

Ethics, Education and Environment in the Uganda Context

By Tabitha Naisiko PhD
Philosophy Centre Jinja
naisiko@yahoo.com

Questions of reflection

1. What is ethics?
2. What is environment?
3. What is education?
4. How do the three above concepts interact?
5. Why are we concerned about the interaction?
6. What are the realities of the above in the Ugandan context?
7. What are the challenges faced?
8. What is the way forward?

What is Ethics?

- Johnson (1991, p.1) defines ethics as a science of conduct. That it is the examination of life with an interest in the norms and standards. (ethics is rational)
- Compose of right conduct, moral character, obligation and responsibility, social justice and good nature of life. (Victor Grassian 1992, p:1)
- Silberbaner(1999, p.14), = the constructs of Western moral philosophy cannot be applied to other cultures without some modification. E.g. most Bantu people in Uganda will refer to ethics as “ *obuntu bulamu*” i.e. being humane, *obwenkanya being just*

What is ethics?

- Desmond (1995:p.165) Being ethical entails more than an adherence to some arbitrary set of principles derived solely for the sake of solving some problem. It involves participating in the goodness of being itself.
- Bujo (2001 p.20), Magesa (1998, p.14), Mbiti (1991, p.174) observes that in Africa, one looks at the entire panorama i.e., ethic conduct is not only based on the individual but realised primarily by means of a relational network that is equally anthropocentric, cosmic and theo-centric.
- The community must guarantee the promotion and protection of life by specifying or ordaining ethics and morality.

What is ethics? The Sabinian Perspective

- Code Family: Morality, Created: 09/15/08 06:49:37 PM (Super) Codes (37):Quotation(s): 39
- [Friendship creation] [Good morals] [good neighborhood] [hospitality] [Immorality and incest is highly discouraged] [Immorality leading] [immorality reduced] [knowledge of behavior in soci..] [Laziness was discouraged] [Morality is kept] [respect among couples] [respect and identity] [Respect by both girls and boys] [Respect for age-groups] [Respect for fellow initiates] [Respect for husband] [Respect for one another] [respect for parents] [Respect for society] [Respect for uncircumcised] [Respect from father in law] [respect in public] [Respect is gained] [respect of every age sets] [Respect of the age mate] [respect of the husband] [Respect one another] [Respect will be left out] [respectful] [school to teach rules and regulations] [shaped morally] [sincerity] [social control] [social promotion] [social responsibility impact] [Trustworthy by people] [unruly students]

In General Ethics Deals with

- choice of what is good from bad, what is best alternative
- Culture , Customs, rules, laws, traditions and taboos,
- Nurturance, Development of capabilities (participation)
- Duty integrity, truthfulness and fairness
- Liberation
- Organisation Process
- Reason/Rationality Reflection
- The principle guidelines Wellbeing Betterment

Education according to the Sabinu

- Educated community
- Encouraging education
- Formal education
- Education amidst cultural practices/Education both traditionally
- Education for all
- Education for boys and girls
- Education from mentors
- Education from relatives and other people
- Education in certain responsibility
- Education of the individual
- Education organisation
- Education progress
- Education standard
- Education strengthening at all levels
- Education systems
- Education up to village level
- Educational development
- Educational services
- Educative/counselor
- Education matters

What is education?

- Picus (2001, p.86) education is a process by which people acquire knowledge, skills, values or attitudes. It is a process.
- It should help people develop an appreciation of their cultural heritage, become more productive members of the society and live more satisfying lives.
- Education then ought to be situational to help different people live sustainably in different environments.
- Picus highlights modes of education as
 - ✓ General education or liberal education i.e. humanities, mathematics, and biological, physical and social sciences,
 - ✓ Vocational education aims at preparing individuals for a job,
 - ✓ Special education i.e. education designed to take care of people with disabilities
 - ✓ Adult education – continuing education which teaches adults new skills to meet the changing world.

