

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 infrastructure, weak commercialisation pathways, and limited access to early-stage financing for innovations emerging from schools and universities. Studies on innovation and commercialisation in Ugandan research institutions reveal significant gaps in technology transfer offices, institution-linked incubators, and venture financing mechanisms gaps that prevent promising ideas from reaching the market. This fragmentation stands in stark contrast to developed economies, where education institutions are deliberately embedded within national innovation strategies and linked directly to incubators, accelerators, venture capital, and industry partnerships.

Another major barrier is the uneven implementation of entrepreneurship and innovation education across regions and education levels. Opportunities to engage with startup ecosystems are concentrated in a few urban centres and select universities, leaving millions of learners across the country excluded. 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 introduce entrepreneurial thinking early, sustain it through higher education, and connect learners continuously to incubators, mentors, markets, and policy support, creating clear pathways from ideas to enterprises to economic impact.

The consequences for poverty reduction and leadership development are profound. Where education systems are weakly linked to economic opportunity, graduates naturally 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 knowledge. Specifically, 50 percent of the assessment should focus on practical, innovative entrepreneurship. The remaining 50 percent should be dedicated to knowledge-based evaluation, 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 capacity building; establishing innovation hubs and incubators within institutions; strengthening industry linkages and commercialisation pathways; expanding financing mechanisms for student and graduate startups; and deepening public-private partnerships.

By doing so, Uganda can emerge as a model nation in the Global South self-reliant, innovative, industrialised, and led by empowered citizens shaped through a transformative education system.

Dr Joseph Opul (PhD) is a lecturer at Gulu University, director of Quality Education Consultancy Ltd (QECL) and founder of OPUL Skilling Foundation Africa (OSFA)
ceo@opulskillingfoundationafrica.org