minutes of the Estates and Works Committee, the Council committee that was responsible for awarding the tenders for civil and other engineering works, perhaps some of the accusations would have stuck and some of us would have lost our jobs, and ended up in court or faced worse situations.

Precise minute writing and good record keeping are some of the enduring traditions at Makerere. In his report, the only complaint the IGG raised had to do with the Council's tendency to expand the scope of works after the tender award. He recommended that every time additional works were found necessary, the University Council should tender them out again. As I discovered, in construction – more often than not – extra works are simply inevitable. This is because the initial designs usually omit a few things which become apparent as the work progresses

and, sometimes, modifications to the original design are necessary. The problem with the IGG's recommendation was its practical applicability. We imagined a situation where three or more contractors would be engaged on the same project, each trying to undo what the other had already done. Unfortunately, I had retired from the university before the IGG's recommendation was implemented. As the Senate House project was nearing completion and the funds running low, I was concerned that the University Bookshop Road, which also hosted the physical address of the Senate House and the Students' Guild Canteen, was about to be left in its original sorry potholed state. That would have been a real eyesore and a shame to the university. The contract for constructing Senate House also included a provision to repair the University Bookshop road. However, as a result of frugal project budget management, there was enough money left to repair the entire road, from the University Road to the west to the Pool Road to the east, a stretch of over half a kilometre. When the repairs were completed, it was the finest road in the university. We were also able to mobilise additional funds to repair the equally potholed Pool Road which had become treacherous to motorists. I recall an interesting joke a member of staff made when he saw the contractors busy at work on the Pool Road. He wondered why the Vice-Chancellor had not bothered to ask the many men who drove at breakneck speed along the Pool Road on their way to Africa Hall to foot the bill for the repairs. I guess he was right in some way, but I had no way of catching them or making them pay, short of erecting a toll booth at some strategic place along the road. I was equally sure that for obvious reasons, the Vice Chancellor's antiques would not have gone down well with the residents of Africa Hall either.

### **The Commercial Units – Venturing into the Corporate World, Makerere's Limited Liability Companies**

When Avitus Tibarimbasa was appointed as University Secretary in 1995, he was aware of Makerere's financial woes. Before taking up the post of Institute Secretary at Kyambogo, he had spent most of his working life in the Academic Registrar's Department at Makerere where he had risen to the level of Senior Assistant Registrar and therefore, a first-hand witness to the institution's state of financial hopelessness. In his new role as the university's accounting officer, he was keenly interested in increasing and diversifying the funding sources. In effect, this would be an extension of his thesis for his MA degree at the University of Manchester in the UK, which was on financing higher education. For him, it was now a question of putting theory into practice. Borrowing a leaf from his experience at ITEK, he floated the idea of setting up income-generating ventures to earn additional revenue. He kept referring to these income-generating ventures as commercial units, the same term he had used at ITEK. The University Council accepted his proposal, but on condition that the units would be legally set up as limited liability companies wholly owned by the

University Council. The second condition was that the University Council would set them up for the sole purpose of making money, so once capitalised they had to operate as viable business enterprises. They were therefore expected to declare dividends from time to time. That meant that they had to register with the Registrar of Companies as for-profit business entities under the category of single-proprietor limited liability companies. The University Council would be the sole shareholder, superintended by a Board of Commercial Units, which was one of the permanent committees of the University Council. At the time, the university had a number of service units which had the potential to make money. It was a matter of re-orientating them from purely service units into commercial enterprises. The Guest House, the University Printing Press, maize mill, bakery and the University Bookshop were the first of such units to be turned into commercial units. Later, Makerere University Press and Makerere University Building Unit (MUBU) were added to the list. Mr Patrick Okumu Ringa, a specially-elected member of the Council was the first chair of the Board of Commercial Units, with Mr Tibarimbasa as Board Secretary. Mr Okumu Ringa had joined the University Council on the strength of his long and vast experience as a successful businessman. He was therefore, the obvious choice for the job. Within a relatively short time, he successfully managed to get the Board off to a good start. As a way of minimising delays in the appointment of staff and reducing the red tape, the Appointments Board also created a special committee to handle the appointment staff of the commercial units, with Dr Charles Wana Etyem as its first chair.

In spite of the fact that the university had had a Faculty of Commerce for almost three decades, the concept of commercial units was a totally new idea at Makerere. To those who chose to think in the box, a university had no business with the world of business. In Fact, to many an academic, the word “commercial” was and continues to be a dirty word. For those of us who believed in thinking outside the box, there was nothing wrong with making some money for the university from unconventional sources. With no rules and procedures in place to guide us as to how we could raise more money to run the university, we had to keep experimenting with new ideas, writing and re-writing the rules as we went along. To show that we were seriously interested in seeing the commercial units succeed, we created a new salary scale – the Commercial Unit (CU) Scale, which was different from the regular university’s M scale, and wrote a new set of terms and conditions of service, specifically for staff in the commercial units. Every unit had to meet its salary bill, pay the corporation tax and cover all its operational costs from its own revenue. There would be no subsidy from the University Bursar; only capitalisations and loans approved under very special circumstances. To ensure staff efficiency, all posts – some of which had been hitherto permanent – were converted into contractual appointments. There would be no permanent appointments anymore, and renewal of contracts was subject to satisfactory performance appraisals.

To Avitas Tibarimbasa's satisfaction, most of commercial units, like the Guest House, the maize mill, bakery and printing press performed extremely well. They were not only meeting all their operating costs, they were also turning out good profits which were being ploughed back to expand the business. Admittedly, a few were strugglers, largely because they required far more capitalization than the University Council could provide. For instance, the printing press was a beneficiary of a loan from the Local Donors account in the then Uganda Commercial Bank. This account was opened soon after the 1987 Donors Conference. Because business was good, the printing press quickly paid back the first loan with the requisite interest and went for more. No doubt, Catherine Munyagwa had been a good manager. It was equally interesting to see Simon Sagala, a friend from our undergraduate days, take over as manager of the University Printing Press when Catherine retired in the late 1990s.

The printing press was not the only commercial unit to benefit from the Local Donors account. Likewise, the new Makerere University Press was capitalised with a 20 million shillings loan from the same source. However, for the press, the loan from the Local Donors account was not enough to capitalise it fully. A lot more money was needed, and we had hoped that Friends of Makerere in Canada (FOMAC) would come up with additional money because, as we have seen before, FOMAC had shown a lot of interest in the newly-created University Press for purposes of facilitating academic publishing. By the time I left Makerere in 2004, Professor Charles Olweny had not yet raised the money. The interesting thing was that, although some of the units were limping, they were making some money and not about to go burst. This reinforced our belief that the university could earn more revenue from this source, if only we could find a way of capitalising its commercial units fully. The bookshop, with its unique problems that made it difficult to run along the lines of a profitable commercial unit, was the exception. If I were to pick one commercial unit I considered most successful, I would put my bet on the Makerere Guest House. In my opinion, it was the big jewel in the crown, and for good reasons too.

### **The Guest House – Makerere's X Star Hotel**

When new Mary Stuart Hall opened in the late 1960s and the females moved out of their old "Box", the Administration decided to turn the old hostel into a guest house to provide accommodation for external examiners, newly appointed staff, as well as other university guests. In the 1960s, a wooden wing with a red tiled roof was added to the eastern side of the old small hostel. Then, in the late 1980s during Professor George Kirya's tenure, the British Government funded an additional wing on the western side of the original building. Even with all these modifications, the Makerere Guest House remained a service unit until 1996 when it was re-organised into one of the university's commercial units,

generating sufficient revenue to meet all its overheads, and with a surplus to remit to the university coffers. However, before converting it into a business enterprise, there were several things that needed changing. First, the management had to be reformed in order to make it more professional and capable of running the guest house as a business. Secondly, we had to shed off some of the old and excess staff who did not fit into the new structure. They had to be sent back to the University Secretary for redeployment. These were tough decisions and we tried to implement them as humanely as we could. We also needed some facts and figures to make sure that the Guest House would succeed as a business venture, without resorting to the University Bursar for bail-out. We decided to set up a small committee of experts, chaired by John Turyagenda of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, to advise on the best available options of turning a hitherto non-profit-making entity into a professionally and profitably-run guest house, along the lines of the modern hospitality industry. John Turyagenda (or JBT to his peers) knew a thing or two about running a successful business.

Turyagenda's committee recommended the hiring of a new manager with sufficient experience in the hospitality industry, preferably with a strong background in hotel management. The committee further recommended that all chefs, waiters, kitchen and chamber staff be retrained or replaced with new ones who had the requisite qualifications and skills to work in a profit-making hotel. My initial reaction about all these sweeping changes was apprehension, and for a reason. I was concerned about the many old Guest House staff who had been recommended for retrenchment and the possible backlash from their union. I had learnt the hard way before, when we tried to rid the university of the many unauthorised makeshift kiosks which had mushroomed all over the campus, how unpopular and unpleasant such a decision could be. Much as the kiosks were serving a useful purpose to their owners, a sizeable section of the community was concerned about their impact on the image of the university. They argued, and convincingly so, that the uncontrolled kiosks were not only turning the university into a slum, they had also become a source of insecurity. The Administration was asked to get rid of most of them. As we went about demolishing the ugly-looking kiosks on the orders of the University Council, we met with a lot of resistance. Their owners decided to vent their anger on the Vice Chancellor. Besides the rude remarks, I received threats of physical harm. Suddenly, I had become a very unpopular Vice Chancellor. The reason for the hostile reaction was understandable. Those little makeshift shops were a vital source of supplementary income and livelihood to some members of staff and the community who owned them. In the students' halls of residence, the kiosks had become an important source of revenue in the form of monthly rent collections, in addition to providing the students with convenient shopping. Getting rid of them altogether therefore proved a very sensitive matter. We were only able to diffuse the potentially explosive situation after agreeing to keep a few which met

the University Council's standards in specifically designated places. As second compromise, we had suggested that anyone who wanted to build a kiosk should apply for a plot in the empty space below Mitchell Hall which we used to call the ROKO site.

With kiosks episode fresh in my mind, I was not prepared for a replay of those ugly confrontations. I had already learnt that staff regarded retrenchment as a dishonourable dismissal, so I wanted us to proceed with a lot of caution. As we started implementing Turyagenda's committee recommendations on staffing, I had to restrain some of my colleagues' run-away exuberance in order to contain any potential industrial relations fall-out. On the other hand, the University Secretary appeared to be more resolute in his belief than I was. He was convinced that if such situation ever arose, it could be contained. I had to pray that he was right and that he had the means to handle a staff riot if it ever erupted. However, as far as I was concerned, we were leaving a lot to chance, and this had its dangers; in any case, it has never been a good management practice. We had to make a conscious effort to allay the fears of the affected staff and to convince them that their interests were being taken good care of in the new arrangements.

Good public relations – in other words, using effective communication to manage stakeholder concerns, combined with a well thought-out staff redeployment plan – did the trick. Naturally, some of the affected staff, who had worked in the Guest House for years, were unhappy with the changes; but all passed without serious incident. From then on the Guest House had to operate as a real business entity. At the time it changed status, the University Council was one of its big debtors, and the University Secretary was instructed to settle the debt as quickly as possible. Since he could not raise the money to settle the old debts, the University Secretary suggested doing a debt swap. Other debtors were also relentlessly pursued to pay up. Now, there would be no more free lunches for the Vice Chancellor and his guests. This was to ensure that the Guest House as a commercial unit operated like a normal business and paid its way. Although the debt collecting initiative was not a dramatic success, it made a difference. Even my office that made use of the Guest House regularly had to pay for the services.

The advertisement for the position of its manager attracted very few applicants. I strongly suspected that the poor response was a reflection of Makerere's uncompetitive salaries in the market. Nevertheless, among the few who applied, the Appointments Board was able to identify a suitable candidate for the job. Mrs Rosemary Kobutaagi performed best at the interview and was offered the job. Her previous experience in hotel management came in handy. We were also able to identify a qualified accountant. The next exercise was to screen the former employees to identify who would be retained. All of them had been asked to re-apply for their jobs, but only a few of them qualified for re- appointment. In a relatively short time, coupled with a rigorous promotional campaign, Mrs

Kobutaagi had turned the Guest House into a profitable enterprise. The once service unit was now earning enough money to meet all its overheads, including its wage bill, and making substantial savings. For instance, in 1996 – the first year it operated as a commercial unit – it earned a gross income of UgSh140 million and made a net profit of thirty million shillings, after meeting all costs, including the corporation tax. By 2002, the gross revenue had risen to UgSh230 million. In 2004, my last year at Makerere, the guest house earned a gross income of UgSh528 million and a net profit of almost seventy six million shillings from its forty rooms and other services. In a space of about eight years, the gross earnings had risen by about 270 per cent while the profit margin had also risen by about 150 per cent.

Although the good old guest house had started attracting big crowds of clientele from as far as town, the building and its surroundings could do with a facelift. With good cash flow, the place had accumulated sufficient funds to embark on a serious renovation exercise. The wooden wing on the eastern side facing Lincoln House was the first to undergo a make-over. We decided to pull it down and rebuild it anew in brick and motor. All the money that paid for the renovation, some UgSh180 million or so, came from the guest house's savings. With the wooden wing fully renovated, the guest house was now boasting of some very fine and modern rooms equipped with colour television sets and a PABX connection. The place was slowly, but surely moving out of the Stone Age into something captivatingly modern. The manager had a new and more befitting office in the renovated wing. Avitus Tibarimbasa's experiment had succeeded beyond our wildest dreams and I could not hide my excitement the day we commissioned the renovated wing. A new reception desk was also installed, followed by improvements in other areas. More and more people were turning it to their popular joint and patronising it every evening. Even my children too took a fancy to the place. Now, we had a reasonably priced place on campus for our international guests. My Norwegian friends, in particular, liked staying there. With good food and improved services, the place became my ideal venue for entertaining university guests. The waiters too, in their new uniforms, were a smart lot to look at. In fact, at times the manager had difficulty satisfying the demand for rooms. On many occasions, she had more customers than she could accommodate in her forty rooms. Inspired by that instant success story, we started exploring ways of expanding it with another extension behind the existing building. Unfortunately, when my tenure ended, the idea was still under discussion.

Much of the empty grounds and lawns in front of the guest house manager's residence, the former David Rubadiri's residence, were always bushy and idle. David Rubadiri once told me that he used to sit there with his students to read poems. We decided to give the space to the guest house as an outdoor facility. After mowing the lawns, the green grounds added the much appreciated beauty to the guest house decor, in addition to providing space for outdoor parties. Soon, I was

one of the Guest House's frequent visitors. Besides a health club, the only facility our X star hotel (by the time I left we had not yet applied for a star rating) lacked was a business centre. I had several discussions with the manager on the issue until we agreed to convert an office next-door to the kitchen into a small business centre, to provide the guests with e-mail, Internet and fax services, but at a fee. To that end, I made sure that the MakNet optical fibre backbone was installed and the Guest House was given a connection. In fulfilment of my request, Dr Tusubira of DICTS made sure the optical fibre was extended right to the Guest House, and in no time, the manager was busy mobilising funds to purchase the computers and accessories. Everything seemed to be going well for her, and for us too. Therefore, it came as a surprise when she informed me in late 2003 that she had decided to go back to school to pursue a Masters degree at the Uganda Management Institute. Consequently, she was resigning her post as manager. No amount of sweet-talking could persuade her to change her mind. I was deeply disappointed, not because she was leaving, but because she had done so well in so short a time. All I could do was to express my gratitude to her for an exemplary performance and bid her farewell. Although I never pressed her hard to tell me the real reason for her sudden departure, I had detected a streak of frustration in her. As the Deputy Vice Chancellor used to say, the office of the University Secretary was not giving sufficient autonomy to the managers of the commercial units to run them the best way they knew. It was still exercising control over them as if they were being run as service units. As every good business person will tell you, "red tape and excessive bureaucracy kills business".

The staff clay tennis courts in front of the University Guest House had fallen into a state of disrepair due to years of neglect, and were now an eye sore to the Guest House manager. Lawn Tennis was and continues to be a popular pastime for both staff and students. I know of several colleagues both senior and junior, who really loved the game and were almost addicted to it. Dr John Silike-Muruum, my colleague during my days at the Chemistry Department, was certainly one of the avid lawn tennis lovers. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Epelu Opio, was one of the regular players before the chores of the office made it increasingly difficult for him to play regularly. But due to the bad state the courts were in, they had to play on very rough surface until we raised some twelve or so million shillings and hired an expert on tennis courts from the Uganda Lawn Tennis Association to do the repair job. To avoid the continuous degeneration of the surfaces, I had suggested a change from clay to an all-weather asphalt surface. The majority of the patrons opposed my idea because, according to them, asphalt would shorten the life span of their balls. The expert who repaired the court did a good job and, in no time, members of staff were playing their game on a smoother surface. No doubt, the refurbished court with new perimeter chicken mesh added more aesthetics to the surroundings of the Guest House. I had the rare pleasure of playing a curtain raiser game the day the contactor handed the courts to the University

Administration. I had last played lawn tennis at St Peter's Junior Secondary School Nsambya way back in 1963, so you can guess the quality of my game that day. I do not even remember who my more-than-patient opponent was. All I remember was that every time I hit the ball, it went flying all over the place. I remember that Professor Elly Katunguka-Rwakishaya and other more experienced players, who were watching us, kept laughing at my rusty and unusual forehand and backhand strokes as I struggled to put the ball over the net; but it was good fun. My idea after repairing the tennis courts was to open them to the interested Guest House patrons, at a fee. That would be one way of raising money for their regular minor maintenance. Unfortunately, I left before I could sell the idea. Considering the amount of money we had spent on rehabilitating the courts, I expected the users to take care of their rehabilitated facility; perhaps that was my usual wishful thinking – another grim reminder of the fact that in our part of the world, public property is never a public concern.

### **The Good Old University Bookshop Goes Private**

From a purely personal point of view, the University Bookshop story was a sad one. Since the death of Kansiimeruhanga in an air plane crash – when a Ugandan Airlines plane crashed in Rome in 1987, killing most of the people on board – the University Administration had entrusted the management of the Bookshop to James Sewankambo, an old friend of mine from our undergraduate days. Sewankambo was not strange to the world of business. He possessed a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration from the former Institute of Public Administration, which later became the Uganda Management Institute. In addition, he had a person like Mr Ngobo who had transferred from the Finance Department with his wealth of financial management experience. As we have seen before, the Bookshop was originally set up to import and sell prescribed textbooks and stationery to all university students. When the Government was subsidising public universities, each student at Makerere had a textbook and stationery account which was replenished every academic year. Those were the good old days which some of us tasted during our undergraduate days before things went sour. Because all unspent money had to be returned to the Government Treasury, some “smart” students who failed to exhaust the money on their accounts bought novels the Bookshop stocked from time to time and sold them to the street hawkers down town at a premium price. No sane student was keen on his or her money being returned to Government.

During the latter years of Idi Amin's rule and the period immediately after his overthrow, foreign exchange to import books became scarce, which made the process of getting the US dollars from the Bank of Uganda a very tedious procedure. The consequence was unacceptably long delays in placing the orders and getting the books in the Bookshop before the academic year ended.

As solution, whenever the Bank of Uganda released the dollars, the Bookshop manager would travel to Britain to buy the books directly from the publishers and fly back with them. Sadly, Kansiimeruhanga met his tragic death when he was returning from the UK on one of such trips. All the books and the tons of stationery perished with him in the accident. At the time, it was common practice for students to go through a full academic year without a single textbook. As a remedy, the university abolished the old system whereby students bought the textbooks for keeps, and set up a Book Bank scheme, managed by the University Librarian. The change in policy had a profound effect on the future of the University Bookshop. If anything, it should have closed when the Book Bank scheme became operational in early 1990. However, some people argued that it still had a role to play, not as a service unit, but as a business enterprise. Consequently, the University Council decided to keep it open. Under the new arrangements, it would continue to import textbooks as well as other books of general interest as part of its business. The idea was to cater for those students who could afford to buy their own textbooks at their expense. It was supposed to operate like any commercial bookshop. However, as my friend Sewankambo soon discovered, with the poor reading culture of most Ugandans and the stiff competition from well-established bookshops in town, the University Bookshop was slowly but surely doomed to fail. Few students were interested in buying their own textbooks. Besides, they could buy the same books more cheaply from the many Kampala street booksellers. To make matters worse, many would-be customers wanted to buy books on credit and many who were advanced credit never made good their debts.

In spite of James Sewankambo's good intentions, vigorous advertising campaigns and business acumen, the Bookshop was making very little money. The Commercial Units Board had reached the conclusion that, as a commercial unit, the University Bookshop was not viable. To ensure fairplay before we acted, we asked the Turyagenda Committee to investigate the viability of the Bookshop as a profitable commercial unit or lack of it, and recommend the best course of action. The committee concluded that the Bookshop was unprofitable and recommended that it be privatised. The Commercial Units Board accepted the recommendation and tasked us to make the necessary arrangements for its privatisation and the redeployment of its staff. The majority of staff members, including the manager – James Sewankambo – were working there on secondment. It was another difficult policy change to implement, but we had no choice but to go along with the Board's decision. As we prepared to redeploy the staff, James Sewankambo and some of his senior colleagues decided to take early retirement, with their terminal benefits. On one hand, their resignation solved a problem for the University Secretary who had the task of re-integrating them into the mainstream University Administration. On the other hand, I thought that by taking early retirement, my colleagues had made a hasty decision, which in my opinion was a big mistake. After all, none of them

had been accused of incompetence or financial impropriety. It was just that the book business was not a good money maker. Some thought the Bookshop failed as a commercial unit because management had no formal training in running a commercial bookshop. Unfortunately, there was little I could do to persuade them to change their minds; it was their personal choice. In spite of the publicity it was given, the advertisement for the privatization of the Bookshop attracted very few responses. By the deadline, there was only one promising bid from Fountain Publishers – a local publishing house in town. The Commercial Units Board agreed to award the contract to Fountain Publishers at a negotiated monthly rent, but it still remained under the Commercial Units Board, run along different lines. As far as I can recall, it was one of the first partnership experiments between the university and the private sector.

### **The New Home for the Institute of Computer Science and the Controversies**

One of my long cherished dreams as Vice Chancellor was to build a new home for the Institute of Computer Science, appropriately located near the university's main gate. I wanted to give what I thought was the technology of the new millennium the highest visibility possible. As I have said before, every time I visited the Institute of Computer Science in its old and cramped premises at the Department of Mathematics, staff there always raised two issues: inadequate computers and space for teaching and staff. As if I had already identified a source of quick money, I kept promising them that, very soon their problems would be a thing of the past. Frankly, much as I was promising, I had no clue as to how I could deliver on my promises, because at the time I had no idea where the funds would come from for an appropriate building for the institute. As a matter of fact, I was risked being labelled a sweet-talking Vice Chancellor or worse, as it was just one of those many daydreams of mine, nothing more. Nevertheless, I was confident that, one day, we would raise the funds to build an appropriate home for the struggling institute.

In 2000, we realised the breakthrough we had been waiting for. As we negotiated the NORAD-funded Institutional Development Programme, I deliberately added on the long list of needs, a request for a building for the Institute of Computer Science. Convinced of the critical role ICT was poised to play in the development of the university, NORAD approved the request. The long serving Institute Director, Dr Edmund Katiti – now out of office – left the planning for the new building to his successor, Mrs Norah Muliira. When the architects and quantity surveyors presented the bills of quantities, we discovered that the budget NORAD had approved for the ICS building could only pay for four floors. However, the University Council wanted a bigger building. The architects were instructed to add a fifth floor, which the University Council

would pay for. In all, the five floors together amounted to 2,375 square metres. One of the reasons for adding a fifth floor was that we needed a new and befitting home for the African Virtual University. Several reputable contractors submitted bids and after the usual scrutiny process that saw the lowest bidder lose out to the second lowest bidder, due to what the consultants called discrepancies and errors in his bills of quantities, we were ready to award the contract. However, NORAD wanted to be convinced that the university had awarded the tender to the lowest bidder on sound technical reasons, so they commissioned Pricewater House Coopers to investigate. The consultants were able to explain why the lowest bidder was disqualified. NORAD was satisfied and that was the end of the matter, so we thought. In hindsight, I now believe this was a pointer to the problems that were to come later. We then signed the contract for five floors.

As construction progressed, it became obvious that given – the rate of cash flow – the University Council could not afford to pay for the extra fifth floor, so the contractor was instructed to scrap it. Naturally, this necessitated a revision of the contract. At about the same time, Dr Charles Basalirwa who was Head of the Meteorology unit in the Department of Geography was thinking of a new building for his unit, but his budget for construction in the NORAD grant was just enough for a single storied building. During one of NORAD's Steering Committee meetings in late 2002, which I personally chaired, we proposed to put a request to NORAD to allow Dr Basalirwa and the Institute of Computer Science pool their budgets to finance the fifth floor which the University Council had earlier abandoned. Since the demand for space was huge, the rationale was to try as far as possible to stick to the original design. The fifth floor, which the University Council had failed to pay for would now be the new home for the Meteorology unit. Fortunately for us, NORAD approved the request. However, our minutes' recorder messed up. Instead of five floors, the minutes made reference to six floors. Fortunately, the mistake did not affect floor area, it was recorded as 2,375 square metres as in the original design. Unfortunately for me, it was the beginning of the *wahala*, as my West African friends would say, which put me on a direct collision course with the new Institute Director, Dr Venansius Baryamureeba.

Originally a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics, Dr Baryamureeba had taken his PhD at the University of Bergen Institute of Informatics in Norway, which was awarded to him on August 25, 2000 at the same graduation ceremony where the university conferred on me a PhD honoris causa. Since his PhD thesis was in a Computer Science-related discipline, soon after his return in 2001, we decided to transfer him to the Institute of Computer Science (ICS), which at the time was grossly understaffed, as Acting Director. He joined the ICS when most of the planning and the architectural drawings for the new building had been completed, under the direction of Norah Muliira. When Byaramureeba learnt that

there would be no sixth floor and that the sixth floor referred to in the Steering Committee's minutes was an error, he became so incensed that he decided to ask the Inspector General of Government to investigate what he believed was high-level corruption on the part of the University Administration. As usual, the IGG was quick to swing into action. At the end of the investigation, the IGG concluded that the alleged corruption was unfounded, nothing amiss, but the young man refused to believe the IGG's report. To him corruption existed. He had already concluded that the real reason we had decided not to build the sixth floor was because we had pocketed the money which had been earmarked for that floor. Unsatisfied with his report, he petitioned the IGG to convene a meeting of all interested parties, NORAD, Makerere University Administration and him. The IGG obliged and invited us to meet him in his office. During the said meeting, we went over the same arguments and at the end of it all, the IGG said he had not seen any new evidence to change his report. The young man was still adamant. For him, corruption had been proven. Perhaps the IGG had been compromised by the corrupt Makerere University Administration. The young man decided to take the matter higher – to the Social Services Committee of the Parliament of Uganda.

As far as I could remember, this was a precedent. The Social Services Committee was willing to listen and give him audience. After meeting him alone at Parliament, the Committee promised to visit the university to see what was at the heart of the dispute. Indeed the Committee, led by its chairperson, Mrs Dorothy Hyuha made an extensive tour of the ICS building under construction and pored over all documents. The Committee's conclusion was the same as that of the IGG. Nothing was amiss. Although I had been summoned to appear before it and answer the allegations, after the grand visit, the appointment was never followed up. That put the matter to rest, but the damage had been done. The episode was such an embarrassment, not only to the university, but also to the Norwegian Embassy and NORAD. To clear the air, the Norwegian Ambassador, Gjos Tore, invited me to his office to explain what was going on. As far as he was concerned, he did not think there were any irregularities. Being a good civil engineer, ambassador Tore told me what mattered was not so much the number of floors, but the square metres, adding that you could build as many floors as you wanted out of a given number of square metres, depending on the size of the floors and number of rooms you wanted. If those had been altered, then he would have had reason to be concerned. In fact, if we had not acted with care, the project would have been in danger of being cancelled. Much as we all understood Dr Baryamureeba's argument for the extra space and we had even asked him to raise funds from the institute's revenue to pay for the extra sixth floor he wanted, we failed to understand why he pursued the matter so viciously that one wondered if the ICS building was the first we had successfully constructed. Beyond insisting that he needed all the space, because in the near future he intended to introduce many more courses, we failed to understand his real motive. In fact, a friend of

mind told me that when the young man went to contest the 2001 Parliamentary elections, he asked the people there to vote for him because he was one of the few members of staff at Makerere who had dared to expose the corruption in the University Administration. Borrowing a phrase from one of our colleagues in the Bursar's Office which he once used when he was under investigation for alleged corruption in the Finance Department in the late 1980s – “much as the investigators were insisting that I was responsible for the disappearance of a big consignment of beef meant for students, my family neither saw nor ate the meat” – I told the IGG that, much as the young man insisted that he had unearthed corruption in high places, neither my family nor myself ever saw or ate the meat. On reflection I was tempted to believe that the young man was acting out of youthful exuberance. Perhaps he was simply overzealous, too eager to prove a point. But it is also probable that he was genuinely sure he had smelt a rat, which had convinced him that indeed we had engaged in acts of financial impropriety. Whatever it was, perhaps I will never know. However, the consistent figure of 2,375 square metres in all relevant documents saved the day.

Despite the initial disruptions, the contractor was able to complete the five-floor building on schedule without further problems. In January 2003, Ambassador Gjos Tore cut the tape and declared the building officially open. It was an emotional moment for me. I almost broke into tears when he handed me the keys. I remembered how close this beautiful building had brought whatever little reputation I had into disrepute. I also remembered what a joyful moment it had been when, almost two years earlier, Ambassador Arild Oyen and I symbolically broke the ground on Pool Road in a place where Dr Festo Byarugaba's house once stood, to commence construction. I could not help feeling a sense of accomplishment that in spite of the difficulties, I had delivered on my promise. We had come so close to losing it. In his short address, Ambassador Tore, who had replaced Dr Arild Oyen a year or so earlier, remarked that the building had cost far less than he would have expected and it was a good job. To us who had been accused of impropriety, the Ambassador's remark was reassuring. I have no doubt in my mind that the ICS building is one of the most beautiful new buildings at Makerere. It is also appropriately located near the university's main gate in fulfilment of my dream. Shortly before I retired, both Senate and the University Council had agreed to change the name from Institute of Computer Science, which to me was a more appropriate name that encapsulated what the new building stood for, to the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology, with Dr Baryamureeba as its first Dean.

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## Information and Communication Revolution – The MakNet

### **The MakNet – Making ICT Work for Makerere**

Students are very good at coining slang and jargon that suits any situation and occasion. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise when the ICT revolution started spreading across the university campuses in Africa in the late 1970s and early 1980s, gaining momentum in the late 1990s, that students started referring to their professors as “digital” and “analogue” professors. As I discovered later, a digital professor meant one who could use a computer with ease and was able to surf the Net. An analogue professor could neither use a computer nor go online. As the ICT revolution started pervading almost every aspect of the university’s business, calling a professor worth his or her salt analogue was derogatory. It meant that you were archaic and if the students had a choice, they would shun you. It is interesting to note that although in the early beginnings of the new technology most of the staff at Makerere were still very much analogue. Makerere University has always kept abreast of the computer technology. The trend was set in the late 1960s when the university acquired its first mainframe computer, the ICL 1920A, which was housed in the Department of Mathematics. At the time, computing and the then emerging discipline of Computer Science were the preserve of mathematicians, engineers and physical scientists. Then, computing was about number crunching and complex mathematical calculations. To use a computer to solve a problem, you had to write your programme, a laborious exercise that required a good grasp of the programming languages in use at the time. FORTRAN was the programming language of choice for the mathematicians, scientists and engineers while COBAL was mainly for the world of finance. FORTRAN was a precise language with complex rules and grammar, which took time to master. Other languages such as PASCAL came later but

they were equally unfriendly to the ordinary user. You could say that at the time, computers were not as user-friendly as they are today.

For many years, the complex nature of computer programming had created the belief that only exceptionally gifted students could study Computer Science. Indeed, some of the best computer scientists to come out of Makerere in the early 1970s, students like Rotalo Mutooro and Joseph Kavulu, were some of the most brilliant mathematicians Makerere has ever produced. Both graduated with the best first class honours degrees in Mathematics before branching out into Computer Science. I am sure it was a disappointment to the university that after obtaining a PhD in Computer Science in the UK, Dr Mutooro chose to work with one of the big oil companies operating in the Middle East. In the same way, after graduation in 1972, Joseph Kavulu joined the Shell Oil Company where he stayed until he retired in the mid-1990s. They were expected to form the nucleus staff of a future Computer Science Department. Back then, we never imagined that someday in the near future, the computer would become user-friendly to everyone and would eventually replace the good old manual and electronic typewriter as an everyday office tool, and that the e-mail would make written communication as instantaneous as a phone call and take much of the mail business from the Post Office; that we would have unlimited access to an unimaginable volume of information posted on the Internet daily, read our favourite local dailies online wherever we are in the world, tune in to our favourite local FM radio station, even when we are in Antarctica, download our favourite music and do our shopping online; that even books and scholarly journals would be published in electronic form as e-journals and e-books and be accessible at the touch of a button; that one day we would be referring to books and other written documents as hard and soft copy, the printed one being the hard copy and the electronic form being the soft copy. The ICT revolution has taken the world by storm and in the process has turned it into one big global village. Even the names used to describe the technology have been changing as rapidly as the technology itself. Once known simply as Computer Science, the nomenclature changed to Information Technology (or IT for short). When the e-mail and the Internet became powerful tools of communication, the name changed again to Information and Communication Technology (or ICT). I am sure we have not yet seen the last of the new and fancy nomenclatures to describe this rapidly evolving and revolving technology.

Although I have no patent to my credit, perhaps because I quit Science rather prematurely, new ideas and doing things the innovative way always fascinate me. My first computing experience was in 1973, when one of our brilliant lecturers at Makerere – the Oxford-trained Peter Childs – introduced us to FOTRAN programming in our final undergraduate year at Makerere. However, because we were busy preparing for our final examinations, we never paid much attention to

what appeared to be a fascinating but mind-boggling subject. We went only as far as writing simple programmes, using those old one-box, one-character coding sheets. Those sheets were the hallmark of FORTRAN programming. From the coding sheets, the data was punched onto special cards. A technician normally did this for you. A deck of these holed punched cards contained the entire programme the computer was supposed to execute. Very big programmes were stored on rolls of magnetic tape. The computer had a special facility for reading the cards and tapes and translating the data into machine language. Next, the computer executed your programme to the end if it was error-free. Programme execution always ended wherever the computer detected an error. You would be lucky if your programme was executed to the end without a break. A break meant you had to go back to your coding sheets, find the error, correct it and punch a new card. In those days there no monitors, mouse, hard disks, USBs, etc. The computer printed the results as hard copy on large scrolls of green-ruled music paper. To a beginner, FORTRAN had its frustrations. The language had too many routines and sub-routines which required you to get every sequence right. However, once you mastered its grammar, programming became simple and enjoyable. Unlike today, in those early days, every computer user was also a programmer.

My second exposure to computer programming came in my second years as a PhD student at Queen's University, Belfast in 1975. If I remember correctly, the exercise was about writing small programmes in FORTRAN to calculate the frequencies of spectral lines in molecular infrared spectroscopy. Our programmes had to be very short, because they had to be run when the big users – the Engineering and Computer Science students were changing the magnetic tapes. Much as I found the exercise hard, I had to do it and get it right. This was also the beginning of linking computers together in a network, to enhance the computing power. The IBM mainframe at Queens was linked to the more powerful University of Manchester mainframe computer across the Irish Sea through a especially dedicated telephone line. Likewise, through an infrared link, the Faculty of Engineering in the Ashby Institute was also connected to the University Computer Centre, about half a mile away. Without realising it, I was actually witnessing the genesis of the Internet. It was that limited exposure that really stimulated my enduring love for computing and anything related to computers.

The invention of the silicon chip and the microprocessors that revolutionised the way we use the computers today was the beginning of the age of the personal computer and the laptop computer that has become part of our everyday working tool even when we are flying. The chip also paved the way for the information super highway, known today as the World Wide Web. Suddenly, the bulky and much less user-friendly mainframe computer, which required huge rooms and

good cooling systems, was giving way to the personal computer, which was a fraction in size. Microsoft's Disk Operating System (or DOS) eliminated the need for programming, except for the more sophisticated users. With DOS, all you had to do was to master the commands. Computers ceased to be the exclusive preserve of the experts and whiz kids. The introduction of the mouse simplified matters further. As they now say, the world had become a click away. Word processing was the last missing piece of the puzzle that made a personal computer everyone's tool. When the University Computer Centre, which in 1986 became the Institute of Computer Science, acquired the first two Apple microcomputers – Apple II C and Apple II E – in the early 1980s, through the UNDP/UNESCO Project, I happened to be one of the early users of the two computers. I even started teaching myself how to programme in the then new and much simpler BASIC language and to word process in WordStar, which was the popular word processing software at the time.

When the university sold its aging ICL mainframe in the 1980s the question was what was the best machine that would replace it? As expected a debate ensued. Some were for another ICL mainframe; others preferred the IBM mainframe, arguing that it was superior to the ICL. Later, as the technology advanced, the discussions shifted from a mainframe to two or more minicomputers, which had just appeared on the market. There was even talk of a super computer, but that was really a wishful thinking. Super computers, like the Cary, were not only very expensive, but also not freely available. In the end, the idea of another mainframe or mini computers was dropped altogether in preference for the much cheaper and convenient personal computers. The acquisition of the IBM XT and AT microcomputers through the UNDP/UNESCO Project in the late 1980s, and later the first much smaller Compaq computer, was the big turning point. We all realised that we did not need the bulky mainframes any more. With that small collection of personal computers, the Institute of Computer Science was able to start offering a Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science course. Coincidentally at the time, Professor Kirya – the then Vice Chancellor – was also exploring ways of automating the Main Library and the University Administration. The Government of Uganda had successfully negotiated a loan from the African Development Bank (ADB) for Makerere University. Part of the loan was for computerising the university. Government even set aside some money as counterpart fund for the automation project. However, the sudden change of the Vice Chancellors, bureaucratic red tape and poor communication between Kampala and the ADB in Abidjan, stalled the project. The project was forgotten for a while until the early the early 1990s when the university received a grant from the IDRC of Canada and installed its first ever e-mail service under the domain name of Mukla. The server was located in the Institute of Computer Science and managed by a computer expert, Charles Musisi. The e-mail service was a novelty at Makerere. However, the absence of working telephone lines at

the time meant that the dial-up e-mail service was available to only a few offices in the university. Nevertheless, Mukla was a giant step in the evolution of ICT at Makerere. Unfortunately, the university never considered the sustainability of the service beyond the IDRC grant; so, when the grant came to an end, Mukla slowly wound up. The Medical School was next to have an e-mail service under the domain name Healthnet. It was another dial-up service, slow and intermittent, mainly because the available telephone lines were constantly clogged due to heavy traffic. What the university needed was a more reliable e-mail and Internet service.

When I took over as Vice Chancellor in 1993, I remembered Professor Kirya's shelved automation project, which I had strongly supported when I was still at the Faculty of Science. Professor Paul Mugambi of the Department of Mathematics was another of the strongest advocates for a university-wide computerisation initiative. But between 1987 and 1993, a lot had changed; so we had to re-design the project, taking cognizance of the new developments in ICT, the new needs and the lessons learnt from the past. Although I was fully committed to the automation project, there was one big problem we had not yet solved. As if to dampen our enthusiasm, it soon dawned on us that we did not have the money to implement this ambitious and expensive project. We were not talking of small money but billions of shillings that translated into millions of dollars. Although intimidated by the colossal sums of money I had to raise, I was not about to give up. I remember holding several meetings with Michael Kityo Galiwango of the Institute of Computer Science and Patrick Manghen of Mathematics Department, two of the computer experts the university had, to explore the best options for implementing the project as cheaply as possible. I roped in Kityo Galiwango because he had developed customised software for the Academic Registrar, which simplified the hitherto complex and tedious manual selection process that used to take the Admissions Board several weeks to complete. The software reduced the undergraduate admissions from weeks to just a couple of days.

These two colleagues provided me with invaluable technical advice. With their technical advice, we had found a way of building what we believed would be a relatively cheap but good university-wide computer network. One option was to use copper cables; the other was to piggyback the network on the existing telephone system, with all its attendant problems. We also discussed the best minicomputer makes on the market at the time, including brands like DEC. At the time, we thought the minicomputers were the best suited for such a large network. However, all this effort came to naught because of the delays in finalising some formalities before the African Development Bank could release the money. Once again, the project lay shelved. Moreover, in an unexpected way, President Bill Clinton and his wife Hilary visited Uganda in March 1998. They had a very tight programme in Uganda that included, as we have seen, Mrs Clinton's

public lecture at Makerere on March 25, 1998. During a short private session in my office, I presented Mrs Clinton with a list of the university's urgent needs in the hope that she would find a way of convincing her husband to do something for Makerere University, which had hosted her to a public lecture in Uganda. She told me that her husband was working on an initiative, named after the late African-American Texas Congressman – Leland – which was intended to assist Africa bridge the widening digital divide. Congressman Leland had died in an air crash in Ethiopia a few years earlier. She assured me that Uganda and Makerere University would be some of the beneficiaries of the new initiative.

Mrs Clinton delivered a powerful and moving speech at the Freedom Square. The lecture was attended by the former Vice-President of Uganda, Dr Specioza Wandia Kazibwe and her daughter Caroline, Mrs Janet Museveni and the former speaker of Uganda Parliament, the late James Wapakhabulo, among others. She acknowledged and applauded the efforts Uganda had made in such areas as economic development, human rights, gender equality, and the big strides women were making in Uganda, while condemning the atrocities and excesses of the likes of Idi Amin and Joseph Kony, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader. I enjoyed her lecture but, deep down, I was disappointed. Naively, I had expected to hear her say something in her speech about the university's needs which I had earlier presented to her; after all, without specifics I had no idea how Makerere University would benefit from the Leland initiative. Had I drawn a blank? Not so.

A few months after President and Mrs Clinton had left Uganda, I was pleasantly surprised to receive the Director of the USAID Mission in Uganda, Dr Dowson Libelli. Although she started by saying that her visit was a courtesy call to congratulate the Vice Chancellor and the university on successfully hosting Mrs Clinton, she had actually come to deliver some good news from President Clinton. The US Government had given Makerere University a grant of one million dollars, channelled through the USAID Mission to Uganda, to support ICT development, adding that the USAID had been mandated to implement the Makerere project under the Leland Initiative. I must admit that the announcement took me by surprise. Mrs Clinton had come and gone and her visit to Makerere was already becoming a distant memory. However, the grant provided the badly needed funds to kick-start the floundering ICT project. Finally, we were edging closer to becoming our own e-mail and Internet providers and automating the university. Although we were eagerly expecting the money, I soon learnt that the USAID policy was to keep all the project money in their account. Payments for the goods and services procured for the project were made directly to the suppliers. The USAID, through the Leland Initiative, would also recruit and pay the salaries of the key project staff.

As we began to roll out the project, I recall the many productive meetings I had with Barbara Keating of Computer Frontiers International (CFI). The

USAID had contracted her company to manage and implement the ICT project at Makerere. In 1998, CFI conducted a survey of the university's ICT needs. The first time she came to see me, she was in the company of Dr Frank Tusubira (or Tusu as he preferred to refer to himself). Dr Tusubira was one of the brilliant engineers and an Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering in the Faculty of Technology, who the Leland Initiative and CFI had identified to participate in the implementation of the ICT project. Indeed, Tusu had the right credentials for the job. He graduated from Makerere University in 1975 with a first class honours degree in Electrical Engineering. He also possessed an MSc and PhD in Telecommunications Engineering, both obtained from the University of Southampton in the UK. So he was not lost to Barbara Keating and her Leland Initiative colleagues, who were looking for the best Ugandan electrical engineer at Makerere to work with them on the project, right from the inception, and train local staff. Soon they assembled a team of brilliant young men and women, engineers and computer specialists, and it was this team that was behind the successful implementation of the first ever wireless ICT network at Makerere in collaboration with CFI, which became operational in April 2001, with Frank Tusubira as team leader.

As we began to plan for the implementation of the ICT project, one thing became abundantly clear. Since the project was first conceived during professor Kirya's time, the technology had dramatically changed and this necessitated changing the project design altogether. There would be no minicomputers and the university-wide area network would be a mix of wireless connection and dial-up as back up. We had also planned to connect directly to the satellite through a VSAT dish but, on the advice of the experts, the VSAT option was dropped in favour of going through a local Internet Service Provider (ISP). At the time, the South Africa-based Mobile Telephone Network (popularly known as MTN in Uganda) was one of the very few telecommunication companies in the country which had the capacity to provide that kind of link through its repeater mast located on Luby Hill, about five kilometres west of Makerere. Originally, the Institute of Computer Science had been designated as the Network Operating Centre (NOC). However, the NOC required a lot more space than the institute could provide. The Department of Physics happened to have the space and was ideally located for a direct aerial link to the MTN mast at Luby. But there was some urgent homework we had to do first. We had to negotiate with the Head of Department to allow us turn the late Professor Ilukor's microwave research laboratory into the NOC. The negotiations were concluded without difficulty. We now had adequate space for the servers and their racks, as well as work stations for the technical staff. In no time, all the wiring had been done and the equipment fully installed. We were ready to test. During the testing, everything worked flawlessly. Finally, the university could boast of non dial-up Internet connectivity. The bandwidth of about 190kb per second for the up and

down link, which Sida/SAREC paid for in the first few years, was more than adequate. A year later, it was no longer sufficient. Incidentally, shortly before Professor Senteza Kajubi stepped down in 1993, the university had set up an Internet web site, but managing and updating it was problematic as no specific person seemed to have been assigned the responsibility to do it, not to mention the fact that at the time, very few people at Makerere had access to computers with a connection to the Internet. In fact, those who were visiting our web site had started to complain about the stale and boring material posted on it.

With the new wide-area network up and running, we could now do something about the stale web site and also do other things that were not possible before. For example, for the first time, the university had its own domain name – @mak.ac.ug – and soon Dr Tusubira was assigning e-mail addresses on that domain. I had two addresses assigned to me, a private one that carried my name and the vc@mak.ac.ug for general use. In addition, the web site was re-designed and upgraded with a new address; www.makerere.ac.ug. At last, Makerere University had joined the cyberspace. Much as I could not hold back my excitement, I was fully aware that there was more hard work ahead. The champagne had to remain on the ice for a little longer. Although we had a Wide Area Network (WAN, for short) which I dubbed Makerere Net or MakNet, the faculties, departments, main building and other units of the university had no Local Area Networks (LAN). Worse still, few units had sufficient networked computers which could be connected to the WAN, so access to such services as e-mail and Internet were unavailable to the majority of users. We had to solve that problem first so that all units of the university could fully benefit from the new technology, with access to the Internet, the university's e-mail service and other ICT services. This meant buying more computers and increasing the number of telephone lines. The latter was an extremely expensive undertaking due to the high telephone bills. But that was the only way we could have access to the wireless backbone. Connecting the Main Library to the WAN also created its own problems. As the number of users of the Library ICT facilities dramatically increased, the effect translated into reduced Internet connectivity speed. People had suddenly discovered the enormous advantages of the Internet. The small bandwidth was getting clogged. Unfortunately, with the kind of money available at the time, we could not afford to buy bigger bandwidth, but the system was choking and threatening to grind to a halt.

After Sida/SAREC contribution came to an end, the Bursar was having a tough time raising the monthly fee of some US\$1,800 owed to MTN for the 190kbps band. I was learning fast that good things do not come cheap. I must confess that before we commissioned the wireless WAN in 2001, I had never heard of such jargon as bandwidth and bits per second before. Now, I was being asked to look for more money to pay for a bigger bandwidth. We had to raise the money and we had to devise ways of finding it. We constituted an ICT fund, with

subscriptions coming from the internally-generated income and, with the source of funding identified, we could afford to buy a bigger bandwidth. Shortly before I retired, we had upgraded it to almost 4Mbps.

