

BLACK MONDAY

Newsletter

Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!

EDITORIAL

The difference young people can make when they choose to position themselves as agents of social change is stamped in history records. From the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa to the pro-independence struggle in Uganda, the immense contribution from the young generation attests to the power of youth. Here are young Ugandans who refuse to sit back and watch as the country grapples with incessant theft and is plundered under the watch of our political leaders.

This Edition of Black Monday shares and celebrates the inspiring stories of these young heroes and heroines who are making a difference in their own spheres. We share the thoughts of young music artists, poets, activists and students who have contributed to the struggle against big and small graft.

We hope this issue inspires you to do whatever you can to end theft of public resources in Uganda. We can all use our "Voice" to collectively form the strongest choir. We do not believe the scourge of corruption is insurmountable. We choose to be the different. We want to see corruption out of our Country.

Be Inspired!

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The unemployment paradox: Youth deserve better!



WHERE IS THE HOPE FOR THE UGANDAN YOUTH? The high level of youth unemployment has left many heading for gambling and other unprofitable schemes of work.

The high level of unemployment among the youth is a global concern as it is a recipe for organized crime, lawlessness, political instability and social conflicts. The Government of Uganda has in the past undertaken a number of programs intended to address the problem of un-employment and poverty among the youth including: Northern Uganda Social Action Plan (NUSAF 2), Skilling Uganda, Youth Enterprise scheme, Youth Venture Capital Fund, and the latest one being the youth livelihoods programme. It is important to note that around 78% percent of Uganda's population is under the age of 30 years. In this edition, we meet a Ugandan youth as he narrates his story of growing up, and the challenges other youth in his age group faced

Growing up in my home district of Bugiri,

my friends and I would sit by the roadside every evening and while feasting on mangoes, we would talk about what we wanted to be in future. At that time, I thought saying: "I want to be a lawyer," would automatically make you one later in life. We were all innocent. We did not know what reality awaited us as adult Ugandans, in the 21st century.

Today, thank God, I am in University studying and hoping to realize my childhood dream of becoming a lawyer next year. But every time I go back to my home district and talk to my childhood friends, they are far from realizing their dreams. Why is that?

While my parents struggled to raise money and send me to good schools then like Busoga College Mwiriri, on the other hand my friends' humble parents did the same but only to take them to the "best" Univer-

sal Primary Education (UPE) schools. With shining shoes, books on shoulders, pens and pencils resting strategically on their ears; while wearing khaki uniforms, they majestically marched off to their schools. Ready to embark on an educational adventure in the social jungles of Uganda and break barriers within society, to become Uganda's number one pilots, engineers or doctors later in life, my friends would be welcomed by absent teachers, small dilapidating classrooms, outdated textbooks; with a curricular that was not innovative and administrative staff riddled with corruption.

As a result, many pupils began dropping out of school, as they were not seeing any

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NOT FOR SALE

Young people in Action: Activista opens doors to health centres in Northern Uganda

Demonstrations and official letters from young activists was enough to change a Health Centre in Northern Uganda from a sprawling colossus of inefficiency to a sprawling clinic of activity. The villagers now get proper diagnoses, the children are immunized and the people receive free medicine for their illnesses.

The doors to Otichi Health Centre in Northern Uganda now open early in the morning. The shelves are bulging with vaccination medicine, needles and other medical equipment. A year ago, the doors would often be shut until lunchtime and sick people travelled for hours to get treatment in the town of Gulu.

Activista-member Ocira Bosco was at the forefront, when Activista demanded the Health Centre to operate as promised by the Government.

“We made a large call for improvements at the Health Centre. Everything has become better since we started to make noise,” he said.

Noise from Activista

When the Activista members realized, that their children did not get immunized and that their neighbours were denied even basic treatment, they decided to call for action.

“We started by organizing several community meetings to map out the exact issues. We discussed with the ActionAid partner, Partner for Community Development (PCD)



Youth in Amuru district stand up against corruption during the 2013 anti corruption caravan.

and last year, we wrote a letter to the District Officials signed by us and many other community members. We took the letter to the LC1 Local Councilor and made sure that everybody knew about our complaints,” the 27 year old Ocira Bosco said.

A week later, the Government started delivering more medicine and the LC1 councilor promised to hire 2 additional staff, raising the total number of staff to 6.

But the clinic still remained closed in the mornings, as the staff lived in Gulu, which is a two hour bus ride away.

About Activista

ActionAid’s youth network, Activista, involves youth in 50 countries. Its members fight corruption on all levels. Its Campaigns runs with the same strength on big government conferences as in villages. Activista aims to make the youth drivers of change towards a poverty-free planet.

