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plomacy accompanied commerce. Alliances
were forged and renegotiated. Intermarriage
created political bridges. Conflict occurred,

through councils, or
or collective withdrawal of support, was not

Your Excellency,
It is widely acknowledged that extreme
poverty and youth unemployment re-
main persistent challenges. These chal-
lenges have shaped public sentiment, par-
ticularly among young people, and have in-
fluenced political realignments over recent
years. It is against this background that I draw
your attention to what I believe is the missing
link in Uganda's 40-year struggle to decisively
end extreme poverty: the strategic reposition-
ing of education as a direct driver of business
startups, accelerations, business, innovations,
and job creation.

I call for a bold, unified education revolu-
tion that intentionally positions Uganda's en-
tire education ecosystem, from Early Child-
hood Development (ECD) through primary,
secondary, tertiary, vocational, and university
education, as the country's primary incubator
for entrepreneurs, innovators, problem-sol-
vers, and job creators. Education must move be-
yond preparing learners to seek jobs; it must
prepare them to create jobs, build enterprises,
solve real problems, and compete globally.
When fully aligned, our education system can
become Uganda's most powerful and sustain-
able engine against poverty, unemployment,
overdependence on imports, and youth dis-
enfranchisement.

Education institutions are not merely cen-
tres of academic instruction; they are natural
nurseries of innovation and enterprise. How-
ever, Uganda's education institutions have
struggled to integrate effectively with incu-
bators, startups, accelerators, and innovation
ecosystems across all levels. Curricula and in-
stitutional cultures remain largely academic
and theory-driven, with limited emphasis on
practical, market-oriented entrepreneurship.

Research within Ugandan universities con-
sistently shows that entrepreneurship edu-
cation is predominantly classroom-based, of-
fering little exposure to real business crea-
tion, product development, market valida-
tion, or scaling. As a result, many graduates
leave the education system without the skills,
confidence, networks, or financing pathways
required to start and grow enterprises that
could meaningfully reduce poverty and un-
employment.

Dear Mr President, education is the key

I call for a bold, unified
education revolution.



Joseph Opul
Open letter to Museveni

Uganda's education innovation ecosystem is
further constrained by fragmented infrastruc-
ture, weak commercialisation pathways, and
limited access to early-stage financing for in-
novations emerging from schools and univer-
sities. Studies on innovation and commercial-
isation in Ugandan research institutions re-
veal significant gaps in technology transfer of-
fices, institution-linked incubators, and ven-
ture financing mechanisms gaps that prevent
promising ideas from reaching the market.
This fragmentation stands in stark contrast to
developed economies, where education insti-
tutions are deliberately embedded within na-
tional innovation strategies and linked direct-
ly to incubators, accelerators, venture capital,
and industry partnerships.

Another major barrier is the uneven imple-
mentation of entrepreneurship and innova-
tion education across regions and education
levels. Opportunities to engage with startup
ecosystems are concentrated in a few urban
centres and select universities, leaving mil-
lions of learners across the country exclud-
ed. While commendable initiatives exist such
as engineering boot camps, innovation hubs,
and university industry partnerships these
remain isolated and insufficiently scaled. By

contrast, developed education systems intro-
duce entrepreneurial thinking early, sustain it
through higher education, and connect learn-
ers continuously to incubators, mentors, mar-
kets, and policy support, creating clear path-
ways from ideas to enterprises to econom-
ic impact.

The consequences for poverty reduction
and leadership development are profound.
Where education systems are weakly linked
to economic opportunity, graduates natural-
ly gravitate toward scarce formal jobs rather
than entrepreneurship, limiting job creation
and innovation.

I, therefore, propose that the assessment
framework be structured to include an equal
emphasis on practical and theoretical knowl-
edge. Specifically, 50 percent of the assess-
ment should focus on practical, innovative
entrepreneurship. The remaining 50 percent
should be dedicated to knowledge-based eval-
uation, ensuring a balanced approach that
fosters both practical skills and conceptual
understanding.

I also recommend mainstreaming practical
and innovative entrepreneurship across all
education levels; investing in teacher capaci-
ty building; establishing innovation hubs and
incubators within institutions; strengthen-
ing industry linkages and commercialisation
pathways; expanding financing mechanisms
for student and graduate startups; and deep-
ening public-private partnerships.

By doing so, Uganda can emerge as a mod-
el nation in the Global South self-reliant, inno-
vative, industrialised, and led by empowered
citizens shaped through a transformative edu-
cation system.

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reference will be given to insightful articles rather than generalised polemic observations. Attach a portrait and send to editorial@ug.nationmedia.com