### **Management Information Systems – ARIS, FINIS, HURIS and MakLIBIS**

Way back in the 1980s when we began discussing how we could computerise and automate the Library services and University Central Administration, I am sure that apart from people such as Professor Mugambi, very few of us had a good grasp of what it really entailed. I even doubted whether we had answered the basic 3Ws and H questions; what did we want to automate, when, why and how? I guess at the time that we had no reason to be bogged down with such fine details. The project was consequently stalled. It was time to define what we wanted the system to do. Through my interactions with the more advanced institutions and management experts, I had come to learn of the Management Information Systems (MIS) and how they could dramatically improve the performance efficiency of an organisation. It occurred to me that this was what the university needed. However, a few questions were still unanswered. For instance, did we fully understand what the MIS concept was and how it could enhance our work? I only had a hazy idea. Nevertheless, it was an idea worth exploring in some depth. So, during the first meeting with the NORAD team in 1998, I made a presentation detailing what I thought were the university's priority needs. The shopping list was long, almost bordering on a wish list and I was worried that NORAD would reject most of it. However, that fear did not stop me from sneaking in the MIS project. It was a long shot, because at the time I had no idea whether NORAD would be willing to provide funds for such a project. The MIS project looked the odd ball among the many pressing and deserving university needs.

Fortunately, for us, NORAD recognised the importance of MIS in modern management and agreed to fund the MIS project as part of the Institutional Development Programme (IDP). Even after trimming down the budget, the consultant, Age Ronningen, had advised that the MIS project be retained, and it was among the final projects we submitted to the NORAD Board. In 2000, the NORAD Board approved a four-year NOK110 million grant to support the university's IDP, inclusive of the MIS project, which was funded under the component aimed at strengthening administrative computing in the IDP.

As we began to implement the IDP, it became clear that we were dealing with a multitude of ill-defined management information systems; so it had become necessary to define and differentiate between them. Acting on the advice of our experts, we zeroed in on four. One was inclusively devoted to academic affairs; we called it Academic Information System (or ARIS, for short). Another dealt with human resources; we decided to call that one Human Resource Information System (codenamed HURIS). The third had to do with finance management,

and it went by the name Finance Information System (or FINIS). The fourth was a library system we codenamed Makerere Library Information System (or MakLIBS). The Academic Registrar was responsible for the ARIS. HURIS was under the University Secretary. The University Bursar was in charge of FINIS and the University Librarian was responsible for the MakLIBIS. While Kibirige Mayanja as Director of Planning and Development was responsible for implementing the entire IDP, the Vice Chancellor remained the overall head. Both of us had to make sure that the responsible officers implemented the four MIS as planned. At the time, we had underestimated the magnitude of the hard work that lay ahead before we could think of commissioning the four systems. Such complex systems require high-level expertise to design and implement. Each system had to be scoped and a detailed systems analysis done. Most of the university's manual operations had also to be re-engineered. Fortunately, in the IDP grant, NORAD had made a provision for the MIS. That meant we could hire a consultant for this purpose. The Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands, which had assisted us develop the ICT policy and the ICT master plan, was contracted to assist with the design of the four systems.

In the meantime, each information system put together an implementation committee, each with a chairperson and a team leader. For example, Sestina Ngobi was the chair of the ARIS Committee, assisted by Godfrey Bazannye Nkangi as team leader. The HURIS was chaired by Sam Byanagwa, with Mrs Stella Rwakooma as team leader. Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, was responsible for the FINIS, while James Mugasha, the University Librarian was responsible for the MakLIBIS. The teams worked closely with the consultants on all aspects of their MIS projects. Some, such as the ARIS team, organised a study tour to the University of Dar es Salaam. In terms of ICT development, Dar es Salaam was ahead of Makerere. The team also visited some universities and Technikons in South Africa to learn from their best practices. Although all systems were important, I was more preoccupied with ARIS, and for a reason. We badly needed a system that would help us solve the long standing and embarrassing problem of those unnecessarily long delays students experienced in getting their academic transcripts. The problem had become a serious concern for the university as it was already denting its reputation. Every time you opened a newspaper, you were sure to read an article or a letter to the editor, written by a frustrated graduate who had not been able to secure his or her transcript months after completing all formalities. The transcript office had become a dirty word, a stick in the mud. Most students had come to perceive the Academic Transcript Unit as the most inefficient unit in the Academic Registrar's Department, and for good reasons. In the ARIS, I could see the long awaited solution to the transcript problem and I wanted this particular MIS to be developed and operationalised as quickly as possible.

The slow start notwithstanding, by June 2004 MakLIBIS was operational. As we have seen before, the Library was one of the units that quickly embraced the new technology so much such that Makerere was chosen as one of the eleven universities selected by the Association of African Universities to participate in the Database of African Theses and Dissertations (DATAD) project. Besides the NORAD's grant, the Library received additional funding from other sources for its MakLIBIS. One of the advantages the MakLIBIS offered to the users was the convenience with which the information could be retrieved from the Main Library. At a touch of a button you could find out whether the book you wanted to read was available without having to leave your desk. By the time I left the university, the other three systems were at various stages of development. My colleagues were working hard to ensure that their systems succeeded. However, this level of success would not have been possible without the assistance of other donors and the Government of Uganda. The NORAD grant alone could not have covered all the costs, including the MIS software.

Much as the MIS and other ICT related systems were being implemented at good speed, we needed more money and better management of the entire ICT project. I was pleasantly surprised to receive Dr Hannah Akuffo from Sida/SAREC on October 27, 2000. Dr Akuffo is a Swede of Ghanaian descent and a professor at the Karolinska Institute, a medical university on the outskirts of Stockholm. She was also a staff of Sida's research arm, SAREC. Her mission was to explore ways Sida/SAREC and Makerere University could cooperate in research and postgraduate training. Sida/SAREC had developed a strong interest in Lake Victoria and its basin and had begun supporting research programmes and studies related to the lake's environment. I was also aware that Makerere University staff was participating in some of the Sida-funded research projects on Lake Victoria. I therefore wanted the new support to be channelled to the university's other needy research areas which were either poorly funded or had no funding at all. At the time, I held the view that research on Lake Victoria was well funded. At the end of an interesting discussion over a cup of tea in the Guest House, we had figured out how we could do it within the overall framework of Lake Victoria's research, which was Sida/SAREC interest in East Africa.

Although at the time infrastructure was my top priority, Dr Akuffo made it clear to me that Sida/SAREC did not fund buildings. It was primarily a research funding agency. Although disappointed, I remembered that research was also limping, because it was chronically starved of funding. Therefore, Sida/SAREC support was more than welcome. We could now conduct some serious and meaningful research and train more postgraduate students. To get things going, I asked Professor John Opuda-Asibo, who was then Director of the School of Postgraduate Studies, to coordinate the Sida/SAREC programme and act as Dr Akuffo's counterpart and contact.

It was now becoming increasingly apparent to us that ICT was poised to play a big role in research. Besides the material available on the Internet, many journals were also available online as e-journals. The question was how Makerere University researchers and graduate students could access this vast resource without an appropriate ICT infrastructure. Sida/SAREC had the answer for us. First, the University Library received funding for the online journal subscriptions. Soon, the Library was subscribing to over 7,000 online journals. What this meant was that researchers could have access to the latest abstracts and full papers almost instantly. Secondly, Sida/SAREC agreed to provide additional funding towards the development of the ICT infrastructure. In fact, the Sida/SAREC support came in just when the USAID funding was about to run out and with it we were able to keep Dr Tusubira and his team on the project. Thirdly, we quickly realised that the level of computer literacy amongst staff, both academic and administrative – except a few in the scientific and technical fields – was too low and if we did not do something about it, the huge investment in the ICT infrastructure would have been wasted. The solution was to organise a massive end-user training programme, which Sida/SAREC funded with the Institute of Computer Science conducting the training.

### **The Directorate of ICT Support (DICTS) – Its Genesis and MakNet**

Now that MakNet – based on a wireless backbone – was up and running, a policy and a good plan to manage this gigantic and complex enterprise was what was missing. The solution was to develop a proper ICT policy and master plan. Assured that Sida/SAREC was interested in funding such an initiative, we decided to organise a special workshop which was held at the International Conference Centre in April 2000. The objective of the conference was to solicit from the experts good ideas that would assist us formulate a realistic university ICT master plan. A consortium made up of the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands, the University of Uppsala and the University of Dar es Salaam was assigned the task to craft the first ever Makerere University ICT master plan. Frank Tusubira took care of all the logistics to ensure a successful workshop. In spite of a few problems at his university, Professor Mathew Luhanga, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam and an accomplished Professor of Telecommunications Engineering, attended the workshop in person and made an invaluable input.

Besides the ICT master plan, another key outcome from the workshop was a proposal to set up a separate unit to manage the network and every aspect of the ICT. The idea was the brainchild of Dr Fabian Nabugomu, who was then Head of Department of Mathematics. His idea received overwhelming support at the workshop and was passed. The University Council accepted most of the workshop's recommendations. Dr Nabugomu preferred to call it a directorate rather than a

department or centre. The Directorate of ICT Support (or DICTS as it is popularly known) was born and became operational in 2001, with Frank Tusubira as Acting Director. His technical NOC team constituted the initial DICTS staff. Besides managing the university's wide area network (WAN) and providing technical back-up, DICTS was mandated to advise the university on all aspects of ICT, including computer purchases, software licenses and general computer maintenance. Combining administration with the technical management of the university network added extra load to Frank Tusubira as Director, and he needed a helping hand. We believed that Mrs Norah Muliira, who had been acting as Director of the Institute of Computer Science was the right kind of person to deputise for Frank Tusubira, so we asked her to move to DICTS as acting Deputy. Later, a few additional technical staff were brought in to beef up the team and before long, DICTS had become a household name throughout the university. With all the extra new equipment that was coming in, including additional servers for the expanding network and all the staff crammed in one small room at the Physics Department, the place was becoming overcrowded and we had to find space quickly for both the NOC and the DICTS staff. We had agreed with NORAD that the basement of the new building for the Institute of Computer Science would house the university's ICT facilities. As soon as the building was completed in late 2002, the massive job of moving the network's operating centre from the Physics Department began and DICTS handled it successfully. At the same time, we thought it was time to separate DICTS as an administrative unit from MakNet's technical operations, now located in the well air-conditioned basement of the new ICS building. Earlier, we had made a decision to turn all the flats in the newly renovated Lincoln House into offices for academic programmes. We decided to allocate one of the flats to DICTS, which served as the offices for the Director, Deputy Director and all non-technical staff. The technical staff moved to the new ICS building. As I had expected, the Director of ICS was not amused having part of DICTS in his building, but that was a matter of university policy.

I had heard people say that ICT was an addictive technology and that once you got hooked on, you would never be able to do without a computer. For the first time, after commissioning the new ICT facility, I became acutely aware of what that statement really meant. Although when we started, a few of us had some rudimentary ideas about computers, several members of staff – including some very prominent senior administrators – had no idea at all. To them, learning to use a computer was like asking them to learn classical Greek. As each senior officer in the University Administration was allocated a computer to work with, I was amazed at the speed with which these colleagues of mine were picking up keyboard skills. After a few weeks of training, some were asking whether I had received the e-mail they had sent a few minutes earlier or telling me that they had spent a good part of the day surfing the Internet but the speed was very slow. This was re-assuring news. It was as if we had unleashed an unstoppable

revolution on the university. My impression was of people asking why someone had not told them the day before that a computer was as easy to use as chewing *matooke*, one of Ugandas most popular staple foods, and why it had taken so long to realise the enormous benefits the ICT offered, such as the e-mail for instant written communication. However, for the majority of staff with limited technical background overcoming the fear for the computer took a lot longer, but taking the first step meant that they were determined never to look back. While they dilly-dallied, I was growing impatient with some senior administrative staff who had continued to show little or no interest at all in the new technology; but Frank Tusbira in his optimistic way kept counselling me not to lose patience too soon, reassuring me that before long everyone would be on board, that it was a matter of time and persistence. He was dead right as the bug soon infected everyone. The pressure was now on me to provide enough computers, have them networked and linked to MakNet. That was the challenge, but a rewarding one.

With few users of the Internet at the beginning, the bandwidth we had was just about sufficient. You could access the Internet almost instantly at any time of the day and the telephone bills for the dial-up connections were still affordable. However, as more people discovered the wonders of the Internet and the convenience of the electronic mail, they started logging on in big numbers and soon the small bandwidth could no longer cope with the volume of users. The Internet became frustratingly slow and the wireless WAN was almost at choking point. The dial-up phone bill was also escalating. However, not to disappoint members of staff we had driven so hard to become digital, mainly through the End-User Training Programme, we needed to quickly find a good solution to the problem of inadequate bandwidth. This meant that we had to invest more in the system, which money we did not have at the time.

Fortunately, by 2000, the Government of Uganda had successfully negotiated a soft loan for Makerere University from the African Development Bank. About US\$100,000 of the loan was earmarked for ICT development. The solution was realised through a combination of the new WAN based on a high quality optical fibre backbone and the old wireless network. When the optical fibre network became fully operational, the wireless backbone became slightly redundant except for connecting to far centres like Mulago, the University Hospital and Kabanyolo.

Sam Byanagwa was the Deputy Secretary in charge of the Project Implementation Office. His office was directly responsible for the implementation of the all capital projects throughout the university. Way back in the late 1980s when the African Development Bank gave the Government firm indications that the second loan from the African Development Fund (ADF) would be approved, the Ministry of Finance started disbursing money to the university in small monthly instalments as counter-funds. The then University Secretary, Reverend David

Sentongo, deposited the money on a special university projects account. Even when the loan appeared to have fallen through, the counter funds amounting to some two hundred million or so remained on the university account. When the signal was finally given to build a fibre optics high speed, high data density WAN, we used the money Reverend Sentongo had saved on the counter-fund account to finance the civil works, which involved excavating trenches all over the university's main campus. The money from ADF II loan financed the rest.

By 2001 and after a lot of hard work under Frank Tusubira's watchful eye, a 15-kilometre optical fibre cable had been laid and the new wide-area network was ready for commissioning. Only Mulago, Nakawa, Kabanyolo campuses and the University Hospital were not yet connected. Later the cable was extended to 18 kilometres. Much as there was a lot to celebrate, we were not yet done. There was a lot more to do before we could get things really going. Under the old wireless WAN, most of the university departments were connected to the network's backbone through Post Office telephone lines. The optical fibre network would eliminate the telephone lines. It had several nodes located at different points throughout the university. Using what the experts called intelligent switches, each department or unit could get a connection to the WAN as long it had a local area network (LAN). But LANs did not come cheap. It was clear right from the beginning that we could not afford to finance all the LANs from the centre. The solution was to offload that responsibility to individual departments and units. We had to persuade Deans and Directors and even Heads of Departments to raise money to build the LANs. The process took time largely because not everybody had internalised the potential benefits of ICT fully. Even the Main Building, the seat of power, did not have a LAN. As for the Main Building, we sourced for funding and built a LAN covering most of what President Museveni had called the ancient building. But as the engineers found out, much as the Main Building was seen as an old building, it was as solid as a rock. Drilling through the walls was extremely hard work. The LAN was connected to a powerful server located in what used to be the Academic Registrar's examination strong room. Fortunately, most Faculties responded positively. Later we were able to connect Mulago and Kabanyolo, which had been out of reach in the initial stages. As we shall see later, when the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 came into force, the Business School at Nakawa ceased to be an integral part of Makerere University; so we did not extend the link there.

As we implemented the ICT initiative, I was convinced that the technology would not only lead to a more efficient University Administration through the use of the MIS, but also to significant improvements in teaching, learning and research. I saw the ICT initiative as a logical extension of other initiatives such as the Virtual University and e-Learning project, which Godfrey Bazannye of the Academic Registrar's Department was leading. Given the perpetual shortage

of textbooks and other learning material, the Internet offered both staff and students a unique opportunity to access an unprecedented wealth of information moreover much of it was free. It was an attractive prospect, but to get there, we had to overcome a few obstacles. Although the wireless network was accessible from virtually every corner of the university's main campus and anyone with a laptop with an antenna and an authorised password from DICTS could freely access the Internet through MakNet, at the time very few members of staff and students could afford a laptop. Therefore, for a long time this facility remained under-utilised. Secondly, few departments had enough networked computers. In spite of the presence a digital library in the Main Library where staff and students could access the Internet free of charge, the computers were still too few to satisfy the big demand. Thirdly, even with the more efficient optical fibre network, the bandwidth was still a big impediment to the high speed connectivity as it could hardly cope with the heavy traffic. The last major obstacle was our ability to sustain the new technology beyond donor funding.

By now the problem of access had been more or less solved. Through its first grant to the university from 2001 to 2004, Sida/SAREC had provided us with funds to set up a few Internet kiosks for the undergraduate students. The first to open was located in Senate House. However, the aim was to set up one in every faculty. When I visited the Senate House in 2003, I was fascinated to see the enthusiasm with which the students were using the Internet kiosks. Some of them were already on the keyboards, busy surfing the Net; others were in a queue, patiently waiting for their turn. I was happy to see them making full use of the new technology as I had predicted, but it was also a stark reminder that we had a long way to go before we could have enough computers to satisfy the surging demand. We had to provide more kiosks and more computers so students did not have to queue up for too long before they could get to a computer. The problem was no longer sustaining the ICT services only, the number of available computers had become an issue.

Engineer Tusubira's ideal ratio was one computer to every five students, but by 2003, we were still light years away from that magic number and we had to speed up the search for a durable solution. The fact that the clock had started ticking for me towards the exit made the search much more urgent. I did not want to bequeath to my successor anything he could find difficult to sustain. To tackle the problem of sustainability and adequate numbers of computers, we turned to university's private revenue. The quick answer was to set up an ICT fund.

Initially, it was hard to convince some of the Deans and Directors to give up their income for yet another fund. Already a significant proportion of their share of the internally-generated revenue was going to a multitude of initiatives like the Retirement Fund, Staff Development Fund, Maintenance Fund, Library Fund, Salary top-up and a host of others. Here we were, asking them to contribute to

yet another new fund. When would it end? In fact, one could have argued – and correctly so – that the university was overtaxing the Faculties, which made the bulk of the money. The unpalatable reality was that the university had very few sources of income to turn to. It had to bootstrap itself. Because the Government budget was grossly inadequate, the university was relying more and more on the goodwill of its donors. If we were to sustain initiatives like ICT, which served as a public good, we had to make more sacrifices. Fortunately, the majority of the Deans and Directors had realised the importance of ICT and agreed to make another sacrifice for the new ICT fund. But we were not about to let the Government off the hook, so we made it a point to include an ICT vote in the Government budget as well. With those two sources, I was convinced that we could somehow sustain the ICT services. We had done some good thinking. In its first year of launch, we realised close to a billion shillings, equivalent to some US\$ 600,000. That was not a bad start. Whether it was enough to cover all costs was another matter.

The size of the bandwidth remained a nagging problem for quite some time. As we have seen, the cost of even that small 192 kbps bandwidth was running into thousands of US dollars a month. In fact, it came as a rude shock to discover that the Internet users in Africa were paying far higher for the bandwidth than their counterparts in America and Europe. That was the reality we had to live with for as long as we wanted to be part of the digital world. When we began, the USAID and Leland Initiative-Sida/SAREC paid the bandwidth bill for us in full, but I was aware that someday their support would come to an end. I envisaged that day when we would have to foot all the ICT bills from our own resources. We had to square up to that reality.

For a start, we had to take over the salary bill of the DICTS staff as soon as both USAID and Sida/SAREC funding came to an end. Here, the ICT Fund would come in handy. Secondly, we had to do something quickly about the bandwidth which was slowing down everything. We could not justify to the Deans, Directors and other users why they should continue to pay for a poor service. As a temporary solution, we decided to ration the bandwidth and improve the way it was managed. Naturally, some users had started abusing the system, downloading music and pornography, among other things. Music and pictures take up a big chunk of the bandwidth, making it difficult for the bona fide users to access the sites they want to visit. DICTS was instructed to block most of the websites that were likely to lead to unproductive use of the small bandwidth. These measures brought about some improvements for a while, but they were not enough to convince the sceptics that the service was efficient. The solution was to increase the bandwidth, even if that meant paying more for it.

In 2002, the Director of DICTS came up with the idea of introducing some elements of competition amongst the major Internet Service Providers, namely MTN and the new Uganda Telecommunication Limited (UTL). According

to his analysis, UTL was more competitive. It was selling the bandwidth at a lower price than MTN, so we agreed to phase out MTN and switch to UTL. In addition, with UTL the signal would be coming from its recently installed mast on top of the Observatory Hill, which was closer to the university than the MTN mast at Luby. Interestingly, MTN had also erected a mast on the same site, but as I could recall the signal was still coming from Luby. My young son, Martin Mwanje, always reminded me that competition was good for the consumer. How right he was as I soon discovered. As soon as we indicated that we were about to phase them out, MTN told us that they were willing to consider revising their monthly rates. Makerere University had become one of the biggest bandwidth users in Uganda and no serious Internet Service Provider could afford to ignore it and, for that matter, MTN was not about to lose its piece of the pie to its competitors. As a compromise, we decided to access the bandwidth from both service providers. By 2002/2003, the combined bandwidth was a more comfortable 2.3Mbps. In 2004, it was increased to almost 4Mbps. At that time, the number of networked computers connected to MakNet had reached 1,300. About a year later, it had dramatically increased to over 3,000. At the same time, the university was accessing almost 8,000 e-journals. Although it was the kind of farewell I was looking forward to, I was acutely aware that given the growing demand, it was a matter of time before the bandwidth needed upgrading again.

### **The i-Labs – Makerere Links up with MIT**

In the spring of 2003, the four American Foundations, namely the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, which had come together to form the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, organised a study tour to some of the most outstanding research institutions and top research universities on the east coast of USA for nine African Vice Chancellors. I happened to be one of them. The other eight came from Tanzania, Ghana and Nigeria. For the first time I had occasion to visit Columbia University in New York and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (or MIT as it is famously known all over the world) in Cambridge, Boston. On our second day in New York, the Presidents of the four Foundations met us at the headquarters of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The meeting was also attended by some of the trustees of the four Foundations. The President of the Carnegie Corporation, Dr Vartan Gregorian, asked Professor Narciso Matos, a former President of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique and former Secretary General of the Association of African Universities, to facilitate the discussion. I had known Professor Matos from his days at the AAU. When the Carnegie Corporation resumed support to Makerere University in 1997, he had been visiting the university regularly, so he was familiar with all the developments there.

The trustees of the Foundations wanted to know how they could assist our universities. At first, I took it as a rhetorical question; after all, four Foundations were already providing support to our institutions. Did they want to hear another litany of needs from us again? Nevertheless, as the discussion progressed, I realised it was a serious question. We discussed many areas where we thought new support could be channelled and which could make a real difference and a lasting impact. Then Professor Matos turned to me and asked me about Makerere and what I thought were my priority needs. Without hesitation, I singled out ICT as priority number one and in particular the size and cost of the bandwidth available to my university. I explained the high cost of the bandwidth was frustrating our efforts to introduce ICT in our struggling university. Unexpectedly, the idea generated a lot of interest. A trustee of the MacArthur Foundation and a former US Navy Admiral whose name I do not recall, pointed out that there were many satellites in the southern hemisphere which were virtually redundant. He advised that we should consider approaching the companies that owned them, individually or as a consortium, and negotiate with them for a bigger bandwidth to our institutions at a lower cost. After we had left the USA, the Foundations continued discussing the idea. Apparently they had taken a keen interest in the subject. I later learnt that shortly after I had retired, the Rockefeller Foundation provided funds to Makerere University which helped it to upgrade its bandwidth to an unprecedented 5Mbps. I was pleased to know that perhaps through my exuberant enthusiasm for ICT, my modest contribution during that meeting in New York had stimulated a wider and serious debate on the cost of bandwidth, and would eventually culminate in a commitment on the part of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa to assist African universities access bigger bandwidth at a relatively low cost. This is a contribution which I am sure few people know about or can remember. As a Ugandan, I was pleased to meet and interact with Olara Otunnu. Otunnu was Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1980 to 1985 and served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1985 to 1986. Later, he was President of the International Peace Academy from 1990 to 1998, and he was an Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict from 1997 to 2005. He was at the meeting as a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation, something I was not aware of before I met him. I was moved to hear him speak so well about Makerere, its problems and how it was struggling to overcome them. I had not seen him since that famous speech he made at Makerere before Idi Amin's Minister of Education, Barnabas Kili, way back in 1973.

The meetings in New York were followed by visits to a number of research institutions, including universities. It was a dream come true for me to visit Massachusetts Institute of Technology for the first time. I had always envied my classmate at Makerere, Peter Kwizera, who took his PhD in Physics there. During the day, we listened to presentation after presentation on the various aspects of this

great Institution from several officials, including one on the MIT Open Courseware and the rationale for putting their courses online. After the presentations, we visited the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science where we met a young electrical professor going by an interesting Spanish name of Jesus del Alamo, who introduced us to a novel idea MIT had been experimenting with since 1998 – the Internet laboratories (or i-labs). He explained that through the information superhighway, MIT had made it possible for institutions outside the USA to conduct sophisticated experiments on its state-of-the art equipment in real time without coming to Boston. As an example, he mentioned a university in Sweden that was already participating in the initiative, adding that he had conceived the idea with Professor Steve Lerman of the Centre for Educational Initiative. To me, it sounded like what we know as remote control. It was so fascinating that we had to ask whether it would be possible for our institutions to participate. The young professor was quick to assure us that, as part of MIT policy of collaborating with institutions outside USA and sub-Saharan Africa, some of our universities would be part of the initiative. He promised to visit Makerere and Dar es Salaam on a technical fact-finding mission in the near future to assess the capacity of the various Science and Engineering Departments to participate in the initiative.

On return to Makerere, I reported to my colleagues the potential this new initiative offered to our university and, in particular, to the Faculties of Technology and Science. I also urged them to make full use of this innovative collaboration with MIT, made possible by the ICT revolution. True to his word, Professor del Alamo made his maiden visit to the Faculty of Technology in the latter part of 2004. With the help of Dr Frank Tusubira, we identified a young brilliant Electrical Engineering graduate, Albert Lumu, to coordinate the programme. I was amused when one morning Frank Tusubira called me on my cellular phone and told me that Jesus had come. At first I was puzzled, thinking that perhaps Frank Tusubira had suddenly become a *mulokole* – a born-again Christian – but later I remembered that Jesus is the first name of Professor del Alamo. In spite of the bandwidth problem that was still bedeviling us, his visit paved the way for Makerere University to participate in the MIT i-lab initiative. Makerere's participation in the initiative was made possible because of the generous Carnegie Corporation funding. Two other African universities, the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria also received funding from the same Corporation for the same purpose. As far as I know, this was also the first time Makerere was collaborating with MIT, a world class American Science and Engineering University.

No doubt, the competent team of young engineers and computer specialists in DICTS made a significant contribution to the successful implementation of the ICT project. I was grateful to Engineer Frank Tusubira and his brilliant team

for making it work. Good teamwork at all levels of the university and committed senior management was another critical factor. Without the support of senior management, we could have achieved very little. The willingness of the university community to embrace the technology was equally important but, above all, the financial support from the Government of Uganda and our development partners was the magic bullet which did the trick. For this, I will always be grateful to the Government of Uganda, NORAD, Sida/SAREC, USAID/Leland Initiative, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, NUFFIC of the Netherlands, as well as our consultants and contractors. The Ford Foundation made it possible for the Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere to link up with Tufts University in Boston and the University of Dar es Salaam in the first ever joint programme of interactive online Political Science course, using the Blackboard Software. I also pay tribute to Professor Pearl Robinson of Tufts University, who had spent a year at Makerere in the late 1990s as a Ford Foundation fellow, for playing a critical role in this nascent initiative. The external technical experts and advisers, in particular the Technical University of the Delft team and Professor Wait of the University of Uppsala in Sweden, deserve a special mention. It is almost impossible to list everyone who contributed to Makerere's ICT initiative. As I started preparing for my exit, I kept telling my colleagues that ICT was all I wanted them to remember me for. The rest they could forget.



## Makerere University's Friends and Development Partners

### **A Friend in Need**

If there is such a thing as luck, I have good reasons to believe that good old Makerere had plenty of it. During more than seven decades of its existence as an institution of higher learning, Makerere has been fortunate to attract scores of loyal friends, supporters and well-wishers – individuals and organisations. No doubt, their unwavering support has been its enduring strength. During its darkest chapter in the 1970s and early 1980s, many of its old supporters abandoned it, not so much by choice, but because the prevailing circumstances had made it impossible to continue supporting the institution. As soon as some semblance of peace and political stability returned to the country, one by one, they returned to pick up the pieces.

As Professor David Rubadiri (that famous son of Makerere and the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi) once put it, when he visited his old alma mater with his College Principals, Deans, university officials and student leaders in 2001, “During the days of the worst political turmoil Ugandans had been subjected to, the forces of intellectual darkness did everything possible to kill Makerere, but Makerere refused to die.” I believe David Rubadiri summed it up very well. Indeed, Makerere refused to die, because within the dwindling rank and file of its fine academics and seasoned administrators, there were still a few extremely devoted and loyal staff left. They ensured that their beloved institution did not die with Uganda's turbulent times. It was badly bruised, but refused to go under. In those times of greatest need, it still had many loyal friends outside its gates, who directly or indirectly lent a helping hand. Those are the ones that provided the intellectual anchor upon which it buttressed its survival.

As its eighth Vice Chancellor, I had the rare privilege of enjoying their generosity first hand. They put their confidence in me, and they did so unreservedly; for that, I feel duty bound to devote part of this personal account to them. Makerere's impressive list of loyal friends is almost inexhaustible, and I am the first to admit that it is next-to-impossible to pay appropriate homage to all of them, because they are many! However, a few stand out prominently, notably because of their exceptional generosity and loyalty to the institution. I have already referred to most of them elsewhere in this account. Where I have mentioned them, it was not so much a deliberate gesture of paying them the homage which they surely deserve, but an illustration of what we were able to achieve with their generous support. The order in which I am listing them here has little to do with how much or how long they have supported Makerere. As far as I am concerned, they are all equal among equals.

### **The Rockefeller Foundation and its Evergreen Friendship**



**Plate 21:** On his first visit to Uganda in October 1998, Dr Gordon Conway, President of the Rockefeller Foundation met with HE Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda at State House, Nakasero. From Left: Dr Gordon Conway, HE Yoweri Museveni and the author, Prof. John Ssebuwufu

According to the available records, the association between the Rockefeller Foundation and Makerere dates back to 1961, a year before Uganda attained independence from Britain. That year, the Foundation made a grant amounting to 50,000 British Pounds Sterling to the college to support bilharzia research under the auspices of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It also began a long-term cooperative programme of assistance to institutions of higher education in East Africa. Apart from the turbulent years, the relationship has kept growing. In the decade 1961 – 1971, sometimes referred to as Makerere's golden decade in which the Foundation played a key supportive role, the college evolved from a relatively small institution of higher learning into a vibrant university serving the needs of Uganda and East Africa. The Foundation's significant contribution to the college's evolutionary process was in four major disciplines, namely Agriculture, Medicine, Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences. In each of the four disciplines, the Foundation assisted the college in four key and specific areas. Firstly, it provided support for research aimed at increasing the body of knowledge on the East African environment and problems, which would later become the basis for adapting the teaching materials to the African conditions. Secondly, it assisted the college to strengthen and improve its capacity for data collection and analysis for policy choices relevant to national development. This was also the time regional cooperation in East Africa, underpinned by the East African Treaty and Community, was at its peak. Makerere was actively engaged in activities aimed at preserving and strengthening regional dialogue and interaction among East African scholars through the Educational Councils in Medical, Agricultural and Social Sciences, which were operating under the University of East Africa, incorporating the colleges at Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The Foundation provided the bulk of the money which funded most of these activities. Thirdly, staff development was where the Foundations contribution made the most impact. In fact, most of the great names among the first generation of East African scholars began their academic careers under the Staff Development Programme of the University of East Africa in which the Rockefeller Foundation made a preponderant contribution through scholarships, fellowships or advanced professional training in universities or research institutes abroad for promising African academics. Lastly, the Foundation funded a Special Lectureship and Tutorial Fellowships scheme, which was aimed at ensuring that there would be no financial obstacles to an orderly transition to the Africanisation of the University of East Africa and its constituent colleges. Under this scheme, Makerere University College was assisted to appoint suitably qualified Ugandans as Special Lecturers, Tutorial Fellows and Special Assistants, pending a vacancy on the regular establishment. The Foundation also assisted Makerere in the provision and sponsoring of expatriate staff. Through this assistance, the college was able to recruit expatriate staff to fill vacant positions where staffing was poor. At Makerere, the Faculties of Agriculture and Social Sciences were the largest beneficiaries of the Foundation's Special and Expatriate Lecturer schemes.

In the period 1971 – 1981, the association between Makerere University and the Foundation declined for reasons already explained. This was the period when research and postgraduate training declined, and the university stopped registering any form of serious development. However, after the liberation war in 1979, the Rockefeller Foundation came back and was at the forefront in the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the ravaged university. In fact, the Foundation co-hosted the first Donors' Conference, which was held at its premises in Bellagio, Italy in 1981, and during which Makerere connected again and entered into very useful dialogue with the donor community. At about the same time, the Foundation on its own resumed its support to the university in its traditional areas of Health, Agriculture and Social Sciences. For instance, in 1987, the Foundation made what was then a substantial grant of US\$160,000 towards the university's Staff Development Programme. The first beneficiaries of this grant were two doctoral students, namely Boniface Makanga of Zoology and Gabriel Bimenya of Biochemistry, who were assisted to go to the UK for research training for about six months. At about the same time, seven first-degree holders in the Departments of Veterinary Public Health, Paediatrics, Geography, Chemistry and Botany, as well as the Institutes of Computer Science and Public Health respectively, were also assisted to go abroad for training at Ohio State University and the University of Toledo in the USA, Universities of Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow and Reading in the UK and at the University of Zimbabwe, for their Masters degrees. The Rockefeller Foundation's contribution to the university's Staff Development Programme was adding the badly needed stock to the university's academic staff, which at the time stood at less than 50% of its full strength.

It also made a grant of US\$65,000 to Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) under the leadership of late Dan Mudoola as Director, to support a research project on "The Agrarian Question and Technological Change". In the field of health, the Foundation provided funding for research in Clinical Epidemiology, which enabled eight members of staff of the Faculty of Medicine to receive specialised training in this field. This assisted them to gain sufficient competence to conduct their research projects. At the time, advanced training in Clinical Epidemiology was not available at Makerere. It had to be done abroad. A number of staff also supported by the Foundation went to Canada and the USA for their training. The School of Fine Art was not forgotten too. The Foundation made a modest grant to the School to purchase badly needed materials, while also supporting a research project on Contemporary Art in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda undertaken by young Artists at the School.

Some of the buildings at Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute, Kabanyolo, including a postgraduate hostel, are testimony to the Rockefeller Foundation's generosity since it started associating with Makerere. In addition, the

Banana Research Projects at Makerere University Research Institute, Kabanyolo and Kawanda Research Institute have equally enjoyed generous funding from the Foundation. The two projects were the first serious research effort on the unique East African highland bananas, which constitute Uganda's favourite staple – *matooke*". Part of the Banana grant was used to setup three state-of-the-art Biotechnology laboratories at Kabanyolo, Kawanda and at the Faculty of Agriculture on the university's main campus.

Professor Patrick Rubaihayo's Biotechnology research laboratory in Department of Crop Science is one of the most modern of such laboratories in the country and a showcase of plant "hi-tech" research. As Vice Chancellor, I took a lot of pride in this facility. The Banana Tissue Culture Laboratories at Kawanda (under NARO) and Kabanyolo were equally impressive facilities. Through this research effort funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, a new method of propagating bananas was developed, which is now fully commercialised and widely used as a source of clean planting material. The problem with the traditional method of using suckers cut straight from the mother plants as planting material was spread of disease, particularly the infamous banana weevils, which this cut-and-plant technique enabled to spread from plant to plant. Besides supporting the banana research, the Foundation funded Professor Adipala for his PhD at the Ohio State University in the USA, as well as his important cowpea research project, which culminated in a new variety of this important Ugandan vegetable being released to the farmers for the first time in more than thirty years. So, when I took over as Vice Chancellor in 1993, I found a flourishing and historical friendship between the university and the Foundation, which for me meant that I had a firm foot in the Foundation's door before I even started my job. Indeed, it marked the beginning of the incredibly generous support the Rockefeller Foundation, extended to the university throughout my almost 11 years as Vice Chancellor.

When Dr Gordon Conway, formerly Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex in the UK and a professor at Imperial College of Science and Technology, took over as President of the Foundation in the late 1990s, and I guess the first English man to lead this American organisation, Makerere was the first university outside the USA he visited. His first visit to Makerere was in October 1998, followed by two other visits, in November 2000 and March 2004. On his first visit, he was accompanied by Drs Check Mbacke and Catherine Namuddu, among other officers of the Foundation. Gordon Conway and I became friends instantly. In the course of our discussions, I decided to take him on a short tour of the campus. I remember him making an interesting comment as we went around the almost litter-free campus, on how our students managed to maintain such a level of discipline and cleanliness. I remembered a similar comment being made by the Vice Chancellor of Nottingham University when he and his wife visited the university a few years earlier. I thought that was a complimentary comment

worth remembering. As a former Vice Chancellor, Dr Gordon Conway and I had a lot in common to share. After lamenting about our thankless job, we settled down to some serious business. We explored other ways in which the Foundation could enhance support to Makerere, which he saw as a university on the mend after a difficulty period in its history. I had intended to crown his historical visit to Makerere with a tour of Professor Rubaihayo's Biotechnology Laboratory in the Faculty of Agriculture. Lo and behold, when we went there, we found the place in total darkness. Without warning, Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) had cut off the power supply as a way of forcing us to pay the outstanding bills. The specimens that were supposed to be kept at a constant  $-80^{\circ}\text{C}$  had started thawing, rendering them useless. A year's work and hundreds of thousands of dollars of donor money lay in ruin. I was deeply mortified, to say the least. To put it mildly, the visit to Professor Rubaihayo's laboratory was simply a disaster. At the time, we did not even have a standby generator to take care of such emergencies.

What made this particular episode so painful was the fact that I had talked to the then UEB Distribution Manager, who happened to be a friend of my family and he had assured me that although we had a bill to pay, he would not cut off the power. I had explained to him that we were waiting for the Ministry of Finance to release the funds to settle the outstanding bill, after all Makerere was one of UEB's biggest customers. As it turned out, the trust I had put in my friend was misplaced. He went back on his promise and instructed his men to cut the power. It was a bitter experience. In fact, throughout my tenure as Vice Chancellor, I found dealing with the utility companies a constant headache. In spite of the fact that Makerere University was a public institution funded by the same Government which owned them and the fact that the university had never defaulted on the payments, the UEB and National Water and Sewerage Corporation never stopped harassing us for bills. The water company had even hired a private debt collecting company which, more often than not, behaved no better than a bunch of mercenaries, with little regard for corporate relationship management. They were fully aware of our vulnerability and took full advantage of it. One day when I inquired why they were doing this to us, someone told me that a fat cheque from Makerere always went a long way to solve their problems, so they always eagerly looked forward to it. Indeed, our bills ran into hundreds of millions of shillings. I had learnt the lesson. Besides the private talks with me and the University Administration and a tour of the facilities funded by the Foundation at the time, Dr Conway was scheduled to deliver a public lecture in the Main Hall. He had intended to present it in power point, but power was a problem. We had to improvise with a small and noisy generator. I do not even remember where it came from. It worked, but the noise almost drowned his voice; I cursed my friend, I cursed the entire UEB establishment, but my curses had no effect, the damage had already been done.

As I have pointed out before, the Rockefeller Foundation had contributed significantly and in many ways to agricultural research in Uganda over the years, starting from the 1960s, so we thought that on his first visit to the country, it was only prudent that the President of Uganda should know about our important guest and to fill him in on the important contribution the Rockefeller had made to improve Uganda's agriculture. I therefore, made an appointment for Dr Gordon Conway to meet President Museveni. Fortunately, the State House accepted our request and fixed us in the President's busy schedule. Dr Conway had a string of important discoveries to his credit as an agricultural research scientist. Among other things, he was promoting a new high yielding variety of rice in West Africa, developed out of the research done in Sierra Leone. It was the kind of stuff I thought would fascinate the President. Although we had to wait for a long while before we were ushered in, the two men had what I thought was an interesting discussion which, if my memory serves me right, soon drifted to bananas and banana research.

Although the President was happy with all the agronomical research done on this important food crop over the years, much of it funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, he was concerned that there was still a missing link in the chain, something not yet done. Banana production had gone up, but the farmers were experiencing difficulty in selling all their *matooke* because of its perishable nature; yet according to President Museveni, no scientist in Uganda was conducting serious research on alternative ways of utilising the fruit beyond eating it cooked. He was keenly interested in value addition research. It was a thought-provoking idea which I have reason to believe led to a tripartite initiative involving the Department of Food Science and Technology at Makerere, the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and the International Institute of Agriculture, working together to improve banana marketing, including its export and non- traditional utilisation. It was a productive meeting which ended on a good note. By the time Dr Conway took over as President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr David Court, who had been in charge of the Foundation's regional office in Nairobi for many years, had joined the World Bank. He had been replaced as Director by a Senegalese national going by the name of Dr Cheick Mbacke. Catherine Namuddu, a Ugandan, had been working with the Foundation in Nairobi as a consultant after leaving ITEK in the late 1980s. After the departure of Dr Conway, the two officers together with Dr Joyce Moock, the Foundation's Associate Vice-President, worked closely with me to implement I@mak.com – one of most important and ambitious programmes that the Rockefeller Foundation had ever funded at Makerere.

As a further contribution to the university's development in the recent years, the Rockefeller Foundation, through its African Career Awards Programme, supported several members of staff to study for their doctoral degrees and theses

research. It also provided some with postdoctoral research fellowships. Dr George Nasimanya of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was one of the recipients of this award, while he was studying for his PhD at the University of Guelph in Canada. Starting in October 1995, the Foundation provided significant financial support to the Institute of Public Health to launch a new and popular two-year field oriented Master of Public Health (MPH), under a new concept of Public Health Schools Without Walls (PHSW). By October 2003, the institute had received over one million US dollars from the Foundation towards the costs related to this programme.

As we embarked on some major university-wide reforms, in 1995 the Foundation provided funding towards the development of the University Strategic Plan, which was a critical instrument in the university's transformation process. It also provided funding for the Maxplan planning process that led to the formulation of a blueprint for transforming the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences. A similar planning process, which the Foundation also funded, produced the blueprint for re-organising and rationalising the Faculties of Agriculture; Forestry and Nature Conservation; the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Zoology (Fisheries Unit) into a College of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Environmental Science. This was in addition to the small research grants it was awarding to members of staff, particularly in the Faculty of Agriculture, from time to time.

In fact, it is impossible to do full justice to the Rockefeller Foundation's contribution to Makerere University in these few pages. Suffice it to point out that during my time, the Faculty of Agriculture, the Institute of Public Health and the Institute of Social Research were the big recipients of the Foundation's support. It is also interesting to note that in more than 25 years, the Faculty of Technology had never benefited directly from the Rockefeller Foundation. However, in November 2003, Dr Moses Musaazi of the Department of Electrical Engineering received a grant to support the development of a machine capable of producing affordable sanitary pads from local materials for poor adolescent schoolgirls, under the faculty's Appropriate Technology Programme. However, as far as the big contribution goes and as far as I am concerned, the I@mak.com programme was the big gem in the crown.

### **I@mak.com, Rockefeller Foundation's Largest Grant Ever to Makerere University – Lessons in Learning to Work with the World Bank**

In 1995, the Government of Uganda initiated a fundamental reform in the way the country was governed and administered. Hitherto, administration was over-concentrated at the centre, which in turn meant that the Central Government had the monopoly over every decision and service in the country. It was an inefficient

system that kept local people out of the process of making critical decisions which affected their lives and livelihoods. The centre decided virtually everything for the people, which in effect made the citizens passive consumers of Government decisions. What made matters worse was the fact that most important Government offices were located in Kampala, the country's capital. After careful consideration, the Government decided to devolve most of its functions and much of the decision-making power to the Local Governments democratically elected by the people. The process culminated in the enactment of the Decentralisation Act, which Parliament passed into Law in 1997. As a result, the entire Government machinery had to be re-engineered. The districts became the centrepiece of the new governance structure. The centre retained only a few functions and services, such as defence, international and foreign affairs, among others. With most of the essential services like health, primary education, agriculture and feeder roads decentralised to the districts, the quality and capacity of the district staff, who were expected to implement and provide the decentralised services, became an issue. A quick survey indicated that most districts did not have enough staff with the requisite technical and administrative skills to deliver quality services. At the same time the civil servants, who were originally working at the centre were too few to go round every district, which were over 56. Moreover, the centre too needed most of its highly skilled staff to play the oversight role and to keep the non-decentralised services running efficiently. The retrenchment exercise of the 1990s, which was part of the civil service reform, had reduced their numbers drastically, leaving the central Government with just a few civil servants.

To ensure that the decentralisation process succeeded and Local Governments delivered, the Government created a separate Decentralisation Secretariat within the Ministry of Local Government to implement and coordinate the process. No doubt, the decentralisation process began with too many uncertainties. Some people were of the opinion that the Government had rushed the process and done too many wrong things in haste before building sufficient capacity in the districts. On the other hand, the long serving Minister of Local Government and main architect of decentralisation in Uganda, Jaberu Bidandi Ssali and his colleagues in the cabinet, held the contrary view. For him, it was far better to get the process going and build capacity along the way than to wait. It was really a question of the chicken and the egg. In fact, some of the reservations, which had been expressed about the weak and inadequate human capital at most districts headquarters to manage the new roles that came with the decentralisation, were real. For instance, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Emanuel Tumusiime, wanted to be sure that the finance staff had the requisite qualifications, skills and experience to manage and account for the Government grants – both the conditional and the non-conditional – which the Ministry of Finance was releasing to the districts every month.

The Decentralisation Act made all decentralised districts accounting centres. This new role placed a heavy and serious responsibility on the staff working in the District Finance Departments. In anticipation of such problems, the Government had successfully negotiated a loan from the World Bank to support the Local Government Development Programme (LGDP). One component in the LGDP was district staff development and training. In order to undertake human resources development on such a scale, the LGDP needed supplementation from local training institutions. As we have seen, Makerere University had played a key role in the planning and formulation of the decentralisation form of governance, but was not playing an active role in the programme any more beyond turning out graduates from its regular programmes, who ended up working in the Local Governments. Even if members of staff were willing to participate in the implementation of the new form of governance, decentralised governance presented the university with a real challenge. The university had no ready-made or off-the-shelf courses on decentralisation, because up to then there had never been the need or demand for them. Now that the country had embraced this form of governance, it was time for the university to get actively involved once again. Innovative and tailor-made programmes had to be designed to match the needs and demands that came with decentralisation. However, there was still an unanswered question. Where would the money to finance a mass-training programme come from? Apparently, neither the Ministry of Local Government nor the LGDP had the money to finance it. For the answer, we turned to our long trusted friend, the Rockefeller Foundation.