What is education

- Education is open-ended i.e. from birth to death, one is taught how to live in the environment. (Kenyatta 1938, p.99)
- Picus (2001:87-88) = 3 goals of education i.e.:
- The cognitive area which aims at increasing a person's knowledge and intellectual skills of enabling the ability to think and reason effectively (Uganda's weakness!!)
- The affective area which deals with feelings, values, appreciations. It aims at helping an individual develop moral and spiritual values as well as health attitudes and emotions. John Kanter (2006)
- The psychomotor area involves development of a person's muscular or mechanical skills. These skills are often related to hand writing, vocational and technical courses.
- At (PCJ/UMU) we teach the head, the heart and the hands. Devt in practice, Ethics, ICT, Communication skills

Environment

- De Taverner (1994: 235 – 261), breaks down the concept environment to refer to all factors external to the organism that affects its fitness.
- Relevant factors in human environment include food/water, energy, and natural resources like soil, minerals, water, air, trees, climate, toxic substances i.e. natural and man-made and disease i.e. microbes and vectors.
- Environment then refers to the physical, living and non-living surroundings of people that stand in dialectical relation with each other.

What is environment?

- UNEP (2004:12) observes that the term environment as defined in the dictionaries is too narrow and leaves a lot to be desired.
- Environment gives more meaning when defined in relation to human well-being as an ecosystem
- Ecosystems provide crucial life supporting services, which can be categorized into: provisioning, regulating and culture enriching
- The unresolved tension between resource use and environmental protection denies the community of such services and consequences of which is poverty.

Resources in Uganda

- **Gifted by nature**
- Fresh water lakes, Victoria, Kioga, Albert, George,
- Fresh water rivers, Nile, Mpologoma, Rwizi
- Natural forests , Mountains, hills , Rich flora and Fauna
- Good soils, food variety
- Hospitable People
- Big young population
- Culture
- Wild animals
- Overhead sun i.e two rain seasons
- Generally we always say we are gifted by nature

What is the connection?

- Refer to the attachment on environment
- Refer to the attachment on the association between ethics, education and environment
- Has the rich environment and education led to wellbeing?
- No! why not? Refer to our key concepts i.e. Education, environment in Uganda's Vision 2035 (pages 19-25)

The Paradox

- The PRSP Report 2005, p.23) admits that there is a remarkably slow progress in the areas of combating infant and maternal mortality; reducing malaria; improving environmental sanitation and standards in slums; and reversing the loss of environmental resources and other related environmental services.
- More needs to be done in order to strengthen the capacity of the public sector to translate these resources into service delivery that will make a difference in people's lives.
- Human suffering appears to be at the increase as a number of people hopelessly go without some basic human needs. Nearly 8.4 million Ugandans lived in poverty in 2005/06 while 1.4 million persons were poor in absolute terms (UBOS 2006, p.61).

The Paradox

- Lawlessness, crime and insecurity are growing at a high rate annually. UBOS (2009) show that in the year 2004; police recorded 45,000 cases, 67,000 cases in 2005, 81,000 cases in 2006, 83,000 cases in 2007, and 97,000 cases in 2008. The report also reveals remarkable increase in road accidents, p. 2,171 cases in 2006, 2,334 cases in 2007 and 2,035 cases in 2008.
- There is an increase in corruption which according to the Country Review Mission (CRM) of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (APRM Secretariat, p. 2008, p. xii) reveals that over USh330 billion (US\$184 million) is lost every year to corruption in procurement. This is much more than what the country receives annually in aid.
- This is coupled with other problems that compromise human wellbeing such as failure to manage diversity, conflicts, over dependence on donor aid, lack of structural transformation of the economy and increased inequality.

