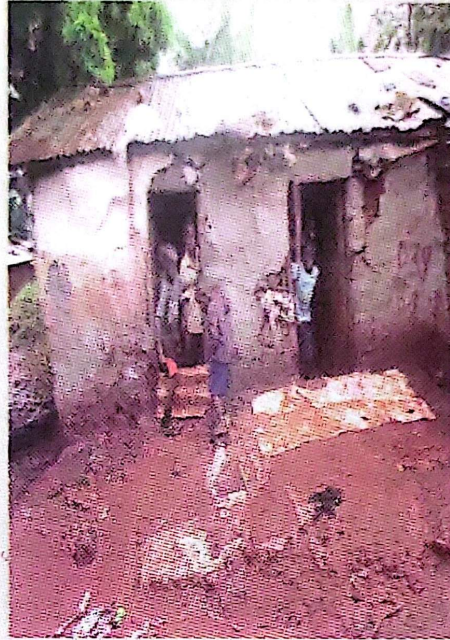


# How we can reduce income inequality

Uganda is a free market economy where people are free to do what they are best at - engineering, music, and teaching, among others. You can decide how much work you want to do and what kind of property you want to possess. But, this freedom is also widely perceived as an expression of income inequality given that not all of us are at the same level of success. This is noticeable in, for example, how hard and expensive to start a company, own land, get a degree, and find a decent job.

This is partly because while some people have the opportunity to start off with a small loan, or even bribe human resource managers or law enforcers to succeed, others are born into abject poverty and cannot do the same. This makes it much easier for the rich to remain wealthy while the poor remain poor.

According to a 2017 report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), this has maintained a relatively high national income inequality measured by the Gini coefficient of about 0.40 and justified by unequal life opportuni-



ties, disparities in health and life expectancy, and social disunity. We may argue that to achieve income equality, wealthy people must either slow down their dream, determination and passion and wait for the poor or give their hard-earned possessions to the less privileged in order to attain equilibrium.

It is like supporting a student interested in pursuing engineering course, but with an IQ of less than 45 to join those with IQ 96 plus, re-

quired for the course. Most likely, the former will fail the test.

However, even without an outright solution to this problem, the government is obliged to find one using the many poverty alleviation programmes expounded in the second National Development Plan (NDP II).

Primarily, the unfavourable income distribution should be rectified by implementing appropriate legislation, policies and practices that are universal in principle. These guidelines should consider the needs of the disadvantaged and marginalised through fiscal, wage and social protection policies. If a person, no matter their background, were just as likely to have any job, a millionaire's child would be just as likely to work at the Parliament as someone born in poverty. Secondly, for those brought up in poverty, if you have the opportunity to study, do so with passion and later look for a job. If you can access land that you can use to start a business, work on it with zeal so as to succeed

**Laster-Stoney Ogola,**  
lastogola@gmail.com