After several discussions between the Decentralisation Secretariat, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Rockefeller Foundation office in Nairobi, Makerere Institute of Social Research and my office, the Foundation approved a small grant to the university to undertake a situational analysis and a baseline survey in a few, but representative districts. The results of this primary research would later inform critical decision making. Delius Asiimwe, an MISR research fellow led the team that undertook the study and wrote an interesting report entitled, "Human Resources Demand from the Perspectives of the Districts-2000". The study revealed serious skill shortages in the districts; and even where the requisite skills existed, staff lacked practical experience or proper academic qualifications. Among the districts surveyed, almost 60 per cent of the staff had no university degrees, yet they were performing tasks that would ordinarily be performed by university graduates. According to the report, the District Chief Administrative Officers (or CAO) who were the topmost civil servants in the districts, had the challenge of producing high quality reports, which were a mandatory requirement to be filed to Central Government, with this kind of staff. The problem of staff quality was a complex one. Many districts could not afford to employ graduates for lack of money. Secondly, most university graduates were unwilling to work in remote rural areas, which offered very little economic

benefits and limited prospects for career and professional growth. In fact, many university graduates had the perception that working in the underdeveloped rural districts was equivalent to being thrown into academic limbo, totally cut off from the modern amenities like e-mail and the Internet. In a way, they could be excused for thinking that way for the simple reason that the university education they had received from Makerere and other universities did little to prepare them adequately for rural life. Perhaps, it inadvertently prepared them for urban life. They preferred to work in Kampala and other big urban centres which would offer them better opportunities. Under the decentralised governance, the Central Government as an employer had shrunk. Most of the civil service jobs were now in the districts. Every time you opened a newspaper, you were bound to come across advertisements spread over several pages for vacancies in this or that district administration. The central Government was hardly advertising. The answer to this was to devise an intervention programme that would assist the academic staff to adjust to the new changes and realities in order to produce graduates with the right orientation, prepared and sufficiently equipped to work and to integrate in the remote rural communities, areas that were far from the big urban centres like Kampala. The intervention was the Capacity Building for the Decentralised Districts programme, financially supported by the Government of Uganda, the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Bank. The programme opened a unique window of opportunity for both staff and students to discover the missing link between the university and the community. Through this programme, staff and students soon discovered that they could assist the community, particularly the rural communities, to solve their problems in a practical way and enjoy the sheer fun that came with engaging with the community.

The MISR primary report highlighted several staffing problems the decentralised districts were facing. They ranged from quality of staff to inadequate staff numbers and capacity to deliver services. As an immediate outcome, in 2000 the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to provide a seed grant to the university to develop a proposal for a much bigger grant that would fund an innovative Capacity Building for Decentralisation programme for the next three years. The university planned to implement the programme in conjunction with the Government. The aim was to consolidate and ensure the success of the decentralisation process. These efforts culminated in the formation of a Committee of 14 people to plan and implement this novel collaborative initiative between Government and Makerere University. Interestingly, this was the first time Makerere University had joined hands with the Government and worked mutually together on a programme of significant national importance. The Committee of Fourteen, later simply referred to as the C14, consisted of seven members representing the Government of Uganda and an equal number from Makerere University. Keith Muhakanizi and Kenneth Mugambe represented the Permanent Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Swamiri Katunguka initially

came in on behalf of the Decentralisation Secretariat, Yeko Acato and Fagil Mandy represented the Ministry of Education, Christopher Kiwanuka Musisi represented the Local Council V and Gloria Kempaka (later Mrs Mugambe) came from the Economic Policy Research Centre, an autonomous Government research centre based at Makerere. Nelson Sewankambo, Dean of Medicine; Elly Sabiiti, Dean of Agriculture; John C. Sekamwa, Dean of Education; Joe Oloka Onyango, Dean of Law; Joy Kwesiga, Dean of Social Sciences; Nakanyike Musisi, Director of MISR and Muhammed Kibirige Mayanja, Director of Planning and Development, made up the original Makerere's representation on the C14. The priority areas for the programme's focus as identified in the MISR report determined the choice of the university's representatives on the Committee. The MISR report listed six broad priority areas where capacity building was most urgent, namely: Agriculture; Health; Planning; Education; Governance; Financial and General Management.

Although the Vice Chancellor was the substantive chair of the Committee, I had decided to delegate the responsibility to the Academic Registrar. When the Academic Registrar ran into some difficulties, I passed the responsibility to the Director of Planning and Development, Kibirige Mayanja, to chair the Committee on my behalf. However, during the general elections in 2001, Kibirige Mayanja decided to run as candidate for President of Uganda. He resigned from the university and the Committee, but not before he had stirred up controversy in Arua town where he had led a team of C14 members to assess the capacity building needs of the relatively young district of Arua. While participating in the Juma (Friday) prayers in a mosque, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) also a Muslim, accused him of using the occasion to conduct a political campaign in a manner that was likely to cause a breach of peace in the area. The RDC almost threw the team out of town before they had completed the mission.

Understandably, this was the time of heightened political tension in the country. Fortunately, common sense prevailed and the team was able to complete its mission. Florence Nakayiwa, also from the Department of Planning and Development, replaced him. I must say that the Committee of 14 laid much of the groundwork for what would later become a showcase of a successful Government-University joint initiative. As Professor Kajubi would probably have put it, "the town and gown were finally together for a common purpose, national good". When Kibirige Mayanja left to try his luck second time at politics, some members of the Committee thought it was time for the Vice Chancellor to take over the chair and get fully involved. They believed that the Vice Chancellor would move the process forward faster. I agreed.

Cole Dodge was no stranger to Uganda and was a familiar figure to many Ugandans, especially those who had close ties with UNICEF and its country programmes in the 1980s when the guerrilla wars were raging. He was the

UNICEF Director in Uganda in those very difficult years. After retiring from UNICEF, visiting MISR as a guest scholar had become one of his pursuits. Although he lived in Nairobi at the time, he had become a regular visitor at MISR. He knew the country very well and his background, long experience and ability to facilitate meetings and events stood him in good stead for his next assignment. A combination of these attributes came in handy when the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to engage him as a facilitator on behalf of the C14. He was really an asset to the committee, especially during the shaky beginning. He helped minimise the usual mistrust between the university members of the Committee and the Government representatives. Some Government representatives on the committee had started expressing the usual doubts and scepticism about Makerere's ability to do anything useful or innovative. As far as some of them were concerned, Makerere was a place where students were taught only theoretical and abstract ideas. The scepticism was a reflection of an old and persistent perception that nothing of practical good could ever come out of Makerere. Some even expressed doubt whether Makerere staff had the capacity to utilise the colossal sums of money the Rockefeller Foundation was about to invest in the programme.

For a while, I feared that two sides could never work together. The Committee appeared to be in imminent danger of falling apart. In my rather naïve way, I never stopped reminding the doubting members of the C14 of my long held opinion that Makerere had some of the country's finest brains amongst its staff, therefore Makerere had the capacity to deliver on any programme, whether theoretical or hands-on. All staff needed was to be challenged and facilitated, the rest would fall in place automatically. The message seemed to sink in and with a lot of hard work the Committee was ready to commence serious work. Later Cole Dodge, while commenting on how the programme had fared so far, said that while most members of the Committee feared that the programme would not achieve its objectives, only the Vice Chancellor had faith in his staff's ability to deliver. Perhaps it was blind faith I had in my staff. At first it was just faith, but later I was totally vindicated when the majority of the university staff who participated in the programme performed far beyond expectation. They proved the sceptics wrong.

Towards the end of 2000, the Committee of 14 spent much of the time planning and laying down ground rules. Occasionally, Joyce Moock, Cheick Mbacke and Catherine Namuddu would fly in to check on our progress and to make sure that things got off to a good start and problems were promptly resolved. On several occasions, they also participated fully in the Committee's work. Windsor Lake Victoria Hotel at Entebbe, one of the oldest hotels built in the colonial times, offered an excellent venue for our weekend meetings at competitive room charges. We used to check in on Friday evening and would work up to Sunday at lunchtime. Due to the enormity of the work at the beginning,

we worked almost every weekend, but later we devised a proper work schedule. One of the first tasks was to draft the ground rules, regulations and procedures for the I@mak.com programme. This was tough; and as we had nothing to refer to, we had to start everything from scratch. It was a totally new experience with no precedence. It was hard but exciting work. Initially we had not realised the need for the Committee to have its own secretariat; so hitherto, Dr Nakanyike Musisi was handling all Committee's work at MISR.

As work intensified and the documents began to accumulate, the need for a separate secretariat became obvious. The Committee decided to create a Secretariat, with Nakanyike Musisi as a part-time Executive Secretary. She was joined by Samwiri Katunguka, who became the Task Manager for the World Bank Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL); Florence Nakayiwa, as Administrator; Cole Dodge, as External Facilitator and Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, as Finance Manager; with Andrew Asiimwe and Maureen Nabwaami as Assistant Accountant and Assistant Administrator respectively. A Secretary and a cleaner constituted the rest of the Secretariat. For a home, Professor Epelu Opio, in charge of housing, agreed to allocate Flat C5 in Lincoln House to the I@mak.com Secretariat. It soon became one of the most well-known addresses in the university. One of the implications of having a secretariat was that Nakanyike Musisi, Samwiri Katunguka and Florence Nakayiwa ceased to be active members of the Committee. They had to be replaced with new members. Some members felt that the Committee needed an international member with experience in transforming higher education institutions. At the time, every member was a Ugandan. The proposal was carried and Dr Miriam Were, a prominent Kenyan Public Health specialist with a distinguished record of accomplishments, became the first external member of the Committee. Much later, Martin Orach Oola of the Decentralisation Secretariat and Raphael Magyezi of the Uganda Local and Urban Authorities Association (ULAA) Secretariat, joined the Committee as full members. The Committee's composition was now bigger than the original C14, which started out as a purely planning committee. In fact, as the membership increased, we had to stop calling it C14.

As we all know, good planning is a key to success. No doubt, a new initiative of this kind depended on careful prior planning to succeed. This meant that the programme had to start on a small scale as a pilot in a small number of carefully selected districts. There was no way we could roll out a new programme before we were sure it would work. It was a risk we were not prepared to take at this stage if we were to avoid disasters later. The pilot districts had to be a mix of urban and rural, some relatively well-resourced and others poorly resourced. Kampala, Mbale, Rakai, Arua, Iganga and Mbarara districts were selected for the pilot phase. However, given the rate at which the Uganda Parliament was creating new districts at the time, moreover most of them carved out of the old ones,

the number of districts in the pilot phase kept increasing. Sironko, which was originally part of Mbale District, was now a separate district. Also Yumbe, carved out of Arua District and Rwampara county, originally in Mbarara District, but later transferred to the new district of Ntungamo, had to be accommodated in the pilot sample. Using the MISR primary research as guide, the Committee identified the critical areas that required capacity building and in-depth intervention. Next, we had to devise a good strategy to assist the university staff to be able to respond to the challenge of assisting the districts with the appropriate capacity building interventions. Our catchword was "innovation". Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Cole Dodge suggested that to reflect and stress the importance of innovation in the programme, the Committee should adopt the more captivating name: Innovations at Makerere Committee (or I@mak.com, for short) as its official name. The Committee unanimously accepted the new name.

The first task was to produce a set of well packaged guidelines, bound in a well-designed and attractive booklet, explaining the goal and objectives of the programme, what members of staff were expected to do, how to apply for project funding from I@mak.com and above all the programme justification. The next stage was to sell the programme to the university staff. For that, we needed some good publicity. The strategy we adopted was as innovative as was the programme itself. We decided that the best way to catch everybody's attention was to invite all academic and administrative staff, officials of the pilot districts and the Rockefeller to a one-day briefing meeting at the Kampala International Conference Centre on February 17, 2001, with all expenses paid by the Committee. At registration, each participant received a well-designed bag containing the guidelines and other documents and a small out-of-pocket stipend.

Given the level of apathy at the time, we had estimated a less than fifty per cent turn up, because we knew that most Makerere staff members were not keen on attending meetings, moreover during a weekend. Little did we know that we were in for a shock. Over ninety percent of the university staff turned up for the meeting. To say that the crowd overwhelmed us would be an understatement. Indeed, history was made that day. Good preparatory work had done the trick. This was the first time members of staff had been mobilised this way. We had gone to great length to ensure the meeting succeeded and achieved its objectives. We prepared well and the presentations were lucid and up to the point. The organisation went like clockwork, with no hitches, no glitches. At each presentation, members of staff raised questions and comments, which were exhaustively discussed. We did not want to leave any stone unturned. In the course of the discussion, some members of staff expressed fear that the I@mak.com programme would turn the university into some sort of a polytechnic. Others were concerned with issues of sustainability beyond donor funding. We explained that in addition to its innovativeness and relevancy to the capacity

building for decentralisation, all project proposals submitted to the Committee for funding had to spell out how the project would be sustained after the end of I@mak.com funding. That was a critical element in the proposal. The proposal writers had to state clearly how they intended to sustain their programmes and projects. It was one of the key conditions for any proposal to be accepted for funding. After this “Kacoke Madit”, (the Luo words for big meeting) and all fears allayed, the Capacity Building Programme for the decentralised districts was officially launched.

At the February meeting we had made it clear that Makerere University staff was the main programme implementers and the I@mak.com was the programme’s grant awarding body, so the guidelines we developed to help the proposal writers were quite elaborate. The grants had to be competed for with staff having to write high quality proposals in order to get the funds through a competitive process. To ensure institutional ownership of the programme, it was a mandatory requirement that all applications for funding were routed through the Heads of Departments and Deans in accordance to the normal university proposal approval process. The reason for this condition was two-fold. One was to ensure that the applicant’s department and faculty had a stake in the programme implementation, and not necessarily an isolated individual’s project.

Secondly, it also ensured proper fund utilisation and accountability according to the university approved procedures. At the beginning, the Committee was disbursing funds directly to the successful grantees. The rationale was to minimise unnecessary bureaucratic delays. However, a few bad cases of abuse and non-accountability led to a change in policy. The policy change required the University Bursar to channel the funds through the grantee’s Dean. The original programme designed focused on about seven areas: Training university staff in decentralisation; short courses tailored to specific service delivery needs for district staff; long courses for non-graduate district staff, leading to degrees in fields relevant to their work; curriculum development to make it more relevant to societal needs; decentralisation policy research; demonstrations and extension, including appropriate technology and undergraduate students internships. In addition, the programme had provision for about one hundred undergraduate scholarships in the six target disciplines. Originally, all the scholarships were tenable at Makerere, but later they were made tenable at any of the partnering institutions. There was also a provision of some seventy-five or so partial research grants for students enrolled on Masters degree programmes at Makerere or at any of the partnering institutions and twenty PhD scholarship reserved specifically for Makerere University staff. The guidelines stressed the need to put emphasis on experiential learning techniques, which gave students a deeper understanding of the dynamics of local governments under the decentralisation system of governance.

The I@mak.com programme had very specific goal, objectives and clearly stated outcomes and deliverables. Therefore, it was not only imperative that the Capacity Building Programme succeeded, but that it fulfilled all its objectives and goals before it ended. To ensure the programme's success, it was critically important to focus on quality of projects, their relevance to decentralisation and capacity development, as well as sustainability. To that end, every application for funding, with the exception of research and some demonstrations, had to go through a mandatory four-stage process. As a first step, an interested applicant had to submit a short, but concise concept note. In the note, the applicant had to detail the justification for the proposed intervention, how it related to the goal and objectives of the Capacity Building Programme, the expected outcomes and deliverables and how the project proposal's author intended to achieve them. It was laborious, but necessary. The Committee reviewed the note based on a set of criteria. Each Committee member had to make an independent assessment and award a mark. At the end of the exercise, all the individual marks were added together and a simple average worked out. Only concept notes with an average score of seventy percent or better qualified for funding for the next stage, the feasibility phase. Later, the qualifying mark was adjusted to sixty five percent. That was the kind of quality the Committee expected. During the feasibility phase, the applicant received a small grant to test his or her ideas amongst the targeted stakeholders and beneficiaries in the districts. At the end of the feasibility study, the grantee wrote a detailed report, which included among other things an evaluation report from the participants and district officials and a full accountability for the funds. Any proposal that targeted stakeholders in the districts and did not give a favourable rating stood no chance of receiving more funding from the Committee. From the Committee's point of view, this was a clear indication that intended beneficiaries did not think the idea addressed their needs. The Committee wanted Makerere staff to understand that much as they could initiate ideas, ultimately there had to be a strong demand for them in the districts and communities. For that reason, the I@mak.com process was strongly demand-driven. Many brilliant and well-written proposals failed at this stage, because there was no demonstrated demand for them. The next stage was the pilot phase. This was really the roll-out stage. The targeted audience was bigger and the scope of coverage wider. At the end of the pilot phase, the grantees wrote another comprehensive report, similar to the one for the feasibility phase, also incorporating the beneficiaries' evaluation.

At the pilot stage, the Committee expected a lot more rigour. The report had to score seventy percent and better to qualify for the fourth and final stage, which was the full implementation phase. For one reason or other, many worthy projects failed at this stage. Although at every stage, the Committee endeavoured to inform members of staff why their proposal had failed or fell within a certain range of marks. The authors could revise and re-submit them. The Committee was equally

concerned about the high failure rate. We did some detective work and zeroed the problem down to the high pass mark. Perhaps in our fervent quest for quality and excellence, we had pitched the pass mark too high. Consequently too, many good proposals were failing to make the grade to the next stage. Personally, I found it painful to turn down reports with a score of say sixty eight percent or sixty nine percent. Reading the reports as we used to do, one got a sense of the hard work staff was putting into writing them. Certainly, it was an intellectually taxing work and here we were, telling them that their best efforts were not good enough. That was bound to be a shattering experience for them. It was also becoming a serious disincentive for staff to continue submitting proposals. I figured that many proposals were failing because very few members of staff had experience in working directly with the remote rural communities or had good ideas how the decentralised Local Governments worked. Therefore, majority of staff members were wading through unfamiliar territory. Secondly, at the time I@mak.com was not the only source of funding open to them. Therefore, we had to be aware of its negative impact on the I@mak.com Programme. Staff were bound to lose morale and interest in the Programme due to our stringent requirements and without their full participation, the Programme was doomed to fail, and it would be an expensive failure. That was the risk some of us were not prepared to take.

Interestingly, some members of staff were also not prepared to give up without a fight. Every time they received a no from the Committee's Executive Secretary, who was responsible for communicating the good and the bad news, they lodged appeals; and we were duty bound as a Committee to look at the grounds for appeal. In some instances, some members of staff vented their anger and frustration on the Secretariat staff. Later after a much-heated debate, the Committee agreed to adjust the pass mark down slightly, but without compromising much on quality. To the Committee, quality was simply an obsession. Staff whose proposals made it to the fourth and final stage stood to gain up to a maximum of US\$40,000 to see their projects through full implementation. Later, other incentives were introduced to drum up more good proposals. For example, the author of every project which the panel of judges that I@mak.com had set up for that purpose considered the best, qualified for the Vice Chancellor's Award of a total sum of US\$30,000. A cheque was handed over to the winner at every graduation ceremony. At the end of the fourth stage, which was the full implementation stage, the Committee required the concerned member of staff to submit a final report detailing outputs, outcomes, impact, sustainability and how the author intended to incorporate and integrate the outcomes of his project into the regular university programmes.

Soon after the big meeting in February 2001, the Rockefeller Foundation released an additional one million dollars to I@mak.com towards year one activities. At the time, that seemed to be a lot of money. Some members of the Committee even wondered whether the university had the capacity to utilise all that money in one

year. This lack of confidence on the part of some members of the Committee led to the initial grants being excessively generous. For instance, a concept note which qualified for the feasibility phase could get as much as US\$5,000 dollars and a successful full implementation proposal could fetch US\$100,000. As the concept papers started coming in droves and were being vetted, it became clear that we had grossly underestimated the staff's capacity and interest in the programme and the challenge and opportunity it presented to them.

By April 2001, the one million dollar-grant was almost exhausted and more proposals were still coming in. It was as if we had opened a floodgate. In any event, most of the proposals the Committee had approved earlier had not yet gone beyond the feasibility phase. Suddenly, we were short of money. I guess that was the time I was totally vindicated for my near-blind faith in Makerere staff's intellectual capacity and ability. It was beginning to look like a bad case of, "I told you so". Unfortunately, the funds had run out before we had concluded the negotiations for the Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL) with the World Bank. Any additional Rockefeller Foundation funding was awaiting the LIL. It was time to swallow our pride and make some hard and painful choices; either to terminate the programme prematurely until more money came in or revise the size of the grants downwards and hope that, in the process, members of staff would understand our predicament.

Dampening staff morale was always my worst fear, for the simple fact that it would spell the premature end of a much hyped novel experiment in community engagement on a large scale, something we had never done before. After some serious discussions and a lot of agonising over the difficult decisions we had to make, we agreed that the latter option offered a less embarrassing way forward, but which in a way made us look like we were trying to save face. That of course meant revising and issuing new guidelines. The sad part was that although several members of staff continued to show interest in the programme after the new guidelines were issued, many were disappointed. To some extent the initial near hysterical interest staff had shown in the I@mak.com programme waned. From then on fewer proposals were coming in, yet many important aspects of the programme remained untouched. For instance, we had not yet funded any proposal on decentralised policy research. Subsequently, members of the Committee had to work very hard to drum up more support for the programme, through more sensitisation seminars and interactions with staff in their Faculties. I am sure this experience helped dispel the myth some Committee members had about Makerere University and the quality of its staff.

Right from the beginning, the World Bank as a funding agency had played a key role in assisting the Government of Uganda implement the decentralisation programme. In my roles as Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Chairman of National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Chairman of

the Board of Directors of the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), I had met and interacted with most of the resident World Bank Country Managers over the years. Besides funding NEMA, the World Bank funded the pilot phase of the African Virtual University at Makerere. It had also provided funding for the ultra-modern Global Distance Learning facility at the Uganda Management Institute. To crown it all, on his visit to Uganda in 1995, the former World Bank President, James Wolfensohn paid me a courtesy call before delivering a lecture at the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) which was attended by the graduate students of Economics, among others.

In November 1997, his Vice-President for Africa, James Adams also visited Makerere. All this had equipped me well to work with the World Bank. In November 2000, the new Country Manager, Dr Robert (Bob) Blake in the company of Jo Ritzen, Oeindvila Dube and Harriet Nanyonjo visited Makerere University for the first time. It was an extremely fruitful visit which marked the beginning of an enduring relationship between Bob Blake and I. At the time, the World Bank and Uganda Government were exploring other ways of boosting the implementation of the decentralisation process in the country through additional capacity building. As we saw earlier, Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile was very instrumental in the Makerere-World Bank discussions. The Bank was willing to make available to the Ugandan Government a soft loan of US\$5 million to pilot some new ideas. This was the Learning and Innovations Loan (LIL) to finance innovative ways of building capacity for the decentralised districts in some critical area where capacity was either weak or lacking. The prime objective of LIL was to enhance quality service delivery in the decentralised districts. Makerere University was the agency to implement it on behalf of the Ugandan Government as part of the I@mak.com programme the Rockefeller Foundation was funding. That meant that the Foundation and the World Bank would fund the programme jointly. That in itself was groundbreaking for the two institutions. The Rockefeller Foundation, a private charity with all its flexible structures had never worked with the World Bank at Makerere. Anyone who has ever worked with the World Bank is familiar with its rigid structure, rules and procedures. We could not help wondering how and whether the two institutions could find common ground to work together in harmony; but the two had to figure out how they could work together, anyhow.

However, before the Bank could approve the LIL as a loan to the Ugandan Government and as a grant to Makerere University, we had to an incredible amount of legwork with the Parliament of Uganda. Since the LIL was a new initiative we had to develop a full funding proposal and submit it to the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Parliament of Uganda. Although the World Bank had indicated that it would consider funding the proposal, it was not a foregone conclusion. The proposal had to be written to the standards that met the Bank's

quality requirements, the usual rigorous standards the World Bank demands. If we presented a poorly written proposal and the Bank rejected it, we risked kissing the LIL and possibly the entire I@mak.com programme a big good-bye, because even the Rockefeller Foundation had indicated that continued funding of the I@mak.com was conditional to the World Bank approving the LIL.

Fortunately, I had brilliant people who assisted me put together a credible proposal. Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Samwiri Katunguka did an excellent drafting job and before long, we had an acceptable proposal document ready for submission to the Bank. However, it was one thing to write a superb funding proposal and quite another to get it to the Board of the Bank for approval. In matters of loan application, ordinarily the World Bank does not deal with individual institutions; it works directly with Governments. Therefore, our LIL proposal had to go through the normal Government of Uganda submission procedures. In Uganda, that was the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Fortunately, we had the support of the Permanent Secretary, Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile. In fact, he had initiated some form of dialogue with James Adams earlier in the year. Now, all that was left was tying up a few loose ends before the Ministry formally submitted the proposal to the Bank. During, their exchanges between the Bank and the Ministry of Finance, one of which I was privileged to attend, it became clear that the Bank had raised an issue that I had to clarify. A special video conference with Jim Adams was arranged for me. In spite of their very busy schedules, we held a lively conference in the World Bank, Kampala offices, which Bob Blake, Keith Muhakanizi and other officials of the Ministry of Finance attended, with Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile leading the discussion. I was able to answer most of the questions Jim Adams asked me. In spite of being held on what I believed was a public holiday in Uganda, it was a lively conference and all went well. From that video conference, I was left in no doubt that the Bank would approve the LIL. There were subsequent meetings in the Ministry of Finance involving Makerere University, Bob Blake and Chris Kasami, who was then the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry and Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, and other officials of the Ministry. With the World Bank now on our side, we seemed to have had a relatively easy ride, but one more hurdle ahead. The Parliament of Uganda had to approve the loan before the Bank could finally approve the credit to the Government of Uganda and that was the catch.

Many Members of Parliament were wary and alarmed by the country's huge indebtedness to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other bilateral lending institutions. They were concerned that the Government had over-mortgaged the country to these international institutions and had advised the Ministry of Finance to cap the borrowing. It was the same Ministry of Finance that was now asking Parliament to approve a new loan. It was a tough

sale for the Minister of State, who represented the Minister of Finance. The Committee of Parliament on the Economy was not about to entertain such a request. In particular, the Committee's chair, Honourable Mafabi Nandala, who incidentally had worked as an accountant in the same Ministry before venturing into politics, was strongly opposed to the whole idea of a new loan from the World Bank and made no secret of his disapproval. As far as he was concerned, there would be no new loans. Uganda was already drowning in debt. The Government would have to find the five million dollars from its own resources and give it to Makerere. However, Honourable Rukutana, the Minister of State for Finance, who was assigned the responsibility of presenting the LIL proposal to Parliament on behalf of Makerere University, Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Samwiri Katunguka continued to press the Committee hard and their hard work paid off.

Eventually, the Committee agreed to submit it to Parliament for approval. In September 2002, Parliament approved it and gave the Government a go-ahead to finalise the negotiations with the Bank on behalf of Makerere University. That was a hard won battle. The Rockefeller Foundation topped it up with a matching grant of US\$5 million, bringing the total LIL portfolio to US\$ 10 million. This kept the I@mak.com programme going for two more years – up to the end of 2006. It was the kind of a shot-in-the arm we had been waiting for. Moreover, it could not have come at a better time. The World Bank started disbursing funds to the LIL account in December 2002, making our Christmas the merrier.

Going by the little I know about the workings of the World Bank, once the credit is approved and the credit agreement signed with the client, the Bank identifies one of its officers to oversee the client's compliance with the terms of the credit agreement. In a way this officer becomes the Bank's credit desk officer and a liaison between the Bank and the borrower. For the LIL, the Bank identified Ms Pritti Ahuja to act as Desk Officer. Ms Ahuja did not disappoint. She turned out as pretty as her name implied. I@mak.com, acting on behalf of the university, consequently asked Samwiri Katunguka to act as counterpart to Ms Ahuja in the new role of Task Manager. The two worked wonderfully well. In spite of being a comparably small loan by World Bank standards, the amount of paper work was quite demanding. The time difference between Washington DC and Kampala added to an already arduous task for the two officers. Quite often, Samwiri Katunguka had to stay behind till very late in the night, talking to Pretti Ahuja on phone. Late working turned out to be too dangerous for him as it almost cost him his life. On the unfortunate night it happened, he left office late as he often did. On his way home, armed thugs waylaid him and bundled him into the back of the pick-up truck he was driving. After a while, which I am sure must have looked like a million of years to him, the thugs dumped him and sped off with the brand new pick-up truck, never to be seen again. Luckily, they released him unharmed but as people usually say, he had a brush with death.

Although the LIL was a grant to Makerere University, we had to comply with all the usual World Bank requirements and procedures, in particular the tough procurement procedures. Fortunately, Makerere University was already operating a more or less similar procurement system, so we did not have to learn too many new things. One other Bank requirement was that the I@mak.com Secretariat had to have a qualified accountant working full time on the LIL. We were fortunate to have attracted Mr Emma Okurut in 2003.

The LIL made it possible for the I@mak.com programme to address new areas. We had already realised that without other institutions participating in the I@mak.com programme, only Makerere graduates and staff, who have a better understanding of how the decentralisation system of governance worked would be the ones contributing effectively to the Capacity Building for Decentralisation. Now there were four public universities and a host of private ones. The LIL made it possible to roll out the programme to other institutions. We invited as many universities and other institutions to participate in the I@mak.com programme as partnering or collaborating institutions. Admission of an institution as a collaborating partner was through a rigorous screening exercise which was intended to validate their competences and capacity to implement the I@mak.com programme. The institutions which qualified as partnering institutions included, among others, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Nkumba University, Uganda Martyrs' University, Nkozi; The Islamic University in Uganda at Mbale, Uganda Christian University, Mukono and the Uganda Management Institute. As you would expect, there were the usual murmurs; why was Makerere selected to "superintend" the LIL? But in time, the murmurs disappeared as everyone settled down to serious business which went beyond the usual petty institutional jealousy and rivalry. As we have seen before, the LIL and Rockefeller Foundation undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships for district staff were now also tenable at the partnering institutions. This in a way was another innovation. It was the first time Makerere University was collaborating with other institutions on a human capacity development programme which had immediate benefits to the country. The partnering institutions were encouraged to undertake the necessary curriculum development to address the needs of the district staff they were supposed to train. To ensure that the collaboration was not just skin deep, we made a provision for the partnering institutions to be represented on the I@mak.com. Father Kyazze, a Cambridge graduate, lecturer and ICT Director at the Uganda Martyrs' University, Nkozi was the first representative of the partner institutions on the Committee who came on board in late 2003.

To cement the collaboration further, the I@mak.com Secretariat staff visited these institutions regularly to ensure all was working well. In addition, we had to identify Centres of Excellence on decentralisation worldwide, where we could sponsor staff and students to undertake courses on the mechanics and dynamics

of decentralisation, governance and devolution. Unfortunately, up to the time of my retirement, we had not yet sponsored anyone for such a course.

One can attribute the success of the I@mak.com largely to the facilitating skills of Cole Dodge. Quite earlier on, he introduced the original Committee of 14 to a new and powerful decision-making tool, widely known as Visualisation in Participatory Programmes (or VIPP, in short). UNICEF and other organisations make use of this technique. The VIPP process makes extensive use of cards. Ideas are written on cards. The cards are then clustered on a billboard or a wall. As they are examined, one is able to identify major thematic problems or issues requiring action. One can use the same technique to identify solutions and interventions to address the problems. In the VIPP process, no idea is shot down or discarded because it sounds stupid. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to contribute an idea and no one dominates the discussion. The technique suited the I@mak.com decision-making process very well. There were times when I used to think that being Vice Chancellor, I had an edge over my colleagues when it came to some decisions, but some of my so-called good ideas would be thrown out in VIPP sessions.

It was a totally new learning experience for me. Although by the time the I@mak.com was through its first year many of us had sufficiently mastered the technique, we felt that we still needed a neutral and experienced person to continue facilitating our decision-making. The Rockefeller Foundation agreed to fund Cole Dodge for another year. The Committee held two kinds of meeting. One was the regular business meeting during which members of the Committee independently vetted and scored the proposals and awarded grants to the successful applicants. The second was a policy meeting which used to be held once every quarter. Usually, it was at these policy meetings that issues of how the programme was performing, how the lessons so far learnt could be integrated in the university programmes and host of other policy matters were discussed and decisions made. These were meetings which Check Mbacke, Joyce Moock and the Rockefeller officer of the Nairobi regional office would not miss. The format of the policy meetings was also different from that used at conventional meetings. Instead of a chairperson guiding the meeting, the facilitator led the discussions – as expected using the VIPP process. All members of the Central Administration, namely the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the University Secretary, the Academic Registrar before he became a full member of the Committee, the University Librarian and the Director of Planning and Development attended the policy meeting. They were usually very serious meetings.

After the programme had run for two years, we realised that we needed to make changes in the Committee and invite new members. First, it occurred to us that unless the Academic Registrar, who was the overall senior University officer in charge of academic programmes, actively participated in the I@mak.com programme, the possibility of mainstreaming its outcomes in the university

curriculum regular programmes would almost be nil, which would have been tragic for such an expensive programme. It was a risk we were not prepared to take. While members of staff were at liberty to engage in basic and fundamental research and other academic pursuits of their choice and interest, the I@mak.com programme had a very specific objective, to assist Makerere University fulfil its third mandate, namely service to the community. The logical thing to do was to invite the Academic Registrar to become a full member of I@mak.com.

Secondly, we needed some new blood from the Government side, as well as from the Makerere side, since some Deans who had been members of the Committee since its inception had retired. Mr Kiwanuka Musisi, who was a member of I@mak.com by virtue of his position as chairperson of the Local Authorities Association had changed status. The President of Uganda had appointed him Resident District Commissioner for Kampala. Joe Oloka Onyango had on his own accord resigned from the Committee. Fagil Mande too had retired from the Ministry of Education and Sports and was now an independent consultant.

Thirdly, after working so well as a team for more than two years we suddenly began to notice unexplained tension between some Committee members and the Secretariat. I guess this is what some experts would call fatigue, resulting from working intensely together for so long. Whatever the cause, it was a worrisome development. At a retreat held at the Jinja Nile Resort Hotel in late 2003, I bade farewell to the old Committee and constituted a new one. The occasion was an emotional one for me. I had worked with that Committee for the last two years and I had the privilege to bear witness to incredible accomplishments of the Committee in such a relatively short time. Therefore, their contribution had been extremely invaluable. In choosing the new external member, we were very mindful of the East African Community spirit. Dr Miriam Were came from Kenya and it was now the turn of Tanzania.

My colleague, Professor Mathew Luhanga, the long-serving Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam had the talent for spotting brilliant and promising young engineers from the Faculty of Engineering and nurturing them into good administrators. Like Makerere, the University of Dar es Salaam had been formulating and implementing some fundamental reforms and Professor Tolley Mbwete, a Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering had been at the forefront of Professor Luhanga's reform programmes. After due consideration, we agreed that Professor Mbwete was the kind of person we were looking for. We were convinced he would be an asset to the Committee. I extended an invitation to him to serve as a member of I@mak.com, and he gladly accepted. It was always a pleasure for me to find him already settled at Windsor Lake Victoria Hotel on Friday evenings when I@mak.com met and worked till Sunday. Occasionally, he would come along with one of his children and wife at his own expense to see a bit of Uganda, a country he and his family had never visited before.

Besides being a brilliant man, Professor Mbwete was a hard worker. We had no regrets having him on the Committee; he easily lived up to our expectations. At the time he joined I@mak.com, he had left the University of Dar es Salaam and had taken up a new position as Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania. Interestingly, the Open University was the brainchild of Professor Geoffrey Mmaari, a Makerere-trained mathematician and once Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam. When the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania decided to establish the Open University, Geoffrey Mmaari became its first Vice Chancellor. When time came for Mmaari to retire in 2004, Tolly Mbwete was the obvious choice to replace him. We were thrilled when we received the news of his appointment as the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania. That meant that from then on, I@mak.com had two Vice Chancellors as full members.

The new Committee worked equally hard, building on the excellent foundations laid by the previous Committee. At the same time, we decided to intensify and publicise the training courses on Decentralisation offered at the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), on behalf of the Committee. Members of staff from Makerere and partnering institutions were encouraged to attend them. However, the heavy teaching loads and other commitments made it difficult for most members of staff to devote time to the free training at the UMI.

As 2003 slowly came to a close, several projects had gone through the four-stage cycle of concept, feasibility, pilot and full implementation. Some had been evaluated. The evaluation was rigorous, based on a peer review process by external evaluators. Besides the final report, the Committee requested the team leader of every project that had gone through the full cycle to make an oral presentation. I read very many interesting final reports and listened to the staff's good oral presentations. I found a number of them quite outstanding. Without expounding any personal bias, the following projects left an impression on me: Professor Elly Katunguka Rwakishaya's internship project entitled: "Attitudinal Change and Enhancement of Practical Training to Future Veterinary Service Providers in the Decentralised Districts", which involved the undergraduate Veterinary students undertaking practical training on the farms of practising farmers in the rural areas, was one of them. Students were required to stay full-time on the farm with the farmers' families and participating in the farm chores and the daily routines. The routines included milking the cows twice a day, early in the morning and late in the evening; on the spot assessment of the quality of the milk; regular examination of the animals for undetected disease and a myriad of others. Given the perceived bad reputation of Makerere students, it was the more remarkable that the farmers willingly accepted the Vet students on their farms, providing them with the opportunity to have hands on training on their expensive cows, as well as their accommodation and upkeep. The students were

equally magnanimous in their behaviour and willingness to learn from the not so well educated farmers. At the end of the project in 2004, Professor Rwakishaya had found a way of integrating the experience into the training and internship component of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine curriculum.

Sam Luboga's innovative Curriculum Revision and Refresher Course for the Medical Practitioners was equally impressive. In 2003, the panel we set up to assess the quality of the projects for the first Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence judged Sam Luboga's project as the best for that round, thus becoming the first project to win the Award. Dr Luboga received his award from the university's new Chancellor, Professor Apolo Nsibambi during the October 2003 graduation ceremony. Slowly but surely we were meeting the rather ambitious objectives of I@mak.com. The designing and development of a full-fledged three-year undergraduate degree course in Local Government in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration did not escape my attention either.

In terms of relevance to the programme's ideals of improving service delivery in the decentralised districts through training and retraining of the district staff, the Department of Political Science and Public Administration came quite close. My old Chemistry Department, now under the leadership of one of my former postgraduate students, Dr Steven Nyanzi, was involved in a project on bio-fuels. They had designed both fixed and portable simple biogas systems for the rural community. Although biogas production was not a new technology in Uganda, its production had never been properly popularised or made simple enough for the rural community. Dr Nyanzi and his colleagues not only made simple designs, but for the first time they also trained local technicians from different parts of the country in the construction of simple biogas digesters. According to our categorisation, this project fell under Demonstrations and Extension. The Committee judged it as outstanding, and it won the Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence.

In 2004, shortly before I left the university, the Committee introduced new aspects to the programme and a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation expert joined the Secretariat to strengthen that function. The Community of Practice, involving all members of the Committee travelling upcountry to meet district officials from the pilot districts was another new feature. The first one I attended, with some World Bank and Rockefeller Foundation officials, was held in Mbarara in Western Uganda in late 2003. The second was in Mbale in May 2004. At these meetings, the Committee members listened to presentations on the progress and the difficulties the district officials were experiencing as they implemented the programme. Solutions and the way forward were then discussed. It was during the Mbarara meeting that I met Michael Crawford, who later became the Bank's lead official for the Millennium Science Initiative in Uganda.

The Community of Practice was one way of cementing and improving the relationship between the university and the districts participating in the I@mak.

com programme. Likewise, the Committee had devoted a separate business session of the Entebbe weekend meetings to a discussion with the district statisticians and planners. The basic element of that discussion was how I@mak.com could help them improve their job performance in collecting and analysing quality data on which some critical planning decisions were based. It was interesting, but at the same time disheartening to listen to the challenges they faced everyday as they went about their work: lack of adequate tools like good computers and the fact that, more often than not, the districts' political leadership sidelined them in key decisions.

After stepping down, I thought it would be a fitting occasion for me to bid farewell to the many district officials we had worked closely with right from the inception of programme. The next Community of Practice meeting was held in Arua town in 2005, which presented me with an opportunity to meet the group for the last time. It was an emotional, but also a crowning occasion for me as I reflected back on the early beginnings of the I@mak.com initiative, the long hours of hard work, the problems and challenges we faced as we implemented the programme, the near-blind faith I had in the ability of Makerere staff to implement the programme successfully, and seeing some of the outcomes of the programme.

In my considered opinion, the one most important test the I@mak.com programme had to pass and pass with flying colours to qualify as a successful initiative was its ability to survive beyond Ssebuwufu and donor funding. Its sustainability was crucial. It had to outlive me, the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Bank funding. So, as my departure drew nearer, the Committee persistently emphasised this point at almost every meeting. I could sense a feeling of uneasiness in the air. The Committee members seemed to be worried about the future of the programme after my departure. Some believed that this innovative initiative could die after my departure, especially so as some had started calling it the "Ssebuwufu Project". The Committee wanted to be sure that I@mak.com would be securely anchored in the University structures with or without me. They suggested that the best way to ensure the programme's continuity was to institutionalise the I@mak.com. Right from the beginning, behind I@mak.com had been a Vice Chancellor's Committee to assist in implementing the project. No doubt it would remain so under my successor, but the Committee wanted to be sure that the transition would not disrupt the programme's activities. Senate was our entry point. The Academic Registrar assured the Committee that I@mak.com would be an agenda item for one of the regular Senate meetings. Dr Nakanyike Musisi agreed to prepare the requisite documents for Senate. She also made a visual presentation to an attentive Senate. Since most of the Senate members were beneficiaries of the programme, it was like preaching to the converted, they had no problem recommending to the University Council that I@mak.com becomes

a task-specific standing Committee of the University Council. The Council also had no problem approving the Senate's recommendation.

Finally, this innovative programme had become a permanent feature of the university, but this did not silence its critics. Despite the demonstrable benefits that had accrued to both students and staff, there were still many within and outside the university, who persisted in the belief that the programme was actually diverting the university from striving to regain its position as a centre of academic excellence in Africa to a low-level polytechnic. Those who were against it saw it as a radical departure from the traditional university mission. Fortunately for the Committee, there were also many who held the contrary view. They took pride in the fact that Makerere was beginning to move out of the ivory tower into the community. According to them, the programme had cleverly combined that role with the high intellectual engagement, and the university had not compromised on its academic standards in any way. If anything, the programme was enriching the university curriculum. They argued that as an African university,

Makerere had to move away from the European medieval university mentality and become relevant to the unique needs of Africa. To them, through the I@mak.com programme, the university was beginning to do that. It was the kind of programme which justified the university's claim that it was not an elitist institution as it was often perceived to be. Whichever way you prefer to look at it, my guess is that this debate will be one of the enduring legacies of the I@mak.com initiative at Makerere in the 21st century.

### **The University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnership in Africa (USHEPiA) – A Regional Graduate Programme Fostering Inter-African University Cooperation**

Besides the I@mak.com, the Rockefeller Foundation continued to support other initiatives at Makerere. Some had a regional dimension. Notable among the regional programmes the Foundation funded, in conjunction with the Mellon Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, was the University of Cape Town-based University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnership in Africa (USHEPiA) and the Forum on Agricultural Resources Husbandry Programme. USHEPiA involved postgraduate training in eight collaborating universities in Eastern and Southern Africa, namely the University of Cape Town, which was also the coordinating centre for the programme and the hub of the network, University of Botswana, University of Zimbabwe, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Zambia, University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Makerere University.

The initiative was born out of a meeting held at the University of Cape Town in early 1994. James Higenyi, the Dean of Technology and I were expected to

attend the Cape Town meeting at which USHEPiA was formalised as a regional initiative. However, a strike by MUASA for better salaries which coincided with the meeting made it impossible for me to travel to South Africa. It was too risky to leave my house on fire. Since I was absent at that founding meeting, Makerere University was almost eliminated from the consortium. In spite of our conspicuous absence from the meeting, the Vice Chancellors and the Programme Coordinator, Professor Martin West – one of the Deputy Vice Chancellors of the University of Cape Town – who attended the meeting in Cape Town agreed to keep Makerere in the network. However, to formalise our participation in the network, we had to sign a Memorandum of Understanding the other Vice Chancellors had signed in Cape Town. Professor Martin West was kind enough to bring the document to Makerere for my signature. It was one of the programmes which supplemented the university's staff development efforts, as it opened an unexpected opportunity for our staff to study for their advanced degrees at the University of Cape Town, fully paid for by USHEPiA. One of the young members of staff of the School of Education, Goretiti Nakabugo, who took her MPhil at UCT under the Programme in the first cohort, turned out to be an exceptionally good student. She was one of the very few students to have graduated with a distinction. In 2000, she went back to UCT for a PhD in Education Assessment, which she also completed in a record time in 2004.

USHEPiA turned out to be one of the most successful African regional capacity building networks and a good example of a successful South-to-South inter-institutional cooperation. Right from the beginning, it was designed as a sandwich model which made good use of a mix of supervisors at the student's home institution and the host university. As the programme rolled out in 1995, Professor Martin West and his energetic team, Lesley Shackleton, Nan Warner, Caz Thomas and others, became regular visitors at Makerere. Mrs Euphemia Kalema Kiwuwa, my personal assistant, assisted me to coordinate it from my office. USHEPiA was one other way the university was benefiting from the generosity of the Rockefeller and the Mellon Foundations, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Originally the network's focus was on Science and Engineering and its first name was actually USEPiA, but with funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Humanities were also included and the title of the network changed to USHEPiA – the lower case “i” in the name standing for the word “in”. Later, USHEPiA received additional funding from the Coca Cola Foundation, which made it possible to sponsor more fellows in Science and Engineering. It was interesting to note that USHEPiA, which started as a small step became a giant leap in human resource development for the eight participating universities some ten years later. We are grateful to the University of Cape Town and all the staff who worked so hard to make it work, as well as the fellows who successfully attended the programme.

### **The Rockefeller Foundation and the Forum on Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM) – A Regional Research and Graduate Training Programme**

The FORUM involved ten universities: Eduardo Mondleni in Mozambique, University of Malawi, and University of Zimbabwe; University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, The International American University in Africa, Nairobi, and Egerton University – all in Kenya; University of Zambia, and Makerere University in Uganda. This unique programme provided research grants to staff in Schools of Agriculture in the ten universities. A portion of the grant was used to support students studying for their Masters degrees. Dr B. P. Patel (or simply BP as she was popularly known) was the Rockefeller Foundation's officer-in-charge of the programme. Originally she was coordinating the programme from her office in Malawi, but later she moved to the Rockefeller Foundations regional office in Nairobi. Not to be out-competed, my smart colleagues at the Faculty of Agriculture seized the opportunity the FORUM presented to make a kill.

By 2003 when the Rockefeller began to consider devolving the FORUM to one of the participating universities, the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere had taken up over sixty per cent of the grants, with an equally impressive output of students and publications. Professor Adipala Ekwamu of the Crop Science Department was one the most prolific FORUM researchers and had earned a reputation and respect for his exceptional hard work. No doubt the FORUM-funded research contributed significantly to his and other rapid promotions we witnessed in the Faculty of Agriculture. As usual, Makerere had done it again and done it well. After several years of administering it, initially from Malawi and later from Nairobi, the Rockefeller Foundation was ready to turn it over to one of the ten universities in the consortium. But a suitable university among the ten with that capacity to manage it had to be identified. The Foundation commissioned two consultants, Professor David Norman of Kansas State University in the USA and Professor David Njugi, formerly of the University of Nairobi and ICRAF to evaluate and access the capacity of each of the ten institutions. After going around all ten universities, the verdict was that Makerere University had clinched the honour. It had been adjudged as the most prepared university to manage the FORUM. To me, this achievement was a further confirmation that Makerere was truly on the mend. After a series of meetings in Nairobi, it was agreed that the FORUM would also assume a new name, which reflected its independence from the ambit of the Rockefeller Foundation's Nairobi office. The nine founding Vice Chancellors, during a meeting held in Inter-Continental Hotel in Nairobi in early 2004 which I chaired, adopted and confirmed the name "Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)". They

also confirmed Makerere as the new home for the programme. Jane-frances Nabawanuka ensured that the FORUM was legally registered in Uganda with the Registrar of Companies. Although the Rockefeller Foundation would continue to fund it for some time, the devolved FORUM had to solicit additional funding from other sources. That was a tough challenge we all accepted.