The Paradox

- Serpa (1999, p.49) quotes the former United Nations (UN) Secretary General, Kofi Annan, lamenting that Africa is struggling with a multiple of crises, these being ecological, economic, social and political. Moreover external aid has not prevented the tumbling of per capita incomes; children dying of malnutrition and more worrying, the fear that even if Africa implemented all the required reforms correctly, the situation would continue to deteriorate.
- This indicates that the problems of development in Uganda are essentially behavioural i.e. a problem of the social structure i.e. relationships and interactions, and can be attributed to lack of ethics and integrity without forgetting the influence of external factors.

Challenges of contemporary Education

- *Failure to Articulate the Objectives of Education* Before thinking of any improvements and reforms in the education sector, Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura et al (1972, p.178) identify the gaps within the formal education system in Africa. They dwell on what is perceived as strategies for a good future. They identify a need to liberate education strategies from:
 - ✓ the desire to bring education closer to the community life and needs, to the concern to fulfill individual aspirations more effectively;
 - ✓ projects to create tighter bonds between local communities and primary education to establishment of closer relations between industry, research institutes and universities;

Challenges of contemporary Education

- ✓ harmonious development of all elements in the educational process-knowledge, understanding, mental attitudes, motivations, practical aptitudes to greater consideration of emotional and personality problems;
- ✓ increased attention to physical education, to underscoring of moral elements in education;
- ✓ the restructuring of education systems to modernisation of educational methods;
- ✓ action to eliminate the complex causes of school wastage, to mechanisms for rehabilitating 'failures';

Challenges of contemporary Education

- ✓ the introduction of sciences of life into all kinds of education, to the insertion of basic technology courses into primary and secondary school curricular to reducing pressure of tests and examination;
- ✓ improving textbooks, to increasing sources of learning;
- ✓ the introduction of subject-centred and polyvalent education to improvement of specific scientific disciplines; and
- ✓ the development of activities aimed at stimulating the preschool mind to measures intended to prepare adults for senior citizenships.

Challenges of contemporary Education

- *Too Exam-Oriented* (Harber (2004, p.111-123) : The African modes of education are after making a person functional in the community and the modes of assessment is done by the community when watching the performance of the initiates in given tasks or expected roles.
- Due to lack of direction through failure of formal education sector to articulate its objectives:
 - ✓ *Concentrates on economic development and emphasizes credentials:*
 - ✓ (2006 Sabin experience)
 - ✓ a “private good” and it is competitive. It promotes winners against losers, rural against urban, rich against poor (Sabin education which is geared towards ensuring that all are winners and useful in society.

Challenges of contemporary Education

- ✓ Obsolete teaching systems Banking system Verses Generative themes which is problem solving. (Freire 1996, p. 56) is often times overloaded with obsolete and irrelevant information.
- ✓ *Creating Division among Community Members* (Ddungu, 2004, p.28).
 - *Fewer and De-motivated Teachers at all*
 - Too many children. Class teacher ratio
 - Salaries come late
 - Poor facilities

Challenges of contemporary Education

- Part-time(ism), academic mobility (no research, publication, conference, knowledge generation)
- The Elites have betrayed the people in Africa (Kanyandago 2004)/Brain drain (frustrating both South and the West (oxford appeal)
- *Intellectual Dumping and Fatigue* : Formal education in Africa has suffered a lot of modalities as controlled by the proprietors in the Western world. (Catch-upism as put forward by Kanyandago)
- *Failure to Implement Good Policies (ethics!!! Otherwise proprietors lose. E.g. couching, boarding schools, nursery school exams. The influential government people involved)*

The Way Forward to Appropriate Education

- *Contextualising Education for Community Wellbeing: All the policies in education should be geared towards empowering the citizens to be productive in the community i.e. not credentials but to useful skills and knowledge.*
- There is a need to adopt Cheng's (2003, p.26-64) proposal of "tripalisation" of education as a way forward. In this case, what is put into consideration are individualisation, localisation and globalisation concepts. Cheng argues that localized globalisation in education can create more values for local developments if local creativity and adaptation can be induced in the process of operational change and cultural change.