Every young person who ActionAid engages or works with around the world, who aspires to end poverty and injustice, and who want to be an active member of a movement creating social change can be an Activista. Activista in Uganda has its Twitter discussions on #activistaUG and has a Facebook page as well. All of ActionAids Local Rights Programmes (local offices) can also direct to Activista Chapters.

“The Health Centre has staff quarters but they refused to use them. Therefore, we made a demonstration blocking the road, so the staff

could not return to Gulu. We also wrote a letter to the district administration with our complaints,” Ocira Bosco continued.

Better health services

Paul Ocen who is a Health Practitioner at the clinic admits that a lot has improved because of Activista.

Shortly after the roadblock, the Health Centre started opening at 7.30 each morning.

“We used to open around 11.30, but now we have 3 staff members that sleep in the quarters. They ensure that the clinic opens early every day,” he explained. “The supply of Government medicine has become a lot more stable after the youth groups complained to the District Government Office. I am not sure how it disappeared before, but now we get the quantities, we need.”

Family planning and vaccinations are among the other improvements that came after Activista’s interventions.

“Over the last year, we have also improved readiness to serve urgent cases. All children get their immunization and we visit different schools to sensitize them. We have also upgraded our antenatal care vastly, and we arrange family health days,” Paul Ocen concluded.

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The unemployment paradox: Youth deserve better!

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value in education. Today, these “drop-outs” and those that completed UPE education gamble - literally with money, as well as with their lives. What greets me when I arrive home in Bugiri, are hungry and angry young people requesting me for a “bail-out” of 5,000 shillings for them to spend on sports betting and “make free money” or to go watch European football. Some have requested to be my driver when I have graduated from law school. Most girls were married off in high school and got children early. One of the girls is a re-known village thief champion. Others are certified drunkards. What really shocks me is that these were bright students, some of whom were better than me in lower primary.

That is the story of my childhood friends. It is not a story that makes you smile. The embezzlement going on in this country has left the youth in a deep hole of skills deficit, poverty and poor education, and those who

graduate are either in unemployed, underemployed and unemployable. Money meant for investing in critical sectors like education and entrepreneurship, has been stolen. This is money that could get these young people off the streets and stop them from gambling with their lives.

The growing number of such youths makes me cry inside. The look of helplessness on these uneducated young women’s faces when they can’t feed their kids is unforgettable. The pained look when they see their children not being successful in life is indelibly written in their parent’s faces. And when they see me studying, the look of envy often translates into inferiority complex every time they meet me.

I wake up every day hoping for a better future, only to realize it is the same old story but a different day with Newspaper headlines showing different corrupt government officials involved in graft and billions of shillings lost in Office of the Prime Min-

ister (OPM) and in the Public Service. For the fourth year in a row, Uganda is ranked as the most corrupt country in East Africa. In the same period, School dropout rates are increasing as the betting companies continue to make more money from youth.

Attempts by the government to address Youth unemployment have been disastrous. A few years ago, a Youth Venture Capital Fund was launched. Most youth that I have interacted with have told me that they have never heard of this fund, yet there was more than 4 billion allocated for it. Beneficiaries of that scheme are probably from another planet!

So the latest Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) which was launched in November 2013 by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Youth development caused another level of excitement among fellow youth. On the surface, it looked like what every unemployed Youth had been waiting for. It caters for both the educated and the uneducated thus giving

hope for the Youth in rural areas. Implementation of this program is yet to start but we can only hope that it offers some hope.

The people implementing the YLP are still to answer questions about its progress. Mr. Pius Bigirimana, the person in charge of it now, was named in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) scandal and at the time of his appointment to manage the YLP, he had not been cleared from the OPM charges. The question is: How will he oversee and ensure accountability for the YLP Fund, when he failed to manage programs with similar outcomes at OPM? The question is, are we safe with him in charge of the funds allocated to better the lives of the Ugandan Youth?

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POEM SOCIALLY

Socially we meet through mediums dubbed media.
 Socially we meet.
 Socially we share façades that we masterfully don on at dawn.
 Dusk is but our plastic cocoon.
 Socially we seek to find ourselves in echoed caves of our craves.
 Socially we fall on this net of hope,
 Hoping this will help us cope...
 Socially we hope.
 Socially we consume the smoke that blinds us see.
 Socially we drop our morals,
 Bathing in the norms of another's home.
 Socially we sing and we swing on this thin string.
 Socially we profess ours is true King.
 Socially we claim to know everything.