All Vice Chancellors of the participating universities constituted the Board of Directors. The Vice Chancellor of Makerere University was the automatic chair of the Board and by default I ended up being the first chairperson of the Board of the new RUFORUM. Before we got ready to pop the champagne, Makerere University had to guarantee that the programme would enjoy full autonomy, except for the oversight function which was delegated to the Vice Chancellor as chair of the programme's Board of Directors. It was a condition we easily fulfilled. Our Legal Officer, Ms Jane-frances Nabawanuka who drafted the protocols did an excellent job. Incidentally, the transfer of the programme from the Rockefeller Foundation to Makerere also marked the retirement of long-serving Dr B. P. Patel. When she was bidding us farewell, she indicated that she would be going back to her home in Bangalore, India. It was a sad occasion to see her go.

My immediate challenge was to find an appropriate accommodation for a regional programme of this nature amidst the severe scarcity of space at the university. The solution was simple: rob Paul and pay Peter. An under-utilised flat in the refurbished Lincoln House which had been allocated to one of the departments did not escape my attention. Since I was desperate, I persuaded Professor Epelu Opio to re-allocate the flat to RUFORUM. It was meant to be a temporary arrangement, while we searched for a permanent alternative. I had my eyes on house number 151 Garden Hill, the former residence of Professor Senteza Kajubi. It was thought a suitable home for the programme, but there was a catch. When Professor Kajubi vacated the house in the late 1980s, it was handed over to the Italian Embassy as part of the university's in-kind contribution to a project the Italian Government was funding at the Faculty of Technology. The Embassy was using it as residence for the visiting Italian professors working on the project whenever they came to Makerere. By early 2004, the last phase of the project had long ended and there was little hope there would be a follow-up phase. After due consultation with the Italian Embassy, we handed over the house to RUFORUM in appreciation of the enormous contribution the Rockefeller Foundation had made to the university over the decades. I must admit it was not an easy decision. Naturally, our friends at the Italian Embassy were disappointed when we told them that we wanted the house back. I remember the many telephone calls and visits Jane-frances Nabawunaka had to make to the Italian Embassy, asking them to hand over the house. They kept re-assuring us that the Italian Government would soon approve funding for a follow-up phase. They wanted to keep the

house in case they got confirmation from Rome. They warned us that the absence of suitable accommodation for the Italian professors would jeopardise the chances of renewing the project. However, we counter-argued that we wanted the house to take care of an emergency, adding that if the negotiations for a follow-up project succeeded, the university would find another house for the professors. In the end, like good diplomats, they did let us have the house back, so there was no longer need for the flat in Lincoln House.

The accommodation problem behind us, the next challenge was to find a capable person to coordinate the programme. The Board had agreed that the position would be competitive, so we had to advertise as widely as we could. The advertisement attracted several good candidates and, after a gruelling interview held at the Kampala Sheraton Hotel in 2004, the Board identified Professor Adipala Ekwamu as the best candidate for the job. He had made an impression on even the most sceptical Vice Chancellors by his presentation and his deep knowledge of what the job entailed. No doubt, he had prepared well for the interview. In fact, it was the first I saw him with a shaven scalp. When the interviews were over, I invited all the Vice Chancellors to the university to look at the flat where I thought the programme would be temporarily housed, while we refurbished its permanent headquarters at 156 Pool Road. Although they liked the newly refurbished flat in Lincoln House, they were even happier when they visited the Garden Hill house. It was an old house in dire need of a serious facelift and the access road was in a bad shape too. The main plus in its favour was its size. It was far bigger and somewhat isolated. The Board members urged us to drop the Lincoln House option and source for funding to renovate the bungalow as quickly as possible. I also used the occasion to give my fellow Vice Chancellors a quick tour of the university.

I remember during a stop-over at the Faculty of Technology, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Levi Nyagura who had visited Makerere a few years earlier, commented positively on how we had succeeded in turning around the bad things he had seen then in a relatively short time, which in his view was a sign of good leadership. Then he had seen Makerere in a dilapidated state, now he was seeing a different Makerere, with new buildings and most of the old ones renovated. Professor Crypus Kiamba, who was then Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi thought the Makerere Vice Chancellor had the smallest desk he had ever seen in any Vice Chancellor's office. I enjoyed those titbits about my institution. Although it got off to a slow start, because of the long illness and subsequent death of Professor Adipala Ekwamu's wife, the programme quickly picked up. Professor Adipala raised money and by early 2005, he had renovated the house and fenced it. The Regional University FORUM (RUFORUM) was finally off with a good start.

### **Rockefeller Foundation Support to Other Initiatives – The Change from Faculty to College**

The Rockefeller Foundation also extended its generous support to other new initiatives, one of which was an attempt to do something about the over-centralised University Administration, which was increasingly becoming inefficient and unable to keep up with rapidly changing circumstances. One solution involved clustering several faculties and departments with closely related academic mandates into colleges headed by a Principal, who would act as both the academic and administrative head. We have already come across examples of such attempts spearheaded by the Faculties of Agriculture, Forestry and Nature Conservation, Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, Faculty of Science (Fisheries unit in the Department of Zoology), as well as the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, which were aimed at translating this initiative into concrete action with varying degrees of success. The main objective of the initiative was to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of academic administration and management. The idea was that when fully decentralised, the central administration would retain only a residual administrative role in the day-to-day decision-making and management of the university. The Vice Chancellor would then have time to concentrate on the big picture of coordination, supervision, planning, fundraising, public relations and legal affairs, among other non-routine administrative functions. In fact, this concept was the centrepiece of the university's first Strategic Plan.

The MISR report which had given the university the stimulus to set up the I@mak.com had indicated that much as Makerere's trained doctors were competent, they nevertheless lacked skills to deal with the rather unique problems of health service delivery in a rural setting. Since the country had embraced the decentralised form of governance, the training of doctors also had to change. That was the challenge the Medical School had to address. In order to do a better training job, in 2000 the Faculty of Medicine began the process of transforming itself into a College of Health Sciences. The faculty had been toying with this idea as early as 1998. In fact, between 1998 and 2000, the faculty had produced a couple of plans, but all fell through. The efforts failed to stimulate interest amongst staff. It was time to try a new approach. The answer was to set up a planning committee, which was dubbed the Max Plan.com. To kick-start the process, we applied for a grant which the Rockefeller Foundation kindly approved. Cole Dodge had proved an excellent facilitator for I@mak.com, so we decided to entrust the whole process to him, which he gladly accepted. He fell back on the VIPP methodology, which had proved to be a powerful planning tool.

The Max Plan process was as elaborate as it was novel. The majority of the Max Plan.com members were drawn outside the Medical School. They came from the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda Medical Association, Uganda Private Practitioners

Association, Public Health Nurses' College, Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau, Mulago Hospital Management, Ministry of Health, Makerere University Council, Medical Students' representatives and representatives of the Faculty of Medicine. Ordinarily, the Committee would be dominated by the Medical School staff; so, understandably, staff could not comprehend why outsiders had to be so heavily involved in decisions which affected the future of their faculty and why the facilitator, apparently with the consent of the Vice-Chancellor and their Dean, had decided to load the planning committee with outsiders, leaving the university and the Medical School staff with about forty percent of representation. As expected, initially the Dean, Professor Nelson Sewankambo had a bit of hard time selling the idea. But with a lot of explanation on the merits of using that kind of approach and after re-assuring them that once the planning was done, the Faculty Board would take over and would have the final say before the plan went to the University Senate and Council, the majority of staff agreed to give the Max Plan.com a chance. The Max Plan.com was an innovative way of bringing the end-users of the faculty's graduates together to plan a new type of Medical School and medical curriculum. The Max Plan recommended that the Faculty of Medicine should quickly transform into a College of Health Sciences with four Schools, namely the School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine, which encompassed the new Infectious Diseases Institute, School of Health Sciences and School of Public Health, and twelve departments. A Learning Resource Centre, an Institute of Continuing Medical Education and an ICT Unit would be added later. The college would also adopt an innovative problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum.

The recommendation was a radical departure from the traditional way the School had been training doctors. Under the traditional curriculum, students spent the first two years studying the pre-clinical biomedical disciplines of Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry, without ever going on the wards. They only went on the wards in the teaching hospital in the last three years of their training, studying the clinical disciplines. There was minimal linkage between the pre-clinical and the clinical disciplines. Some saw it as disjointed training. The new curriculum integrated both the Biomedical Sciences and the clinical disciplines right from the first year. The objective was to demonstrate to the student the link between all medical disciplines quite early in their training. Admittedly, it would be quite a daunting task to convince everyone to accept the new and perhaps untested curriculum. However, Dr Sam Luboga, the Deputy Dean responsible for Education was undeterred; he threw all his energy into it and it worked.

Due to the meticulous planning, Senate had no difficulty recommending the proposal to the University Council to transform the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences with six Faculties. In November 2001, the University Council approved the College of Health Sciences to replace the old Faculty of Medicine, which had also evolved from the original Makerere College Medical

School, which opened in 1924, barely two years after the college opened. With the approval granted, it was time to initiate the process of operationalising the college. We had targeted to open the college in the 2001/02 academic year. Both Senate and the University Council had agreed to our request to ask Professor Sewankambo to act as Principal until such a time when a substantive one would be appointed. By the time the College of Health Sciences was approved, the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 had come into effect. Under the new Act, only the Chancellor had the powers to appoint the Principal, either in acting capacity or substantively. My powers as Vice Chancellor were limited to appointing acting Deans. But a college with Deans but without a Principal was not a smart proposition. To complicate matters further, at the time, the university had no Chancellor. President Museveni ceased to be Chancellor as soon as he gave the Presidential assent to the new Act in March 2001. To say the least, that was a difficult time for the university. Not only did it not have a Chancellor; it had no Governing Council either. In one of those desperate moves, I remember attempting to invite the President as a special guest to grace the graduation ceremony with his presence in April that year. As was the usual practice, the invitation had to be routed through the Minister of Education and Sports, who at the time happened to be Dr Khidu Makubuya, an old friend of the family. His advice was that since the President had ceased to be Chancellor, by inviting him to preside over the graduation ceremony, we would be acting outside the law. Unfortunately, the Minister had misunderstood our intentions. We were well aware that we were not inviting the President to confer degrees, but to give the ceremony some respectability. As Vice Chancellor, I was expected to play that role, because the new Act provided for the Vice Chancellor to do so in the absence of the Chancellor. We chose not to pursue the matter further. Interestingly, I had always looked at the office of the Chancellor as purely ceremonial, with no executive powers. It now dawned on me that the absence of a Chancellor could have serious implications for the implementation of some critical decisions, like the appointment of an acting Principal for the College of Health Sciences. I thought I could circumvent the legally tangled web and do the appointment. Although it could have been seen as surreptitious, it offered the quickest way of getting the appointment through; but after seeking a legal opinion from the University Lawyers, I was advised to hold on, because the law was explicitly clear on how a Principal of a college was appointed. Therefore, the appointment of an acting Principal for the college would have to wait for the new Chancellor. It was a setback we had not anticipated and indeed a disappointment, as my colleagues in the Medical School were looking forward to quick action from my office. Up until then, the process had moved quite fast without any serious hitches.

As they say, when the problems come, they come in leaps and bounds. As we grappled with the legal nitty gritty of appointing an Acting Principal for the college, the Sessional Committee of Parliament on Social Services threw

another spanner in the works. They asked why the Committee was not informed of this fundamental change at the university before the college was approved. Apparently we had goofed on this one too. We had to take the concerns of this Parliamentary Committee very seriously. It was this Committee which decided whether Parliament would approve the college's budget or not. Therefore, before they could consider the budget estimates for the new college, they demanded answers from the University Administration. Of course, we did not have answers for them. Never before had the Parliament of Uganda been directly involved in the way Makerere University conducted its academic business or how it structured its curriculum and created academic units. What we were witnessing was a new development in our relationship with the Parliament of Uganda, which I must admit took us totally unaware. It was a big departure from tradition. In fact, at no point during the Max Planck process did it cross our minds that we had to inform the Committee on Social Services beforehand about the university's intention to transform the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences. It was always assumed that on such matters, the university enjoyed total independence. Was this the beginning of the erosion of the university's academic freedom to innovate as it so fit, which we had been taking for granted? To complicate matters more, our interaction with Parliament was not a matter of regular routine. We only met the Committee on Social Services as and when we were invited. On hindsight perhaps, I should have given a hint to the chairperson of the Committee, Honourable Mrs Dorothy Hyuha about what was cooking, as a way of preparing her for what was coming. It was now too late; I could not roll the clock back. Given all these mounting problems, we decided to heed the advice of the University Lawyers and wait for the appointment of a new Chancellor. To my disappointment and that of my colleagues in the Medical School and our funder too, the College of Health Sciences remained shelved up to the time I left the university in mid-2004. I left it to my successor to follow up.

One of the numerous exciting things about the Rockefeller Foundation and its generous support to Makerere University during my time as Vice Chancellor, which left a lasting impression on me, was the privilege to host its President, Dr Gordon Conway, four times during his presidency. I have already given an account of his first visit. The second visit was in January 2000. This time, Dr Gordon came with the President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Dr Vartan Gregorian. As I have already pointed out, round about this time, the Carnegie Corporation had just resumed supporting Makerere again. The two Presidents, in the company of their officials, were unfortunate to have arrived in Uganda in the midst of the dry and unusually hot season. We had arranged for a press conference in the VIP lounge at Entebbe Airport, but as the conference began, I could see the discomfort Dr Vartan Gregorian was experiencing in the poorly air-conditioned lounge. He was sweating profusely while Dr. Conway was a little more comfortable in tropical heat and did most of the talking.

Perhaps the difference between the two men was the fact that while Gordon Conway had been in Uganda for a while and had already acclimatised to the tropical heat, having worked in other tropical parts of the world before, Vartan Gregorian was visiting Uganda for the first time. We tried to keep the press conference short. Typical of our media houses, they sent young and apparently less experienced journalists. Certainly most of the questions they asked were dull, uncritical and could use a dose of ingenuity. However, to our delight the next day the photograph of the two Presidents appeared in *The New Vision* newspaper. Dr Gordon Conway's third visit to Uganda in 2002 was memorable for a particular reason. I dared to go with him where angels feared to tread at that particularly time in our country's history. This time, he came with several of his New York and Nairobi-based staff. As usual, Joyce Mook was one of them and so was Peter Matlen, who at the time was in charge of the Food Security Programme at the headquarters in New York, but later took over from Check Mbacke as Director of the Nairobi Regional Office.

Dr Gordon Conway arrived in the country when President Museveni had pitched tent in Gulu where he was overseeing some military operation and was not about to come down to Kampala to meet the President of the Rockefeller Foundation. But Dr Conway wanted to meet him and exchange views on a number of initiatives the Foundation had in the pipeline. The alternative was for Dr Conway and his team to fly to Gulu and meet the President there. The idea of flying the President of the Rockefeller Foundation with many of his senior staff to Gulu at that time was a troublesome thought. My immediate concern was the security situation in that part of our country. So much had been said and written about the troubles in Northern Uganda and here we were, flying the President of one of the major American philanthropic foundations into the midst of what most people thought was a security nightmare.

Honourable Sam Kutesa, then one of the Ministers of State in the Ministry of Finance, was the officer Government tasked to handle the arrangements for Dr Conway's visit to Gulu. The Ugandan Government chartered a local airline, Eagle Airlines, to fly him and his team to Gulu. The trip was also the first for me. Although I had been to Gulu several times before, I had never gone there by air. However, I was aware that the Gulu airstrip had a good runway, so I didn't have to fret about a bumpy landing. Much as I found flying to Gulu exciting, I had some anxious moments about the trip. In the end, all my worst fears never materialised. In fact, it turned out to be a flight to remember and for good reasons. Firstly, one of our pilots, Ms Apolot, was the first Ugandan woman pilot. Secondly, apart from the many army vehicles running up and down, including the convoy which escorted us from the airstrip and back, we found Gulu as peaceful as any other part of the country. Contrary to impressions you got when you heard news over the radio and television or read in the newspapers about the northern part

of our country, people in Gulu town were busy going about their normal daily business as other Ugandans in the more peaceful parts of the country. Thirdly, the President was residing in the army barracks, so getting there past all the security screening raised our adrenaline levels, particularly our American friends, who were not used to this way of life, but all went and ended well.

When we arrived at Gulu Military Barracks, the President was still busy. We were told we had to wait until we were called on. Our security personnel escorted us to what used to be the Acholi Inn under the defunct Uganda Hotels Corporation, but which was now privately owned, to while away the time whilst we waited for our turn. Back to the barracks, we had what I thought was a very thought-provoking meeting with the President. In fact, some of the issues the President raised must have taken Gordon Conway by surprise. What I remember most about the interaction between the two men seated face to face as the debate switched to Biotechnology, genetically modified food and organisms (or GMOs) was President Museveni's persistent question why the scientists had decided to abandon the old and less controversial breeding methods, which he believed was a much better way of producing safe food, and opted for the more controversial biotechnology. I am sure Dr Conway was amused when the President said that he had been an animal breeder for many years and was using the less controversial traditional breeding techniques, pointing out that sometimes the new Genetic Engineering techniques involved transfer of genes across unrelated species and that was the heart of the controversy and the source of disagreement in the GMO debate. In spite of its assurances, people were not sure about the safety of GMOs as a source of food.

The President's knowledge on the GMOs and the Biotechnology amazed us. Dr Conway, with occasional help from his officials and people like me seated in the audience, tried his best to explain to the President the enormous advantages Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering techniques had over the traditional breeding techniques, including the increased resistance to disease and reduced post-harvest losses. This lively impromptu debate took up much of the discussion between the two men. At the end of it all, Dr Gordon Conway was quick to admit that he found the debate challenging, adding that he had found the discussion with President Museveni relevant and very useful. It was now time to take leave of the President and head back to Entebbe. The interesting debate on Biotechnology and the GMOs aside, going to Northern Uganda by air provided us with an unexpected spin off – the opportunity to see the majestic River Nile from the air, gently meandering out of Lake Kyoga like a snake on the desert sand and cascading down the Murchison falls on its way to Lake Albert. Seeing an aerial view of this spectacular marvel of nature was an experience of a lifetime. Despite my initial security concern, having a bird's eye-view of Lake Kyoga, located almost at the heart of Uganda, the mighty Victoria Nile and a glimpse of

the Murchison falls in the distance, more than compensated for my initial fears and apprehension about flying to Gulu.

On his last visit as President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr Gordon Conway came along with his wife, the chair of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, James Orr and his wife, and a few other trustees of the Foundation. This time, we had a packed programme for him and his team, which kept them busy throughout the visit. James Orr and some of the trustees left earlier after they had had a personal impression of the outcomes of the programmes and projects the Foundation was supporting or had supported at Makerere and in Uganda in the past. Professor Adipala Ekwamu of the Department of Crop Science at the Faculty of Agriculture and a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation grant for his PhD at Ohio State University, was a good events organiser. We asked him to put together a good programme for Dr Conway's visit. He gladly accepted and produced an exciting programme, which included an exhibition and a publication detailing all the programmes and projects the Foundation had financed at Makerere over the years. The publication also featured the Foundation's programmes which were ongoing as well as the impact they had had on the university and the country.

Fortunately, some of the first Ugandan members of staff of the university whom the Foundation had trained and assisted to join the faculty, under the Special Lecturer Scheme of the University of East Africa in the early 1960s, were still alive. They were now senior professors who were almost retiring from the university's service. We requested those who could make it to meet the President of the Foundation, who had made it possible for them to join the academic staff of the university at a time they were being told that there was no establishment to accommodate them. It was an emotional moment for me as I saw my senior colleagues, Professors Gabriel Kiwuwa, Patrick Rubaihayo, Joseph Mukiibi and William Banage taking turns to shake hands with President Conway and say thank you to the Rockefeller Foundation. In spite of the fact that it was put up at short notice, the exhibition in the front courtyard of the Faculty of Agriculture was a rich one. It included the numerous scientific publications which had come out of the projects the Foundation had funded at Makerere over the years. Also on display were some of the new varieties of food crops, including the huge FHIA bananas that had come out of the agricultural research the Foundation had supported and which had now become part of the mainstream crops Ugandan farmers were growing, as well as the I@mak.com projects and a lot more. Unfortunately, time was too short for him to look at each one of them in detail, but certainly it was an impressive record of the Rockefeller's contribution to Makerere University and the country as a whole.

Later in the morning, Dr Gordon Conway visited the Kawanda Research Institute, one of the six NARO research institutes, to see the new and state-of-the-art Biotechnology laboratory specialising in tissue culture, which the Foundation

had financed, and the long running Banana Research Programme. As we have seen, this was one of the programmes on which Makerere University Faculty of Agriculture staff were collaborating with researchers at Kawanda. It was another exciting occasion, as Dr Mathias Magunda, the Institute Director led him on a tour of the facilities the Rockefeller Foundation was supporting there. The tissue culture technique was perhaps the nearest answer to President Museveni's concerns about the GMOs and genetic engineering. It is a modern technique similar to cloning, but does not involve trans-gene manipulation. Shortly before leaving Kawanda for another appointment in Luwero District in the afternoon, President Conway briefly addressed a gathering of the institute's staff and invited guests, expressing satisfaction at the tremendous progress he had seen at Makerere and Kawanda.

From Kawanda, it was time to visit another site at Nakaseke Primary Teachers' College, located deep in rural Luwero, some fifty or so kilometres north of Kampala, where Makerere University was running two Rockefeller-funded projects. Nakaseke was a new generation of core Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs) the Government of Uganda had built as part of its effort at improving the quality and quantity of teachers for the massive Universal Primary Education programme or UPE as it popularly called. Luwero was one of the operational areas where President Museveni and his rag-tag army of peasants waged a five-year bush war, which eventually brought the National Resistance Movement to power in January 1986. Nakaseke, like most towns in Luwero, was severely damaged during the long bush war. However, at the time of Dr Conway's visit there, the town had almost recovered from the ravages of war. The town was boasting of an impressive complex of modern buildings nearby, which I understood were housing a private nursing training school. The Teachers' College was further west, a couple of kilometres from Nakaseke town centre. It was the first time I was visiting the new college too. My first impression of the college was that of an island of modern small and medium-sized bungalows surrounded by forest and jungle on all sides in the middle of nowhere. Nevertheless, the wonders of modern communication technology – the cellular telephone and the Internet – ensured that neither staff nor students were completely cut off from the rest of the country, and the world for that matter. No doubt, Dr Conway had seen a bit of Uganda's beautiful countryside on his many visits to Makerere, but this time he was seeing the real rural Uganda, which I guessed added a little bit of flavour to his visit to the college. Mrs Byakika, the college Principal was at hand to welcome us.

Since Kyambogo University had the oversight over all PTCs in the country, Professor James Lutalo Bosa, the Vice Chancellor of that university was also there to welcome and interact with Dr Gordon Conway. Waiting for Dr Conway was Dr Moses Musaaizi of the Department of Electrical Engineering, who was in charge

of the low-cost sanitary pads, hygienic insulator and water harvesting projects; and Dr Robinnah Kyeyune of the Language Education Department, leader of the Minds Across Africa School Club (MAASC) supplementary readers project in which Nakaseke PTC was one of the participating institutions, together with some of the surrounding primary schools. Dr Conway first inspected Dr Musaazi's interesting project. Dr Musaazi explained in graphic details how his project had helped the college maintain a high level of hygiene and how the water harvesting technology had assisted the college ease the chronic water shortage. After touring the projects, Dr Conway listened attentively to an account given by a smart female student on the convenience and usefulness of the Dr Musaazi's sanitary pads. Incidentally, both Musaazi and Conway had something in common. Both of them had been to the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London – although at different times. Gordon Conway was there as a Professor and Moses Musaazi as a Masters and PhD student in Electrical Engineering respectively in the '70s.

I recall Gordon thanking Musaazi for making his engineering skills useful to the community. Dr Kyeyune's project on developing reading and writing skills at primary school level was also progressing well, to the satisfaction of Dr Conway. After an interesting interactive discussion that included some of the challenges which she had encountered in the course of implementing her project, it was time to end the day in Nakaseke before dark. It was already getting late in the evening. We bade farewell to the Principal, her staff and students and started the rough ride on the dusty and bumpy sixteen-kilometre rough stretch linking Nakaseke and Wobulenzi town on the Kampala- Gulu highway and back to Kampala. It was a busy day but, by all accounts, a productive one. The Principal too had impressed us with her warm hospitality and management of the college.

To crown his last visit to Makerere as President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr Conway delivered another public lecture in the Main Building. This time he was not about to take chances with the power supply in the Main Building, which almost made him abort his first lecture on his first visit to Makerere; so he abandoned the powerpoint projector, and instead, he decided to deliver it in the old-fashioned way, like a priest delivering a sermon from the pulpit. As usual it was an interesting lecture, but members of staff were already in a sombre mood. They had started agitating for more pay, so they were not as receptive as they were during his first lecture. He kept referring to me as a "good Vice Chancellor", but members of the academic staff, who made up the majority in the audience, were in no mood to listen to that kind of stuff being said about the Vice Chancellor. After all, they had heard that the Vice Chancellor was paying himself a hefty salary while they continued to receive peanuts, so they were angry. As we shall see later, the Vice Chancellor had long ceased to be a good man. Therefore, unlike the previous occasion, their response was a muted one.

I am not a superstitious person by nature, but once I was tempted to believe that Dr Conway was either an exceptionally lucky man, or had some powerful white magic up his sleeves that ensured that, every time he visited Uganda, President Museveni was in residence and could set aside time to meet with him. Even on his last visit, President Museveni managed to squeeze in time to meet him at Nakasero State House. While thanking the Rockefeller Foundation for supporting research on Uganda's indigenous green cooking banana plantains – *matooke* – that had led to improved varieties and high yields, the President lamented the limited markets for Uganda's bananas and the fact that no one was making effort to add value to the bananas. According to him, most of the serious research was agronomical, which no doubt had led to a lot of improvements in banana cultivation, but the loop was far from closed. As far as President Museveni was aware, no serious research was being conducted to develop other value-added banana products. In turn, this was frustrating, as many banana farmers had no choice but to throw away the surplus they could not sell or eat, or leave them to rot in the plantations. In response, Dr Conway agreed with the President on the need to support applied research targeted at marketing and adding value to the banana.

I for one, and I am sure Gordon Conway too, found our relationship over the years as extraordinary as it had begun. He was President of the Rockefeller Foundation, an Englishman with an English accent as my American friends would say, at the helm of a renowned American charity, and myself Makerere's VC. Here we were, two middle-aged men, one tall and the other short, who had never met before, deciding to take a stroll around the Makerere University campus, way back in 1998, only to discover that we had a lot in common. For starters, like me, Gordon Conway had been the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex before moving to New York and like me, he was a passionate scientist. I am deeply indebted to him for the friendship and all the support he and his colleagues at the Rockefeller Foundation extended during the years I was Vice Chancellor at Makerere, and the support they continue to give to Makerere University. Even when the Foundation's finances were in a bad shape after the New York Stock Exchange crash of 1999, forcing it to scale down many programmes and cancel some, their commitment to Makerere was unaffected. That is what I call true institutional partnership. I can safely say without fear of exaggeration that most of what I managed to achieve in my long years as Makerere's Vice Chancellor bears the thumbprint of Gordon Conway and the Rockefeller Foundation. As they say, a friend in need is a friend indeed! The Rockefeller Foundation was and continues to be Makerere's true friend in need. I thank Gordon and all his colleagues with whom I worked so closely for over ten years of my service to Makerere University and Uganda's higher education sector.

### **The Rockefeller Foundation and the Banana Project – Improving the Productivity of Uganda’s Favourite Food Crop; the Matooke (Uganda’s Green Bananas)**

On his fourth and last visit to Uganda when I was Vice Chancellor, Dr Gordon Conway engaged in a friendly exchange with President Museveni over the banana research the Rockefeller Foundation had been supporting in Uganda over the years, and how further research on the crop could lead to value added products and improve its marketability. That was precisely because the Rockefeller Foundation had contributed to a banana green revolution in Uganda. The banana project was one of the most successful research projects the Foundation had funded in Uganda.

The research phase I am reporting on in the next few paragraphs started in 1999/2000, after the first phase had come to an end. It was negotiated by the Department of Crop Science of the Faculty of Agriculture and later joined by NARO. The primary objective of this phase was to continue with efforts to improve the East African highland banana production in Uganda and later in other banana growing parts of East Africa. The project dealt with soil fertility, plantation management, crop improvement in terms of conventional breeding, as well as modern molecular biology breeding. Then the project had well established modern laboratory facilities at Kabanyolo and Kawanda and developed several varieties of cultivars (or protocols as the breeders sometimes preferred to call them). The cultivars were developed from micro-propagation carried out in the tissue culture laboratories and passed on to the farmers. Compared to the traditional suckers, the cultivars propagated by tissue culture techniques made disease-free planting material. The suckers produced in the petri dishes and test tubes in a tissue culture laboratory can be regarded as clones of the adult bananas minus the disease pathogens and other undesirable characteristics, which are environment-induced.

Initially, the Dr Calsit Baliddawa, who was then the Head of the Crop Science Department was the Project leader but when he resigned from the University, the project was transferred to NARO at Kawanda under Dr Kalamura as project leader. Professor Patrick Rubaihayo, who was Baliddawa’s co-researcher on the project continued with the work at Makerere in collaboration with other Makerere staff, namely Professor Julius Kitungulu Zake from Soil Science, Dr Magambo and Dr Maurice Ogenga Latigo of the Department of Crop Science. Later, Dr Ogenga Latigo left the university to engage in politics. The project benefited the university and Uganda in a number of ways. Several postgraduate students were sponsored to undertake their Masters degree dissertation research on Uganda’s favourite crop under the supervision of the principal investigators. Through the project, both Kawanda and Makerere acquired the state-of-the-art Biotechnology

laboratories. Besides the banana farmers, including myself, three departments at Makerere, namely Crop Science, Agricultural Economics and Soil Science were direct beneficiaries of the project funding and capacity building efforts.

The projects also facilitated a link between the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere and the Catholic University in Belgium. In terms of scientific output measured by the number of publications in peer-reviewed journals, the researchers on the banana project were really prolific. They had an impressive list of publications to their credit, which contributed significantly to their promotions. Those of us who relish this delicacy were grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for the generous support.

### **The Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD)**

Many times people have asked me what I really considered as my most memorable and enduring experience during my long tenure as Vice Chancellor of Makerere University. This was one of the questions I always found hard to answer, not because I could not single out any particular experience, but because I had too many memorable experiences to be able to pinpoint one I could call outstandingly memorable. In terms of who contributed most to the progress of Makerere University during my tenure, certainly a number of development partners come to mind. I have already singled out the Rockefeller Foundation, which is a relatively small private charitable organisation in the USA.

However, there were also many governments and government agencies across the world that provided Makerere with vital assistance, which played a critical role in its difficult recovery process. With that assistance, moreover given so generously, we were able to turn a few things round for the better. Among this category of bilateral development partners, the Royal Norwegian Government through its international cooperation and development agency, NORAD, as well as the Norwegian universities and other Norwegian institutions of higher education, come very close to the top of that list. Indeed, I have already said much about NORAD, but mainly in passing or simply as reference to specific projects or programmes the Agency had supported. Nevertheless, I want to emphasise some fine details of the long and productive relationship Makerere University on one hand and the Norwegians, NORAD and the Norwegian universities on the other hand, have enjoyed over the years, and more so during my time as Vice Chancellor, that were a truly memorable experience for me.

Going back in time, the development cooperation between Norway and Uganda started in 1963; a year after Uganda attained independence from Britain. At the time, most of the Norwegian development assistance to Uganda went to support the agriculture and forestry sectors. Some of that assistance came to Makerere and to Nyabyeya Forestry College, located in what is now Masindi

District. In 1970 NORAD provided funding to the Uganda Government to establish a Department of Forestry in the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere University. However, the political upheavals which followed the military coup of 1971 forced NORAD to withdraw its development aid to Uganda. The assistance which had been earmarked for Makerere University was instead given to the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Dar es Salaam based at Morogoro, which later evolved into the Sokoine University of Agriculture, named after Edward Moringe Sokoine, the late Prime Minister of Tanzania who died in a tragic road accident in 1984. However, as the country slowly returned to normalcy, Norway resumed its development assistance to Uganda. NORAD returned to Makerere in the academic year 1995/96 with an initial grant of Norwegian Kroners (NOK) three million to the Department of Forestry. The objective was to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Forestry to be able to improve research quality and extension services. The ultimate goal of NORAD's support was to assist the university provide the forestry sector with better graduates, who were expected to play the role of researchers, administrators, conservators and extension workers. While Makerere University trained and produced graduate foresters, there was also an identified need for more and better qualified technical personnel at diploma level for this vital sector. Nabyeya Forestry College offered this kind of training. Like in the 1960s, even this time round NORAD decided to include Nyabyeya Forestry College in the new development assistance to Uganda. As the Principal once lamented, the NORAD support to the college was timely and the best thing to have happened there in decades. It rescued the college from the brink of closure due to the extremely low and irregular Government subvention. To strengthen the undergraduate practical training, the department arranged for the Makerere BSc Forestry students to spend part of their study time at Nyabyeya on field work in the nearby Budongo Natural Forest Reserve. NORAD agreed to provide funding to construct an appropriate hostel for Makerere students at the college.

The Forestry Department project was excellently executed. It paved the way for the much bigger support NORAD extended to the university later. I remember the regular and productive meetings we used to have in the Ministry of Finance to review the progress of the projects and approve work plans and budgets. Thanks to Dr Kaboggozza's good project management and proper utilisation of project funds, as well as his well-written reports, we always ended the meeting satisfied that the project was achieving the objectives and the project expenditure was in compliance with the terms of the grant agreement. At the time, Mr Karl Solberg, who doubled as the desk officer for NORAD at the Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam, with one or two of his colleagues used to fly in to attend these tripartite meetings. It was the first time for me to work closely with the Norwegians. Through that interaction, I soon discovered the modest and unassuming nature of the Norwegians and their passion for hard work and efficiency. I also got to

know Mr Karl Solberg. In fact, we got on well. Partly because of the success of this project, NORAD agreed to support a University-wide programme, which later became the Institutional Development Programme (IDP).

In 1997, Karl Solberg left Dar es Salaam and joined the newly opened Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala as First Secretary. The NORAD desk at the Embassy was also one of his responsibilities. As soon as he moved over to Kampala, he decided to pay me a courtesy call. During our discussions, which included my usual litany of needs, he indicated that, subject to successful negotiations, NORAD would be able to provide a bigger grant to support a university-wide institutional development programme, adding that NORAD was satisfied with the way we had implemented and managed the Forestry project. I hesitated to believe what I had heard and chose to wait for further news from him. It took time to hear from him again. In fact, I was beginning to suspect that perhaps the promise had fallen through. Then it happened. I received a call from him, advising that we should start planning for the new grant. He promised to get me a consultant who was familiar with the workings of NORAD.

In order to do good planning for the expected big NORAD grant, I put together what I called the NORAD Task Force, made up of some 25 members, including the Principal of Nyabyeya Forestry College, Mr W. Kasolo. I was the chair, with Professor Luboobi as my co-chair. Dr David Matovu, the chair of the University Council was also a member. In late 1999, almost a year after the Uganda-Norway Programme of Development Cooperation was signed, we held a grand planning meeting which included colleagues from the various institutions in Norway whom we were collaborating with in other Norwegian programmes like NUFU, and the Norwegian Embassy. At the end of the meeting facilitated by the consultant, Age Ronningen, a civil engineer by profession, we wrote up what amounted to a costed project proposal document. It was the first time I was introduced to the Logical Framework (normally simply referred to as logframe) planning methodology. It was hard work and some members of the drafting committee had to work on a public holiday to get the document ready. After going through a series of stages, the document was finally submitted to the NORAD Board in February 2000.

In March 2000, Karl Solberg telephoned me with the good news. The NORAD Board had approved the five-year Institutional Development Programme Grant in its entirety in principle. However, there were a few things to do before NORAD would release the money to Makerere. I was thrilled. I did not know what to say at that time. I remember telling him that I was going to dance on the top of my desk as a way of expressing my joy and gratitude to the NORAD Board. What NORAD had done was for me a dream come true. A few days later, in the company of his colleague Harold Karlsnes, who had just joined the Embassy and who later succeeded him as First Secretary when he retired, Karl Solberg

came to Makerere to discuss the modalities of implementing the IDP. It included scrutiny of our financial management system, assessing the university's capacity to implement the IDP and signing the grant agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Norway, among others.

As part of the pre-programme implementation activities, NORAD contracted PriceWaterHouseCoopers to conduct an assessment of the Finance, Internal Audit and Planning Departments, focusing on the weaknesses and gaps in requisite skills and to make recommendations thereon. By any stretch of imagination, it was a big grant. None of us had ever managed a grant on this scale, so NORAD wanted to assure itself that we had the capacity to implement the programme efficiently. In fact, it could have been much bigger. Initially, we had planned to include every department in the programme. However, after doing some number crunching, we realised that if we kept everyone and everything in, the bill would be frighteningly astronomical – some NOK220 million which at the time was equivalent to fifteen million dollars over a five-year period. I believe that if NORAD had approved such a huge grant, it would have stretched our absorptive capacity to the limit. We also realised that we would be asking NORAD for the impossible. On the advice of our consultant, we dropped the grand idea of an all-inclusive IDP and scaled down the budget. Instead we decided to focus on a few projects, which in the opinion of our consultant and our Norwegian friends were likely to have a high impact on the university and the community. With a five-year budget of NOK110 million or about fifteen million dollars NORAD had approved for the IDP, we trimmed down the list to just fifteen projects, with NOK10 million remaining unallocated for the future. This was a big investment NORAD had made to a single institution, and one hoped and prayed that everything would go on well.

The grant agreement was signed in the Boardroom of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, on June 28, 2000 with Mr Chris Kasami, the second Permanent Secretary in the same Ministry signing for the Ugandan Government. I was privy to this historical ceremony. As soon as the grant agreement became effective, the Taskforce which had done all the planning work and written the project proposal changed its role. It was transformed into a Programme Steering Committee (PSC), with the Vice Chancellor as chair and Professor Luboobi as alternate chair. According to the terms of the grant agreement, the Vice Chancellor was the *de facto* programme leader, assisted by the PSC. The Director of Planning and Development was designated as the overall Programme Coordinator and the link between the university and the Norwegian Embassy.

For a start, seven projects received funding in 2000/2001, namely: Strengthening the Department of Planning and Development (NOK8.4 million); Administrative Computing – Automation and Management Information Systems

(NOK, 9.5 million); Strengthening the Department of Gender and Women Studies (NOK4.8 million); Strengthening the Department of the Academic Registrar – Academic Records Information System (NOK1.5 million); Strengthening Research Coordination in the School of Postgraduate Studies (NOK1.8 million); Support to the Faculty of Forestry, including the Budongo Research Project (NOK9.6 million) and Support to Nyabyeya Forestry College (NOK9.4 million). In the latter part of 2000/2001 and in 2001/2002, the following projects also came on line: Faculty of Agriculture – Farm Rehabilitation, Land Purchase at Kyetume and Continuing Agricultural Education Centre at Kabanyolo (NOK twelve million in total); Department of Animal Science – the Elite Ankole Cow Research and Breeding Project (NOK3.8 million); Department of Food Science and Technology – New Building and Equipment (NOK17.2 million); Institute of Computer Science (NOK9.5 million); School of Education – Outreach Programme (NOK1.2 million); Education Research and Extension (NOK three million); Education Resource Centre (NOK0.8 million); Department of Botany – Herbarium (NOK4.2 million); Department of Geography – Meteorological Unit (NOK3.3 million).

This massive financial support was one way NORAD was systematically assisting the university to achieve the goals and objectives set out in its 2000 – 2005/2007 Strategic Plan. Every activity in the IDP was aligned to this plan and to the Government of Uganda development plans like the Poverty Eradication Programme (PEAP), the 1997 – 2003 Education Strategic Investment Plan and the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA). The Norwegian strong interest in supporting agriculture was because according to the 1996 statistics, Uganda derived fourty five per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from agriculture, making it the largest economic sector. Besides contributing to food security, agriculture also served as the main source of income for the majority of Ugandans. Therefore, support to agricultural education and research was a high impact investment. Given this background, it did not come as a surprise that out of the NOK110 million, the Faculty of Agriculture with three projects in the IDP took thirty per cent of the grant, making it the largest single beneficiary of the NORAD support under the Institutional Development Programme (IDP). When combined with the closely related Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, including Nyabyeya Forestry College, the total share of the grant rose to almost fourty eight percent. Interestingly, fifty two per cent of the grant to the Faculty of Agriculture went to the Department of Food Science and Technology, which was established with the sole purpose of value adding to the country's agricultural produce. About thirty six per cent of the rest of the grant to the Faculty of Agriculture went to Makerere University Agricultural Research institute, Kabanyolo (MUARIK) and the Continuing Agricultural Education Center (CAEC). Later, the Department of Food Science received an additional NOK four million from the unallocated funds to complete its new building,

bringing its total share of the grant to NOK twenty one million. Although I was too busy to find out that they appreciated the NORAD support, I am sure my colleagues in the two Faculties had good reason to smile and perhaps to be a little happy with their Vice Chancellor, who worked so hard to get the financial support.

The NORAD grant made it possible for the Department of Food Science and Technology to have a home of its own space in a new and modern building on top of the Observatory Hill, which my children used to call the “Bipipa Hill” because of the many water tanks located there. Dr Joyce Kikafunda, the Head of Department together with small a team of her staff, which included Drs Muhammad Serunjogi and William Kyamihangire, spent several hours with the architects, NORPLAN, meticulously designing and planning the building. Besides a building befitting the department, they wanted laboratories which could meet the ISO standards. Pilot plants, cold rooms, food processing facilities for research and teaching, low cost equipment for traditional food processing, dairy products’ (including yoghurt and ice cream) processing equipment, solar dryers, dehydration and extruders, and a lot more were also on the long list of their needs. Certainly, the list of the items, which the department submitted was much longer. I have just mentioned a few to give the reader an idea of the magnitude of the department’s needs. For years, the department had been looking for ways of acquiring new and modern equipment for teaching and research. It was also fast becoming a referral centre for the food and agro- processing industry, so it was in dire need of space and modern equipment. For a long time, Uganda’s Government did not have the resources to equip the young department.

In addition to the main teaching and research building, which also housed the departmental as well as staff offices, the architects managed to squeeze in a conference hall without over-stretching the tight budget. I later learnt that the architects had initially found it very hard to come up with a design that fitted into the small budget, but after a lot of effort they were able to come out with something. Construction commenced in 2003 after the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda, Tore Gjos, cut the sod and laid the foundation stone at a colourful ceremony held on site. On April 6, 2005, the Ambassador commissioned this magnificent building, which stands majestically above the Faculty of Technology. However, shortly before I left the university in 2004, I had heard from the usual corridor talk that as soon as it moved into its new home, the department had plans to break away from the Faculty of Agriculture and transform into an autonomous Institute of Food Science and Technology. With a new and well-equipped facility, the department had reason to contemplate such a move, although I was sure it would not go down well with their Dean.

The IDP brought several spin-offs. For instance, after installing the MakLIBS, the University Library formalised a linkage with the University of Bergen with

the objective of facilitating an inter-library loan service. The service enabled both staff and students gain direct access to the University of Bergen rich library database online. The programme also facilitated Makerere University Library staff spending time at Bergen and the University of Bergen Library staff coming down to Makerere from time to time as part of the exchange programme between the two universities.

As far as I could recollect, Makerere University Library hardly had any professional linkages with libraries in other universities and therefore, hardly ever participated in exchange missions. The IDP changed all that. Besides the University Library, other NORAD grant beneficiary departments also explored and established collaborative linkages with other national and international institutions for purposes of training, research and outreach/extension services. For example, the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation started collaborating with the Agricultural University of Norway through NORAGRIC on a joint MSc degree in the Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture. Students registered for the programme, including Norwegians, spent the third semester at Makerere, taught by Makerere staff. The tripartite PhD programme and staff exchange with Sokoine University in Tanzania and the Agricultural University of Norway were the other initiatives in which the new Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation participated. The School of Education and the Faculty of Agriculture were able to re-activate their outreach and extension services to various schools and institutions throughout the country. In short, the university was able to take full advantage of the Institutional Development Programme to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in a variety of ways and ensure that the registered improvements were not skin-deep, but could be sustained long after the NORAD support ended, and that they were also keeping with the changing national and international higher education environment. By the time I was leaving the university, we had initiated discussions with NORAD on the possibility of funding a second phase, IDP II. That included, among other things, further support to some of the ongoing projects which could not be completed or which were not allocated sufficient funding in the first phase, such as the ICT project and the Management Information Systems, as well as bringing in a few new ones like a building for the Faculty of Technology. Unfortunately, I was unable to conclude the negotiations before I retired. Before I left, I made a passionate plea with the Norwegian Embassy and Mr Kibirige Mayanja that, should phase two of the IDP be approved, a provision be made for a new building for the Faculty of Technology. This was despite the rumour I had heard that NORAD was thinking of putting an end to further infrastructure development.

Working closely with the NORAD staff at the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala and in Oslo was a truly rewarding experience for me. It was one of the crowning achievements of my Administration. In the same vain, I wish to pay special tribute

to Dr David Byatike Matovu, that wonderful chair of the University Council for two three-year consecutive terms, who put all his weight behind the Programme to ensure that it succeeded. To all colleagues, who were responsible for implementing and coordinating the IDP and did so professionally, in particular Mohammed Kibirige Mayanja – the Programme Coordinator – and his team of Matia Kabuye the Statistician, John Mangheni, Florence Nakayiwa, Paul Teefe the Programme Accountant and Florence Bwanga (who went on to register for a PhD), Bob Lyazi, James Kabatangaale the University Internal Auditor and the entire Programme Steering Committee. Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, deserves a special mention for his good financial management skills. We could account for every cent. My Personal Assistant, Mrs Euphemia Kalema Kiwuwa, did a fine job; always ensuring all the necessary documentation was done and the minutes of meetings were written and circulated. Jane Francis Nabawanuka, the University Legal Officer; Alex Muraari Muhwezi, Sam Wandeka and Hellen Kawesa, all of my office provided me with the essential administrative back-up, which was so critical to the success of the entire programme. The two Ambassadors I was privileged to work with, Ambassador Arild Oyen and his successor, Ambassador Tore Gjøs, as well as the NORAD desk officers at the Embassy: Karl Solberg with whom we started it all, Harold Karlsens, Elisabeth Stribott and young Randi, who took over from Elisabeth; Mr Odero Obella, Patrick Ocailap and all staff in the AID Liaison Department of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for the annual tripartite meetings at the Ministry that ensured that the programme was well managed and the funds kept coming on time.

The NORAD Steering Committee, made of the various project leaders with Professor Livingstone Luboobi as alternate chair, essentially provided the programme with the right intellectual stimulus and stewardship.