The Way Forward to Appropriate Education

- *Taking an Anthropological Approach to Education:* One of the challenges of formal education is school drop out. There is a need for the Ministry of Education to establish and support more user-friendly education programmes for specific communities. Among these are Literacy Adult and Basic Education (LABE) and Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK).
- *Integrating Traditional and Modern Education:* There is a need to integrate modern education with other forms of life education. Rites of passage and formal education can enhance each other to address the needs of the people. (thogoto, ekisaaakate, kwanzaa)
- *Integrating Morality and Spirituality in Formal Education :* Lack of these important complements in human life could be the cause of the irrational decisions made which result into collapsing buildings, stolen materials, broken bridges and roads which have cost many people's lives in Uganda.

The Way Forward to Appropriate Education

- *Integrating African Studies in Various Disciplines and Professions:* The system of education for human development calls for a reflection on universalism and particularism. In this context, in Africa, there is a need to reflect on how various academic programmes integrate African studies.
- Training professionals for Africa requires putting African issues into consideration when teaching, researching and publishing. For instance, there is a need to study African technology, African education, African social-work, African medicine, African culture, African ethics and law, African ecology and African religion.
- This calls for responsiveness to the endogenous knowledge in which the norms, sanctions and attitudes are kept.

The Way Forward

- Avoid duplicating services by integration of programs E.g if teaching about HIV/AIDs, Health, education, ethics, gender need a single program (Ethics!!!)
- Adopt use of ICT (Ethics!!! It reports)
- Improving on the Living Conditions of Teachers
- Recruit more teacher at all levels
- Conscientise people about limiting the family size (ethics!!)
- Protecting the education sector through funding, monitoring and evaluation. The private practitioners need to checked, unnecessary journeys etc (ethics!! Rampant corruption)
- *Changing the Methods of Assessment: there is a need for on going assessment not to wait for UNEB.*
- *Implementing Good Policies Recommended in Studies e.g*

The big question!

- If the way forward is known, why is it not put in practice for the citizens to benefit from their environment through education?

Why Ethics is Needed

- According to Socrates statement, the challenge to examine one's life falls with special force on those who are making transition (from youth to adulthood, Pre-industrial to industrial, Agrarian to pre-industrial, Local to national to globalisation. (Johnson)
- From the *Nicomachean Ethics* put forward by Aristotle, it seems all human beings want *eudaimonia* i.e. "happiness". Happiness in the context is termed as the highest good in life.
- Johnson (p.478) further informs that *eudaimonia* is translatable into English as "vital well-being", living well and doing well". And it is not as the same as pleasure. Happiness is an active, engaged realization of human innate capacities.

Yoking ethics to development

Yoking ethics to development

- a wooden frame for harnessing two draft animals to whatever they had to pull
- **frame for carrying loads:** a frame designed to fit across somebody's shoulders with balanced loads suspended at each end (Encarta dictionary)

Qn. Is it possible to yoke ethics to African development? What does this require?

Messay Kabebe (1994)

Says that linking development with ethics appears to many people as an odd or mistaken endeavour

As development brings betterment to human life, it is good and thus expressible in ethical terms.

Yoking ethics to African development

For Kabele, yoking ethics to development makes sense in:

- Ethics of virtue (slide No.7)
- Ethics of duty i.e. the objective character of scientific procedure is difficult to reconcile with the pursuit of happiness.
- Any link between human motivations and scientific disposition must be via duty, which alone can assume impersonal character.

Development is ethical because the necessity of choice is always a move towards development e.g.

- Choice between modernity and tradition (development might require forgoing some traditional values e.g.??class discussion).
- Choice between pain and pleasure (cost benefit analysis & PSIA)
- Choice between universality and particularity
- As development is choice, ethics is the realisation of that choice

Yoking ethics to African development

- Kabede affirms that ethics of duty alone can explain the chief character of development.
- Ethics requires that we take development as a duty. This goes beyond mere gratification of personal pleasures or interest. Calls for reason and self-control.

