

Strengthen local language education to accelerate national development

EDITOR: Uganda's education system is doing well by having local languages on the curriculum.

As a nation, we need to open our eyes more to understand the necessity of not only learning local languages, but also mastering them and applying them in development decisions.

We need to encourage students to carry on these languages into 'A' level and university rather than drop them after O'level as most students tend to do. For such continuity to happen, parents need to encourage their children to study languages, just like more schools and universities need to create opportunities for language education. The way Ugandans have an interest in foreign languages like Spanish, Chinese or French is the same way we should push for interest in Ugandan languages like Ateso, Luo, Lusoga, Luganda, Runyakitara, etc.

Language is not just a means of communication or expression. Instead, it is an organic way of thinking, comprehending issues and formulating ideas. For instance, currently, China is being strategic by ensuring that several Ugandans learn Chinese. In the long-run, China will have Ugandans with whom to partner on China-Uganda development issues with ease.

Considering the current trend where many Ugandan young people cannot fluently express themselves in local languages, it is possible that in the near future, Uganda's leaders and development cadres will be people who cannot communicate in our God-given languages. Yet, those languages are vital when conceiving, organising and implementing development ideas.

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