### **The Norwegian Universities Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU)**

The Norwegian support to the university was not only through NORAD. Other Norwegian institutions were equally keenly interested in seeing Makerere regain its reputation as an outstanding African university, a status that was provisionally lost during the many years of political turmoil and economic hardship. In 1988, the Norwegian universities and colleges decided to set up the Norwegian Council of Universities Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU). It was set up with the objective of promoting a programme of academic research and education cooperation between the Norwegian institutions and institutions in the South, based on equal partnership. In 1991, NUFU successfully negotiated and entered into a five-year agreement with the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to finance the international cooperation programme between universities and university colleges in Norway and developing countries. The cooperation

with the institutions in the South was based on four broad goals, namely: Long-term commitments and agreements between partner institutions; Equality in the partnerships between the Norwegian institutions and the institutions in the South; Setting priorities; and Identifying needs as defined by the institutions in the developing countries. This was the decentralised model for implementing and managing the cooperation programmes.

The main objective of the NUFU initiative was to contribute to the creation and enhancement of research capacity and competence at universities in the developing countries. To achieve its objectives, the NUFU focused on four types of activities. Joint research cooperation; education and training of researchers for Masters and PhD degrees; developing new degree programmes; and training of technical and administrative staff. In terms of research support, NUFU focused on Agriculture and Fisheries, Health and Medical Sciences, Mathematical and Natural Sciences, as well as Humanities. The Science took the lion's share of NUFU funding. Like NORAD, NUFU wanted to support projects that had the highest positive impact on society in the developing countries. It laid a lot of emphasis on training large numbers of doctoral students from the developing countries – mainly through joint sandwich type of training in which students would take part of their training in Norway and the other part in their home countries. Creating a viable and sustainable research environment in the developing countries was one of NUFU's priorities. A higher number of individual publications by researchers from the developing countries and joint publications with their Norwegian counterparts was also part of NUFU's agenda. It also wanted to see policy makers in developing countries use research-based knowledge in decision-making, as well as create right conditions for enhanced industrial production by utilising research results and outcomes from the cooperation programmes. It also encouraged creation of sustainable North-South-South collaboration and viable networks.

Makerere University started participating in the NUFU programmes in 1991 after a meeting held in Harare that year between the Norwegian universities and African universities from East and West Africa and Sudan. For its part, Makerere University was interested in capacity building in basic sciences, as well as Science and Technical Education; strengthening the Departments of Dentistry and Pharmacy respectively; support to the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as strengthening the new Departments of Architecture and Land Surveying in the Faculty of Technology. Fortunately, Makerere was one of the universities in Africa which received a favourable response from the NUFU Board. I strongly suspect Makerere struck it lucky because Dr Endre Lilethum, a Physics Professor at the University of Bergen had visited the university in 1987/88 and found the laboratories in the Physics and other science departments in a deplorable state. On returning to Norway, he made a passionate appeal for support on behalf of Makerere University. In response to Professor Lilethum's appeal, in May 1992,

Makerere University and the University of Bergen signed a general agreement of cooperation in Bergen and thus began a long and enduring cooperation between the two universities. Other Norwegian universities and university colleges signed on later. The conclusion and signing of the agreement of cooperation qualified the two institutions to start drawing funds from NUFU to implement a programme of agreed activities. The first phase of NUFU's support at Makerere ended in 1994. I was fortunate to have participated in the negotiations for the second phase in 1995. At the time Professor Senteza Kajubi and Bernard Onyango, who was then Academic Registrar embarked an ambitious academic staff development programme. NUFU provided the badly needed input in terms of research, as well as teaching material and equipment.

Makerere University benefited from the NUFU support in several ways, all vital components to its development. In the first instance, the programme enabled some of the young Assistant Lecturers, Graduate Fellows and Teaching Assistants who had one degree to obtain their Masters degrees at Makerere and in Norway. It also provided a window of opportunity for members of staff who had, for one reason or other, missed upgrading to PhD level to study for that degree, which in turn enhanced their research competence and opportunity for promotion. Thirdly, through NUFU, the university acquired vital research supplies and equipment. Researchers at Makerere had the opportunity to access and utilise the well-equipped laboratories of the Norwegian universities. Fourthly, Makerere University was host to some of the top Norwegian and non-Norwegian academics who taught and co-supervised research students registered at Makerere, Norway and elsewhere. Norwegian undergraduate and postgraduate students too were afforded the opportunity to take part of their training at Makerere and to undertake research in Uganda. Interestingly, most of the Norwegian students preferred to share rooms in the halls of residence with Ugandan students. Additionally, many publications in peer-reviewed journals came out of the joint research projects. All this helped to increase the profile of Makerere University as a credible African university, and no doubt played a significant role in its academic recovery.

Following the signing of another four-year agreement which came into effect in 1996, by the time I left, I recall that Makerere University was collaborating with the following Norwegian universities and colleges: The University of Bergen; the Norwegian University of Science and Technology – formerly the University of Trondheim – and the Norwegian Institute of Technology (or NTH as it was then called); Agricultural University of Norway at Aas; Oslo School of Architecture; Oslo Veterinary School; School of Mission and Theology based at Stavanger. The University of Bergen took the lion's share of projects with Makerere. Between 1996 and 2000, NUFU had committed up to NOK twenty three million, equivalent to US\$ three million dollar, of support to ten projects and programmes at Makerere. The university was implementing the projects in collaboration with

partner institutions in Norway. In fact, most of the NUFU funding went into supporting joint research projects. In 2001, we entered a new funding cycle with a few more projects coming on board and a few old ones dropped. One of the most interesting features about the NUFU cooperation was the powers NUFU gave to us to decide the kind of projects we wanted it to fund. However, we did this taking into consideration the interest of our partners in Norway. Makerere staff and their counterparts in Norway had to submit joint project proposals to a panel of evaluators at Makerere of which the Vice Chancellor was the chair. We had to rank all the proposals in order of merit and priority, and consequently submit a detailed report on each to the NUFU Board in Norway. On receiving our rankings, the NUFU board made the final decisions.

In a relatively short time the NUFU house in Garden Hill became a hive of activity and constant comings and goings. One of the projects I found very interesting was one submitted by Dr Yusuf Kizito of the Zoology Department at Makerere and Professor Peter Larson of the University of Bergen titled Nature, Society and Water. It was going into its second phase, but we almost failed to find money for it. Although its objectives were strongly relevant to the Ugandan situation, at the time the NUFU budget could not accommodate it. We had to search for funding for it from another source. It was the first NUFU-like projects to have benefited from the IDP grant as had been the agreed arrangement prior to the signing of the IDP grant agreement. Since at the time NUFU was not part of NORAD, we had to make a special case for us to use part of the unallocated NOK ten million IDP budget to fund it. NORAD granted the request.

### **Cooperation Between Makerere University and the University of Bergen – The First Experience in Joint Degree Awards and Credit Transfer**

As far as I could recollect, the idea of forging collaborative linkages with universities abroad dated back to the early 1980s when Professor Asavia Wandira tried, but with limited success, to initiate an academic linkage between Makerere University and Pavia University in Italy. Professor George Kirya picked up the idea and popularised it further. In the intervening years, Makerere University began to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with universities and research institutions around the world. Some MoUs blossomed and translated into real action and successful relationships. Sadly, others remained just dry ink on paper or fell by the wayside. Without exaggeration and given the fact that neither institution had ever worked with the other before, the linkage between the University of Bergen and Makerere University was one of the most successful and enduring relationships Makerere University had ever had with a European University in recent years, and stands out loftily as an excellent example of successful academic collaboration. The initial contact with the University of Bergen began in 1988, but serious work activity started in 1992 with the signing of a five-year general agreement

of cooperation which expired in 1997. Fortunately, during this period, the scope of cooperation between the two institutions kept expanding. Within these first five years, four Centres and seven departments at the University of Bergen were actively involved in the cooperation with Makerere. At Makerere, two Faculties and six departments were participating in the joint programmes with Bergen. The NUFU-funded Basic Sciences for Technological Development project was one of the most successful joint activities undertaken by both universities in the first five years of cooperation. Based on what this project had achieved, the two universities decided to continue working together with more programmes added to the list of the joint activities. Besides NUFU, funding for the new projects was sought from other sources as well. The Norwegian Research Council agreed to fund the first phase of the Nature, Society and Water project on Lake Victoria. The University of Bergen too injected its own money into the project, including a new research boat with an outboard engine. Other interesting joint projects submitted to the Norwegian Research Council for funding included Light and Life in Lake Victoria and Aquaculture, Nutrition and Health in Developing Countries. As part of its commitment to the cooperation agreement, the University of Bergen agreed to co-finance the latter project during the planning phase. Biosystematics at Makerere University; Gender Studies; Integrated Management of Fresh Water Ecotones in Uganda; Women and Water and a Master of Science Degree in Integrated Management of Areas by Rivers and Lakes were some of the additional joint programmes on the growing list of new areas of cooperation at the time. As expected, Makerere's contribution to the projects was mainly in kind.

After an internal review of the cooperation a few years later, we mutually agreed that the cooperation had been a success and had benefited both partner institutions. As a follow up to this success story, we approved a proposal for the two universities to enter into a long-term agreement that ensured the sustainability of the cooperation for at least fifteen years. However, as an escape clause, we included a provision for evaluating the principal agreement document (or the strategic document as my colleagues at Bergen preferred to call it) every five years, and the annexes every three years. We also narrowed down the cooperation locus to four mutually agreed broad areas: Research Collaboration (joint research and teaching); Scientific Competence Building (exchange of information and publications); Staff and Student Exchange; and Institutional Development. We further emphasised the importance of integrating institutional development into all collaborative activities by encouraging staff at both universities to participate in the cooperation programme.

In November 1999, I had the honour of hosting a delegation from the University of Bergen, led by none other than the Rector herself, Professor Kirsti Koch Christensen. Incidentally, she was no stranger to Makerere. She told me she had visited the university before. On November 18, 1999 I sat down with her in

the Council Room in the Main Building and both of us appended our signatures to a fifteen-year Frame Agreement. Mrs Jamila Kamulegeya signed as witness for Makerere on behalf of Mr. Avitus Tibarimbasa, University Secretary, who was away at the time and Mr Kare Rommetveit, the Director General of the University of Bergen (the equivalent of the University Secretary in our system) signed as the second witness on behalf of the University of Bergen.

While the University of Bergen had appointed a full-time Makerere–Bergen liaison officer with a coordinating office at Bergen, we were yet to appoint one and identify a proper office for him. After the retirement of Professor Endre Lilethum, the University of Bergen appointed Professor Andrea Steigen, a zoologist as new coordinator. Professor Luboobi had been heading the Basic Sciences for Technological Development project for many years and had done a good job. We asked him whether he would be interested in coordinating the Makerere–Bergen cooperation programme on behalf of Makerere University. In effect, in that role, he acted as Professor Steigen's counterpart. He gladly accepted the responsibility, but needed an office and a small staff to assist him administer the programme. Fortunately, we were able to squeeze him in one of the flats at Lincoln House, which at the time was under renovation. The office would also double as a residence for the staff from Bergen. Andre Steigen and Livingstone Luboobi inspected about three flats after I had sought permission to enter and both settled on one of their choice. I signed it off to them and it became the Bergen–Makerere office. It was not long before serious activities began in earnest. One of the main responsibilities of the coordinator's office was to take care of the students from Bergen, who were at Makerere on the student exchange programme. The University of Bergen furnished the office and provided the coordinator with a brand new off-road vehicle for quick and convenient mobility.

Collaboration with the University of Bergen introduced a new and innovative feature at Makerere and took institutional collaboration to a new level. For example, student exchange was not restricted to the usual occasional student type. It was a much more serious affair. It involved, among other things, actual credit transfer and joint degree awards. As far as I could recall, this was the first time foreign students were taking full credit courses taught at Makerere and examined by Makerere staff, and carried the credits they earned to their home university, and such counted towards their total degree credit load. This was a totally new experience. Once again, we were witnessing history in the making. A new era of internalisation of higher education with the Global North was unfolding; one that promoted international networking, sharing of academic and socio-cultural experiences, and free mobility of students and staff among universities,

Under the Frame Agreement, both universities agreed to recognise credits earned from one another. Where there was substantial overlap between courses, there would be a deduction in the credits corresponding to the overlap. However,

it was a conditional requirement that the student's department at the home university had to accept the study programme offered at the host institution before departure. The arrangement included prior credit recognition. Furthermore, to avoid misuse of the student's study time at the host institution, the exchange students were required to maintain full-time enrolment during their stay. Their study programme abroad would be included in the study plan, which they would have followed at their home university as a requirement for the completion of their degree programme. However, a student was free to take additional courses at the host institution as long as there was good reason to believe that such courses would be of value to the student's experience on return to his or her home institution. Language and culture would be among such courses. Where tuition and boarding fees were applicable, they were paid direct to the host university. In addition, students had to certify on their application to Bergen or Makerere that they were in satisfactory academic standing.

In the pilot phase, joint awards were restricted to graduate degrees only, Masters or PhD, in a sandwich or joint research programme between the two universities. The requirements for the jointly awarded degrees were relatively simple and straightforward. There had to be a matching Masters degree at either university. Candidates had to fulfil the requirements of both universities for registration or graduation. Preferably, a candidate for the joint degree had to be a participant in an ongoing joint research project between the two universities. The challenge was how to operationalise these bold and innovative ideas the two universities had mutually agreed to undertake together. Because Makerere University had no policy on either credit transfer or joint degree awards, we found ourselves not ready to sign the Student Exchange and Joint Degrees Agreement yet, despite the fact that the Agreement was ready for signing in early 2003. It had to wait until the policy had been enacted and put in place. Although I could not hold back my enthusiasm for such innovative ideas, I soon realised that we were in uncharted waters and my time was fast running out, so we had to act quickly. I wanted the Agreement signed before I left the university. I had worked closely with my colleagues on this initiative and I wanted to leave when everything was finalised and ready for implementation. For me, working with colleagues at the University of Bergen had been a rich and rewarding experience, which culminated in the joint awards scheme, something we had never attempted before. So for all intents and purposes, I did not want to leave it half done. As we worked on this and other initiatives, I regularly visited Bergen and what I found most amusing was the constant talk about the weather. I had all along believed that it was only the English who always complained about their weather. It was interesting to discover that the Norwegians also constantly complained about the same thing. Every resident of the city of Bergen I met every time I was there was complaining about the terrible weather and the constant rain. That was one of my many interesting Bergen experiences I wanted to recount to the Rector next time she visited.

Fortunately, the policy on joint awards did not take us long to sort out. By July 2003, Senate had prepared a Policy Document on Joint Awards and was ready for the University Council to approve. In September that year, the University Council approved the policy. Interestingly, the impetus for such a policy had not only come from our collaboration with the University of Bergen, but also from a variety of other sources. In 2001, Makerere University Business School (MUBS) and the National University of Rwanda (NUR), proposed to start a Master of Business Administration degree, which they wanted to be a joint award between the NUR and Makerere University. While considering the proposal submitted by MUBS and NUR, it became clear that Makerere University had no policy on joint awards and Senate found itself in a tight corner. It had ended there until it came up again in 2003 under the University of Bergen–Makerere University collaboration. This time, Senate decided to set up an ad hoc five-member committee, chaired by Professor John Opuda Asibo who was then Director of the School of Postgraduate Studies, to evolve a policy on joint awards between Makerere University and other universities. Up until then, we had only sandwich programmes run jointly with other universities, but the students who were participating in them had to register at only one university, either Makerere or the partner university.

Admittedly, it was not a satisfactory arrangement. In fact, some of our partners had started complaining that it was unfair for a student to do a substantial part of his or her study or thesis work at their university and, at the end of it all, Makerere alone awarded the degree. They argued that such a partnership did not give due recognition to their contribution. Therefore, what they were looking for was fair recognition of each institution's contribution to the student's degree. A few of them saw the joint awards scheme as the answer. Senate had to take note of their complaints. Incidentally, before the Opuda-Asibo's committee submitted its report, there were some nagging questions being asked, to which we had to provide answers. For instance, some asked why Makerere University should get involved in joint awards. Was this not one way the university was surrendering its academic autonomy to other universities? I guess the reason why such questions were being asked was that the majority of universities are notoriously fearful of anything which is perceived as undermining their academic reputation. In effect, they were cautioning us that before we appended our logo on a certificate which bore a logo of another university, we should first assure ourselves that the partner university was academically at par with Makerere University. To allay the lingering fears, we had to assure the critics that by going into joint degree awards, Makerere University was not necessarily surrendering part of its academic autonomy to other universities. If anything in a world that was changing so fast, any initiative that was likely to enhance Makerere's academic standing in the world was certainly welcome. It was therefore time that Makerere University had a proper policy to govern the joint awards.

Following the recommendations of the Opuda-Asibo Committee, Senate gave a broad definition of a joint award as an award following jointly executed teaching, supervision and examination or all such multidisciplinary responsibilities between one or more departments at Makerere and other relevant and recognised universities. A joint award presupposed that collaboration or cooperation existed between the partner institutions, thus creating an enabling environment in which students and academic staff could willingly and mutually interact intellectually. According to Senate, joint awards served two purposes, namely to utilise related and relevant expertise towards a course, degree award or closely-related specialities; and to establish partnerships between different universities for mutual academic benefits. Senate also identified three major advantages of joint awards accruing to Makerere University. Firstly, inherent in the joint award programmes was an element of mutual learning, leading to a better understanding of each institution's comparative advantage, as well as its limitations. Secondly joint awards had the potential to strengthen and reinforce Makerere's capacity to undertake high quality research. It was also the view of Senate that joint awards would boost the university's international visibility.

The policy was comprehensive and required, as a first step, that the collaborating university for the purposes of a joint award be a recognised institution with the requisite facilities and expertise to manage, teach, supervise and examine students. In addition, the collaborating university must possess the research capacity commensurate with the level of the joint award. Ethical issues related to the award had to be taken into account and agreed as jointly acceptable by either university. Students and staff involved in the joint degree programmes had to be made aware of all procedures related to such awards. Likewise, the partnership between Makerere and the partner university had to be complementary and equal. The existence of a collaborative agreement between Makerere University and the collaborating partner university was an essential pre-requisite to any joint award scheme. The funding mechanisms had to be agreed on right from the beginning and included as a clause in the agreement of collaboration or memorandum of understanding. Any intellectual property arising out of research undertaken for purposes of a joint award belonged to the partner university where the research was done. However, the partner university had to work out how to share any accruing financial proceeds in a format acceptable to all partners, taking into account each university's rules and regulations on intellectual property. The admission requirements of Makerere University and the partner institution had to be equivalent, otherwise any modifications or new requirements had to be mutually agreed on. The duration of study and stay at each university was to be defined and prescribed as a requirement. Quality assurance instruments, as well as the examination regulations and procedures had also to be mutually agreed right at the outset of the programme. Makerere University and the partner university would issue academic transcripts on terms agreed in the memorandum

of understanding. On certificates, the policy stipulated that the name of the award must be in existence at either institution and the certificate had to bear both or all universities' logos side-by-side; a statement attributed to the awarding bodies in the partner universities; the title of the degree (with class where applicable) and the signatures of the relevant authorities at each university. A joint award candidate was free to attend graduation at each partner institution, but would receive the award at only one university. For arbitration and termination of cooperation, the policy required the appointment of an arbitrator.

In case of termination or withdrawal from the programme by any of the partners, the partner had to give a one-year's notice, which had to be mutually consented to. When for one reason or another the cooperation between the institutions had to be terminated, the students already registered would be assisted to complete their studies.

The new policy not only paved way for Makerere University to award degrees jointly with the University of Bergen, it also made it easy for the university to participate in joint award programmes with any other recognised institution around the world. Although we now had a policy and were ready to enter into collaboration with the University of Bergen, we doubted whether the experiment would work, for the simple reason that the two cooperating universities were located in totally different settings. Makerere was a university located in the Global South and Bergen was in the Global North. Would Makerere live up to the high expectations of the Norwegian students, especially in terms of facilities? The more I thought about it, the more I wondered whether we had not embarked on an expedition into the unknown and had got to a point of no return. We had to bite the bullet, after all we had been telling the world that Makerere was an international university with a proven track record of academic accomplishments, but which had taken a temporary nose-dive during Uganda's turbulent years. After years of hard work, it had sufficiently recovered from the ashes. Now was the time to put that rhetoric to test and pass it with flying colours.

By the time I retired, the experiment was still in its early days, but by all accounts, it seemed to be working to everyone's satisfaction. For instance, between the 2002/2003 and 2004/2005 academic years, about twenty undergraduate and eight graduate students, including one PhD student of the University of Bergen, had studied at Makerere for periods ranging from six weeks to two semesters on mutually agreed programmes. The only criticism I heard voiced by the Norwegian students was that some of our staff were always dictating notes instead of lecturing. I suppose the tendency to dictate notes was one of the legacies of times past when students had no access to textbooks and computers, and lecturers had to dictate lots of notes to make up for the unavailable textbooks. The criticism notwithstanding, I am tempted to believe that the collaboration with the University of Bergen also marked the beginning of re-internationalising Makerere

University. However, the memorandum of understanding on Joint Awards with the University of Bergen – (Frame Agreement between Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda and University of Bergen, Bergen Norway, on Research Collaboration, Scientific Competence Building, Students and Staff Exchange and Institutional Development; Agreement on Joint Degrees) was concluded in November 2004 by my successor, Professor Livingstone Luboobi. Even before the agreement on joint awards was concluded, the relationship between Makerere and Bergen had been extremely productive. It assisted Makerere to strengthen its staff development. For instance, between 1991 and 2001, thirteen PhD and forty Makerere Masters candidates had obtained their degrees under this collaborative arrangement and the number was still growing. In 2002, the Faculty of Medicine began collaborating with the Medical School of the University of Bergen, thus becoming one of the latest additions to the list.

Sweden was my next port of call.

### **The Swedish International Agency for International Development and its Research Arm, SAREC (Sida/SAREC)**

#### ***Makerere and the Swedish Universities Cooperate in Research and Joint PhD Awards***

I am tempted to believe that during the dying years of the twenty-first century, which ushered in the new millennium, Makerere's lucky stars were positioned in the right Zodiac constellation. Not only was our relationship with the Norwegian universities blossoming, we were also attracting other partners and new opportunities. At about this time when we were about to conclude discussions with our partners at the University of Bergen on a new frame agreement and joint awards, Sida/SAREC informed us that some Swedish universities we were collaborating with were also interested in exploring the possibility of entering into a joint PhD programme with Makerere University. As I recall, this was the time we had started rolling out the Makerere University–Sida/SAREC bilateral research collaboration programme on the theme: Lake Victoria and Other Water Sources.

The research projects on health, urban waste management, socio-economic and political change, as well as technology and the environment in the Faculties of Medicine, Social Sciences, Technology and Agriculture were already underway and attracting postgraduate students, most of them on staff development. Right from the outset, Sida/SAREC had told us that it was interested in sponsoring long-term university collaboration between Uganda and Sweden, with the aim of strengthening postgraduate research, PhD supervision and training at several faculties, schools and institutes at Makerere University. Therefore, a joint awards programme was another dimension of its support to Makerere University.

When Sida/SAREC suggested that we go into joint PhD awards with some Swedish universities, our Medical School had started collaborating with the Karolinska Institute – a medical University in Stockholm and the home of the Noble Committee for Medicine or Physiology. Karolinska was ready to take the plunge, but our Medical School had a few problems to sort out. As we have seen elsewhere in this account, most members of staff in the Medical School were reluctant to register for the supervised PhD. Instead, they preferred their traditional and unsupervised Doctor of Medicine or MD degree which, according to their arguments, was more professionally oriented than the PhD. However, the link with the Karolinska Institute changed their mindset. Gradually, several members of staff came forward and registered in the joint PhD programme. However, Karolinska Institute was not satisfied with the old practice where only one institution in a joint graduate programme reserved the right to award the degree. They wanted a joint award and so we began the long process of formalising the joint awards arrangements. As I discovered later, it was not plain sailing for the Karolinska Institute either. The leadership of the Karolinska Institute found it tough sell to their staff and the Swedish Government because, like us, they too had never been involved in joint degree awards with other institutions, particularly in Africa. On a happy note, eventually they were able to convince both staff and Government that what they were proposing was a good idea which, in the long run, would be of benefit to both institutions.

In November 2003, in the company of the Director of the Postgraduate School, the University Bursar and other university officers, I made a short visit to Stockholm to conclude and sign the Joint PhD Award Agreement with the Rector of the Karolinska Institute. This was my second visit to Stockholm since the signing of agreement for the Sida/SAREC support to Makerere University, between the Government of Uganda and the Royal Government of Sweden. The historical signing ceremony took place in the prestigious Nobel Committee building. As I put pen to paper as did the Rector, Professor Hans Wigzell, on behalf of the Karolinska Institute, I could not help thinking that once again this was further proof that Makerere University was regaining its rightful position as a centre of academic excellence and a rightful member of the international community of universities.

The visit to Karolinska Institute had an added bonus. It happened to coincide with the Nobel Prize Awarding ceremony. It was indeed a rare opportunity for me and the colleagues who accompanied me to the prestigious ceremony, which was presided over by the King of Sweden. Rector Hans Wigzell had so kindly arranged it for us to witness the exclusive and colourful ceremony to which only a few are invited. Listening to the citations and acceptance speeches of the new laureates, and seeing them receive their laurels from the King was such a captivating experience. It was an occasion you do not forget so easily. It lives with

you for the rest of your life and, as a scientist, I could not help but indulge in some day-dreaming and regretting that if I had not abandon my science early for other things, perhaps I could have been one of them. With my paper in *Nature*, who knows!

The signing of the cooperation agreement in Stockholm formalised the joint awards arrangements between Makerere and the Karolinska Institute, but left out other Swedish universities we had entered into collaboration with. For those universities which were not participating in the joint PhD awards, the arrangement was for Makerere students to register at the collaborating Swedish University, but with two supervisors – one in Sweden and one at Makerere. Where it was possible and feasible, the student did the bulk of their PhD research work at Makerere. Some Swedish universities required the students to register for the Licentiate first before attempting the PhD. Initially, the idea of subjecting our students to what appeared to be another Masters degree when they already had one did not appeal to me. I had seen it as a waste of student's valuable time. It also reminded me of the old Makerere Licentiate in Medicine which, before the opening of the University of East Africa in 1963, was the only medical qualification the college awarded and that was long time ago. Why go back to the old and phased-out qualifications, moreover in Engineering? However, my second visit to Stockholm in November 2003 changed my pre-conceived notion about the Licentiate.

Besides the main signing ceremony at the Karolinska Institute, I also squeezed in a visit to the Royal Institute of Technology (or KTH as it is known by its Swedish acronym), located on the other side of the town. This was the main Swedish Engineering University which was collaborating with our Faculty of Technology. John Baptist Kirabira of the Department of Mechanical Engineering was part of the first batch of Makerere PhD students to register at KTH, with Dr Joseph Byaruhanga as his supervisor on the Makerere side. He had completed his Licentiate and was going to defend it. I had heard and read about the public thesis defence system in the Swedish universities against an opponent, but I had never witnessed one before. The Rector of KTH had requested me to attend Kirabira's public defence of his thesis, which was literally open to whoever was interested.

As I sat in the auditorium waiting for the dual to start, I felt nervous about the whole thing. In fact, it was a tense moment for me. I imagined Kirabira being tormented by some Swedish Nobel Laureate Professor as his opponent. Much as I had a lot of confidence in his intellectual prowess, I could not help sympathising with him. It must have been a tense moment for him too. The occasion reminded me of my PhD thesis defence some twenty-six years ago. However, my defence was different. It involved my supervisor, the external examiner and one other professor, moreover behind closed doors. This one was in effect open to a potentially unlimited number of examiners – the audience. Kirabira's opponent was a professor with an imposing frame from the University of Stockholm. It was one of the few

Swedish universities Makerere had no links with. I also learnt something new. In the Swedish system, a thesis is a collection of academic papers on the candidate's area of study. Each chapter in the thesis is composed of a series of published papers or papers due for publication. The opponent picks questions from every part of the thesis and the candidate has to answer them before an attentive audience. Like the rest of us, Kirabira's two supervisors were just part of the audience, literally onlookers. Kirabira was sweating it alone. As is their practice, towards the end of the dual, the opponent is free to ask if the audience has a question to put to the candidate. It was a tense, but fascinating process to watch. John Kirabira easily outwitted his opponent and passed the defence with what I thought were flying colours. I do not recall him failing to answer any of his opponent's questions. In fact, his opponent was full of praises for him congratulated him on his good research and outstanding performance.

Although I never considered race as an issue in matters of intellectual ability, nevertheless I found it a rewarding experience seeing John Kirabira, an African student trained as an engineer in an African-based university, stand before a predominantly white audience and perform so well. Much as it was not a PhD, his outstanding performance was a source of pride for me as his Vice Chancellor. The Licentiate was a step towards the PhD, which he also defended and passed less than two years later. The Licentiate defence was a sort of a dress rehearsal for the real thing. His supervisors were all smiles too for a job well done. His research on Ugandan clays showed that Uganda had high-grade furnace refractory clays. Later as we took a walk through his department and School, I noticed several students looking intensely at a piece of paper pinned up on the billboard. Kirabira told us that indeed the students were looking at their test grades which had just been pasted up, adding that the reason why the students looked anxious was because it was common at KTH for students to fail their tests. He narrated how the Swedish students were amazed at his ability to pass those tests, and pass well too. As we continued the tour of the School, I was happy to meet more Makerere students from different departments of the Faculty of Technology, who had followed Kirabira at the KTH and were doing well. I must admit that before my visit there, KTH was one of the Swedish universities I knew very little about, just as I used to think that there was only one university in the city of Uppsala – the old and famous University of Uppsala, founded in the fifteenth century. It was not until the Faculty of Agriculture linked up with the Agricultural University of Sweden (LSV), located on the outskirts of the same city, that I realised that Uppsala had two separate universities. The Agricultural University of Sweden, like the University of California, is a system with several campuses with its headquarters in Ultuna near Uppsala.

After a series of very productive meetings at the Karolinska Institute and in her laboratory at the same institute during my first visits to Sweden in the summer of

2001, Dr Hannah Akuffo proposed that I should go with her to the Agriculture University at Uppsala to meet with the Rector. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the modalities of the collaboration which the two universities had entered into, but the details of which the Rector and I had not had the occasion to discuss one-on-one. I was anxious to finalise with him what should go into the final print of the memorandum of understanding. We drove to Uppsala on a rather rainy day, but the occasion provided us with an opportunity to see the beauty of that part of Sweden in summer.

I was pleasantly surprised to be welcomed by Dr Annakbong, a Ugandan, who told me that he hailed from Mukono. He had been with the LSV for several years and was already well established there as part of the academic staff of the university. I believe by then he was at the rank of Associate Professor. Later, as part of the Sida/SAREC project linking the two universities, Dr Annakbong became a frequent visitor to the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere. When he visited Makerere again in January 2004 to attend the second Donors' Conference, he had just been promoted to the coveted rank of full Professor at the same university. We were all happy for him. He was proving that, given the chance, Ugandans can make it anywhere in the world. As one of the Sida/SAREC senior researchers at Makerere, Professor Elly Sabiiti of the Department of Crop Science and Dean of Agriculture was one of his links at Makerere. At the time, Professor Sabiiti had developed an interesting research project he was implementing with his counterparts at LSV, which involved innovative ways of converting the heaps of Kampala's garbage into fertiliser for peri-urban agriculture. In fact, in one of the meetings held at Fairway Hotel in Kampala, the participants proposed that on his next visit to LSV, Professor Sabiiti should go along with Sebaana Kizito, Kampala's Mayor, for him to see at first-hand how the city of Uppsala handles solid waste disposal and management. Unfortunately, the invitation to the Mayor never materialised.

The meetings of postgraduate research students and their supervisors, both at Makerere and at the partner Swedish universities, which used to be held at Makerere annually, was one of the means of assessing the progress of project implementation in each of the four participating Faculties and the School of Postgraduate Studies. I must say that when it came to these meetings, Dr Hannah Akuffo was very diligent. She always attended them in person. Secondly, and as with NORAD, one of the clauses in the cooperation agreement between Sida/SAREC and Makerere University was the mandatory annual tripartite meeting between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Makerere University and Sida/SAREC. The purpose was to review the progress the entire project had made in the course of the year and approve the budget and work plan for the following year. Initially we used to hold two separate meetings at different times, one with NORAD and another with Sida/SAREC. In 2003 however, the two agencies together with us agreed to have one combined annual meeting. It was interesting to see the two

Scandinavian neighbours sit together at the same table with us, but it worked out beautifully. The good preparatory work of Kibirige Mayanja and his team in the Planning and Development Department, the well-written progress report and the positive Auditor General's statement on the projects' audited accounts, coupled with the efficient way Mr Obela of the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (or Mr Patrick Ocailap in his absence) chaired the meetings, we always left the meeting satisfied that on balance, the projects were proceeding well. In total, the Sida/SAREC support to Makerere University for the period 2000 – 2004 amounted to ninety eight million Swedish Kronners, which is equivalent to about US\$ ten Million at the time.

This was indeed a big boost to our research effort and postgraduate training. This research grant was additional to the funding the University Library and ICT channelled through the DICTS. Shortly before I retired, we had begun preliminary discussions on the possibility of a second phase. Since my time was up, I had to leave it to my successor to conclude the negotiations with Sida/SAREC and close the deal. In my final interactions with them, some Sida officials had indicated that if we could provide a new facility, Sida would give favourable consideration to a request from Makerere to re-equip the Faculty of Technology. There was even a proposal for a soft loan to finance the construction of the building. Unfortunately, it was too late for me to conclude those discussions. I just prayed that NORAD would provide the funds for a building for the Faculty of Technology in the second phase of the Institutional Development Programme.

### **The Carnegie Corporation of New York**

In 1911, the American steel mogul, Andrew Carnegie, set up and endowed a philanthropic foundation which interestingly, but contrary to the norm, he decided to call a Corporation; the Carnegie Corporation of New York. He acted as its first and founding president; a position he held until 1919. Andrew Carnegie set up the Corporation to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of United States. It was one of Carnegie's greatest endowments and the only one he established as a grant-making foundation. According to his will, the grants were to benefit primarily people of the United States of America, although up to seven per cent of the funds could be used for the benefits of the people of other countries that were or had been British overseas territories and the commonwealth, in particular sub-Saharan Africa.

According to available records, the Corporation indeed lived up to Andrew Carnegie's wishes at Makerere when Uganda was still under British rule. For example, the college received the Corporation's first grant amounting to £1,350 in 1943 to buy badly-needed textbooks, followed with a donation of a complete Library of Congress catalogue to the College Library in 1953. In 1955, the

Corporation made two more grants, one amounting to £28,720, which was used partly to fund the employment of extra staff for the College Library, an extra mural studies resident tutor based in Kenya, and partly for a Public Administration course developer. Another grant totalling US\$50,000 was made to the East African Institute of Social Research in the same year. Certainly, it would be an understatement to describe it as simply a big grant; it was an enormous sum going to a single unit.

In 1971, the National Institute became the second academic unit at Makerere to benefit from a Carnegie Corporation grant, amounting to US\$300,000. Sadly, that would also be the last grant the Corporation made to Makerere and Uganda until 1993, some twenty-two years later. Like most American-based foundations which either withdrew support, or scaled down their support to the university altogether in those difficult years, the Carnegie Corporation too stopped making grants to Makerere as a result of the unfavourable political environment that existed at the time. In 1993, long after the political dust, which had been responsible for much of the instability in the country, had settled down; the Corporation resumed its operations in Uganda with a modest grant to Makerere University to organise a conference on Social and Economic Development in Uganda.

In 1997, discussions began and culminated in the signing of the first three-year memorandum of understanding between the Corporation and Makerere University. In 1998, the Corporation began to disburse the grant to the university. However, the real big breakthrough came in the year 2000 when Dr Vartan Gregorian, the Corporation's twelfth President, paid a special visit to Makerere. At the time of his visit, we were in the process of drafting a new and comprehensive five-year (2000-2005) University Strategic Plan. However, when we embarked on this exercise, neither the Government of Uganda nor the university had enough money to enable us carry through the entire planning process. We soon realised that without additional funding, we could not complete the exercise, so as usual we turned to our donors. The Carnegie Corporation responded with a US\$72,000 grant. Besides supporting the university-wide planning process, the Corporation provided an additional grant of US\$50,000 in the same year, which assisted twenty-five faculties and administrative units to develop their micro-strategic plans, based on the main plan. The idea was to move away from over-centralised planning to assist the lower university units like departments become the main planning centres.

As far as I can recall, the resumption of the Carnegie Corporation support to Makerere began as a low-key affair, with the exploratory discussions we had with Professor Narciso Matos and other Corporation's officials, including Ms Andrea Johnson, a regular visitor to Makerere, and others. These discussions started in the late 1990s, but quickly picked up. Professor Matos and I were not strangers. I

had known him before when he was Rector of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, and subsequently as Secretary General of the Association of African Universities (AAU) based in Accra, Ghana. He had moved over to New York and was now the chairman of the international programmes at the Corporation. Those discussions were very productive. They laid the ground work for a much larger grant the Carnegie Corporation had ever made to Makerere University. President Gregorian's brief, but notable visit to Makerere University in 2000 was a further testimony to the long lost, but newly found friendship between the Carnegie Corporation and Makerere University, and in a way served to reinforce the Corporation's new commitment to Makerere.

Dr Gregorian came with Prof Matos on his maiden visit to Makerere to inform us that the Carnegie Corporation had gone into partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation, and had launched a broad programme of support aimed at strengthening Africa's higher education, called Partnership for African Higher Education. Based on its record of accomplishments, Makerere University had qualified as one of the first universities in Africa and Asia earmarked to benefit from the first US\$100 million grant. The launch of the grant was a big event held in New York in 2002, which I was expected to attend. However, due to my many pressing commitments, I requested Professor Epelu Opio to represent me and the university at the launching ceremony.

I had long learnt from experience that the best way to manage a big grant was through a steering committee made up of representatives of the beneficiary units. It guaranteed ownership and involvement, transparency and accountability. The Sida/SAREC grant had been the exception to this practice because of its nature. But like Sida/SAREC, research and research management, which was under the School of Postgraduate Studies was one of the Carnegie Corporation's primary focus. The Carnegie grant was somewhat different from other grants and this called for the setting up of a good steering committee to provide proper oversight.

The grant covered many unrelated components which required good coordination. In the subsequent discussions with Professor Matos, it happened that in addition to the overall institutional development programme, which was part of the Strategic Plan, the Corporation wished to channel most of its financial support to just three broad areas. The areas of interest to the Corporation were the Female Scholarship Initiative (FSI), which was basically a scholarship fund for fee paying female students from disadvantaged backgrounds; ICT development, including automation in the University Library system; and support to the science laboratories. We were assured that within these broad areas, several teaching and non-teaching departments stood to benefit from the Corporation's support. That said and done, it took us a while to agree on the list of beneficiary units. At

the end, we narrowed the list down to about ten units, namely the School of Postgraduate Studies, the University Library Service, Department of Women and Gender Studies, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Technology, Department of Distance Education in the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, Planning and Development Department and the Gender Mainstreaming Division in the Academic Registrar's Department. Although the original Committee had a membership of seven, including Professor Livingstone Luboobi who succeeded me as Vice Chancellor, in its wisdom, the Committee decided to co-opt four more members to ensure that it was representative of all beneficiary units. As Vice Chancellor, I served briefly as its chair. Now the practice was that the Director of Planning served as the grant coordinator and secretary to the Steering Committee. However, after the initial formalities of securing University Council approval for establishing the Committee, it was agreed that the Vice Chancellor was too busy and involved in too many things to continue chairing the Steering Committee; someone else had to do it. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor could have chaired it, but the consensus of the Committee members was that one of them should serve as chair and report directly to the Vice Chancellor. By consensus, the responsibility fell on the shoulders of Professor Nelson Sewankambo, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. At first, he was reluctant to take on the additional responsibility as he already had many other commitments, but with a bit of persuasion he accepted to become the Committee's chair.

Besides the main Steering Committee, the FSI had its own Committee, with Professor Ruth Mukama as its chair. The FSI Committee had the daunting task of identifying the bona fide needy students who deserved the scholarships, and administering the three-year US\$1.5 million fund. As usual, suddenly every private female student became needy. According to the terms of the grant agreement, seventy five percent of the scholarships had to go to students enrolled in science-based disciplines. The aim was to encourage more females to go into these disciplines where they were grossly under-represented. Only thirty per cent was reserved for students in the humanities. The competition for the scholarships was extremely intense, thus putting the FSI Committee members under enormous pressure. For instance, when the scheme was first launched in the academic year 2001/2002, the Committee received 450 applications. Out of those many applicants, the Committee selected only ninety nine for the scholarships – sixty Science and thirty nine Humanities. It was an arduous task to sort out the really needy from the greedy. Although from a distance, I was experiencing the pressure too. People approached me to lobby for their children to secure a Carnegie scholarship. A clear and transparent selection criterion went a long way to ensure that the Committee always selected the genuinely deserving applicants and maintained good balance between the sciences and the humanities. The FSI was actually a landmark in the university's history. Makerere was not

in the habit of awarding scholarships to its students, save for the state sponsored performance-based scholarship scheme. The practice was that students paid fees to the university and not the other way round. The FSI scholarships were quite generous and covered practically every needy student's academic need, but there was a catch. To qualify for the award of the scholarship, the applicant must have secured admission to Makerere University under the private student scheme. In addition, the scholarship holder had to maintain satisfactory academic progress for the duration of the scholarship. Students who performed poorly therefore stood to lose their scholarships. Initially we had anticipated supporting a small number of students, but the Committee managed to stretch the funds and squeezed in many more eligible students than the original figure. By 2004, 353 females had received the scholarships, out of which sixty five per cent of the recipients were studying in Science and Technology.

Although I was not able to access and reconcile all the accounts and therefore, the figures I am quoting may be only approximations, nevertheless, they give one a sense of the extent of the Carnegie Corporation's support to Makerere University during the first five years when I was Vice Chancellor. Under the three-year institutional development programme, which became effective in 2000, the Department of Distance Education at the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education received US\$304,000 to develop a Distance Education Bachelor of Science degree programme in conjunction with the Faculty of Science. The School of Postgraduate Studies received US\$390,000 towards research support. An amount of US\$55,000 went to the Planning and Development Department to undertake two important studies. One was a tracer study to assess the employability and the effectiveness of Makerere University graduates, as well as the employment opportunities open to them in the labour market. The second study was an analysis of the consequences of student expansion on the maintenance of adequate academic standards at Makerere University.

The Academic Registrar's Department received up to US\$600,000 to establish a Gender Mainstreaming Division. By the time I left the university, we had sought an additional US\$200,000 as assistance to the same department to develop a full-fledged semester system and institute quality assurance. US\$650,000 went to the University Library to develop scientific library resources. The Faculty of Agriculture was the recipient of a US\$196,000 grant to work in conjunction with the Gender Mainstreaming Division of the Department of the Academic Registrar to develop institutional capacity for faculty-wide gender mainstreaming and provide scholarships to females admitted to the Department of Agricultural Extension Education under the Diploma Entrance Scheme. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine received US\$206,000 from the institutional development programme supported by the Corporation to strengthen the undergraduate practical training programme. The Faculty of Medicine had an interesting project – Building Capacity for Social Responsibility to the Slum Communities around

the Makerere University. I am not so sure how much impact the project had on improving the ambivalent relationship between the slum dwellers who were living on the edge and the relatively well-off university community. We in the university always looked at all the slums around us as an eye sore. Admittedly, at first I was sceptical about what practical value and tangible outcomes would come out of such a project and how they would translate into action. Although I was not terribly keen on this project, nevertheless, being the first project of its kind from the Faculty of Medicine which was specifically focusing on community engagement, it captured our attention and was recommended for funding. An additional US\$178,000 went towards developing a new undergraduate programme in Valuation and Quantity Surveying in the Faculty of Technology. This was on top of the US\$200,000 towards the development of the laboratories in the same faculty and in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine respectively.

Besides those I have mentioned, the Carnegie Corporation supported several other initiatives at Makerere during my time. It is almost impossible to do full justice to all of them. Nevertheless, there are a few which stand out and are still a vivid memory. When Dr Vartan Gregorian visited the university in 2000, I took him on a tour of the various beneficiary units of the Carnegie Corporation grants. Agriculture was one of the Faculties he visited and while there, we met a young lecturer teaching a class in a small lecture room. Unfortunately, the black chalkboard he was using had faded, making it almost impossible to see what he was writing. Dr Gregorian was visibly amazed. He asked me why we could not provide professors with decent chalkboards. The question caught me off-guard and I fumbled to give him an answer. I gave a lame excuse that we had not been informed of this particular problem. Frankly, I was also taken aback by the sorry state of that chalkboard.

This was one of the manifestations of the chronic under-funding, which I used to cry about in my speeches at every graduation ceremony, but which had seemed to fall on deaf ears. We could not even take care of simple things like this, for lack of funding. The episode was really an embarrassment to me. When we returned to my office after the tour, Dr Gregorian told me that he had decided to give me a token grant of some US\$10,000 to replace the old and worn-out chalkboards in the university. He called it his Christmas present to Makerere University. I was extremely grateful, but wondered whether it would be enough to replace all the worn-out chalkboards in the university. When we did the count to determine how many chalkboards needed replacing and costed them, the figure was staggering, far in excess of the President's gift of US\$10,000. We had no choice, but to scale down the list of what we could replace. I must say that my friend Kibirige Mayanja, who was coordinating the exercise, had a hard time sorting out and selecting the worst-off departments. As a result of delays on our part, the money from New York came long after the Christmas of 2000. In fact, Dr Gregorian's Christmas gift came in August 2002. The trouble was that times

had changed, and most members of staff preferred the whiteboards which used markers. However, markers dry up very easily when left uncovered for sometime, which meant they had to be replaced regularly. We respected their choice and left the University Bursar to struggle with that recurrent expenditure. Fortunately, the Carnegie Corporation provided the initial batch of markers and erasers.

As I have said before, both Professor Matos and Ms Andrea Johnson had become regular visitors at Makerere. Andrea's regular visits to the university reminded me of another embarrassing incident. One day, I was returning from Dar es Salaam on an Air Tanzania flight. The flight took us from Dar es Salaam to Kilimanjaro then to Kigali before we landed at Entebbe. Andrea Johnson was also on that same flight with me, coming to Makerere to see me and other colleagues she was working with on the projects. What made the incident more embarrassing for me was the fact that both of us were seated in the same compartment of the aircraft. During a stop-over at Kigali, I decided to take a stroll along the aisle of the aircraft and here was a young white lady, who happened to be Andrea Johnson, seated in front of me. I went past her and came back to my seat without recognising her. I am sure she too was at a loss as to whether the person she was looking at pacing up and down the aisle was the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University she was coming to see or my double. I was tempted to think that way because she too made no effort to talk to me. When I arrived back at the university, my secretary told me that Ms Johnson from the Carnegie Corporation had made an appointment to see me the following day. When she was ushered in, I immediately recognised her as the person I had met on the flight from Dar es Salaam. I was embarrassed and all I could do was to offer an apology of an absent-minded professor. What made matters worse, was the fact that she and I had met more than once before, but as Professor Epelu Opio would put it, *Bibaawo*, meaning that such incidents do happen. It was a stark reminder that age was fast catching up with me. Fortunately, for both of us, the end of our meeting was a happy one. She had come to check on the progress of the various projects to make sure that all was well. Certainly, the Carnegie Corporation was one of our strongest development partners and an incredibly generous institution. Working with Dr Gregorian and his team of professionals was part of my many cherished happy memories at Makerere. I am grateful to those who made it possible for me to be a party to this incredible experience in the reconstruction of our university with the Carnegie Corporation's support and to have worked so well with an organisation I had never had much contact with before. I pay tribute to all the colleagues I worked with on this gigantic programme.

I want to end this wonderful story on an interesting note. Shortly before I stepped down as Vice Chancellor, we had begun some discussions on the possibility of another round of support. The Corporation had neither ruled it in nor ruled it out. Since my time was up, I had to leave the serious discussions to my successors.