The hypocrisy,
 Socially we sink into envy.
 Socially we hold onto boxes empty.
 Socially we forget about humanity.
 Socially we snuff out community.
 Socially we forget about society.
 Socially we lose sight of Identity,
 Socially we think of only 'ME',
 Socially.
 Socially.
 Socially.
 Socially.
 Socially we are empty!
 — Jason Ntaro



LYRICS ZUUKUKA II

Intro Verse by Big Tril Kaiza

Chorus: Get Up, Better Zuukuka
 Let's make this world a better place (Zuukuka)
 Aint no matter what color or race (Zuukuka)
 Let's all just join hands and make the world dance
 Yeah, get Up! Zuukuka

tell them pick a language Zuukuka, Yimuka,
 Ebintu, tibikuza ku hinduka
 Twa tukyimukire, if nothing changes, nothing
 changes
 we look at these problems like they ain't ours and
 we're strangers
 we don't want to get involved, we'd rather get
 blankets
 every time an issue shows up in our place, we
 blank it
 out, we don't want to face it,
 don't want to be the face of the current situation
 we want to blame the government, blame the
 legislature
 claim that the judiciary's eating up all the paper
 but when we're stopped in traffic over a violation
 and the option is a ticket or a compensation
 it's suddenly no longer a spiritual conversation
 suddenly its taken on a different quonotation
 but I ain't just talking about y'all, first thing I want
 to clear up
 is the mental of the man mirror when I tell him...

As the final battle draws nearer. Vision clearer than
 a mirror
 With the kind of flow that makes u wanna take off
 your kofiira
 The majority's inferior coz she wants to live like
 Shakira.
 He steals money to build a new castle. No Alan
 Shearer
 Travels from Lira to Madeira, drives a Porsche
 Panamera, to Parliament, to defend the destruc-
 tion of Mabira.
 Coz he has shares in another Kakira
 and yet he goes back to criticize terrorists on Al-
 Jazeera
 or he'll be watching a thriller, on his 3D television
 from Manila.
 Zuukuka. Pick up your placards and manila.
 Coz this is a guerrilla war.
 Couldnt get realer.
 What you gon do when u faced with these pack of
 angry gorrillas.
 In the village people famished, your house is nicely
 furnished.
 Every week your wife gets her toes and finger nails
 vanished.
 Some girls don't have pads but every MP has an
 i-what? What?!



L-R Big Tril, Ruyonga and Benezeri at the debut performance of Zuukuka part II

Countdown

We would like to celebrate Ugandan
 artistes who have chosen to make their
 voices count for collective good in the fight
 against corruption. All these songs are on You
 tube for your listening!

1. Zuukuka 2 – Benezeri ft Ruyonga and Big Tril
2. Time Bomb 2014 – Bobi Wine
3. Zibuuse – Xenson
4. Anti Corruption Song – Radio and Weasle

Using music to fight against theft: Meet the Zuukuka team

BENEZERI

1. Tell us about yourself.
 My name is Benezeri Chibita. I am a 20 year old rap artist. I am the first born of five children. I attended Aga Khan International School for my primary school education, St. Mary's College Kitende for O'level and later Vienna College Namugongo for A'level. I am currently a second-year student of mass communication at Uganda Christian University Mukono.

2. Why does your music (Zuukuka) carry the lyrical content it does?
 My music carries the lyrical content it does because my vision as an artist is to influence positive living.

3. What has been the response to the song from both your fans and the public?
 The response to Zuukuka was very positive.

4. Do you believe music can inspire a positive change in the fight against corruption?
 I think music can inspire a positive change in the fight against corruption because it unlike other forms of communication appeals to every one of every demographic.

5. An inspiring word to young people out there?
 We all have some untapped power inside of us. You can influence so many people, if you believe and set your mind to it.

6. Where can we find your music?
 My music can be found on the following links:
www.youtube.com/benezeritv
www.soundcloud.com/benezeri
 You can follow me on Twitter and Instagram on @benezermusic



Ruyonga and Benezeri.

RUYONGA

1. Who is Ruyonga?
 I am Edwin Ruyonga. I am a proud Ugandan, African and a Christian. I am a worker, a dreamer and a believer. I love art, poetry and music.

2. Why does your music (Zuukuka) carry the lyrical content it does?
 I don't know how not to push a message. I believe through my music in some way, shape or form. It is my podium, my voice. I have to say something while I have the chance. Even if I am scolding myself, like I did on Zuukuka 2.

3. What has been the response to the song from both your fans and the public?
 It is a very powerful song. People have responded positively, thankfully.

4. Do you believe music can inspire a positive change in the fight against corruption?
 I believe every voice has been given some measure of power to affect change through declaration. Be it Positive or Negative. Music is simply nothing but melodic talking.

5. An inspiring word to young people out there on the power they have to transform their world?
 Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else will be sorted.

6. Where can we find your music?
soundcloud.com/ruyonga, reverbnation.com/ruyonga, ruyonga.com

