

# **MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL SECTOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

African countries are increasingly changing their management styles in a manner that leans towards increased decentralization and privatization with increasing emphasis on people-oriented economic development. In response to privatization, non-profit-motivated service organizations have been on the increase. This inevitably implies an expansion in the voluntary (NGOs and Community-Based Organization) and private sectors in the provision of social services and an increasing need for private/public partnership in service delivery. This expansion is occurring against a background of a critical shortage of competently trained manpower with the capacity to design, implement and manage social sector programmes. There is a significant absence of professional competence to mount effective policy advocacy to lure the scarce resources to the social sector of society.

Some of these organizations provide uncoordinated and loosely integrated services that overlap and compete for scarce resources. With appropriate planning and management these agencies can become more effective. The preparation of professionals who plan and manage multi-sectoral policies and programmes is a timely response to this trend of events in the country.

It is observed that many governments, including Uganda, are in the process of transferring decision-making powers and responsibilities to grassroots populations. When decentralization of social services occurs, a number of issues are certain to arise with greater urgency. Many of them will have to deal with: ensuring equity in the locality or geographic distribution of resources; correcting shortcomings in the local service delivery systems, such as fragmentation, discontinuity, unaccountability and inaccessibility; and ensuring citizen participation in decision-making. Other issues to be considered include skills in advocacy, demand aggregation and articulation, consensus-building and, analytic and human relations skills. Others include sensitivity to issues regarding human diversity such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, culture, and political pluralism.

Although governments have established social planning procedures and departments within their various sectors, social planning is still poorly and marginally organized often coming as an after-thought. Much of the social planning taking place in most

African countries is sectoral. Sectoral ministries such as Social Welfare, Labour, Education, Health, Agriculture, Community Development, prepare and implement their own plans in collaboration with central government authorities. There is a need for training more professionals who will staff the rapidly expanding social services.

On the part of practical and academic training, Makerere University has been training in the general social sciences for more than forty years. The Department of Social Work and Social Administration, in particular, has been running for a little more than 30 years, the programme having been established in 1963. Thus, thousands of students in Social Sciences, in general, and Social Work and Social Administration, in particular, have been graduated over the past several decades.

However, the teaching of Social Work and Social Administration at the University, and the production of higher-calibre manpower for research and policy development in the social sector in the public services, have to-date exclusively depended on overseas training, with obvious shortages in critical development areas. There are no immediate openings for vertical professional growth in this critical sector of human development. This is against a background of government emphasis on community-based development initiatives and the rapid expansion of the voluntary and non-formal sectors in the design, management, delivery and sustenance of social development programmes and services.

## **2.0 JUSTIFICATION**

As the world is increasingly globalized, so are social changes and people's needs, problems, issues and challenges. Among the problems that are on the increase in most African countries, are the following:

- i. Widespread poverty, particularly in rural areas;
- ii. Unemployment and underemployment particularly among the youth and recent school leavers;
- iii. Poor health and nutrition;
- iv. Food insufficiency;
- v. Lack of adequate, decent and affordable housing;
- vi. Drug and alcohol abuse
- vii. High population growth;
- viii. Ethnic, political, religious, and other such conflicts;
- ix. Dysfunctions in families;

- x. Degradation and deterioration of the environment; and
- xi. Lack of essential services for the people who need them most, particularly the various categories of vulnerable groups.

All the above have major implications in the delivery and management social service delivery in a framework of global policies and standards in the context scarce resources.

The persistence of the above problems impairs people's capacity to improve their social and economic well-being and to effectively contribute to national development. Through social planning and management these problems can be addressed. Rigorous social planning and management must be undertaken at all levels; that is to say, at the local, community, district, regional and national levels. This needs to be done in a fashion that meets people's real needs. Thus, advanced skills in social planning and management can be an important developmental tool for addressing people's needs and for promoting social and economic development.

There is therefore a need to train professionals who are sensitive to these issues and can pay attention to them as they plan and manage social programmes and policies that are designed to address the social consequences of change at the local, national, regional and even international levels.

At the moment, Makerere University offers training for this expertise only at the Bachelors level. In order for Social Work and Social Administration practitioners in this country to participate effectively in the processes of policy formulation, planning and management, they need to be prepared at a higher level. There is therefore a need to prepare social sector planners at the Masters level, preferably with specializations in social service management and direct service delivery.

The proposed M.A. degree programme in Social Sector Planning and Management is a response to this gap and seeks, therefore, to provide the critically needed manpower in the design and management of social programmes and in the enhancement of policy advocacy with a view to sustaining human development on the political agenda.