## The Gatsby Charitable Foundation

### *Supporting the Uganda Gatsby Trust; Linking the Faculty of Technology with the Small Scale Enterprises and the Katwe Engineers*

Although Uganda and Britain have a relatively long history between them, as far as I am aware, few British charities have extended the same level of support to Makerere at the scale of the American Foundations. Much of the British assistance to the university has come from Government and its various agencies, notably the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), which later became the Department for International Development (DfID). Therefore, it came as a surprise when, in 1994, Professor George Kirya, then Uganda's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, sent news that he knew of a British charitable organisation which was interested in supporting small-scale and medium-scale industrialists in Africa, and Uganda was one of the promising countries in Africa the charity wished to assist. He thought that Makerere would make an ideal partner. He had sent the same information to Dr James Higenyi, who was then Dean of the Faculty of Technology, ensuring that if I did not respond, at least James Higenyi would keep reminding me. Professor Kirya was referring to the Gatsby Charitable Foundation (GCF), founded by Lord Sainsbury of the Sainsbury Supermarket chain.

I was familiar with the Sainsbury Supermarket, but I had never heard of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation before. I was not even sure the British had big philanthropic foundations like the Americans. One interesting thing I knew about the British people was that, as individuals, they are very generous people. As for their foundations, I hardly knew of any, so this was a new experience. I soon learnt that Lord Sainsbury's family started out as small-scale business – the corner grocery you ran to on a Wednesday afternoon when all the big shops everywhere were closed and you had forgotten to stock up for that half day. What I also learnt was that from those humble beginnings, their business had grown in leaps and bounds to become one of Britain's success stories.

Lord Sainsbury thought he could make a contribution to Africa by giving a push to the struggling African small and medium-scale enterprises (SMSE). James Higenyi was quick to see the enormous potential in working with the GCF and soon we were exploring ways to make it happen. Once again, we found ourselves sailing in uncharted waters. Besides Uganda, the GCF had interest in Kenya, Tanzania and Cameroon. The Trust concentrated on a few countries, I guess because they did not want to spread out too thinly and overstretch the resources without making an impact. Surprisingly, Uganda was the only country where the Trust decided to work with a university, and for that matter, Makerere University. In the other three countries, they set up Gatsby Trusts which worked as NGOs, outside of the universities. I later learnt that one of the reasons the Gatsby Charitable Foundation liked working with Makerere was that, among other positive factors,

they found our decision-making process good and progressive. Experienced Ugandans were involved in selecting the beneficiaries and how the grants would be used. Secondly, we were able to quickly identify entrepreneurs and enterprises which had the potential to succeed. The main objective of the GCF support to this sector was to improve product quality and business acumen in order to make this sector of Uganda's economy more competitive. It was also intended to raise the productivity of the small-scale enterprises and the informal sector as a whole. The logic was that with increased productivity and competitiveness, the SMSEs would be able to create more employment opportunities for the unemployed and possibly the under-employed too.

Through the Uganda Gatsby Trust (UGT), which was set up with funding from the GCF of UK, the Faculty of Technology at Makerere was able to link directly with the small and medium scale industries dotted all over the county and provide them the necessary technical expertise.

It seemed that Lord Sainsbury's vision for Africa stemmed from the realisation that, perhaps with the exception of South Africa, Africa did not have many large industries. Most of the few that existed were declining, largely due to insufficient foreign exchange to import spare parts or to purchase new and modern machinery. Because of this apparent vacuum, coupled with lack of employment in the formal sectors of the economy, Africa was experiencing a rapid growth of small-scale industries, credited for sustaining some of the large-scale industries through the provision of homemade spare parts and machine modification. In the case of Uganda, Katwe Township, a suburb of Kampala on the way to Entebbe International Airport, with prominent entrepreneurs like late Musa Body, is home of such industries. In fact, the presence of so many locally owned fabrication workshops and small factories made the town famous and a household name throughout the country.

Countrywide, the range and categories of the small-scale industries is almost unlimited. They specialise in food processing, textiles and fashion design, electrical motor and transformer rewinding, carpentry and joinery, brick making, metalwork and fabrication; just to give the reader a glimpse of the range of things they can do. The young men and women are hardworking and it seems nothing can deter these enterprising Ugandans from setting up shops anywhere they think their products can attract buyers, regardless of the elements. They are found toiling away in the open, bathed in hot African sun, hence the name *Jua Kali* in Kiswahili, meaning "hot sun". A survey of these small-scale enterprises had shown that, like a free falling body which keeps accelerating until it reaches the terminal velocity and cannot accelerate further, the majority of the SMSEs had also reached their terminal velocity, a limit beyond which they could not grow any further. One could attribute the problems to a few, but critical constraints. The key constraints identified in the survey included low skills and limited technical expertise, low

product design capacity, low product quality, under-capitalisation and absence of research and development to generate new products, to upgrade the existing product lines or to improve product quality. This was not surprising since the majority of the craftsmen and women, branded “Katwe Engineers”, are employed in the small-scale industries and are self-taught or learnt the trade from an experienced craftsman. Besides the technical expertise, most proprietors of these industries lacked the skills and know-how to write good business plans to attract venture capital or access loans from the financial institutions. It was clear from the data collected that these constraints had translated into low value products, which had limited upper market appeal, making the sector marginally profitable. High quality products would certainly command a higher premium and that was what they needed. But for the sector to be able to perform at peak efficiency, management and good supervisory skills had to be boosted too. This was our entry point in the world of Katwe engineers.

Uganda Gatsby Trust and Makerere Faculty of Technology were not the first to get involved with the small and medium-scale enterprises in the country. The nation-wide small-scale enterprise association, the Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) based at Nakawa is one of them. Our intervention in the sector was to supplement and augment these efforts. Having identified the problems, our primary aim was to infuse a dose of professional engineering and business expertise into a sector that was providing livelihood to thousands of Ugandans, in order to improve its performance and in the process, facilitate its growth and expansion with improved product lines, as well as adding new and high value ones. The second objective was to assist the owners of these enterprises improve the profitability of their businesses through sound management practices and good record keeping, well written business plans and access to capital. Our intervention and aspiration to link with the small-scale entrepreneurs was the realisation that the public sector had been steadily shrinking over the years, and the capacity of the formal private sector to employ the entire Uganda’s workforce was very limited. The alternative source of employment for vast majority of people, particularly the young, lay in the informal sector of which the small-scale industries were an integral part. Therefore, as a public university, we had a responsibility to contribute to the economic viability of the small-scale and medium-sized industries. That is how the Uganda Gatsby Trust came into being in 1995, to address this specific need.

I have described elsewhere how the Faculty of Technology teamed up with the Katwe engineers, other small-scale industrialists throughout the country, the challenges and mindset they had to overcome and some of the success stories. Here, I want to focus on the Uganda Gatsby Trust and how it helped the Faculty of Technology make a significant contribution to the growth and development of the small-scale enterprises in Uganda. One of the GCF grant requirements called for the setting up of a local Gatsby Trust as a non-governmental organisation,

legally registered with the NGO Board and not in any way tied to the university's bureaucracy. To meet this requirement, we set up the Uganda Gatsby Trust (UGT). It had its own Board of Directors with three permanent trustees. The rest of the trustees on the Board were appointed on a three-year rotation basis. As far as possible, we had to ensure that the local Trust ran as an independent unit within the Faculty of Technology, with one member of staff of the faculty designated as its General Manager. Although Lord Sainsbury never made it to Uganda during my time, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation had an effective representation on the UGT Board. It was always a pleasure to have Lawrence Cockroft around, particularly during the critical Board meetings. Lawrence Cockroft, who represented the GCF on the UGT Board and the Vice Chancellor were the first two permanent UGT trustees. Later, Dr William Kalema joined the Board as the third permanent trustee and chair of the Board. The rest of the trustees served a term of three years. Dr Joseph Byaruhanga, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering accepted the role of General Manager. The job of the General Manager was demanding. It involved a lot of paperwork, travelling, attending meetings and meeting various kinds of people and much of the learning was on the job. However, up to the time I retired from the Trust in 2004, Dr Joseph Byaruhanga and his team had performed to the Board's satisfaction. One thing I quickly learnt about Dr Kalema, the Board chairman, was that he hated mediocrity and getting a nod of approval from him was as rare as the flowers of an African yam. However, from time to time, Joseph Byaruhanga used to get a pat on the back from him and that was re-assuring that the General Manager was delivering.

The Vice Chancellor was expected to chair the Board, but later that changed. The trustees thought that it was a better option to have a person with an industrial experience or financial background as chair of the Board, with the Vice Chancellor remaining in the role of permanent trustee. Mr Butler, who was then Managing Director of Standard Chartered Bank, served as chair of the Board for a while until he left the country in 2000. He was succeeded by Mr Kettle, Managing Director of the British American Tobacco Company until he too retired and left the country a few years later. The first few years saw a rather high turnover of chairpersons in quick succession, until Dr William Kalema accepted to take on the responsibility. Since the Faculty of Technology was the home for the UGT, the Dean of Technology was a non-permanent trustee and a member of the Board. To ensure a proper link between UGT with USSIA and their complimentary roles, Mr Kawoya, as well as a representative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry responsible for the small-scale industrial sector were invited to serve as non-permanent trustees of the Board. During the first few years of the UGT, Professor Roger Baker of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College, London served as a trustee, representing the Gatsby Charitable Foundation in London. From time to time, Mr M. A. Pattison, the Director of the GCF in London and other CGF

officers came for the Board meetings. I used to enjoy the Board meetings in one of the cramped offices in the Department of Architecture and to witness how one of our best outreach programmes was contributing to solving some of our social problems. Later we shifted the meetings to the small boardroom next to the Dean's office. It was interesting to invite Mrs Irene Mutumba to join the Board as a non-permanent trustee, which she accepted. She had a good reputation and experience in micro-finance. Mr Geoffrey Bikwatsizehi, one of the successful small-scale entrepreneurs in Mbarara represented the Gatsby clubs. Dr Frank Sebbowa, a former member of staff in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, but now the Managing Director of Uganda Clays Limited at Kajjansi, was the latest non-permanent trustee and member of the Board before I left.

The Board agreed that UGT would harness the technical and professional resources existing in the Faculty of Technology at Makerere before looking outside. It also agreed on the mission of the Uganda Gatsby Trust, which was to develop the technological base of the small-scale enterprise (SSE) sector in Uganda and to enable it to grow. The Trust had three main objectives: To develop a network of small enterprises and link them to the Faculty of Technology at Makerere University, with the purpose of helping them improve the quality and value of their outputs; to introduce the engineering students to the opportunities and potential of the small-scale sector and develop technologies appropriate to them; and, to use the staff of the Faculty of Technology to provide technical and professional solutions that would assist solve the problems in the small-scale enterprises. The UGT General Manager, who was assisted by an accountant and an administrator, and later a loans manager, worked through a network of clubs. Each Gatsby club had an elected executive committee, comprising fully paid up members. The clubs were free to employ full-time staff to assist with the running of the clubs. The compelling reason for starting the Gatsby clubs was to provide an appropriate institutional framework that would facilitate a continuous interaction with the small-scale enterprises supported by the UGT. In effect, the Gatsby clubs provided a decentralized institutional framework through which UGT could offer services to club members. This way, the Trust was able to offer services to members in about thirty districts of Uganda. The clubs also served another vital function; they acted as collateral for the loans extended to their members. Through peer pressure, they ensured that their members did not default on loan repayment.

The clubs were not merely talk shops; they provided a range of services to their members, such as business seminars, workshops, business plan preparation, business advisory and extension services, business training courses, local showrooms for members to exhibit their products, sponsorship to local and regional trade fairs. There was also provision for assisting their members with technology development and transfer through the Gatsby Centre for Enterprise Promotion, based at the Faculty of Technology. This was a facility set up specifically

to assist these industries acquire and improve their technological skills. The clubs also assisted their members to access loans for working capital from the Uganda Gatsby Trust Loan Scheme. After the closure of the Cooperative Bank, we had to devise a new Loan Scheme for the enterprises, which UGT was assisting to access working capital. In addition, the UGT had a regular Newsletter to which clubs contributed articles or highlighted their activities.

As far as support to the uplifting of the small scale enterprises went, the UGT work programme revolved around five broad themes. One theme focused on technical and managerial skills development through training courses. The Trust provided tailor-made training courses for managers and artisans of small-scale enterprises, to address managerial and technical skill deficiencies. Typical courses included management, entrepreneurship development, business planning, productivity, quality improvement, costing, credit management, record keeping; skills upgrading in metal fabrication, motor vehicle repair, foundry and black smithery, carpentry and joinery, textiles, food processing and so on. The second theme focused on business development services, where UGT, in collaboration with the Faculty of Technology sent members of staff from the various departments of the faculty to offer extension and mentorship services to interested enterprises with the aim of diagnosing their problems and formulating appropriate solutions. The service included assisting the enterprises prepare well-articulated and costed business plans. The third theme was concerned with marketing. UGT assisted the club members to find markets for their products through the provision of local showrooms and participation in national and regional trade fairs. The fourth theme focused on credit and working capital. UGT set up a revolving fund from which Gatsby club members could access loans to meet their working capital needs or to purchase machinery to improve on their technologies. The loan scheme was administered by the Credit Manager and UGT Loans Committee. This scheme replaced the original one which the UGT operated in collaboration with the defunct Cooperative Bank before the Bank was liquidated. The loan scheme had four cycles. The first-time borrower could get a maximum of three million shillings repayable in twelve months. A second borrower had to access as much as six million shillings, which was repayable in fifteen months. A third-time borrower could access a maximum of ten million shillings, repayable in eighteen months, and a fourth timer would get a whopping fifteen million shillings, which was repayable in two years. All loans had a grace period of two months. It was assumed that, by the time borrowers paid off the second or third loans, their enterprises would have grown to such an extent that they would have acquired their own premises and solid collaterals, which they could use to access loans from commercial banks.

The fifth theme was a machine lease and purchase scheme. UGT wanted to establish a scheme, which would assist members lease or purchase their own machinery. The scheme was meant to be complementary to the Credit Scheme.

Under this scheme, UGT would provide machinery worth up to ten million shillings for individual leases or up to fifty million for group leases. The sixth theme was on promoting students' activities aimed at introducing students of engineering to the potential of the small enterprise sector for job creation and self-employment. The activities fell into three categories. The first category was industrial attachments, which enabled engineering students in the Faculty of Technology to be attached to small-scale enterprises for their industrial training period, lasting up to three months per year. The purpose was to assist the students to appreciate the problems and potential of the small-scale sector. The exposure stimulated many students into thinking of setting up their own micro-enterprises upon graduation, for self-employment, which some did. The second activity had to do with student projects. Under this activity UGT provided financial support to the final year engineering students to design and produce appropriate technology proto-types. The aim was to facilitate the transfer of the technology they developed to the small-scale industrial sector through the Gatsby Centre for Enterprise Promotion (GCEP). The third involved technology development and transfer through the GCEP. The GCEP was purposely set up with the objectives of developing student prototypes into marketable technologies, and developing new appropriate technologies on demand-driven basis. As we have seen, Dr Moses Musaaazi of the Electrical Engineering Department was its first Manager.

By the time I was winding up in 2004, we had started talking of achievements and impact. By then, we had established a network of eighteen clubs in Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Mbarara, Kabarole, Mubende, Masaka, Masindi, Gulu, Lira and Soroti with a total membership of 1,200 – all small-scale businessmen and women who were steadily growing their businesses. Secondly, by then, UGT had played a role in the growth of 600 enterprises country-wide. The list included many businesses that were doing impressively well, thanks to UGT intervention. Additionally, the Trust had set up two small-scale industrial parks in Njeru, Jinja and in Mbarara, where the UGT Club members were setting up shops and workshops. Through its more than 300 training courses and seminars, UGT had trained over 15,000 participants countrywide in technical and business management skills, and carried out 3,000 mentorship visits. Some of the participants, who attended the initial courses and seminars in 1995, had moved on into more serious and bigger businesses. By 2004, some of the participants, who had attended the UGT training courses, for example the Matsikos of NUMA Feeds Limited in Mbarara, had become the proud owners of very successful and rapidly expanding enterprises. About 400 supported enterprises had grown and graduated out of the SMEs. In addition, since 1995, the Trust had sponsored over 450 small scale business owners to Trade Fairs in and outside Uganda, notably the Jua Kali Exhibitions in Kenya and other parts of East Africa. At the same time, UGT had developed over 1,500 business plans for club members.

Over the same period, UGT had also funded 170 industrial prototypes designed and fabricated by the engineering students in the Faculty of Technology, something that had never happened before. Due to lack of funds in the past, most of the engineering students' final year projects ended at the design stage. Some of these prototypes were well designed and could be patented. The solar timber dryer, pineapple juice extractor, feed mixer and the Moringa seed grinder, in particular, caught my attention and I wished that someone with sufficient start-up capital could take them under license and commercialise them. From this experience, I quickly learnt that when it came to product development, research was usually the easier part; development was much harder, because it was capital intensive, with no real guarantee that the product would be an immediate commercial success.

Fortunately, we were able to license ten student prototypes as commercialised. Finally, as part of the benefits accruing to the University by hosting UGT, over 700 engineering students in the Faculty of Technology had undertaken their industrial training in the small-scale industries, instead of scrambling for a few training opportunities in the few big industrial concerns. The Uganda Gatsby Trust was spending most of its funds on skills training and development for the small-and medium-scale industries, business extension services, supporting the Gatsby clubs, organising trade fairs, promoting product marketing, business and staff development through seminars, engineering students, attachments in the SSEs, product development, technology development and transfer and provision of credit for working capital to Gatsby club members. By 2002, the Revolving Fund had grown to 500 million shillings with a repayment rate of ninety six percent. To crown it all, UGT won the trophy for best exhibitor at the Uganda International Trade Fair (Small Scale Division) twice; in 1997 and 2002. In 1998 however, we came second.

This was another truly incredible innovation and a remarkable experience for all of us who were involved in it right from the beginning in 1995. Through the Uganda Gatsby Trust, Makerere University was fulfilling its third mandate; service to the community, this time not so much in words but in deeds. Our usual rhetoric and lip service to community engagement had given way to practical action with tangible outputs and outcomes. I sensed that, this time, we were making an impact. The experience had clearly demonstrated that a university could be of relevance to the community without necessarily losing its identity as a centre of academic excellence. We owed it all to Lord Sainsbury and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, to Professor George Kirya, who had the vision and confidence that it could work, and to the colleagues at the Faculty of Technology for all their efforts that made it work. By all accounts, the UGT programmes were sustainable. As a footnote, at the time of my departure, UGT was generating sufficient income of its own to cover most of the core activities, without further injection of funds from London. I had also enjoyed participating in the inter-Gatsby Trust meetings

in Mombasa in Kenya, Arusha in Tanzania and Duala and Kribi in Cameroon. It was a truly rewarding experience.

For the interest of the reader, Kenya Gatsby Trust was the first to be set up in 1992, followed by Tanzania Gatsby Trust in 1993 and the Cameron Gatsby Foundation in 1994. The UGT, which was launched in 1995, was the last in the line. The GCF was also interested in agriculture, so Lawrence Cocroft, a man with a good taste for Chinese cuisine, on his many visits to Uganda squeezed in time for a trip to Namulonge Research Institute, where the GCF was supporting some research projects, one of which I believe was on cassava.

### **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Other UN Agencies**

I have already said as much as I could about Makerere's relationship with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as its sister organisation, UNESCO, over the years. However, I have been lumping them together with other major development agencies which have contributed so much to Makerere's recovery and development over the years, and that does not do full justice to the long association Makerere has had with members of the UN family in both good and bad times. It is therefore, only fair that I give them similar treatment. As we have seen, their support came at a moment of acute need when the going was extremely tough and nearly every Makerere friend had jumped ship. I am well aware that I could be paying homage to them here at the risk of over-repeating myself but, as people say, "what is good for the goose is good for the gander". The list of what the two organisations have been able to do for Makerere is long, stretching back to the late 1960s when the UNDP sponsored the first regional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics for all Anglophone Africa at Makerere. Following the break-up of the University of East Africa in 1970, UNDP assisted the university to start the Faculties of Technology and Veterinary Medicine. Although UNDP never quite pulled out of Uganda during the difficult years, it scaled down its assistance to the country and Makerere University quite considerably until the situation had sufficiently stabilised.

It was after the 1978-1979 war which ousted Idi Amin from power that the UNDP started scaling up its assistance to Makerere once again. But the lacklustre support from the unstable Governments that replaced Amin's administration, the ensuing insecurity in the country, academic and technical staff shortages and problems with new equipment installation, as well as the inability on the part of the university to provide secure accommodation to its experts almost rendered the renewed UNDP assistance to the university ineffective. Nevertheless, the problems did not deter the two agencies from continuing to support the university. The UGA 79/001 Project based in the Faculty of Science was one of the first projects UNDP financed soon after the war. It became effective in 1980 when the first Chief Technical Adviser, Dr T. Somer, then a Professor of Chemical Engineering at

the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, arrived. Professor Somer worked alone on the project for over a year and as we have seen before, he was responsible for designing and drafting the syllabus for the Industrial Chemistry option, which was a new course in the Department of Chemistry. In the academic year 1981/82, three other experts joined the project, and at its peak in the mid-1980s, there were six experts in all. By August 1987 when the project officially ended, UNDP had fielded nine experts and invested US\$ 2.1 million.

The original concept of the UNDP/UNESCO Project was to introduce new courses in three areas of Applied Science, namely Industrial Chemistry, Applied and Mining Geology and Wildlife Biology. Progress from 1980 through to 1983 was slow, largely due, to the delay in fielding experts. I guess that at the time, few people in the world in their right senses wanted to work in Uganda, a country that had earned an unenviable reputation as unsafe and characterised by wanton killings and on the verge of a civil war. Certainly, the 1980/86 war did not make the situation any easier for UNDP. Despite these setbacks, the UNDP remained steadfast in its commitment to the project, which made good progress. The project went through three phases. The first phase, which actually began in 1975 and ended in 1980, was essentially holding the fort, helping Makerere ease staff shortages. The second phase which began (1980 – 1982) involved designing new courses in Industrial Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry, Applied and Mining Geology in the Department of Geology and Wildlife Biology in the Department of Zoology, as well as preparing orders, taking deliveries and installing new equipment. At the request of UNDP, departments in the Faculty of Science compiled an inventory of old equipment that needed repair. UNDP fielded a maintenance expert for this purpose. Both Senate and the University Council approved and launched the three new academic programmes in the 1982/83 academic year. The third and last phase of the UNDP/UNESCO was essentially supporting staff development for the three new disciplines, starting a few new programmes and revamping a few old ones. In academic year 1983/84, new postgraduate programmes in Geology and Zoology started, and the old ones expanded to cover more of the applied aspects of the two disciplines.

In the Department of Chemistry, the specific project objective was to design a new course in Industrial Chemistry, initiate new courses in Analytical Chemistry, provide some support to Physical Chemistry which was grossly understaffed at the time, set up a departmental quality control laboratory, and provide and install new equipment. The implementation of the Industrial Chemistry option was a major achievement for the UNDP/UNESCO Project in the Chemistry Department. Besides the curriculum, it also involved setting up and equipping a Unit Operations Laboratory with ten pilot plants and providing the department with supporting equipment for training students in the industrial processes commonly used in Uganda. Support to the Department of Geology included a couple of new off-road

vehicles, field gear tents and supplies. The vehicles and new camp gear improved and maintained the department's extensive annual field-training exercise.

The department also took comprehensive delivery of new teaching audio-visual aids. The departmental library collection was extensively upgraded with a new stock of books and other reading material. It also received additional support to develop new courses in Applied Geology in close liaison with the Uganda Government's Department of Geological Surveys and Mines at Entebbe. In the Department of Zoology, new courses related to wildlife were introduced in both the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. The new courses put emphasis on fieldwork for which the Project provided the relevant camping equipment and an off-road vehicle. In addition, the department established close collaboration with the East African Wildlife Society and the Zoological Society of New York. With the latter, the department made extensive use of the Makerere University Biological Field Station, a research facility in the Kibale National Park in Kabarole District. Research undertaken there focused primarily on primate ecology.

Besides the specific assistance to the three departments, the UNDP through the Project extended support to the rest of the Faculty of Science through the provision of senior staff fellowships for short-term study visits outside Uganda, as well as postgraduate fellowships. During the same period, the faculty obtained a 65-seater Leyland bus, two Suzuki Jeeps and two Yamaha motorcycles. The establishment of the Computer Centre in 1985, which later transformed into an independent Institute of Computer Science and in 2004 became the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology, was one of the most important outcomes of the project. For the first time, Makerere University was offering a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science. By 1988, UNDP had invested US\$3.4 million in the faculty, US\$ 1.3 million over and above the original budget of US\$2.1 million. The extra investment supported the one-year extension that allowed the project to wind up properly. During the final year, one of the UNDP experts, Professor Derrick Pomroy, who had been heading the Wildlife Programme under the project, assisted the faculty plan and start an Institute of Environment and Natural Resources.

As we have seen the UNDP assistance to Makerere University spans several decades and over the years, other Faculties have benefited too. For instance, from 1969 up to 1976, the UNDP extended a grant totaling US\$1.96 million and technical advisers to the university to start a regional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, the objective of which was to train professional statisticians from the Anglophone countries of Africa. From 1986 up to 1990, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was a beneficiary of a US\$1.5 million grant, which supported the faculty's continuing education programme, and veterinary extension services to farmers to increase and improve livestock production. For four years beginning from 1984, UNDP invested US\$440,000 in the Faculty of Medicine to strengthen

its teaching and research capacity. Part of the grant covered the cost of technical assistance to the faculty.

The Department of Planning and Development is one of the outputs to have come out of the generous support of UNDP to the university during the Donors' Conference of 1987. After the Conference, it became clear that the university needed to strengthen the planning function. The UNDP provided US\$922,000 as seed grant to help the university start the Department of Planning and Development. It also provided occasional technical assistance to the new department in its formative years. The UNDP support to the Planning and Development Department officially ended in 1990 when the department was fully established. The engineering curriculum in the Faculty of Technology, drafted in 1970, was developed with the assistance of UNDP experts. In 1991 and ending in 1994, UNDP assisted the Department of Economics to design and start a new Master of Arts degree in Economic Policy and Planning and as we have seen, after Idi Amin had expelled the university's expatriate staff and the Asian community in 1972, the UNDP provided professors to fill the vacuum left by their departure.

Between 1969 and 1994, the UNDP had made totaling US\$9 million grants to Makerere. No doubt, UNDP and other UN specialised agencies such as UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA, FAO have made an enormous contribution to the development of Makerere University. It was therefore a privilege and honour for me to welcome Dr Mark Malloch Brown, the Administrator General of the United Nation Development Programme, to the university on November 12, 2003. During his short visit, he delivered an exciting public lecture in the Main Hall on the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Rakai Project – An Incredible Experiment in Life-saving, Multi-donor Support and Institutional Collaboration**

In my considered opinion, the Medical School's Rakai Project was an excellent example of what is achievable when institutions decide to collaborate on a big and multi-dimensional project, with funding coming from a multiplicity of donors. No doubt, several faculties and departments at Makerere have been and continued to be involved in several multi-donor and multi-partner projects and programmes. Nevertheless, because of its sheer scale and the problem it sought to address, I have decided to single out the Rakai Project in the Faculty of Medicine for a special mention to illustrate what a resource-constrained university could do through innovation and imagination. In 1987, some Medical Scientists at Makerere decided to conduct an investigation into what appeared to be a strange and mysterious disease, then observed only in South-East region of the country, on the border with Tanzania, which is now part of the Rakai District. The local population on the Ugandan side of the border had dubbed it "slim disease" because of its body wasting effect on the people who contracted it. On the

Tanzanian side, the residents of towns like Mutukula, Kanyigo and other parts of Kyaka had a more fancy name for it – “Juliana”. I was informed that Juliana was the nickname of men’s stylish attire popular in that region at the time. Because no one knew the cause of this strange condition, speculation was rife in places like Kakuuto, Kyotera, Ddimbo landing site and other towns in the Rakai District, that the mysterious disease was the work of a spell that had been cast on those who had crossed the border and looted property from Tanzania when Amin’s army attacked and bombed Bukoba town in 1978.

The Tanzanians believed the disease was a curse on the rich boys who had made a fortune out of smuggling goods *magendo*, particularly the semi-processed coffee beans, popularly known as *kase*, across the border. At the time, no one understood the kind of disease which was making seemingly healthy people lose weight without explanation. It was still a puzzle! Worse still, when patients suffering from the “slim disease” went down with simple ailments like cough or fever, they either failed to respond to treatment, took very long to recover or did not recover at all. Constant fever was one of the characteristic features of people suffering from this strange disease.

In that year, Dr Nelson Sewankambo of the Department of Internal Medicine and Dr David Serwadda of the Institute of Public Health, travelled to Rakai, the district which seemed to be worst hit and made a shocking discovery. The “slim disease”, which caused the unexplained weight loss and body wasting, was actually related to the recently discovered Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) caused by the Human Immune Virus (HIV). This was the first time AIDS had been detected in Uganda, and possibly in the whole of Africa. When it was first identified, most people and some experts too believed that AIDS was a disease of homosexual men and not heterosexuals. The discovery called for the immediate establishment of a population-based cohort to study various aspects of the disease. That was the genesis of the Rakai Project. The project was initiated in 1988 to study the dynamics, prevalence and magnitude of the “slim disease” in that area of the country. I am sure that when they began, both Nelson Sewankambo and David Serwadda had no idea that they were laying the foundations of a gigantic and successful project. In the process, several donors and agencies agreed to collaborate with Makerere University on the project and fund it as well.

As they developed the project concept in 1987, Nelson Sewankambo and David Serwadda approached the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) based in Atlanta, Georgia and the United States Agency for International Development or USAID for funding and cooperation on the project. In turn, the USAID decided to invite Columbia University in New York to collaborate with Makerere on the project. Dr Wawer of Columbia University, together with Nelson Sewankambo and David Serwadda submitted a proposal to USAID for seed funding. The

Agency accepted to fund the proposal that facilitated the launch of the project in 1988, with the main offices and laboratories at Mulago and an outpost office at Kalisizo at the boundary between Masaka and Rakai Districts. The project was exclusively about HIV/AIDS and its awareness among the people of Rakai District. The then relatively new Rakai District, carved out of the Masaka District, with a population of almost 700,000 was one of the districts in Uganda which HIV/AIDS had affected the most. It is one of the poorest districts in the country with very limited health care provisions. Rakai was also one of the districts bordering Tanzania that had experienced the full brunt of the 1972 and 1979 wars. The Rakai Project's mission was to improve public health in the District through technical support to the health care delivery system in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, backed up with relevant research. Besides the international partners, the project worked in close collaboration with the Uganda Virus Institute at Entebbe and the Ministry of Health in order to maximise synergy in the fight against this incurable disease. The Rakai Project was much more than the usual university research projects, with several high quality papers published in premier journals like *Lancet* as a measure of its success. It also took on a social responsibility role.

Besides the research component, the project had other objectives as well. Key among these was to improve the AIDS awareness in the district and how people could avoid being infected or re-infected with the virus. Secondly, the project set out to improve the quality of health care and to assist people cope with situations of increasing death of the adult heads of the households, which left many children to fend for themselves. Thirdly, it aimed at exploring other ways of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS infection apart from the use of the condom and to find ways and means of taking care of children, who had lost all their parents and guardians. From a scientific standpoint, one of the objectives was to improve maternal and child health by assessing the effect of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) treatment during pregnancy on mother-to-child HIV transmission. The other was to conduct a community-based randomised trial of male circumcision. This was because studies had shown that some sections of the population had started promoting it, believing that circumcised men, the majority of whom were Muslim males, were less prone to catching the disease. They had seen it as a good strategy for preventing HIV/AIDS infection and transmission. The last objective was to encourage people to go for voluntary testing to know their HIV status and learn to live with the disease positively.

Over time, the project expanded and attracted more researchers, partners and other funding agencies besides the USAID. The Uganda Virus Research Institute and Ministry of Health scientists, Makerere University staff, American scientists from Columbia and Johns Hopkins Universities and Walter Reed Army Institute of Research Scientists were some of the many researchers who had worked on

the Rakai Project since its launch in 1988. The Danish Development Agency, World Health Organization, the National Institutes of Health, the Rockefeller Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, Forgarty Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Pfizer Foundation, and NGOs like Concern International, Heal the Nation, the Lutheran World Federation; the World Federation and the Rakai AIDS Information Network (RAIN), were some of the major partners and funders of the project. At the time of my departure, what the project had achieved was quite impressive and going strong. One of the key outcomes was securing popular participation of the people of Rakai District in attaining high levels of HIV/AIDS awareness and the drastic reduction of the prevalence of STDs among the population, most of them unrelated to HIV. This was achieved through the project's intensive STD treatment and preventive measures. To this effect, the project was actively involved in the Rakai STD Control for AIDS Prevention Trials, initiated in 1994 and completed data collection in 1999, which was a complex and intensive community- randomised controlled trial as part of the STD control programme. This part of the project sought to test the hypothesis of whether intensive STD control would result in reduced HIV transmission. Although the results indicated that the viral load was the most important predictive factor for HIV transmission to an uninfected partner, the study showed that STDs were important co-factors in the transmission of the virus from partner to partner. Therefore, it was important to control their prevalence. The trials seemed to have paid some handsome dividends. According to the investigators, the major spin-off from this project activity was the significant reduction in the prevalence of key diseases such as trichomonas vaginalis and syphilis in the district attributed to the mass STD treatment.

It also tested the beneficial effects of good STD control on mother and child viral transmission during birth. The results showed that following a simple presumptive treatment for STDs offered during pregnancy, there was reduced viral transmission and a substantial improvement in maternal and infant health. This trial helped to understand the correlation that exists between the STDs and HIV infection. Then, this fact was not common knowledge. The project's capacity to collect, analyse and interpret complex HIV/AIDS biological and demographic data led to multiple new findings, which came out of the intensive community epidemiological and behavioural studies that documented the HIV/STD epidemics and risk factors. Those were significant studies and findings in those earlier years when scientists were just beginning to understand the epidemiology of the disease. Another achievement of significance was the fact that the project succeeded in creating effective linkages with the district's political and technical leadership, as well as attracting national and international collaboration and funding. The combined effort led to a substantial reduction in the HIV infection in the district.

In terms of the real benefits from the project that go beyond the new knowledge about the HIV/AIDS from the scientific studies, which accrued to the people of Rakai, there are many that one could cite. At the time Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda and Maria Wawer conceived the idea of starting the Rakai Project, Uganda, and for that matter the world, knew very little about HIV/AIDS. Rakai District was in the midst of a serious health crisis. Towns became almost ghost towns and whole villages were abandoned as people ran away from the District under the mistaken belief that they were escaping the dreadful disease. Unknown to those who were running away but already infected, they were running away with the killer disease lurking in their veins and were about to unleash the epidemic on the rest of the country. However, it did not matter what their destination was, their fate was already sealed. Sooner than later, they would all die. The district and its trading centres that dotted the Masaka-Mutukula highways, formerly lively commercial centres and sources of badly needed revenue, were now deserted and devoid of their inhabitants. On the other hand, the bars, lodges and little hotels in those townships were also bastions of commercial sex. At the time, most sex workers did not use condoms. For the majority of them, it was live affair. As a South African friend of mine used to say, "You do not eat a banana with its skin". This initial attitude to condoms exacerbated the prevalence of the infection, which in most towns along the main roads had reached twenty five to thirty five percent of the urban population. The project's contribution was to sensitise the community about the risks inherent in engaging in unprotected sex and to tell people that it was a wrong perception to continue believing that HIV/AIDS was a curse or a disease of the homosexuals. The virus did not discriminate between homosexuals and heterosexuals. Worse still, the infected person could carry the virus in the blood for several years without showing signs of the disease. The idea was to drive the point home that sadly, HIV/AIDS had neither cure nor vaccine. To be told that you were HIV sero-positive meant you were on death row. The best vaccine was to avoid risky behaviour. These simple, but powerful messages had an impact. They helped change people's perceptions and misconceptions about the "slim disease". However, when people realised that the disease was incurable and carried a social stigma, they became reluctant to go for testing. For example, in 1990, only ten per cent of the participants in the studies and trials wanted to know their HIV status. At the time, many people did not want to know their serological status. It was not a smart thing to know that you carried the deadly virus in your blood. However, over time, the project made it easy for people to go for HIV/AIDS testing. Through counselling services, people testing sero-positive were equipped with coping skills so they could live with the virus positively. Initially, it was not easy, but by 2004, over sixty per cent of the participants in the STD trials were requesting their serological test results.

The project's efforts were not limited to town dwellers only. The rural areas benefited from health education and community mobilisation programmes too.

The project made extensive use of drama groups, village meetings, sports activities and trained health educators to get the message across. The NGO, Rakai AIDS Information Network, played a critical and central role in these campaigns. Through the Rakai Project, all study sites were equipped with fixed and mobile clinics. The clinics became the drug distribution points and counselling centres. Although they were located in the study sites, all residents in Rakai District had access to the free general health care provided by the Rakai Project without exception. With funding from the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation and in collaboration with Columbia University and Johns Hopkins University, the project also assisted the District Health Services Department to improve the delivery of family planning services. With the assistance of its twenty or so counsellors, the project was providing family planning services integrated in the voluntary HIV testing and counselling. Before 1995, family planning practice in Rakai District was very low, primarily for fear of the unknown side effects, but the project was able to innovate strategies that helped women overcome the fear. Above all, the project provided employment to the rural communities of Rakai District. The aim was to assist the communities improve their living standards.

By the time I left the university, the project had not shown any sign of relenting or ending any time soon. It had become a showcase for the Faculty of Medicine, with lots of fringe benefits to members of staff involved. No doubt the high quality publications that came out of the research conducted in Rakai under the auspices of the Rakai project were key in the promotion of the university staff involved in the project. Dr Sewankambo, who co-initiated the project when he was still in the junior academic ranks, rose to the rank of full Professor of Medicine in the Department of Medicine. His colleague, Dr David Serwadda was promoted to Associate Professor of Public Health in the Institute of Public Health. There were also new planned studies. One of the studies was investigating the link between the relatively high incidence of cervical cancer and the HIV infection. Earlier studies had shown that Uganda was one of the countries in the world with the highest rate of cervical cancer. Other studies had shown that the incidence of cervical cancer was higher in HIV positive women. Unfortunately, most hospitals and health centres lacked the screening facilities for this type of cancer, so the affected women were having late-stage disseminate malignancies, which was an incurable stage of the disease. The Rakai Project was piloting a novel way of screening for cervical cancer which was cheap and simple to use.

Additionally, the project had started focusing attention on improving the care of the dying children and their families. Research had shown that HIV was the leading cause of paediatric morbidity and mortality in Africa, and the number of infants and minors dying from the disease were steadily rising. The available statistics had shown that two million children were infected and eleven million were orphaned by the disease. Therefore, care for the dying children and their

families when there was no known cure for the disease or vaccine had become an issue of serious concern. The project had planned to undertake a study that would provide descriptive data to guide the provision of palliative and bereavement care for the children afflicted with HIV/AIDS and their families. Rakai District was the host of many such cases.

Another study, *Alternative and Inexpensive Markers for HIV Viral Load and CD Lymphocyte Count for the Treatment of HIV/AIDS in Rakai*, was an evaluation of inexpensive algorithms that allowed a medical practitioner in a resource-constrained setting to initiate and monitor highly active antiretroviral therapy with limited laboratory and diagnostic facilities. The study would allow the researchers to evaluate alternative, but inexpensive markers to initiate and monitor HIV therapy, not only in Rakai District but also throughout the country.

In collaboration with the Walter Reed Research Institute of the Department of Defence in the USA, the Rakai Project investigators were also involved in HIV vaccine development and candidate vaccine trials. Funded by the Henry Jackson Foundation, the Walter Reed Institute started collaborating with Makerere University on the Health Science Programme of the Rakai Project in 1999. However, in 2002, a new memorandum of understanding was signed, which extended the scope of collaboration to include vaccine development and evaluation trials. A state-of-the-art laboratory was set up at Mulago, which necessitated adding an extension to the old Pathology building. It was a fulfilling experience to know that during my time as Vice Chancellor, Makerere University scientists made such a significant contribution to the fight against a killer disease which, if left unchecked, could have devastated the nation and caused a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. I have heard people say and write authoritatively that Makerere staff did not engage in research. Whether that observation is valid or not, Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Maria Wawer and their colleagues deserve our gratitude.

### **Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa – The Return of the MacAdams to Makerere**

The early involvement of the members of staff of the Faculty of Medicine in HIV/AIDS research and care for the AIDS patients, notably through the Rakai Project, attracted many internationally renowned academics and researchers to Makerere; the majority of them from USA. They joined hands with Makerere's medical scientists in their ongoing arduous efforts aimed at understanding this new disease, its dynamics and the best ways of controlling its spread, as well as providing care for the afflicted. They came from various institutions in the USA, notably Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio; Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland; and University of Utah, among others.

Several of them were specialists in infectious diseases. This was the beginning of what became to be known as the Academic Alliance, officially launched in 2001. The American team comprised Marie A. Sande of the University of Utah School of Medicine; Jerold Ellner, who was then at the Case Western University but later moved over to the New Jersey School of Medicine; Thomas Quinn from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Michael Scheld of the University of Virginia; and Catherine Wilfert from the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatrics AIDS Foundation. The Makerere team comprised Professors Roy Mugerwa and Nelson Sewankambo, as well as Drs Moses Kamya, Elly Katabira, Harriet Mayanja Kizza – all of them from the Department of Medicine; Edward Katongole Mbidde of the Uganda Cancer Institute, Philippa Musoke of the Department of Paediatrics, David Serwadda and Fred Wabwire Mangen both from the Institute of Public Health. Its mission, which at first sounded too ambitious and possibly unattainable, was to build the first large-scale state-of-the-art clinic, laboratory and medical training centre in Africa for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Through a generous grant provided by the Pfizer Foundation, the Alliance realised its dream with the opening of the Infectious Diseases Institute on the campus of the Medical School at Mulago in October 2004.

Sometime in early 2001, Professor Nelson Sewankambo gave me a piece of very exciting news. He told me that the Pfizer Corporation, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in the world had given the Academic Alliance a grant worth US\$11 million for their HIV/AIDS programme in Uganda and Africa. The grant would come from the Pfizer Foundation, which was a separate entity from the Corporation. The second part of his mission was to alert me that, in anticipation of the grant disbursement, there were some pre-requisites the university had to meet. The juicier part of the story was the prospect of having a new building in the Medical School. As far I could remember, it would be the first new building in the School in several decades. So, top on the list of the pre-requisites was land for the new building at Mulago, which would house the clinics, laboratories and office space for the director, research scientists, clinicians and support staff. He also indicated that the President of the Pfizer Corporation and Pfizer Foundation, Hank McKinnel would make a visit to Uganda in the middle of the year and personally make the announcement in Kampala, adding that the university was requested to invite the President of Uganda to chair the ceremony. I was glad that the request to invite the President came early, because he was always busy and hard to get at short notice. We sent the invitation well ahead of time. Secondly one of our very own, Professor Gilbert Bukenya, was the Minister for the Presidency, so we were almost certain that if we approached him in time he would be able to fit the event in the President's busy diary. Knowing the role he had played in the fight against the AIDS pandemic through his many awareness campaigns, we were confident that the President would honour the invitation. Since the two men were old friends

and classmates during their undergraduate days at the Medical School, I decided to leave the talking to Professor Bukenya to Nelson Sewankambo. As it turned out, Professor Bukenya was not easy to track down. The man was almost as busy as his boss. Sewankambo had to try several times to have an appointment with him. The personal touch worked. The President accepted the invitation to meet with the Pfizer President. The occasion was also intended to be the official launch of the Academic Alliance. In June 2001, Dr Hank McKinnel visited Uganda and met with President Museveni in his office at the International Conference Centre. After the behind-the-closed-door talks, Dr McKinnel made the long awaited announcement in a plenary session. In his short remarks, which I have paraphrased, Dr McKinnel said that the Pfizer Foundation was happy to support the Academic Alliance in its noble goal of fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa and in Uganda in particular, a country which had taken a lead in the fight against the dreaded disease. He did not specify the nature of the support, but what he said was enough as we already knew the contents of the Corporation's HIV/AIDS package, US\$11 million and drugs. As expected, President Museveni was grateful to the Pfizer Corporation and its Foundation for lending support to the fight against the killer disease which had posed such a huge challenge to the very existence of humankind. The President then went on to declare the Academic Alliance officially launched.

The Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa was started as a not-for-profit organisation by a group of academics, with the sole aim of setting up the first large-scale AIDS research and treatment facility in Africa at Makerere University Medical School. The new facility would provide the AIDS patients with the most up-to-date treatment regimens and train healthcare workers from all over Africa on the latest treatments and prevention methods. Although the bulk of the funding came from the Pfizer Foundation, this rather ambitious project was started as a joint undertaking between Makerere University on one hand and the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the Pangaea Global AIDS Foundations, international and local non-government organisations, on the other. Makerere University, the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the Academic Alliance ran the training programme as a joint effort, based on a comprehensive curriculum which included lectures and clinical experience in the epidemiology, classification of HIV/AIDS (the Human Immuno Virus or HIV existed in more than one strain – initially two strains had been identified, namely HIV1 and HIV2, later other HIV sub-types were discovered) as well as the manifestation of the disease. Patient care at the facility focused on treating the opportunistic infections associated with HIV/AIDS, delivery of Anti Retro Viral (ARV) drugs, prevention and palliative care. The third function was to undertake research into all aspects of the virus and the AIDS disease. This was the beginning of the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) at Makerere University.

The medical doctors going through the institute's training programmes left well equipped with skills to safely and knowledgeably deliver comprehensive HIV/AIDS care, ARVs and to become mentors and trainers of others. By 2002 when it opened its doors, 50 doctors had received training and the demand was rising. To ensure high quality standards and a fair balance between the host country, Uganda and the rest of Africa, the physicians enrolling in the institute's programme had to go through a competitive selection process. Uganda had half the slots on the programmes, the other half was reserved for trainees from other African countries. The physicians enrolling in this intensive training programme came from both rural and urban settings throughout Africa. Trainees had to take pre- and post-examinations as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the training. Post-training follow-up support was also provided to graduates in the form of refresher courses, lecture updates and newsletters. Besides the courses targeting the physicians, the institute developed programmes for allied healthcare providers, such as nurses, clinical officers, laboratory technologists, drug dispensers and others. This was to ensure that this cadre of healthcare providers who assisted the physicians had a solid knowledge and skills base for their clinical decisions.

The leadership of the Academic Alliance wanted their facility constructed and completed in the shortest time possible, so they requested the university to make quick design sketches and preliminary bills of quantities for the proposed IDI building. Technology Consult (TECO) architects and quantity surveyors worked judiciously and in a relatively short time, the drawings and the bills of quantities were ready, but there was a snag. TECO designed a three-storied building in accordance with the University Council's policy of not-less-than-three-floors for all new buildings constructed on prime land. Mulago campus, where the Medical School is located, fell in that category. In the meantime, Pfizer Inc and Pfizer Foundation had contracted Pangaea Global Foundation, an affiliate of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, to manage the Academic Alliance grant on their behalf.

Soon, we ran into disagreement with the Pangaea Foundation over the design, cost and TECO's professional fees. Fortunately, after several meetings and a lot of hard talk, the disagreement was amicably resolved and, in November 2002, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pangaea Foundation for the construction of an ultra-modern building behind the Department of Physiology laboratory, a site overlooking the new Mulago Teaching Hospital, to house the Infectious Diseases Institute. A British-based Civil Engineering firm won the tender. Ground breaking took place on February 26, 2003 amidst a modest, but very colourful ceremony. The American Ambassador to Uganda and a former Makerere student, Jim Kolker and Professor Gilbert Bukenya, who was once Dean of Medicine, held the shovel together in the symbolic act of cutting the sod. In appreciation of the role Bukenya had played in the behind-the-scenes negotiations, which brought the project to fruition, we decided to invite him as co-guest of honour for the occasion.

