

# When exam cheats become doctors and engineers

These days we eat our dinner early when there is still some sunlight because power outages are back. Somehow the electricity just disappears any time and with time, you get tired of calling and begging. So we eat dinner early, which is healthy and, if power remains, well and good.

However, the unreliable electricity also means less or no TV. As a result, my maid has (re)discovered radio. And her Chinese smartphone now has a new function. And she has zeroed in on Super FM. So often when I am at the house, it is like being in a taxi — Super FM fills the air.

The other day, the presenters were discussing exam leakages and someone called supporting the theft of exams, saying if the systems the students aim at joining are corruption-ridden, then they have to use corrupt means to get there! I expressed shock that someone can call on a radio station to support crime. But the maid cut me short.

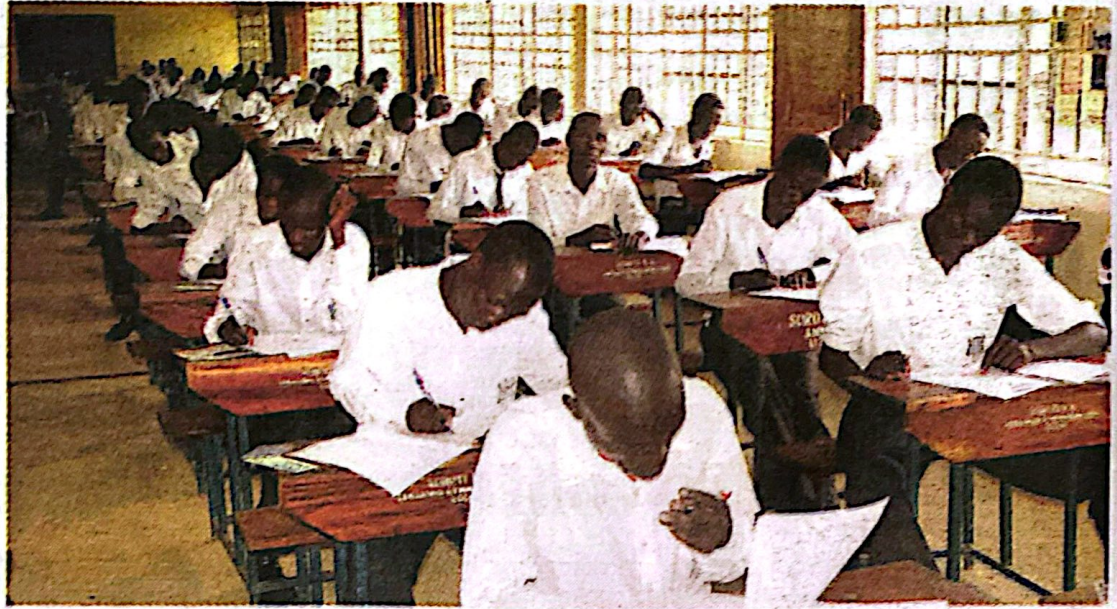
"Why not?" she said. "If there are thousands of ghost students at the university, why not have a few more real ones who stole exams?"

"But two wrongs don't make a right," I pleaded. "And the ghosts are being weeded out, thanks to the recently deceased professor, who led the visitation committee."

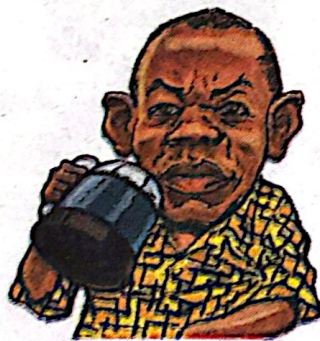
"Heh heh heh!" she laughed. "Closing the door when the dog has run out."

"They say horses, not dogs," I scolded her.

"We have dogs here and I have never seen a real horse," she argued. "I am saying we have enough exam thieves already all over the place and they will be in service for the next 30 years. So even if you



It is alleged that examinations of the Uganda Certificate of Education leaked



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stop exam theft now, we are being treated by doctors who stole exams in our hospitals..."

"Shut up!" I admonished. "Even if they stole exams, they

learnt their stuff and became competent doctors!"

"Of what use is a competent doctor if he treats you with expired drugs imported by exam cheats, who run the pharmacies and other exam cheats in customs?" she retorted. "Indeed, they are so competent that some of them sell newborn babies stolen from poor mothers to wicked women who want to con rich men that they have produced for them and their dead babies are given to the poor mothers whose live baby is stolen."

"It doesn't happen everyday!" I yelled. "In fact, it only happens once maybe in a year."

"Once in a year they are caught, which means several times a year, they do it and don't get caught," she argued.

I did not answer, so she went on: "And of what use is an engineer who wires your house using fake wires that were approved by exam cheats in that whatever office that checks the quality of things coming into the country?"

"So what are you saying?" I asked with a defeated sigh.

"All I am saying is that it is pretence to be surprised when children of thieves steal exams," she answered. "Actually, it is parents and teachers who steal the exams. And if there is corruption all over the place, why should you expect it not to be in UNEB? It is like wishing that when it rains in the village, it should not rain in the compound of the home where there is going to be a *kwanjula* function. You either stop corruption everywhere or stop expecting it to spare UNEB."

I let out another sigh. I could not see her face because of the Umeme absence, so I kept staring in the darkness, wondering.

**“And if there is corruption all over the place, why should you expect it not to be in UNEB?”**