There is a duty to study, duty to avoid corruption, duty to work hard, duty to save for tomorrow, duty to keep law and order, duty to keep the environment from toxics etc

Moral education in Uganda

- It has been often offered by the social structures
- At primary level, there is no curriculum may be implied but not direct
- At secondary school it is catered for religious studies i.e. CRE/ Islam
- At university, it used to be taught as part of professional ethics, e.g. SWSA, Education, Medical
- UMU started it an independent course. Course units are compulsory in UMU regardless of programme.
- These days it is taught as one of the new courses. But still seems exclusive to the interests e.g in MUBs they teach business ethics, Makerere they teach Development philosophy and ethics to DVS, Tourist Ethics to Tourism

Why Moral education?

At Pre- University level

- Break down of the social structure hence children spend more time at school. They need to be taught moral education just like English and Mathematics
- Influence of the media (Social media, face book, twitter etc)
- Prevalence of HIV/AIDs
- The goal of moral education is to encourage young people to develop to the next stage of moral reasoning. Initial educational efforts employing Kohlberg's theory were grounded in basic Piagetian assumptions of cognitive development.
- Moral education, therefore, is to induct young people into the practices and procedures inherent in public moral discourse.

Why moral education

- AT university level
- Beaty in his paper “We will resolve our nation's most pressing problems, only by linking individualism and competitiveness with a set of qualities of a very different kind — qualities of a more co-operative and communal nature rooted in a strong sense of personal responsibility toward institutions, communities, and other human beings. To solve these national problems we need a citizenry who share a strong sense of moral and civic responsibility. Fortunately... our universities occupy strategic ground for creating this kind of citizenry. Almost half of the population, including nearly all government officials, business executives, civic leaders, and other professionals, like lawyers, and health care professionals, attended colleges and professional schools. And, for several formative years, the university may be the most dominant influence in their lives.” MICHEAL BEATY, *Paideia: Moral Education in the University?* on website www.bu.edu/wpc/Papers/Mpsy/MpsyBeat.htm.

Challenges of moral education

- Traditional verses the contemporary approaches in moral education (moral absolutism verses relativity (listen to children they are limited in knowledge, experience, skills).
- Moral theories verses moral practice (divorce from Applied ethics)
- Teaching ethics to those out of schools (drop out rate is high)
- Teaching ethics to those who do not go to university. Technical/vocations/ informal sector etc
- Bureaucracy in the education system
- Ethics teachers are very few. Instead we have counselors (no theories, no course content)

Ethics Education (Theories Verses Applied Ethics)

- Consequentialism
 - Utilitarianism
 - Kohlbergian theory
 - Care –based ethics / the other voice
 - Prima facie duties
 - Social contract theories
 - African humanism
 - Deontology
- Others
(The struggle K.U
leuven 2003)
- Business ethics
 - Social ethics
 - Medical ethics
 - Bio ethics
 - Ethics of technology /Ethics of artificial intelligence
 - Computer ethics
 - Media ethics
 - Professional ethics
 - Religious ethics
 - Sexual ethics/relational ethics
 - Environmental ethics

Business Ethics/Corporate Ethics

- examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment. It applies to all aspects of business conduct and is relevant to the conduct of individuals and business organizations as a whole.
- The range and quantity of business ethical issues reflect the degree to which business is perceived to be at odds with non-economic social values. (Adam Smith's unseen hand)
- John Eikington (Cannibals with forks) **Profits, social justice and environment.**
- Ethics of financial management, Ethics of consumption
- Corporate social responsibility, Ethics of human resource management
- Ethics of production, Ethics of sales and management
- Ethics of property, property rights and intellectual property rights

Sexual/Relational Ethics

- Refers to those aspects of ethics that deal with issues arising from all aspects of sexuality and human sexual behavior.
- Sexual ethics relates to community and personal standards relating to the conduct of interpersonal relationships
- Deals with issues of consent, sexual relations before marriage and/or while married, including issues of marital fidelity
- Joseph Selling(2002) nearly all problems of the world start in the bed. Is it true? HIV/AIDs, domestic violence, environmental degradation, poverty, school drop out, famine, corruption, terrorism, abortion, over-population, under population. A proper sexual ethic will help solve the problems...