Although I had a problem with my legs, which made walking hard and painful, I made every effort to attend the ceremony in person. I remember Professor Bukenya teasing about what he thought was my pending gout. In reply, I told him that since he had abandoned Medicine, I did not trust his quick diagnosis, but hastened to add that in his new political career he was heading for bigger things, it was just a matter of time. He shrugged it off saying that I too had got the prophecy wrong, I had gazed in the wrong crystal ball. As if I had read the President's mind, sure enough shortly after that ceremony he was appointed Vice President of Uganda. In his brief speech, the American Ambassador said that investments like this were critical to the strengthening of healthcare services, which was an essential part of the care and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and mitigation of the long-term economic impact of the disease, adding that it took the initiative and partnership of people from the academia, private industry, non-government organizations and governments to make such important projects happen. Completed over a year later, a new building housing the Infections Diseases Institute is one of the most modern research and clinical facility at Mulago. It has the latest and the state-of-the-art equipment. Initially, it was the understanding that the new institute would start as an independent entity, a sort of a company officially known as the Infectious Diseases Institute Limited, within the Medical School, but later Makerere University would take over ownership.

As work on the Infectious Diseases Institute building progressed and other Academic Alliance activities continued under Professor Nelson Sewankambo's oversight on the Ugandan side, it became clear that in order to get the new institute off to a good start, it required the leadership of a highly capable person, moreover with a proven track record as director. I had occasion to discuss this critical issue with Nelson Sewankambo and other members of the Alliance a couple of times, whenever they paid me a visit in my office. One day, I was pleasantly surprised when Nelson Sewankambo called me and told me that he was booking an appointment to see me with Dr Keith MacAdam, to discuss the leadership of the Infectious Diseases Institute. I was slightly taken aback because I did not expect another McAdam at Makerere after what had happened to his father at the hands of Idi Amin. I was nervous about the prospects of meeting a son of one of Makerere's renowned Professors of Surgery at the Medical School in the years past, and who Idi Amin and his security apparatus had humiliated before declaring him persona non-grata in Uganda and bundling him out of the country in less than seventy-two hours.

Therefore, given the circumstances under which Idi Amin kicked his father out of Makerere and Uganda in the early 1970s, I did not expect his son to take a keen interest in Makerere's affairs. Secondly, we were still procrastinating about where to bury his father's ashes. The old man had willed that after the cremation,

the ashes of his remains be buried in the grounds of Makerere Medical School. His son, Keith, who was then in the Gambia as a medical officer had taken the trouble to send his father's ashes to us. We had actually presented the late Professor MacAdam's wish to the University Council for clearance. In turn, the University Council had debated the pros and cons of honouring his wish, but had turned it down on grounds that the Medical School was not a designated burial ground. The University Council had instead advised that we seek permission from the Kampala City Council to have his remains buried in Kololo Cemetery alongside those of late Cornelius Welter, the mathematics professor and his contemporary. For failing to honour the dead man's wish, I had taken the rap from John Naggenda in his weekly column in the Saturday edition of *The New Vision*. By the time Keith was coming to see me, his father's ashes were still locked up in Dr Lawrence Kaggwa's drawers at Mulago. What then could one possibly say to MacAdam junior and how could one expect him to be so forgiving? When I finally met him, I realised how misplaced my fears had been. Keith was incredibly magnanimous. I could not detect any bitterness or vindictiveness in him. Our first encounter with him was extremely cordial. I guess he is one of the few people I have met who believe in the old adage of "let the bygones be bygones". Such people do not spend time indulging in what happened in the past. The future is their preoccupation.

Behind the scenes, the Academic Alliance had been courting and persuading Dr MacAdam to lead the new institute as its first Director. But by the time we met in my office in late 2003, he had not quite made up his mind whether he would accept the offer but promised that, after consulting with the family, he would get back to us with a definitive answer. Apparently, he liked what he saw and the nostalgia of returning to an institution where his late father had been part of its golden years as an African centre of excellence must have outweighed all other considerations and any lingering doubts he might have had about coming back to Uganda. Uganda was the country where he had spent a good part of his childhood. A few months later, I received news from Dr Sewankambo that Dr Keith MacAdam had accepted the offer and would be relocating to Uganda during the latter part of 2004. Since the Infectious Diseases Institute was still operating as an independent entity, the Academic Alliance was solely responsible for formalising his appointment. Shortly before I retired in 2004, I was given a guided tour of the new building, which was still under construction but was slowly approaching completion. I could not help being impressed. The equipment had started arriving and was being installed. My concern then was the state of the parking lot in front of the Department of Anatomy and the access road. Both were in a terrible state of disrepair then. The heavy trucks ferrying in the construction materials had also compounded the problem. I was just praying hard that by the time the building was ready for commissioning or dedication, we would have found some money to carry out the repairs. The new building

was officially opened in October 2004 by President Museveni, accompanied by his wife Janet, thanks to the generous financial support of one of the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical companies – Pfizer – which made another success story for Makerere possible.

### **Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation – The Generous Hand of the Microsoft Giant Comes to the Aid of Makerere in the Fight against AIDS**

If you asked people a few years ago what they knew about Bill Gates, my guess would be that, in all probability, you would get the answer – he is the founder and President or former President of Microsoft Corporation, the computer software giant. Perhaps a few, who keep abreast of the current affairs, would add that he is the richest man in the world. The technically inclined would probably tell you that Microsoft is all about Windows or its forerun DOS. I am sure a few people would say anything about the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation and what it does. Perhaps a few, who had heard about it, would still associate the Foundation with things related to computing and computer wizardry. Few people then knew that Bill Gates had set up one of the richest Foundations in the USA and the world, which in many ways had a lot to do with addressing the challenges of more earthly problems, and health being one of them. Initially, we knew very little about this new American Foundation, but being a Bill Gates initiative, word quickly spread and those of us at Makerere who had a nose for seeking financial support were on the trail. My colleagues at the Medical School had more or less perfected the art of fundraising for their research into killer diseases like HIV/AIDS – including prevention and care for the afflicted. Teaming up with their colleagues in USA through the Academic Alliance made them a powerful fundraising machinery. Apparently in their quest for money to support their huge HIV/AIDS programmes, they had approached the bosses of the new Foundation for help, and they really received plenty of help from the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation; some US\$20 million, which they had to spend in a relatively short time. In fact, as we went through the process of formalising the two-year grant agreement in 2003, I remember telling Nelson Sewankambo and Fred Wabwire Mangen that if they were not careful, they would drown in Bill Gates money. It was a lot of money to be spent in a relatively short time. I believe the total grant amounted to US\$50 million.

This time, Bill Gates and Microsoft had come to Makerere in a different form, not through the many university computers, which run on the several versions of the Windows operating system, but as a philanthropic organisation to lend us a hand in the fight against mankind's wanton killer disease. Funds provided by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation were meant to support the work of the Academic Alliance for two years, beginning in July 2003. The grant was specifically solicited

to carry out a feasibility and pilot study designed to pave the way for a fully scaled up operation within Uganda and beyond. The Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation was interested in funding a Larger-scale project on HIV/AIDS. The emphasis of the study was on the prevention of further spread of the disease. Beyond the known, the study had to design new preventive strategies and for that reason, behavioural scientists from the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) and the Institute of Public Health and Biostatisticians had to be brought in to work alongside a team of medical scientists at Mulago and from North American universities. The pilot study focused on seven integrated components, namely messages and information campaigns; behavioural surveillance; adherence measurements in mother-to-child transmission (MTCT-plus); in-patient voluntary counselling and training; innovative Anti Retro Viral drugs delivery systems; as well as the development and implementation of innovative laboratory techniques.

This was another big shot in the arm in our struggle to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS not only in Uganda, but in the rest of Africa. Makerere's Medical School had been a pioneer before, it was at it again, and for that I was deeply indebted to the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation. A friend in need is a friend indeed!

### **Makerere University-Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration**

In 2003, I was selected together with eight other Vice Chancellors from East and West Africa for a study tour of the top universities and research institutions on the east coast of USA, sponsored by the four partnership Foundations. During the tour, we had occasion to visit the National Institute of Health at Bethesda in Maryland, which is a suburb of Washington DC. What struck me was the extent to which Makerere Medical School was collaborating with NIH scientists. The icing on the cake for me was to discover the high esteem in which the NIH leadership took Makerere researchers, to the extent that some of them had become household names there. I was being asked about Elly Katabira, Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Fred Mangen and Phillipa Musoke, among a host of others. Dr Phillipa Musoke had just returned to Makerere after her postgraduate training at the Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Curiously, I did not hear of any other African university researchers being mentioned. It was a good feeling to know that our problems notwithstanding, my university was making a mark on the international academic scene. I was touched. Up till then, I had not realised that in a small way, we had established a name for ourselves as credible researchers who could attract NIH funding. From the NIH, our next stop was at the prestigious and nearby Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in Baltimore, one of the top research universities in the USA our Medical School was collaborating with on some of the NIH/Foragarty Foundation-funded HIV/AIDS projects. During that same visit, we spent a couple of hours at the JHU

School of Public Health. Once again during our discussions, Makerere scientists featured prominently. In a way, the talk about Makerere was becoming a little bit of an embarrassment to me, as my colleagues could only look on and listen until our hosts decided to change the topic. Incidentally, many Makerereans had studied for their PhDs at Johns Hopkins, moreover the majority of them straight from Makerere, including Dr James Ntambi, now a Professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. One of my first students, Fred Mangen, who at the time was Director of the Institute of Public Health at Makerere, had also taken his PhD in Public Health at the very same School. During our discussion, I discovered a fact I did not know: JHU and Makerere University Medical School had been collaborating for a long time.

Collaboration between Makerere and Johns Hopkins University dates back to 1988 when Dr Laura Guay came to Makerere as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Paediatrics and joined hands with Ugandan clinicians and researchers who had begun research work on the devastating HIV/AIDS disease in children. At the time, Professor Francis Miiro, a prominent Ugandan gynaecologist was one of the Ugandan clinicians investigating the transmission of the HIV from mother to the foetus in the womb. Since then, the collaboration had flourished, thanks in part to funding from the National Institutes of Health. Around 1996, the partners adopted the name MU-JHU which is short for Makerere University-Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration, with Professor Francis Miiro as team leader on the Ugandan side, and Dr Phillipa Musoke as his fellow the principal investigator from Makerere. The first and all-purpose MU-JHU house was opened at Mulago in 2000. But as the research and services expanded, a new and bigger building became necessary. In 2004/2005, the construction of a second and slightly bigger building on the same site began, to accommodate the expanding research activities and patient care. The success of the facility lay in its turning the humble beginnings of a collaborative linkage between the two universities into an important and vibrant HIV/AIDS research and care centre in the country. It had one of the most comprehensive and advanced immunology laboratories, which was located in the new Infectious Diseases Institute. At the time, this specialised laboratory was one of the few in Africa certified by the College of American Pathologists (CAP). It was also one of the research facilities at the Medical School focusing almost exclusively on HIV/AIDS in children. The facility, with its high research scientific standards, ensured that efficient and accurate laboratory results were readily available any time they were required for both clinical care and research projects. Some of the tests conducted there were critically essential in drug toxicity monitoring. As the only CAP certified laboratory in Eastern Africa, the laboratory carried out an exhaustive range of very advanced and sophisticated HIV and immunological tests, which were essential in understanding the disease and pushing the HIV/AIDS research frontiers towards a cure, and possibly a vaccine.

From 1988 up to 2004, the MU-JHU collaboration had continued to grow with over 4,000 families participating in the research programmes and benefiting from the services provided at the facility, including comprehensive AIDS care, anti-retroviral therapy, nutritional support and counselling. The MU-JHU collaboration was a testimony to one of Makerere's enduring attributes – the ability to attract and retain its international partners. This long and successful relationship between our two universities owed so much to the scientists from both universities who made it work, and to the leadership of Johns Hopkins University that put so much trust in Makerere's ability to participate in a high-level scientific research, addressing what appeared to be an intractable medical and social problem – the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I have to pay special tribute to my colleagues in the Faculty of Medicine, led by Professor Francis Miiro, who proved that Makerere scientists had what it took to be first class researchers, even in a small clinic-cum-office in the crowded Ward 11 in old Mulago Hospital, until the project acquired more befitting facilities.

### **The Second Donors Conference at Makerere, January 2004**

As we continued to attract more and more donors, we realised that perhaps we were beginning to run into the problem of over-duplication of efforts and wasting scarce resources. We needed to improve our ability to coordinate the various partners in order to maximise the benefits from their financial and technical assistance. The solution was to organise a regular consultative forum where all parties would sit together, plan programmes and projects, discuss programme and project implementation progress, assess new and emerging needs requiring support, get to know who was funding which programme or project and by how much. In essence, the forum would be an opportunity for the university to present a progress report to the development partners on the ongoing programmes and projects and perhaps outline new funding proposals. In turn, the university would hear what its donors and partners had to say and whether they had new funding pledges to make. The forum was meant to be an annual event and would take the form of stakeholders consultative meeting, preferably held at Makerere. It would also be a gathering of all Makerere University donors and other stakeholders. It would replace the one-off Donors Conferences. As we have noted, the first donors conference to be held at Makerere was in 1987. Almost fourteen years later, in 2003, we began to plan for a second one, but this time in keeping with what I have outlined.

Towards the end of January 2004, we were ready and, on January 28, 2004 we converged in the Main Hall for a two-day consultative meeting with as many of the university's donors and stakeholders as we could marshal. Disappointingly, despite the concerted efforts to invite as many partners as we could think of, the conference was poorly attended. In spite the low turn-up, there were enough participants to hold a serious meeting. Luckily, most of the university's key donors attended.

The meeting afforded us an opportunity to brief the donors and stakeholders about the latest developments at the university. The coming into force of the new Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001, which had replaced the old Makerere University Act of 1970, was one of the most significant developments I had occasion to brief the donors and stakeholders about. At about the same time, our donors were informed of the ongoing search for a new Vice Chancellor, which had begun after the inauguration of the new Chancellor mid-January of the same year. We also took the occasion to inform our development partners and the general public about the recent research breakthrough in the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission, as a result of research done at the Medical School, and how the discovery had influenced the Ministry of Health to introduce a nation-wide Mother-to-Child Transmission (MTCT) health campaign and consequent service to those in need.

But above all the meeting was an opportunity to focus on the progress of the implementation of the university's Strategic Plan 2000/01–2004/05 so far and developments relating to what had been achieved, what were the failures and why, and the best way forward. It also offered us an occasion to present to our donors new funding requests. As we began to review the progress made so far, we were gratified to note the enthusiasm with which the various donors had supported the Strategic Plan.

We reviewed a report which showed that from 2000 to 2003, NORAD, Sida/SAREC, Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the World Bank had invested over US\$30 million towards the implementation of the plan. This vital support had assisted the university to reinvigorate and improve its academic programmes and expand the teaching space. It had also provided the much needed funding for research and enabled the university strengthen its staff development, notably at the PhD level and improved access for girls. We were also able to remind our partners of the key aspects of the Strategic Plan, one of which was to facilitate the ongoing reforms and transformation in the university across the board and how the reform momentum could be sustained. Their financial and technical support had been crucial in providing the impetus to continue pushing the reforms forward. A latest development we reported on but which had an indirect link to the Strategic Plan was the impact the expanded students' enrolment at the university had had on the private sector, and the emerging relationship between the university and the business community. The business community had seen in the increasing student enrolment at the university a unique business opportunity, which they had seized by constructing modern hostels within the vicinity of the university to provide accommodation for students who could not be accommodated in the university halls of residence. The university had viewed these initiatives by the private sector as positive developments. The private hostels had significantly eased the pressure on the university for accommodation. It was a development the university wished to continue encouraging.

After three years of implementing the Strategic Plan, the meeting noted that Makerere University's development strategy remained as originally formulated. The thrust was still on pursuing the plan's ultimate goal of transforming the university into an engine for the sustainable socio-economic and technological development of Uganda. Therefore, by building on the experience so far gained, the university had decided to systematically underpin this goal with six mutually reinforcing pillars, namely: balancing teaching, research and outreach; infrastructure development; reforms in the university's governance and administration; gender mainstreaming; students' welfare; and relating higher education to the needs of society. To balance teaching, research and outreach, the university was to work towards a better balance between the sciences and the humanities and ensure that members of staff engaged more in research and outreach services.

The plan's cornerstone was the university's ability to mobilise the vast resources needed to facilitate the realisation of these six pillars. In addition, the university was looking for additional resources to support its research programmes. In the Strategic Plan, the university had made research a top priority. However, we had to inform our donors that much as the university would continue to encourage innovative research in all fields, the pressing needs of the country such as poverty eradication, food security, environmental degradation, the fight against killer diseases such as AIDS and malaria, the high infant mortality and the low technological development, had started dictating that the university in collaboration with the relevant Government Ministries and Government agencies, such as the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and the National Environmental Management Authority, should begin to identify key research priorities which would assist the nation to address those needs.

At the time, we were able to take our donors and partners through what the university saw as new and emerging areas of national importance and which, by all indications, were likely to become research priorities. These included food and nutrition, agricultural value addition, biotechnology, technology development and domestication, the environment and sustainable development, lifestyle related diseases and natural resources utilisation and conservation. On infrastructure development, the meeting reminded us of the urgent need to provide additional space in response to the increasing student population but also noted with satisfaction the new buildings that had been constructed so far and the private sector initiatives, which supplemented the university's efforts. We reminded the meeting that NORAD was the only agency supporting the university's infrastructure development and pleaded that other donors should also invest some of their support in this area.

To allay the fears and reservations some donors had about the university's ability to maintain the infrastructure, we pointed out that it had started addressing the problem of poor infrastructure maintenance by setting aside five

per cent of its internally-generated income to support the maintenance fund. The meeting recommended that, as a way of encouraging the private sector to invest more in infrastructure development at the university, the Build, Own and Transfer Space (BOTS) approach should be vigorously pursued. Under the BOTS scheme, private entrepreneurs would be allowed to put up one or more buildings on any of the university's campuses on agreed lease terms. At the expiry of the lease, the university would assume ownership of the property. I made a strong appeal to our donors to provide funding for the construction of a new building for the Faculty of Technology, which was assuming a strategic importance in the technological development of the country to the nation and for the University Library expansion and a mega central computer laboratory, which would provide mass computer literacy to all students.

The two-day stakeholders' consultative meeting ended with no firm new funding commitments or offers; only pledges of continued support and statements of intent. However, NORAD accepted to consider funding a new building for the Faculty of Technology in the phase two of the Institutional Development Programme, which at the time was being negotiated. That was my last donors' conference as staff and Vice Chancellor. I just hoped that as agreed, it would become an annual event and our donors would continue to honour their commitments. I did not know that, as Vice Chancellor, I would organise one like Professor Kirya did.

### **The University's Important External Guests**

Given Makerere's long standing reputation, it does not come as a surprise that from time to time, it hosts very important and renowned personalities. They come for a variety of reasons, in part just to pay a courtesy call on the Vice Chancellor and to see the university. They also come to engage in serious intellectual discourse with staff, students and sometimes the wider public and, occasionally, to deliver public lectures. As we have seen earlier in its hey days, Makerere was renowned for its high standard public lectures. Those were days of the crowd-pulling Makerere's Ali Mazrui versus Dar es Salaam's Rodney Walter duels of word in the Main Hall. Sadly, the dark clouds of the seventies and early 1980s had thwarted that cherished tradition. The regimes of the day saw public lectures, as they did with so many other things at Makerere, as direct and unacceptable criticism and incitement for dissent. Hence, staff had decided to take cover and let the highly cherished intellectual tradition die. That changed with the change of Government in the mid-1980s when Yoweri Museveni ascended power. The tradition was revived but, sadly, it had lost the tempo and lustre of the 1960s.

In my time, we hosted several personalities who delivered powerful public lectures that covered a wide range of topical issues. Many of them engaged with staff in intellectual discourse. Here, I will give some space to the few who either

I have not mentioned before, or who merit a repetition because of who or what they were and what they said. Among the prominent political personalities I hosted, President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique features prominently. He visited in January 1997. He did not deliver a lecture, but his presence was enough. I was able to take him on a guided tour of the university, for him to see as much of good old Makerere as time could allow. After the tour, we hosted him to a small reception. His visit was followed in August of the same year by that of President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania – an old Makererian, who as we saw made a personal pledge towards the construction of an extension to the Main Library and, as a true Makererian, actually honoured his pledge. President Mkapa came with his wife in August 1997 to participate in Makerere's platinum jubilee celebrations, which as we have seen was quite a colourful ceremony. President's visit was followed by that of his immediate predecessor, former President Hassan Mwinyi in November 1997.

Earlier in June 1996, we had hosted the Duke of Abruzzi and Duchess of Aosta in Italy, in the company of the Italian Ambassador to Uganda. In the course of their visit, they opened and dedicated the Mount Rwenzori Resource Centre, part of the Department of Geography in the Faculty of Arts, and left behind a collection of photographs shot by their ancestor, who led an expedition to the Rwenzori (or Mountains of the Moon as they were then known in Europe), at the turn of the twentieth century. Late Ron Brown, then Secretary of Commerce in the Clinton Administration, was another prominent guest we hosted in February 1996. He addressed a small audience of staff, researchers and postgraduate students at the Economic Policy Research Centre about international trade and economic issues. The visit was shortly before his tragic death in a plane crash in Croatia in April of the same year. As we have seen before, Paul H. O'Neal, then Treasury Secretary in the George Walker Bush Administration, was the second US Minister to have come to Makerere during my time. He came visiting in May 2002 and delivered a well-attended public lecture in the new and beautiful Women and Gender Studies building, which was not yet officially commissioned. We were equally privileged to play host to the then President of the World Bank, Mr James Wolfenshon in 1997. He too addressed a small audience of postgraduate students in Economics, staff of the Institute of Economics and Economic Policy Research Centre in the board room of the Economic Policy Research Centre.

Perhaps, in part due to the vast distance separating Uganda and New Zealand, Makerere had had very little contact with universities in New Zealand and few Ugandans were venturing to study there, preferring to go to Australia, which was nearer. Dr Abel Rwendeire was one of the few Makerere staff to have taken his PhD in New Zealand. Late Kiwanuka of the Faculty of Law, who had also gone there for his PhD died before he could return to Uganda. So, I was pleasantly surprised to receive Dr Neils Patricia Macgregor from Massey University at

Palmerstone in the North Island of New Zealand in December 1997 to discuss possible collaboration and other interesting issues. For reasons I cannot recall, this was one of the promising linkages we failed to exploit fully. We also hosted the leaders of India's highly acclaimed institutions. Although India and Uganda had a lot in common, there was very little in the way of collaborative linkages between Makerere and the Indian universities. During his time, as Minister of Education and Sports, Amanywa Mushega tried very hard to link Makerere University and the Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo with the Indian Institutes of Technology (or IITs as they are popularly known).

In December 1995, as part of the Minister's effort to forge linkages with these prestigious Indian institutions, we hosted Professors R. G. Mendiratta, the Deputy Director of the IIT New Delhi and C. V Ramakreshnar, one of the Deans there. Much as we thought our Faculty of Technology stood to benefit from a linkage with the IIT New Delhi's long record as a centre of technological excellence, this was another of those linkages that failed to develop. The failure was because we could not identify a reliable source of funding.

Given Uganda's long history of being a host country to hundreds of thousands of refugees from the neighbouring countries, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has always had a keen interest in Makerere University where, over the years, scores of refugees have studied or taught as staff at Makerere, with financial support from UNHCR. The understanding between the UNHCR and the university was that refugees studying at Makerere would pay the same fees as the Ugandan students, which at first we found rather odd, but later we had to accept it as a norm. The university was extending a humanitarian gesture to the unfortunate. As a way of cementing this relationship between the university and UNHCR, and as a way of getting the Refugee Study Programme at the Faculty of Law off the ground, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms Sadako Ogata, visited the university in May 1998 during her tour of Uganda. Her visit followed on the heels of her colleague, Ms Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, one of the new UN agencies. It was a pleasure hosting her at the Human Rights and Peace Centre in the Faculty of Law.

Besides the century-old famous Royal Society of London, there are other equally well respected and prestigious learned societies outside of the United Kingdom. The Royal Society of Canada (also known as the Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada) which was founded in 1882 by the Marquis of Lome and Governor General of Canada is one of them. Election to the fellowship of this Society is the highest academic accolade available to scientists and scholars in Canada. I was therefore privileged to host its President at the time, the late Professor Robert Haynes, in February 1996. In the mid-1950s, Professor Haynes, a renowned biophysicist joined a small, but significant

movement of prominent physicists who ventured out into Biology. The group included some of the top physicists like Ewrin Schrodinger, arguably the father of Wave Mechanics and the Braggs (father and son who became famous for their discovery of X- ray diffraction and its application to Crystallography). I believe every student of X-ray Crystallography is familiar with the Bragg's equation. Back then, this was a significant departure from tradition. The movement had its early beginnings in Germany and Britain. This small number of pioneering physicists laid the foundations for the new discipline of Biophysics. Unfortunately, Professor Haynes died in Toronto in December 1998, two years after his historic visit to Makerere.

Elsewhere in this account, I described Mrs Hillary Rodham Clinton's historical visit to Makerere and her famous speech in the Freedom Square. I will not attempt to recount her visit and what she said, but only to point out that her visit was a further testimony to the growing esteem in which the world community was once again beginning to hold Makerere University as a leading centre of higher learning in Africa. By the time she visited in March 1998, we did not have the slightest inkling that she wanted to follow her husband's path into high stake American politics and subsequently stand for and convince the New York voters to elect her to the USA Senate. Soon after being elected Senator, rumour came flying that she wanted to use her election to Senate as a springboard to have a crack at her husband's former job – to be the first woman President of the USA. If that were to happen, a return to the White House would see her switch roles with her husband. I am sure the former President Bill Clinton would follow her there, perhaps under the unassuming title of First Gentleman of America. Since this would be a precedence in the history of the USA, to have a woman as President and Commander-in-Chief, an appropriate title would have to be coined for the husband of a woman President, much in the same way as the title of First Lady is bestowed on the wife of a sitting President. It was an interesting prospect.

Besides the First Lady of the USA, I was privileged to host some high-profile Ambassadors accredited to Uganda. Ms Nancy Powell was one of the American Ambassadors to Uganda I got to know very well. Like Johnny Carson before her, she turned out to be a good friend of Makerere and the reason I have singled her out is because this was her last visit to Makerere. She had visited the university on several occasions, but this was a special visit. She was coming to bid me farewell. Although she had made an appointment, through a terrible oversight on my part on September 29, 1998, I went to Masaka for a meeting and spent a night there. Her appointment had slipped out of my mind. Fortunately, next day I started my return journey to Kampala early. I wanted to be back on my desk quickly to catch up on the previous day's work, but I could not remember the 10 o'clock appointment with Ambassador Nancy Powell on that morning of September 30. Just as I was approaching Mpigi town, some 45 kilometres from Kampala Dorcas,

one of my senior secretaries called me on the cell phone to find out whether I was aware of the appointment with Ambassador Nancy Powell that morning.

By the time Dorcas called, it was now several minutes past 10 o'clock and raining, and Ambassador Powell was in my office waiting. There was little I could do. Traffic permitting, it would take us at least an hour to get to Makerere. I apologised and asked Dorcas to pass on my apology to the Ambassador for the terrible oversight and to assure her that I was on the way coming. To my amazement, in spite of her busy schedule, Ambassador Nancy Powell chose to wait for me. She had arrived on time and there I was keeping her for over an hour. She could have gone back to her office disgusted, but she decided to sit and wait for the irresponsible Vice Chancellor who forgets important appointments. When we met, she was the first to ask me not to worry about my lateness. She then told me that she was not about to leave Uganda without saying goodbye to the Vice Chancellor and thanking us once again for successfully hosting Mrs Clinton in March that year. I was touched by her gesture, but all I could say in reply was to thank her for her support and the support of the American Government and American people to Uganda, and Makerere University in particular over the years, and also for the warmth of her friendship. I then wished her happy redeployment and finally retirement, adding that when she finally retires she should make Uganda her second home. I must say it was an emotional moment for me and I guess for her too. That was the last time I saw her.



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## Honours and Honorary Degrees

### **An Unsuccessful Attempt at Honorary Degrees Awards**

One of the many good things universities frequently do is to recognise individuals in public and private sectors of life, who they have reason to believe deserve recognition. The recognition is based on all sorts of reasons, but in the majority of cases, universities honour individuals whom they think have excelled in their respective fields of work, or those who have made significant contributions to the universities or have been exceptional achievers, or have performed outstanding and heroic deeds in the service of humanity. Usually, the recognition is in the form of various degrees awarded *honoris causa* – the honorary doctorates being the most coveted of such awards. The person on whom an honorary degree is conferred is not required to take any examination. The award is based solely on outstanding achievements, which the universities take a lot of care to evaluate. The criterion under which one is judged as qualified for the honour is evidence adduced by a body, usually a committee within the university which has the responsibility to receive, screen and rigorously assess whether the nominee so presented merits the award.

Universities regard their honorary degrees as very prestigious and exceptional awards. For this reason, the awards are jealously safeguarded, ensuring that the persons on whom they are bestowed really deserve them. However, from time to time, this simple rule of the thumb breaks down and the award becomes controversial. Incidentally, Makerere University is no exception. At Makerere, the tradition of conferring honorary degrees on exceptional individuals dates back to the days of the University of East Africa. In its short existence, the defunct University of East Africa honoured many people: politicians, its former Vice Chancellors and Principals of Makerere College and a few individuals in public and private life. When the University of East Africa folded up in 1970, the tradition seemed to have died with it. At Makerere of the early 1970s, honorary degrees had become rare until one was awarded to Idi Amin.

In 1977, the university decided to honour Field Marshal and Life President of Uganda, Idi Amin Dada, with an honorary Doctor of Laws. The international academic community was stunned by Makerere's judgement. There was real concern at the time that perhaps Makerere University had made a big error in honouring a person with such an appalling human rights record and in so doing had dented whatever reputation it had left. Many also suspected that, in fact, Idi Amin had pressured and possibly bullied the university into giving him one. Others thought he was honoured because some individuals canvassing for favours had put his name forward for the award and had lobbied hard on his behalf. Whatever was the truth behind late Idi Amin's honorary Doctor of Laws, in the aftermath of that controversial award, the university decided to tighten up the honorary degree requirements. As far as I recall, until the novelist, the late Michael Nsimbi and one other person were honoured in the late 1980s, no other person had received an honorary degree from Makerere. Shortly before I took over from Professor Senteza Kajubi, the late Alhaji Moshood Abiola of Nigeria and the late Julius Kambarage Nyerere were the last people to be honoured with honorary doctorates.

In 2001, just as we thought that the dust storm of the 1970s had long settled and therefore the time was once again opportune for the university to honour a few people for their outstanding achievements, we ran into serious and, to say the least, unexpectedly difficult challenges. Through the local press, we had asked the public to submit to the Academic Registrar names of people they believed had done or achieved something that Makerere University could recognise with honorary degrees. The public had responded very positively and the list of nominees was quite impressive. As Vice Chancellor, I was the designated chairperson of the Honorary Awards Committee, one of the few and unusual standing Committees of Senate that had representation from both the Senate and the University Council. In fact, the chairperson of the University Council was one of Council's representatives on the Committee. The Committee had not met for several years and worse still, none of us had ever participated in the exercise before.

Fortunately, there were regulations and guidelines contained in an old document, written in the 1970s. The Academic Registrar had kept a copy stamped "secret" in red ink in his office for years. The guidelines were sufficiently clear to enable us identify and shortlist candidates who met the requirements. According to the regulations, the PhD is not supposed to be awarded as a *honoris causa* degree. It is strictly an academic degree, which is studied for and awarded on the basis of a thesis embodying original and scholarly work, internally and externally examined and orally defended in a *viva vocae*. Only the Doctor of Science (DSc) for excellence in any scientific field, the Doctor of Letters (DLit) for outstanding contribution to the Arts and Humanities and the Doctor of Laws (LLD) for the lawyers, statesmen and people who have excelled or have

distinguished themselves in the walk of public and private life, were the doctorate degrees Makerere University could award *honoris causa*.

The selection of the successful candidates for the awards, as stated in the regulations, was an elaborate four-stage process which involved the participation of both Senate and the University Council. The first stage was for the Honorary Awards Committee to solicit names of worthy candidates through public announcements. The second stage was for the Committee to receive nominations and shortlist possibly one or two nominees for each degree category. The third stage was postal balloting by the Senators. Every member of Senate was given a ballot paper containing a list of names of all shortlisted candidates by the Academic Registrar, who was Secretary to the Committee. The list of names also contained a short, but concise write-up on each candidate, giving a candidate's brief bio data and why he or she merits the award. The Senators had to state unequivocally whether or not they approved the nominations and signed their ballot papers before returning them to the Academic Registrar. Each shortlisted nominee had to poll a minimum of fifty one per cent of the Senate membership to qualify for the fourth and final stage. At the time, Senate had a total of 110 members, which meant that to qualify for the next stage, a candidate had to pull a minimum of fifty six votes. Any nominee receiving less than this number was automatically disqualified and could only be considered again five years later.

The final stage was the submission of the names of all candidates who had scored fifty one per cent and over to the University Council. Through another postal balloting exercise, the University Council came up with the final list of qualified candidates. The Academic Registrar would then initiate the process of informing the successful candidates and identifying an orator for each of them. An orator is a member of staff who, before the Chancellor confers the honorary degree upon the successful awardee, reads a citation which contains a brief statement about the person on whom the degree is to be conferred and why the university had decided to honour him or her with that particular honorary doctorate.

One evening in May 2001, shortly after we had closed nominations, I received instruction to add a special nominee who happened to be one of Africa's prominent and long serving heads of state. As if the nomination was a fate accompli, the directive was for the university to arrange to confer an honorary PhD on him at a specially arranged congregation. As I have said before, this was one of the toughest challenges I had to deal with in my long tour as Makerere's Vice Chancellor. First, I was at pains to explain to the authorities that the PhD was not among the degrees Makerere University awards *honoris causa*. I had to point out that if the candidate qualified for an honorary degree, he would be awarded an LLD. As a statesman, that was the only honorary degree he qualified for. The second challenge was the candidate himself: this particular nominee

was no ordinary person; he was one of Africa's charismatic leaders, so whatever concerned him had to be handled with care.

Fortunately for me, by the time the nomination was received, the Committee's work was in its preliminary stage and therefore, possible to accommodate a late submission, after all the nomination had come from more than the ordinary public. In the event, I decided to forward the candidate's name to the Honorary Degrees Committee for consideration and action. However, there was one serious problem with this nomination; it was submitted without the requisite supporting documents. The candidate's biodata and a write-up justifying the nomination for the award were both missing. These documents were a critical prerequisite for the Committee to make an informed decision on the candidate. Without this information, the Committee's hands were tied. While waiting for the critical documents, the Committee decided to postpone decisions on all other nominees whose documents were complete. In spite of the assurance that the candidate's papers would be submitted soon, and despite our constant reminders to all concerned, the documents never came.

What finally came was a brief statement authored by the candidate's local nominator. After several weeks of waiting, we decided to move on to the next stage with the only document available about this special candidate. In the usual Makerere style where the ears of the walls are constantly wide open to the faintest sound, information about this special nomination had already leaked out and the local press had picked it and made it an over-kill. They started bombarding me with all sorts of questions about the candidate, why he had been nominated, who had nominated him, what had he done for Makerere University to deserve an honorary degree award and so on and so on. The press was also interested in knowing how we were handling this special nomination and why the delays in coming out with an announcement. I feared that if we did not handle it properly, there was a real danger of the whole thing turning into a press saga, to the embarrassment of all concerned.

After the Honorary Awards Committee had completed its task of compiling the names of the shortlisted candidates, including the specially nominated candidate, the list was sent to all Senators for postal balloting. When the tally came in, only two candidates had qualified for the next round; one was a former and long serving senior administrator of the university, for the LLD. The other was a prominent Ugandan woman plant breeder, for the DSc. Both had polled over fifty one percent of the votes. Sadly, the specially nominated candidate was not one of them. He had polled fewer than the fifty six votes he needed to qualify for the next round. From then on, he was technically out of the race. The Academic Registrar and I had the unenviable duty of informing the nominator that his candidate was unsuccessful; we had no choice but to convey Senate's decision to the concerned that the bid had failed.

We expected an angry reaction from the local nominator and feared the worst. To our pleasant surprise, the local nominator took the news very calmly and in a very dignified way. Instead of yelling at us and issuing directives and ultimatums, he only wondered why Makerere University Senate rejected his nomination. However, many of his officers took a more confrontational approach, alleging that what Makerere Senate had done amounted to a slap in his face. Some were quite abusive and insulting in their spoken and written remarks. I recall receiving a message hand-delivered by a Permanent Secretary, who had close ties with the university, demanding to know who among the Senators had voted against this nominee or who had abstained. I had to explain that this was a secret ballot and as such I was duty-bound not to divulge information to any unauthorised person or persons who are not members of Senate, adding that if they continued to insist on being given this privileged information, I would immediately pave the way for the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor, who in their opinion would give them the information. I was ready for the confrontation rather than be intimidated into submission. I told the Permanent Secretary that Senate was at liberty to choose who it believed merited such honours without undue coercion. For various reasons, but more so on the basis of the only evidence presented by the local nominator and the absence of any personal and public details about the nominee, Senate had found this specially nominated candidate not worthy of the university's honorary award for that year.

After conveying Senate's decision to the local nominator and receiving his reaction, we believed that was the end of the matter. We had been naïve to think so. Just as we prepared to submit the names of the successful candidates to the University Council, we received instructions in a rather long monologue from some high-ranking officials of Ministry of Education and Sports to the effect that we should stop the entire honorary degree award process at once and wait for further instructions. Under the 1970 Act, senior officials of the Ministry of Education had a lot of say in the affairs of the university. We had no choice, but to oblige with the directive. The whole exercise was put on hold indefinitely and was not to be revived until I left. Unfortunately, one of the promising nominees who had qualified for the DSc degree died before the exercise could resume. Interestingly, some local FM radios took gibes at the whole thing and made fun of the candidate and his failed attempt to get an honorary doctorate of Makerere University. To me and my colleagues however, the jokes were not funny at all. In fact, had this incident happened in the days of the likes of Idi Amin, it could have turned out to be a matter of life or death for me. Fortunately, under the NRM administration, we could get away with it and I lived to tell the tale. Without exaggeration, it was a harrowing experience, one of the hottest potatoes I ever handled in my long years as Makerere's Vice Chancellor.

## **My Contribution Outside the University and My Unexpected Rolls of Honour**

As I have said before, I am not overly superstitious and never a strong believer in things seemingly unnatural; yet I cannot stop wondering why so many unexpected things have happened to me over the years. I have kept wondering if there could be some truth in what some call fate – that power which is believed to decide and control everything that happens to us and which we as ordinary mortals are incapable of predicting, stopping or changing. Or is what has kept happening to us just chance favouring a supposedly prepared mind? It's all hard to tell! To begin with, I was born prematurely, almost two months before time, with a birth weight of 2.6 pounds or just over one kilogramme. I had to be kept in an incubator at Nsambya Hospital and kept warm by rubber-hot water bottles until I had matured enough for my mother to take over. I survived, but lived a very fragile early childhood. On several occasions, I was at the brink, but always managed to hang on by a thread. I guess that my experience is not a unique one. I know that many children are born prematurely every day and many survive. However, what makes my experience slightly different is that I was born almost sixty years ago when modern health care was very much in its infancy in Uganda. Moreover, by the time I was born, my mother was thirty six years old and had had no child before – a fairly advanced age for an African woman. My father was approaching forty five and had one child. I was the first child of my mother and the second of my father. I came into the world when my only sister was over fifteen years old.

After surviving all the odds in my early childhood, I wondered how I managed to scrape through my education, becoming the first member of my family to go to university and to receive a PhD, moreover, on a scholarship provided not by the usual scholarship awarding bodies, but by the very university where I studied for my PhD – Queen's University Belfast. That too was something close to a miracle. I had never expected that someday my maternal uncle – Kojja – would pay the hefty school fees for my secondary school education at Namilyango College and, while there, I would be dogged by constant headaches. But somehow, I managed to scrape through and soldiered on. In my wildest dreams, I had never imagined I would teach at the revered Makerere University. Above all, I never once dreamed that one day I would be its Vice Chancellor, serve longer than any of my predecessors and not be sacked over the radio, as was the norm. I therefore think that I have every reason to consider myself a lucky man, if there is such a thing as luck. That is how fate moulded my life.

My long years as Makerere's Vice Chancellor came with many unexpected honours. There were also a couple of firsts and I have already alluded to some of them. Suffice it to say that some of them were quite significant to me personally, and I believe for Makerere too. Here, I will just highlight in passing a few of

what I consider as my modest service and contributions, which cascaded over to the wider society and organisations in and outside Uganda. I served as the first elected Chairperson of the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology for over ten years, with my friend Zurubaben Nyiira as its Executive Secretary, and we saw the Council make real progress, including acquisition of a plot for its own headquarters. I was an elected Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) for six long years, with my former student at Makerere, Henry Aryamanya Mugisha as its Executive Director, and during those six years, NEMA acquired a big plot of land in the prime area of Kampala, built and moved into its own house – the NEMA House along Jinja Road. I served as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), with James Kalebo as Executive Director, for nine good years. During that period, UMI started awarding Masters degrees for the first time and a Global Distance Learning facility was built there. I was its Chairperson when the Inter-University Council for East Africa was revitalised and became an integral part of the new East African Community. I served as a member of the Governing Council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, based in London, for many years. I was one of the external members of the first governing Council of the newly founded Copperbelt University in Zambia. Together with the Vice Chancellors of the public universities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, I founded the Institute for Capacity Development in Africa (ICAD) based at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology at Juja near Nairobi. We established ICAD in collaboration with the Government of Japan through the Japanese Agency for International Development (JICA).

In the majority of cases, I served in my personal capacity, not by virtue of being the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University; and for that, I am most grateful to those who saw some worth in me and believed they could put it to good use. In so doing, I did not realise that a few people in the international academic community were keenly following my work, and deeds too. To my surprise, they recognised my little and perhaps not so significant contributions with awards and top honours. I am a recipient of the Order of Merit bestowed on me by my alma mater, Namilyango College in 1997, during the celebrations to mark the college's 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary, since its founding in 1902. It is the highest honour the college can bestow on their alumnae in recognition of their outstanding achievement in public or private life. As an alumnus of that great school, I was deeply touched by this recognition.

I am also tempted to believe that I might have been the first Vice Chancellor at Makerere to be honoured with two honorary doctoral degrees while still in office. It was a rare honour for me, and I suppose for my university too. The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, USA led the way when, at a colourful commencement ceremony in 1997, attended among others, by my friend Professor

Elly Sabiiti, my wife Alice and my long serving personal assistant Euphemia Kalema-Kiwuwa, the Dean of the College of Education presented me to the President of the university, Gordon Gee for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Education (EdD) *honoris causa*. The conferment ceremony was preceded by a citation, giving reasons why Ohio State University had decided to bestow an honorary degree on me, read by a member of the university's Board of Trustees. According to the citation, I was being honoured in recognition of my outstanding leadership role at Makerere University and contribution to African higher education, among other things. It was a moving ceremony. My second honorary doctorate, which I received in 2000, was from the University of Bergen in Norway. This time, it was a PhD. Unlike Makerere, the University of Bergen awards the PhD *honoris causa* as well. At this colourful ceremony, I was accorded the privilege to deliver the acceptance speech on behalf of my fellow graduands, who came from all over the world. I received my honorary degree at the same graduation ceremony at which Venasiuss Baryamureeba received his PhD in Computer Science and Informatics. To paraphrase the citation, the award was in recognition of my contribution to the productive relationship between Makerere and the University of Bergen, as well as my good leadership. Besides the scroll, the award included a beautiful golden ring. I was due to receive a third from Tufts University in Boston USA, but for some reason and to my regret, I failed to submit the requisite documentation, so I missed it; but I am grateful to Tufts University for considering me for this prestigious honour. My alma mater, Queen's University, Belfast added to my growing list of honours in summer 2004. During the Congress of the Association of Commonwealth Universities held here in 2003, Dr Michael Gibbons, who was then Secretary General of the Association, asked me to address the Congress on behalf of the African universities at the opening ceremony, which was well received. At the end of the week-long Congress, the Vice Chancellor of Queen's, Professor Sir George Bain looked me out, apparently eager to find out how as a Queens man I had fared since I graduated from there with a PhD in December 1977. It was quite an interesting chat. I did not realise that Sir George Bain had other ideas for me on his mind. A year later, I learnt what he had in mind for me during that brief encounter. Had I been a good mind reader, perhaps I would have guessed what the Queen's knight had in store for me. Alas, I was not, so I never guessed. Therefore, it came as a surprise, and a pleasant one for that matter, to receive a letter from him informing me that my alma mater had decided to honour me as an outstanding alumnus with a degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

Queen's University, Belfast has a way of making the graduation ceremony really colourful and dignified. The graduation ceremony there is held over several days, faculty by faculty. Each honorary degree recipient has a whole session to himself or herself each day. You stand on a podium as the Orator and the Vice Chancellor says all the nicest things about you before an attentive audience of parents and important guests. It was an experience of a life time and the crowning moment

of my long career in academic leadership and administration. Like at Bergen, the Vice Chancellor asked me to deliver an after-dinner speech on behalf of all honorary degree graduates the night before. What a privilege it was for me and my family as I recounted my experience, as one of a handful of black people in the Belfast of the 1970s, to an audience of dignitaries from near and far.

I wished my beloved mother and uncle were alive and there to share the joy with me. Alas, both had long departed. My wife Alice, our eldest daughter Caroline who had spent the first three years of her life in Belfast when I was a student there, and our younger son Martin took their place. Above all, I owed all these honours and recognition to good old Makerere, which gave me the opportunity to serve in the best way I could and to the many good colleagues I had worked with over the years, some alive, some long departed.

As I conclude what you might call an exercise in self-indulgence, I should perhaps attempt to answer the question which so many people have asked me again and again. What made us succeed? Frankly, this is a question I have always had a great deal of difficulty answering. I am not even sure I am capable of answering it at all. I am no expert on leadership; nevertheless, let me make an attempt because, from experience, I have learnt a few things that work. No doubt, my answer is bound to be biased; nevertheless, I shall attempt to answer the question. It is an answer based on personal experience and empirical observations. Did we succeed? I guess the answer depends on who you talk to. I want to begin with a proviso that success is relative and hasten to point out that I am the last person to believe that we succeeded any more than any of our predecessors. But that said and done, I strongly believe and indeed experience has taught me this over the years, that as a leader, having a clear vision you strongly believe in and being able to articulate it, is one of the key ingredients for success. Vision gives you a sense of direction; it acts as your compass. Secondly, I believe that successful leadership has a lot to do with your own personality and how you relate to the people you lead. I suppose these are the personality traits all of us inherit from the higher powers. Based on these personality traits, scholars of leadership describe leaders in terms of their leadership styles, which I will not go into here. From a personal experience, I learnt that one of the best ways to get results out of people and to earn their loyalty was to make them know that you know they are just as human as you are, and like you they suffer from the same human imperfections and weaknesses, and that perfection is something we have to constantly strive for. Hence, you know that whatever they do will not always result in the ultimate perfection you are looking for. I also learnt that it pays a lot to let the people you lead know that you have confidence in them; and with your good guidance, they can give off their best. Making them know and feel that they all matter, regardless of their positions or rank in the organisation or the kind of jobs they do, is equally important in getting the best out of people. This, in my experience, is one of the best ways to build a good and strong team. If you have a strong and supportive management team, half of your work is done.

Avoiding being the dominant figure is equally useful. This is so because no one individual has the monopoly of good ideas or the best brains. In my opinion, a good leader or manager is one who capitalises on the strength of the people he or she leads, instead of over-dwelling on their weaknesses. Admittedly, in every organisation there are people who are simply incapable of pulling hard. In such a situation, use the carrot as best as you can first. But when the carrot fails, the stick should come out, as a last resort. I guess this is what some refer to as fair and firm. Experience taught me that, given the right opportunity and the proper means (some call this mentoring), most people are capable of overcoming their weaknesses, and eventually making it, even in an excellent manner.

Secondly, if you must lead, lead by example. You cannot expect people to be punctual at work when you are perpetually late for no good reason. I also know from first-hand experience that hard work is another critical and key factor that contributes to success in leadership. Some people have also argued that you cannot divorce intellectual smartness from leadership success. I guess there is some truth in that. In short, the list of ingredients that can make one an effective leader is long, but there is one thing I know for sure; there is no short cut to success except through hard work and constant knowledge and skills improvement.

Good supervision of your subordinates helps too. People, and I am one of them, hate to be lambasted and harangued all the time. Correct if you must but do not over-swear. You must demonstrate that you are smart and capable of inspiring confidence, instead of being the one who shoots down your subordinates' ideas all the time. You should also humbly admit that you can be challenged and won over by a good argument. In fact, you must be well prepared to take constant fair and unfair criticism, which at times can be extremely harsh. To your surprise, some of it would come in the form of anonymous mail, write-up in the press or reports to your bosses; which teaches another important lesson. In every organisation, there are employees who always think that they can do your job better than you, so they always concentrate on amplifying the negatives, however trivial they may be. I learnt to accept fair criticism. I have also learnt not to take unfair criticism lying down. I learnt that the best way to silence critics is to fight back with figures and facts.

As organisations become more complex, the leader's personal touch can get lost in the maze of things. However, from a personal experience, a leader must ensure that, in spite of the complexity of the organisation and the many competing demands on his or her time, he or she keeps in constant touch with the rank and file. I have heard some experts on organisations call this kind of interaction vertical and horizontal communication. It is critically important to keep channels of communication open all the time. In an organisation, no problem is too trivial not to be attended to. In a big organisation like Makerere University, there are many things which are likely to, and indeed do escape the Vice Chancellor's

attention. However, if you have well-established channels of communication, people freely feed you with good information without you consciously encouraging the practice of “spying for the boss in return for a favour”, which is so common in many organisations. No doubt, you need information about the formal and informal goings on in your organisation and you need to be kept in the know, but it should not come at any cost. As I learnt, on many an occasion, whistle blowing can be a double-edged sword for a leader. Here, good judgement comes in handy. It enables you to discern the grain from the chaff and to extricate yourself from potentially nasty situations in time. As we have seen elsewhere in this account, failing to keep in touch can lead to disastrous consequences. Simple problems, which could have been contained through simple dialogue, can easily spiral out of control. This is what I call keeping the ear on the ground. As they say, it is better to nip the problems in the bud before they spin out of Control, because when things start getting out of control and going terribly wrong, you may never know what has hit you.

Lastly, I am one of those people who are never satisfied with the status quo. I always want to see something new happening. If I see nothing new happening for too long, I become bored and restless. Above all, I like good and beautiful things, things of high quality. I am terribly irked by filth and shoddy work. This trait is almost an obsession in me and I guess it is what drives my zeal to keep experimenting with new things. I believe that, for one to be a progressive leader or manager, one must have zeal for innovation and perhaps a streak of perfectionism. I hate people who are inflexible and tend to be dogmatic in their thinking and acting. I prefer open-minded people. More often than not, open-minded people are quite successful because they tend to be more perceptive and receptive to new ideas. Finally, as a leader, whatever you do, do it efficiently and effectively, because often what you do and how you do it is a statement on your leadership. Problems should always be seen as challenges to be tackled, and there is nothing as fascinating as facing a serious challenge and innovating an elegant solution. I do not think it is bad ego to strive to leave a positive legacy behind you, that can last long after you have gone. As a leader, failure should never be an option.



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## Choosing a New Chancellor and a Successor

### **First Things First**

If I have anything worthy boasting about as Makerere's eighth Vice Chancellor, it must be the simple fact that I was perhaps the first incumbent Vice Chancellor ever to have participated in the selection and appointment of my successor since Makerere became a full-fledged university in 1970, and the sheer joy I derived out of the experience. My predecessors were not so lucky. Not only did they leave office more-or-less unceremoniously – some disappearing never to be seen again, the appointment of the Vice Chancellor was strictly the prerogative of the Chancellor. As we learnt earlier, the 1970 Makerere University Kampala Act, later amended by Idi Amin's decree of 1975 gave the Chancellor who, by the same Act had to be the Head of State of Uganda, absolute powers to appoint the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor; and in so doing, he consulted neither the Senate nor the University Council.

The Chancellor was at liberty to appoint any person of his choice he deemed fit to occupy that office, and only the Minister responsible for Education had a say in who was appointed. In most cases, the Minister did the search and forwarded the name to the Chancellor for consideration and appointment. That was the law then as enacted by the Obote I Government and, as we have seen, this seems to have been the trend in majority of Anglophone African countries. However, ever since the 1970 Act was passed, the university community, particularly the academic staff, had been fighting tooth and nail to have it repealed. The aim was to reduce Government control over the management of the university. Staff thought it was grossly unfair to sideline the important university organs – the Senate and Council when it came to the appointment of the chief executive officer of the university and other top officials. It took over thirty years to have the Act repealed.

Towards the end of 2000, the sixth Parliament passed an umbrella bill which repealed the Makerere University Act of 1970 and other statutes which were in existence at the time. The bill was given the obligatory Presidential ascent in March 2001, thus becoming the now famous Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001. Among other things, the new Act defined three main roles for the Vice Chancellor of a public university in Uganda, namely being responsible for the academic, administrative and financial affairs of the university. Under the old Act, the Vice Chancellor had no direct say in the university's financial matters. That was the reserve of the University Secretary. Although the Vice Chancellor was still appointed by and responsible to the Chancellor, the new Act changed the mode by which the successful candidate was arrived at. In theory, the Chancellor could reject a nomination submitted by the university, in practice the new Act reduced his or her role to just formalising the appointment; the Chancellor had no power to impose a Vice Chancellor on the university. For worse or for better, this was the fundamental break with the past that generations of Makerere staff had been waiting for.

Although I should have retired towards the end of 2001, the process of appointing my successor took much longer than we had anticipated. The unexpected delay kept me at the job for nearly two more years. Incidentally, those two extra years turned out to be very productive years for me and the university. The process of appointing my successor was slow, because we had no script, no cook book. We had to write every rule and procedure from scratch. The new Act provided the basic guidelines, but had also many lacunas which we had to fill and there was no precedence that we could use as a reference guide. The exercise was challenging but I was happy to have been part of it. Secondly, when the new Act came into effect on April 6, 2001, the President of Uganda ceased to act as Chancellor of any public university in Uganda. From that moment on, the role of the Head of State changed from being the titular head of every public university to that of a Visitor, which was essentially a supervisory role. The other responsibility for the Head of State under the new Act was that to appoint the Chancellors for the public universities from among the candidates presented to him by the universities. All universities had to identify suitable candidates, submit the names to the President through their governing Councils and wait for the outcome. Until Professor Apolo Nsibambi was installed in early 2004, the university was without its titular head, the Chancellor for all that time. As Vice Chancellor, I had to perform most of the Chancellor's statutory duties. This was the second time the Vice Chancellor acted as both Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of the university. However, the appointment of my successor was not one of them; that had to wait until the Chancellor was identified. By coincidence, the term of the old Council also came to an end with the coming into effect of the new Act. In effect, therefore, the university was operating without its main statutory organs.

As much as the new Act of 2001 was a welcome and long awaited change, I doubted whether we had prepared ourselves adequately for the tasks we were about to take on. The first challenge was to put together a new Senate. That was relatively easy since majority of the members came from within the university. Under the new Act, the membership of Senate was drastically reduced from about 110 to less than half of that number by eliminating all Heads of Departments and limiting its membership to Deans and Directors only. In addition, the Act gave each faculty/school/institute two representatives in the Senate, and these had to be at the rank of Professor or Associate Professor. Students, constituent colleges and institutions affiliated to the university were among the new constituencies the Act gave representation in Senate. The Government of Uganda was allocated two members. By early 2002, the new Senate was busy at work. The next, but potentially difficult step in operationalising the new Act was to put together a new University Council. In attempt to minimise the Government control over public universities and make them more accountable and truly representative of the communities they are supposed to serve, the new Act widened the participation and membership of the governing and decision-making Councils of public universities. It also defined who qualified to be a member. For example, members of Parliament ceased to be members of Councils of public universities and, for the first time, the academic staff associations, senior members of administrative staff as well as members of the junior support staff – through the National Union of Educational Institutions – each had a representation on the Councils. All Council representatives of these various groups had to be democratically elected through a popular vote. Interestingly, even the district where the public university was located had to be represented on the Council. The Minister responsible for Education could appoint up to three members from the general public.

The representation of the constituent and affiliated institutions on both Senate and Council presented an immediate and rather formidable problem as each institution had to be represented by the chairperson of its governing Council, the chairperson of its Academic Board, a representative of the staff and a student representative, a total of four people in all. Whatever the sixth parliamentarians who framed the new Act had in mind, this arrangement was obviously unworkable. As illustrated by the example below, instead of reducing the size of the Council, it did the opposite. At the time the Act came into force, Gaba, Katigondo, Alokurum National Seminaries and Makerere University Business School were some of the institutions affiliated to Makerere University, and each institution had four representatives on the Makerere University Council – a total of 16 members in all. The university was represented by just about ten people that included the Vice Chancellor and the two Deputy Vice Chancellors. In effect, the affiliated institutions made up the majority of the members of the University Council. The situation became a glaring mess at new Kyambogo University, which had about ten National Teachers' Colleges, over

sixty Primary Teachers' Colleges, four Uganda Technical Colleges and a host of Technical Institutes affiliated to it. It was now obvious that the Act needed urgent revision. In 2003, the Parliament of Uganda enacted the university and Other Tertiary Institutions (Amendment) Act of 2003. The subsidiary Act provided for the merger of the Uganda National Institute of Special Education, the Institute of Teacher Education in Kyambogo and the Uganda Polytechnic, Kyambogo to form Kyambogo University – the second public university in Kampala – and also amended some aspects of the 2001 Act which eliminated the representation of affiliated institutions on the Councils of public universities.

Some people have speculated that as a result of intensive lobbying, in an attempt to break away from Makerere but retain the name Makerere University, which according to some experts has a big street value, the law makers deliberately inserted the cumbersome clauses in the Act to suit the awkward position of Makerere University Business School (MUBS). Section 132 was another of such manipulations. That Section did not exist in the original draft. The original draft Act, drawn up by the Vice Chancellors of public universities, which were in existence at the time, offered the opportunity to review Section 131. What Section 132, which was inserted in the draft later, did was to create Makerere University Business School as a public tertiary institute affiliated to Makerere University, and task the National Council for Higher Education under sub Section 6 of the same Section to establish it fully as a tertiary institution as soon as the new Act came into force. That in effect meant that MUBS was administratively independent of Makerere University and had become a tertiary institution which, under the new Act, was a non-university institution. The academic programmes constituted the only link it had left with Makerere. Perhaps unknown to the drafters of the 2001 Act or simply an oversight on their part, by categorising it as a tertiary institution, MUBS lost its legal claim to the title "university". Under Part 1 (Short Title, Interpretation and Objectives) of the Act, a tertiary institution is defined as any public or private institution, school or centre of higher learning other than a university, one of the objectives of which is to provide post-secondary education, offering courses of study leading to the award of certificates or diplomas. This technically meant MUBS was using the term "university" in its official name illegally. The Act also defined the relationship between an affiliated tertiary institution and the university it is affiliated to under Section 71. In fact, if the law had been followed to the letter or allowed to take its natural course, most of the time the energy consuming wrangles between Nakawa and Makerere, and the indignities which some of us had to endure for so long should never have happened. However, for reasons which at the time were beyond my comprehension, the authorities who were supposed to put an end to them looked on helplessly to the extent that some of us at Makerere were branded as the bad guys stifling innovative leadership at MUBS. I remember the many fruitless meetings I attended at the Ministry of Education, in the Parliamentary

Committee on Social Services and at the Prime Minister's office, supposedly trying to find a solution to a problem of their creation. To me, the failure to resolve the MUBS problem symbolised two things. It was either administrative incompetence or a deliberate attempt to keep the ambiguities in the law for the benefit of a few. It should never have happened in the first place.

The 2001 Act not only defined the composition and who was eligible to be a member of a public University Council, it introduced other new, but stringent requirements. Unlike the 1970 Act, the chairperson and the vice chair of the Council had to be elected from among the members, but not every member of the Council qualified to be elected to this important position. For instance, members of staff of the university, persons employed by the Public Service or a member of the District Council, were barred from holding the office of chairperson or vice chair of the University Council. The new Act also raised the quorum for a meeting of the Council to be legal from a third of the membership to fifty per cent, with at least five of the members present as neither employees nor students of the university. As we struggled to constitute a new University Council, we kept running into difficulty after difficulty. While Sam Byanagwa, who was then the Acting University Secretary, was able to mobilise all cadres of the University to elect their representatives, other constituents took long to do likewise.

The critical but difficult point was to identify people who fulfilled the new requirements for the position of chairperson and vice chair. That took time. It was not until December 2002, that the new Council was ready to hold its inaugural meeting. Contrary to tradition, the inaugural meeting was held in the Senate House, which had a much bigger conference hall than the Council room in the Main Building. It was also during that meeting the chairperson of the Council for the next three years was elected. After a free and fair election, Mr Gabriel Opio, who had served as Minister of State for Finance in the sixth Parliament, but now a private citizen beat his only rival, Mr John Muzeeyi Ntimba, by a very narrow margin and became the first chairperson of the University Council under the 2001 Act. Mrs Christine Kiganda, a prominent Ugandan educationist was elected unopposed as Vice Chairperson of the Council. Mzee John Ntimba became the Chairperson of the Appointments Board, which was now a specialised committee of the University Council. He would also play a critical role in the identification of my successor. Gabriel Opio's council laid the ground rules for the appointment of the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor and other senior officials of the university.

### **Identifying and Appointing a New Chancellor**

With the Council inaugurated, one of its first tasks was to write the rules that would guide the appointment of the new Chancellor and Vice Chancellor. The exercise required the input of both Senate and Council. We had to identify the Chancellor

first, who in turn would appoint the Vice Chancellor. Dr Colin Sentongo, who was then the Chairperson of the MUBS Governing Council, chaired the combined Senate-Council search committee, which identified three candidates from among the names which we had solicited from the public. Besides being individuals of impeccable integrity with a proven track record in their professional, academic or business fields, Council was looking for people who would not put too much demand on the university. They had to be people of reasonable economic means. Since the position of Chancellor is not a regular salaried position in the University Establishment, whoever was appointed would not draw a salary from the university; so the Chancellor had to be a person capable of supporting himself or herself financially. The incumbent only received small allowances whenever he or she had to perform certain official functions on behalf of the university. After submitting the three names to the Visitor, all we could do was to wait. When the results finally came back, the Visitor had appointed Professor Apolo Robin Nsibambi as Makerere's first non-Head of State Chancellor. We had to point out to him that his appointment as Chancellor had nothing to do with his position in Government as Prime Minister of Uganda. Even if he were to be dropped as Prime Minister, he would continue to serve in his capacity as Chancellor of Makerere University; being Prime Minister was just a coincidence.

Professor Nsibambi's inauguration ceremony as Chancellor on January 17, 2003 in the Main Building started off as a very colourful ceremony. Professor Gilbert Bukenya, the Vice President of Uganda and a former Makererean installed him on his ceremonial chair. However, towards the end, this colourful event was almost ruined by rowdy Government-sponsored students who, in their shameless way, had staged a demonstration outside the Main Building to demand their delayed allowances. They had blocked the university roads with huge tree stumps in an attempt to prevent the guests, including the Vice President from leaving. When it was time for the Vice President to leave, a scuffle broke out between the rioting students and the Vice President's Protection Unit. Some students were hurling stones at the soldiers and before we knew it, the Vice President's guards had started firing to disperse the crowds of marauding students. In the incident, a stray bullet bruised a female student who was in the Faculty of Social Sciences building. She had to be rushed to Mulago. Fortunately, the injuries she sustained were not life threatening; she survived to tell the tale. The colourful ceremony nearly turned into another black day in the university and God knows how it would have ended. Yet again, the students had taken their shocking rowdy behaviour to another ugly level. Many visitors had to leave hurriedly to avoid being injured by either flying stones or stray bullets. Even the reception at the Guest House was partially aborted, only a handful of guests attended. The following day, *The New Vision* newspaper carried a front-page report about what had happened at Makerere, describing it as Professor Nsibambi's baptism of fire. After years of no serious acts of indiscipline, the old ugly habits were making a come back!

### **Makerere's Ninth Vice Chancellor – The Process and the Results**

With a new Chancellor inaugurated, the guidelines written, debated in both Senate and Council and given a seal of approval, the next task for both Senate and Council was to identify my successor. My short contract was about to expire and yet a new Vice Chancellor had not been identified, so the University Council decided to ask the new Chancellor to renew and extend my contract one more time to allow time to complete the process of appointing a new Vice Chancellor. The Chancellor extended the contract to the end of June 2004 or until the new Vice Chancellor was appointed and ready to take over, whichever came first. After agreeing to the *modus operandi*, the stage was set for the ball to start rolling.

According to the 2001 Act, under Section 31, sub Section 3, the first step was to constitute a Search Committee composed of five members, two representing the University Council and three from Senate, with a task to identify five suitable candidates for the post of Vice Chancellor and forward the names to Senate. Senate had to choose and recommend three to the University Council. Although identifying the five Search Committee members was relatively easy, the issue of which of the two organs should provide the Committee's chairperson became a sticky point for a while. Senate argued that since it had the majority of membership, it followed logically that the chairperson should come from among its members. The University Council on the other hand argued that since it was the university's supreme organ and employer, it reserved the right to have one of its members chair the Committee.

Council carried the day and Dr Charles Wana Etyem, a private consulting civil engineer, was requested to chair the Committee. As we have seen, Charles Wana Etyem was no stranger to Makerere. He had been a member of staff and of the University's Appointments Board for many years. Senate was represented by Professor James Ntozi of Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics; Dr Edward Kirumira, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences; and Dr Florence Mirembe of the Faculty of Medicine. Dr Charles Wana Etyem and James Okello were the two University Council representatives. To avoid being accused of influence peddling, Professor Justin Epelu Opio and I decided to keep a safe distance from the activities of the Search Committee and anything to do with the appointment of the new Vice Chancellor. As we shall shortly see, it was a wise decision. Only Sam Byanagwa, the acting University Secretary, with a handful of his assistants were involved in the activities of the Committee, providing secretarial and administrative services. The rest of the senior administrators kept out of the Search Committee's affairs altogether.

Inevitably, the pace of work was initially slow as the Search Committee had to interpret and translate the criteria and terms of reference into working guidelines. It also had to identify five most suitable candidates from those who had responded to the advertisement. To make the process as transparent as possible, it had been

decided that the post would be widely advertised both locally and internationally, and for the first time, on the university's website. This was the first stage in a rather long process. The second stage was to shortlist candidates who met all the requirements for the job, based on a set of criteria the Committee had worked out on a score sheet. The third stage was oral interviews conducted by the Committee. The fourth stage was a 20-minute presentation by each candidate who had passed the interview. The presentations were open to the public and to whoever wanted to attend. The fifth and final stage was to select the five candidates suitably qualified for the job. The advertisement attracted thirty responses from as far away as Britain, Canada, USA, Nigeria, Ghana, India and of course Uganda, to mention a few. I later learnt that out of the thirty applications, only twenty four were complete. But when the PhD requirement and the minimum age of forty were factored in, two more candidates who did not meet those two requirements had to be dropped, leaving twenty two applicants in the race for the top seat in the tower.

At the shortlisting stage, the stakes were high. A candidate had to score at least seventy per cent to qualify for the interview stage. The committee shortlisted nine candidates, including a Ghanaian and a Nigerian. But as the Committee prepared for the next stage, rumours started flying high, accusing the Committee of deliberate bias and not giving women candidates a fair chance. In fact, it transpired that a highly ambitious candidate and apparently well connected to the political establishment, whose application the Committee had rejected for lack of a PhD, had taken the rejection of his application too personal and had gone as far as requesting a very highly placed political office in Government to intercede on his behalf to have his name included among the shortlisted candidates. We thought that was a despicable act, but I guessed that was how desperate some candidates were. It was becoming a hotly contested job.

Fortunately, the office this candidate approached for the special favour had decided to down-play his wild allegations, and not to interfere in the university's affairs, preferring to let the process take its course. We were not spared either. Apparently, Professor Opio and I had been naïve to assume that by keeping a safe distance from the activities of the Search Committee, we would be spared the wrath. We were therefore surprised to receive summons from the Inspector General of Government, accusing us of meddling in the process and favouring some candidates. These accusations came as a rude shock to both of us, but reminded me how much some candidates craved to be Vice Chancellor and how far they were prepared to fight anyone they thought or imagined was an obstacle to their march into the Vice Chancellor's seat. Fortunately, the accusations were proved to be false and in spite of the entire hullabaloo, Wana Etyem's committee pressed on with its work unperturbed.

The shortlisting done, the Committee was now ready for the interview stage. However, as soon as the Committee started interviewing the candidates, the process

was abruptly stopped, moreover in the middle of Professor Oswald Ndoleriire's interview. The reason given was that the Committee had deviated from the terms of reference. To make matters worse, at the time the Chairman of Council in the company of another member of Council intervened in the Committee's work, two of the candidates who had been invited for the interviews that day were waiting for their turns in the Chancellor's office. One of them was the late Professor John Bigala, who had been flown in from Swaziland at the university's expense. Professor John Opuda, who was next in line after Professor Ndoleriire, was waiting for his turn when the bombshell occurred. Other candidates who had been flown in from as far as the USA, also at the university's expense, were also waiting for their turns at the Guest House. Charles Wana Etyem had to excuse himself from the interview to come and answer the Chairman's concerns. Initially, he did not seem to have understood what the problem was all about, and was at pains to explain what his Committee was doing and how it was doing it. Charles Wana Etyem had been a long serving member of the university's Appointments Board which had established a reputation for impartiality and transparency. He had been drafted on the Search Committee and asked to chair it on the basis of his long experience and reputation as an impartial member of the Board. I am sure this saga must have come as a rude shock to him as it did to me. I was horrified to hear the litany of allegations being levelled against the Search Committee. Apparently, some of the candidates with consuming ambitions whom the Search Committee had dropped were not about to give up the fight. They had been busy lobbying anyone who had some influence at Makerere. There was even talk that the Search Committee had shortlisted only anti-Government candidates! Members of the Search Committee were horrified and viewed what their Chairman had been subjected to as blatant interference in their work. In response, they decided to stop the interviews, and so called off the entire search process indefinitely.

In their desperate attempt to play victim, some of the disgruntled candidates who had not made it beyond the shortlisting stage dragged the IGG into the Committee's work. They wanted him to investigate what they perceived as serious malpractices and unfair play on the part of the Search Committee. As part of the investigation, the IGG ordered the Search Committee to halt the process until he had released his report; but as we have seen, his order came after the Committee members had thrown in the towel. Professor Opio and I were also being investigated for whatever role we might have played in the search for the new Vice Chancellor. While all this was happening, Drs Charles Wana Etyem and Florence Mirembe tendered their resignation from the Search Committee. When the IGG published his report, his conclusion was that Professor Opio and I had not interfered in the Committee's work at all. Our decision to stay away from the Committee's work had paid off. Furthermore, the IGG concluded that, in spite of a few mistakes, the Committee had not done anything fundamentally or seriously wrong. Those who had interfered in its work were accused of meddling,

adding that if they had grievances, they should have waited until the Committee completed its work and submitted its report. It was only then that they should have raised their concerns, but not before.

The IGG's report was a big relief for me, because I was tired and eagerly waiting to have my successor named as quickly as possible. My concern was that the process could be thrown into an unnecessarily prolonged delay which could not only have augured well with the provisions of the new Act, but would have delayed my retirement much longer. Fortunately, reason triumphed and the search resumed, but this time with Mr John Ntimba as chair of the Committee. Mrs Josephine Wannyana Mukasa, the Dean of the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts replaced Dr Florence Mirembe as one of the Senate representatives on the Committee. Unfortunately, as the new Committee began work, it became evident that some processes which Wana Etyem's Committee had completed had to be repeated, a double expense to the university, but on a positive note; this time there would be no interference, the IGG had put an end to it. From then on, the Committee's work proceeded uninterrupted. The score sheet was slightly revised, with a few items that the previous Committee had included for scoring scrapped; age was one of them. Wana Etyem's committee had argued that given the demanding nature of the job, the younger the appointee the better, so age was being scored on a sliding scale akin to the logarithmic scale, the younger applicants scoring higher marks than the older candidates.

The reconstituted Committee worked hard and fairly fast, and completed all the stages of the process. After the interview, the candidates made public presentations, *inter alia*, on their vision for the university they wanted to lead, held in the Main Hall. Given the sensitivity of the process, I kept away from the oral presentation, lest I would be accused again of meddling in the appointment of my successor. After the public presentations – a practice Sam Byanagwa borrowed from the University of Cape Town when we made a visit there in 2003 – the Committee was finally able to identify the five candidates for Senate. The Committee completed and submitted its report to Senate on April 30, 2004. The Search Committee's work was done, save for the chair to present the report to Senate. Again, history had been made. It was now the turn of Senate to do its bit as demanded of it under the new law, and here the incumbent Vice Chancellor was in charge.

Senate convened in the usual Senate conference hall in the Senate House to consider and discuss the report in May 2004. It was a full attendance and I was chair. However, before I made the call for this historical meeting – perhaps the most important and critical Senate meeting I had ever chaired – I had given considerable thought to the mammoth task ahead of us and how we would execute it. I was also keenly aware that Senate was about to set precedence. Years of persistent pressure to have the 1970 Act repealed had brought us this far and

for the first time in Makerere's history, Senate was about to participate in deciding who would lead this great institution for the next five years. The old tradition of which I was a part was about to give way to a new era. During Professor George Kirya's time in the 1980s, we had changed the way Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments were appointed and how long they would stay in office. Democracy had replaced the old system of appointment and term limits had replaced the practice of Dean or Head of department for life. That revolutionary idea was now about to be extended to the topmost positions of Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor.

For reasons I cannot explain, I found myself frightened of the unknown that was unfolding before me. Would we make the right choice? What if we went wrong? Would the university slip back into chaos? When I say that was the first time we were participating in such an important exercise, I want to believe that I was speaking for the majority of members of Senate. The chief question on my mind was how do we select the final three candidates from the five? I read the Act over and over again to make sure I fully understood what exactly Senate's role was. Unfortunately, I could not find an answer in the Act which I could call satisfactory beyond what I already knew that we had to forward three names to the University Council. I settled for the lazy man's solution; let Senate figure out the solution. I even reminded myself that as chairman, I was not supposed to bias Senate with my personal opinions. My role was to guide the debate. If there were no rules and the Act was silent on the *modus operandi*, Senate had to invent them and that was what we did.

At the beginning of the big and historic Senate meeting – the *kachoke matidi* – as my Lwo speaker friends would call it, we requested all members who were either candidates or who had applied for the job, but had been eliminated at one of the stages, to leave the Senate chamber. Then we asked the Academic Registrar, who up to that moment was keeping the Search Committee's report under lock and key, to distribute the copies to members. We had not distributed the copies of the report ahead of the meeting because we were afraid the report, which contained a lot of confidential personal information and the Search Committees assessment of each candidate, would leak to the press. Mr Ngobi had actually managed to keep the report tightly confidential, a remarkable feat at Makerere where confidentiality of sensitive information was a thing of the past. Senators were given time to read the most important sections of the report. I called the meeting to order and the debate began.

Mr John Ntimba, the chair of the Search Committee led off the meeting with a presentation of the Committee's report. Senate listened attentively as he went through the resume of each candidate, the Committee's observations and conclusions on each one of them and how the Committee had arrived at the final five names. At the end of his presentation, it was time for Senate to take over

from where the Search Committee had ended. The critical challenge which faced Senate at this point was how to decide on the final three names from amongst the five candidates, who included a Nigerian and four Ugandans, all full and some senior professors.

The Search Committee had ranked the five candidates according to how they had performed during the various stages of the search process. I opened the debate and after intense deliberations, and the legal interpretations presented by the University Senate Lawyer, on the relevant sections of the Act, Senate reached the conclusion that according to the Act, the Search Committee's responsibility was just to identify five candidates it considered qualified to be appointed Vice Chancellor. Secondly, Senate was not bound to make its final decision based on the Search Committee's rankings. The rankings were meant to guide the Committee to arrive at the final five candidates. That phase had ended the moment the Committee submitted its report to Senate. Therefore, as far as Senate was concerned, all five were at par and had to be treated as such. Thirdly, we were reminded by the Lawyers that Senate was not a passive participant in the process. With consensus on these potentially contentious issues reached, we had jumped the first hurdle. The next and perhaps the most controversial step was to agree on the best method of arriving at the three names.

After lots of arguments and counter-arguments, Senate finally settled for a secret ballot, a replica of the process by which Deans, Directors, their deputies and Heads of Departments were elected. To ensure transparency and neutrality, the Dean of Students, John Ekudu, who was not a member of Senate, was asked to serve as returning officer. It was now decision-making time through our ballot papers. At the end of the exercise, Senate had identified the three names, two Ugandans and a Nigerian. To my surprise, the Search Committee's top ranked candidate was not one of them. To be sure that nothing was amiss and there were no dissenting voices, at the end of the exercise, I took liberty to ask the Senators whether the final outcome was the true reflection of their thinking and wish. The answer was a resounding yes. That was the end of the story. We then instructed the Academic Registrar to collect all the copies of the Search Committee's report from the Senators, as they contained very personal information which we did not want to fall into unauthorised hands, and file a report to the University Council with the names of the three candidates to Senate, as the Act stipulates. In less than six hours, another piece of history had been made at Makerere. By one o'clock in the afternoon, the meeting was over and my job done. I left immediately for another meeting at Entebbe. That was the last Senate meeting I chaired.

The acting Academic Registrar, Mr Ngobi, was as efficient as usual. He quickly wrote up the report for Council. In less than a week after the famous Senate meeting, the report was sent to the Councillors. The Chairperson of the University Council, Mr Gabriel Opio, quickly fixed a special meeting of the

University Council to finalise the process. When Council met for yet another history making meeting; nineteen out of the twenty three members were present. After the Academic Registrar had presented the Senate report, followed by a brief but thorough discussion, the University Council too opted for the secret ballot. This time the university's Legal Officer, Jane Francis Nabawanuka, acted as the returning officer. When the tally was done, I realised that it could have gone to any one of the three. Any of the three candidates could have become the next Vice Chancellor as the votes were evenly distributed, six, six, seven. The seventh vote saved the chairman the agony of having to cast a tie-breaker. That was how tight the bid for my former job was. And the winner was Professor Livingstone Serwadda Luboobi, another first for the Faculty of Science. Professor Luboobi is one of the best mathematicians Makerere has ever produced and I was happy to see him emerge as the candidate of choice as my successor. With the new Vice Chancellor identified, the countdown to my retirement had begun in earnest. The next stage was for the University Secretary to compile a report for the Chairman of Council who would, in turn, forward it with the name of the successful candidate to the Chancellor for formal appointment.

One of Professor Nsibambi's enduring attribute is efficiency and meticulous time keeping. He hardly procrastinates over decisions. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise when he took just about three days to approve the Council's choice and to issue the Instrument of Appointment to Professor Luboobi. After a decade plus, Makerere University had a new Vice Chancellor. On June 1, 2004, I handed over the office to the new Vice Chancellor in a simple, but emotional ceremony held in the Council Room. After the handing-over ceremony, Mr Gabriel Opio, the Council chairman officially installed him. I wished him the best of luck in his new and challenging job and left. I was now part of the larger world. I did not have to make the big decisions, attend meeting after meeting, globe trot and be kept at the nerve edge all the time by both staff and students. But I could not help feeling sad, leaving behind the many colleagues who had been so nice to me and in the process made my work an everyday exciting experience; and above all, my efficient and dedicated office staff, Euphemia Kalema, Helen Kawesa, Dorcas Muhiirye, and Mary Seremba. But as they say, we come and go. I had come, it was now time to exit. All I can say about my successor, as a concluding remark, is that in some way, both of us made history in the annals of Makerere. Both of us came from the Faculty of Science. Professor Luboobi was the first Vice Chancellor at Makerere to be appointed under the new system based on the 2001 Act. I was the last Vice Chancellor to be appointed under the old system based on the 1970 Act. It was a pleasure to have served that great institution as its chief academic and administrative officer. I only hope that my best was good enough.



## Makerere University in the Twenty-first Century: Some Reflections and Concluding Remarks

Makerere is one of the world's most enduring and ancient African educational institutions called the university (or *universitas*, which in Latin means corporation, guild or society). I suppose it is so called because it is essentially a community of scholars made up of teachers – the professors – and learners; the students and tutors both united in the pursuit of knowledge and the truth. The university is indeed an enduring institution. Few universities in the world and over the centuries have closed down because they were insolvent or became totally dysfunctional for one reason or another. That says a lot about the university as an institution. Universities are perceived as centres of intellectual discourse, knowledge creation, storage and transmission. Amazingly, universities are extraordinarily adaptive to change and, more often than not, they are pace setters and initiators of change. At the same time, they are viewed as the most conservative institutions the human being has ever created. What a contradiction! But perhaps it is from such contradictions universities derive their strength to continue doing what they have done for centuries and millennia.

As centres of the highest concentration of intellectual power, universities are never far from controversy. For centuries, the community has debated the usefulness of the university in their midst and in the process the university has earned the uncanny name of the Ivory Tower, which emphasises the fact that the community has always viewed the university as an institution totally detached from the realities of the everyday life. Yet the university has been, and continues to be the most prolific contributor to human progress in all fields of endeavour, a fact so often lost to many a critic. To me, a university is to scientific and technological innovation and advancement as oxygen is to life. Take the university

away and you would have killed the scientific and technological advancement. Without exaggeration technology, much of which is innovated and incubated in universities' research laboratories, has made an immense contribution to modern civilisation. Interestingly, we now take for granted the many inventions and innovations, which have made life more comfortable, not thinking for a moment that they are the results of research, much of it done in universities. For example, the breakthroughs in the medical sciences have helped society reduce the disease burden in many parts of the world. In turn we live longer and healthier. Although mother nature keeps throwing up new challenges like the HIV/AIDS pandemic, modern medicine has indeed ridded mankind of many dreaded diseases that used to claim millions of lives in the past. No doubt a lot more needs to be done, particularly in Africa, nevertheless university medical schools have made, and continue to make, their contribution.

Advances in telecommunication engineering have spanned vast distances and turned the world into a truly global village. You can now reach any corner of the world instantly by a touch of a button on your commonplace mobile phone. Consumer electronics and computers that make our modern world tick have their origins in universities or have been invented by people who have been at university. The first human being to walk on the moon at the close of the 1960s could not have done so without the enormous contribution of the American universities. This human feat was undoubtedly one of the world's mind boggling undertakings in modern times. Engineers, scientists, mathematicians, computer experts, to name a few, contributed to the success of Neil Armstrong, Edwin Buz Boldrin and Mike Collin's epoch journey to the moon, and incidentally the three Astronauts were university graduates. Although sometimes harshly criticised for being out of touch with reality, universities are critically important to society and, for that reason alone, I strongly believe that universities are here to stay. In the same vein, I believe Makerere is also here to stay and I predict it will survive many more centuries to come. No doubt, there will be many changes that will come with the future but this institution, cherished by many, will certainly be part of the future as it has been part of the past.

Makerere, as one of the oldest centres of higher learning in Africa has seen better days and bitter days in its relatively short life. In 2022, it will celebrate its centenary and I am sure majority of us alive today will be there to blow the candles. One hundred years is a relatively short time when there are universities like Al Azhar in Cairo, founded in 960 AD, which have been in continuous existence for over a thousand years, nevertheless it will be a landmark worth celebrating. Makerere is a University which has innovatively bootstrapped itself out of a turbulent political and financial pit, and has limped on and survived to become part of the modern global information society. It is often said that Makerere's resilience is its people and its strong institutional traditions, coupled

with the goodwill it enjoys from its alumni and well-wishers at home and abroad. I have yet to come across a Makerere old student who is not proud to be a Makererian. Makererians are many, are everywhere and in every walk of life all over the world. Even in small island nations like Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, one would be sure to find a proud Makererian.

It is one of the institutions whose impact extends far beyond the borders of Uganda and Africa. It has been tested and survived the most tempestuous time. The road to recovery has been long, slow, hard and painful and I want to believe that the Makerere I left in 2004 was a little better than the Makerere I found in 1993. As I have pointed out before, every Principal and every Vice Chancellor has made his contribution to the development and survival of Makerere in an incremental way. But as Professor Senteza Kajubi said as he handed over the mantle to me, “Mere survival is not enough”. In his opinion, many people had continued to regard Makerere as a monastic elitist and ivory tower institution which did not respond to public concerns. Makerere had to heed those voices and change this image and the negative perception of the kind of institution the public thought it was and, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, at the time of my departure, Makerere had embraced change. We had made the first steps in taking the gown to the town. Some thought it was too much a change in a relatively short time; but perhaps after many years in some sort of abeyance, that was the kind of jolt the sleeping academic giant needed.

My management team and I left many teething problems unsolved, but I also want to believe that we solved as many in our ten-year tenure. For one, with so many students admitted, many had started voicing concern whether big enrolments had not come at the cost of the quality education Makerere was known for in the past. We attempted to heed those concerns too. But there were also many who saw the opening up, in more positive terms, as an opportunity rather than a problem of quality erosion. Some argued that, faced with the growing numbers of school leavers who were qualifying to enter university every year, Makerere had no convincing reason to keep locking out thousands of deserving students when at the time it was the only university in the country, flagging the excuse that the available resources and facilities could accommodate only a tiny number of qualified candidates among the many who were knocking at its doors every year. For example, in the 1983/84 academic year, Makerere admitted sixty one per cent of the eligible candidates under Government sponsorship. In 1990/91, the number had dropped to thirty five per cent and in 1999/2000 it was down to 10.8 per cent. Those in favour of expanding access argued that all Makerere needed was a little more imagination without waiting for Government to increase its annual subvention, which was unlikely in the foreseeable future. Indeed, imagination and innovation were not feats beyond Makerere’s intellectual prowess. We co-initiated and expanded the private students’ scheme, evening and

distance education programmes which, besides affording opportunity to many who might have been locked out to study for a university qualification, brought in billions of shillings. Also through these efforts, we attracted development partners and reduced the university's near-total dependence on the Uganda Government's coffers. The experiment worked but also created additional problems – big classes and overcrowded lecture halls. But that too was not beyond Makerere's ability to solve. As we have noted earlier, new structures were built in a bid to expand space, while others like the expansion to the Faculty of Technology with NORAD and Sida support which we had negotiated but were timed out to implement, were on the drawing board by the time I left. All this was additional stock to the badly needed space for teaching, offices and research, and was slowly but surely easing congestion in the lecture rooms. We learnt to use space optimally, something we had never thought about before.

As we tried to maintain the momentum for change, we engaged everyone in some serious strategic thinking and planning, using a bottom-up approach, which produced the first truly strategic plan for the university. Armed with the strategic plan, we went about implementing its strategic objectives. We revived the recruitment drive for additional staff to handle the large numbers. The enrolment started to level off and began to stabilise around 30,000. We had entered the period of consolidation. New and more appealing academic programmes, and many demand-driven programmes, came on stream. Staff development was given a big shot in the arm from our own resources. Many members of staff who had lost hope of progressing beyond a Masters degree were busy pursuing their PhDs at Makerere and abroad at the University's expense. For the first time, Makerere staff could look forward to retirement with hope, because we had created an in-house pension scheme for them. We ushered in the era of ICT with a high quality and high speed optical fibre wide area network (MakNet) of eighteen kilometres, covering the entire main campus, with the satellite campuses connected to the main backbone through wireless transmission. Most Faculties responded by building their own local area networks (LAN). We started developing the critical management information systems (MIS) – ARIS, HURIS, FINIS AND MakLIBIS and improved the university's website on the World Wide Web – the Internet. Communication by electronic mail (e-mail) was slowly becoming the norm. In a nutshell, we refused to succumb to usual despondence and be drawn into lamentations which have characterised the African higher education scene for decades. We chose pragmatic action and in the process reversed most of the decay that had gone on for decades. The result – Makerere was slowly, but surely on the mend. I should like to think that at the end of our time, we did not hand over a sinking ship to our successors. True, the ship we were handing over was still leaking, but was afloat and the water line rising. We had more or less pushed the university beyond the major rehabilitation phase and launched it for the development phase, although most staff houses were still in a sorry state and

as I have noted elsewhere, that was one of my regrets. I had hoped that at the end of my time, members of staff would not be earning only a living wage, but a development wage. Unfortunately, that was one of the goals I never scored, it eluded me, though we were not earning the pittance we used to earn when I started as a lecturer in 1979.

What about the future, Makerere in the twenty-first century? This is what my wish-bone tells me. I want to see Makerere continue building on its many successes and its worldwide reputation, on its colossal local and international goodwill. This way, it will truly be “building for the future” as its motto states. As more universities open in Uganda to absorb the thousands of undergraduate students who would otherwise be knocking at its doors seeking admission, Makerere should strategically admit more postgraduate students and focus on cutting-edge and strategic high level research, which can lead to major breakthroughs. However, owing to its reputation and the fact that many young people still feel good about studying at Makerere, it could be tricky to reduce the undergraduate numbers in a relatively short time, but this should be the long-term strategic goal.

Makerere has done enough good undergraduate teaching and produced graduates we can be proud of, but for the future, it should be the university to lead Uganda’s technological advancement, which has the potential to give Uganda a competitive edge. Makerere should continue to be a centre of innovation and academic excellence in all forms of scholarship. We cannot go back to the glorious days of the sixty, but we can create a new dawn of academic vibrancy. By the time I left, I was beginning to see members of staff do some serious research that resulted in patent applications and, by the time I left, some members of staff had actually received their patents, while others were waiting for them. That was a sure sign that with sufficient facilitation, Makerere had the capacity to engage in original and innovative research, which had the potential to generate wealth and in so doing contribute to poverty reduction and the socio-economic development of the country – Uganda – and beyond.

Given its reputation and international standing, Makerere is well positioned to play that role. Future generations will have every reason to judge Makerere kindly if it failed to produce the badly needed scientific and technological breakthroughs. As we have seen, the foundation has been laid. Makerere has done it before and can do it again. However, for Makerere to attract and retain its top-notch professors, the problem of remuneration and staff terms and conditions of service must take centre stage and be addressed. These are the cutting-edge research leaders the university can ill-afford to lose. We shall not be able to stem brain drain and “brains in drain” if this fundamental issue is not squarely addressed. How it is done will have to be a conscious choice and will require a lot of imagination and the goodwill of all Makerere’s stakeholders, with the Government taking the lead. We have lost too many of our brightest students to the developed world

and the few left have had to spend their valuable time trying to supplement their meagre salaries in order to survive, time which they should be spending more productively in the libraries and laboratories. This is a big investment in human capital we are ill-advised to misuse. Even if I failed to achieve a decent wage for the professors in my time, I have no reason to doubt future Vice Chancellors will be able to achieve this. Like they say, development comes at a cost. The choice is for all Ugandans to make a choice in which Makerere will have a decisive part to play.

Additionally, Makerere should continue to capitalise on its network of international partners. There is value in collaborating with the international academic community. It should continue to nurture and strengthen the numerous linkages it has forged with universities in the North, as well as in the South, and bring on board new ones as and when the need arises. Academic linkages are important, not only because they help minimise inbreeding and parochialism, but also because Makerere needs to remain a vibrant member of the international academia. It should also continue to engage with the wider community on either the I@mak.com model or some other more refined models. The gown should not relent in its quest to go to town and help society solve its myriad of teething problems. The outreach programmes would have to be strengthened further for the simple reason that the society needs Makerere's enormous intellectual capacity to find everlasting solutions to abject poverty and technological backwardness. I see this as both a duty and a crusade, a critical responsibility for Makerere. That way, Makerere will have truly earned its keep.

There is an urgent need for Makerere to counter, perhaps in a more pragmatic way than we could ever do, the excessive negative publicity, which not only tarnishes its image and academic reputation, but is equally disruptive and demoralising to the upcoming generations of students who would wish to study there. While it is natural for a university, and for Makerere for that matter, to constantly be on the look out for things that can impact negatively on the quality and academic standards and even engage with the public on ways the quality of academic programmes can be enhanced, I find some of the excessive negative criticism we so often read about unjustified. Sometimes, I get the impression that for some reason unknown to me, some section of the public has deliberately decided to over-focus on Makerere's woes at the expense of the many good things taking place there. It is as if it is an island unto itself, a closed system. Unfortunately, Makerere is part of Uganda and its problems. That is not to say all is well, but simply to point out that the university is truly on the mend. I believe we have a duty to the young generations regarding why we keep referring to our universities as institutions of low standards. If indeed that is the case, are we incapable of doing something about it? To many Ugandan students, these are the only institutions of higher learning they will ever join. Therefore, instead of

indulging in lamentations about lost glory, our first responsibility should be to fix what went wrong without dwelling too much on why it went wrong, because that much we know. The problem of massification is real and has to be addressed more imaginatively. It is a problem not likely to go away any time soon. That said and done, I strongly believe that the solution is not out of reach. As I have noted elsewhere in this account, the next few years will see an avalanche of the output of the universal primary and secondary education. These youngsters will be knocking hard at the doors of Makerere which, for majority of East African and particularly Ugandan students, is still their university of first choice. When that time comes, if it has not already come, it will be another ball game altogether. Traditional ways of curriculum delivery will have to give way to increased use of new ICT-based methodologies, such as e-learning. Already, Makerere has taken a step towards increased use of ICT in teaching, learning and research. It will have to champion this change much in the same way as it has championed curriculum change, innovation and difficult institutional reforms in the recent past. Decongesting the main campus by opening up satellite campuses upcountry could also be considered as part of the solution to massification and improving the quality of instruction. For a university of Makerere's stature, thinking in the box is not an option. Makerere must continue to innovate, embrace and champion new ideas and emerging technological advances. I do not like to sound like a devil's advocate, but I strongly believe that nanotechnology is one of the emerging technologies which Makerere can ill-afford to ignore.

Finally, I have no doubt that funding will continue to be a serious handicap for the university in the foreseeable future. Without reliable and adequate funding, little can be achieved, yet the sad part of the story is that there are no quick fixes to the problem. However, when we visited some South African universities in 2003, I picked up an idea which I thought could go some way in providing some answers to our perpetually cash-strapped university. There, some universities have set up a University Foundation whose sole role is to fundraise. Unfortunately, I did not have time to look into the feasibility of setting up one at Makerere, but it is something that can be given some serious thought. Such a magnificent institution cannot continue just to survive, moreover on a shoe-string budget, forever. That would be sentencing it to a slow and agonising death.

Makerere University has a long future, but it will have to continue to change with the changing times. It should never turn back to the bad old days; never again!

We Makererians have a good reason to be proud of our alma mater as it continues to "build for the future".



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