Medical Ethics

- Six of the values that commonly apply to medical ethics are:
- Autonomy - the patient has the right to refuse or choose their treatment. Beneficence - a practitioner should act in the best interest of the patient.
- Non-maleficence - "first, do no harm" Justice - concerns the distribution of scarce health resources, and the decision of who gets what treatment (fairness and equality).
- Dignity - the patient (and the person treating the patient) have the right to dignity.
- Truthfulness and honesty - the concept of informed consent has increased in importance since the historical events.
- Values such as these do not give answers as to how to handle a particular situation, but provide a useful framework for understanding conflicts.
- Issues of conflict of interest in contemporary challenges (Herbalists verse Western medicine, doctors selling HIV results, drugs stolen, dodging work

Environmental ethics

- Considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including humans to including the non-human world.
- There are many ethical decisions that human beings make with respect to the environment. For example:
 - Should we continue to clear cut forests for the sake of human consumption?
 - Should we continue to propagate?
 - What environmental obligations do we need to keep for future generations?
 - Is it right for humans to knowingly cause the extinction of a species for the convenience of humanity? John Eikington (1998) Cannibals with forks.
- Ethical theories of environmental protection e.g eco-centrism, anthropocentrism, land ethic

Ethics of technology

- Technology itself is incapable of possessing moral or ethical qualities, since "technology" is merely tool making. Thus, "ethics of technology" refers instead to two basic subdivisions.
- The ethics involved in the development of new technology—whether it is always, never, or contextually right or wrong to invent and implement a technological innovation.
- The ethical questions that are exacerbated by the ways in which technology extends or curtails the power of individuals—how standard ethical questions are changed by the new powers. (joblessness, lack of privacy, lack of autonomy etc)

Ethics In Information TECHNOLOGY

- The major issues concerning ethics with Information technology are: Privacy and Confidentiality, Freedom of Speech, Security, and Computer.
- Information technology is a rapidly growing part of today's society. It affects everyone's life in many aspects. Information technology is now running offices, families, relationships, farms, business, hospitals.
- Every advancement in information technology is accompanied by at least one ethical quandary. From Facebook to email updates, computer users are unaware of the fine balance between ethics and profit struck by providers.
- Software developers, business and individuals must think about the rights and wrongs of using information technology every day.

Media ethics

- Deals with specific ethical principles and standards of media, including broadcast media, film, theatre, the arts, print media and the internet. **Journalism ethics and standards** I.e. truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability
- ✓ News manipulation. News can manipulate and be manipulated. Truth may conflict with many other values e.g.
- ✓ Public interest. Revelation of military secrets and other sensitive government information may be contrary to the public interest , even if it is true.
- ✓ Privacy. Salacious details of the lives of public figures is a central content element in many media. Publication is not necessarily justified simply because the information is true.
- ✓ Fantasy. Journalism may mix fantasy and truth, with resulting ethical dilemmas.
- ✓ Taste. Photo journalists who cover war and disasters confront situations which may shock the sensitivities of their audiences
- ✓ Conflict with the law. Journalistic ethics may conflict with the law over issues such as the protection of confidential news sources.

Professional ethics

- Concerns the moral issues that arise because of the specialist knowledge that professionals attain, and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the public. The professional carries additional moral responsibilities to those held by the population in general and in society. This is because professionals are capable of making and acting on informed decisions in situations that the general public cannot, because they have not received the relevant training. E.g. Military, teaching, legal, social work etc